Women | Muslim Women as Patrons

‘Women also championed the construction of ribats and khanqahs, madrasas, and bimaristans.’

Women also championed the building of ribats (religious fortifications) and khanqahs, (dervish convents), first as a refuge for religious warriors but later used as places of worship and accommodation for the poor. Education was another sphere where women were active as patrons, exemplified by the elaborate educational complex in Cairo, Madrasa of Umm Sultan Sha‘ban, built by the mother of the Mamluk Sultan Sha‘ban. Others provided schools (kuttabs, madrasas) to further the education of girls. Yet other charitable work included the patronage of hospitals (bimaristans) such as that adjoining the Great Mosque of Divri#i, commissioned by Turan Melik who lived in the 7th / 13th century, and that constructed by order of Aziza Othmana, who lived in the 11th / 17th century.



Name:
Madrasa al-Shamiyya

Dynasty:
Hegira 576–616 / AD 1180–1220 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
The madrasa was endowed by Sitt al-Sham, sister of the famous Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin, r. 564–89 / 1169–93).



Name:
Madrasa al-Sahiba

Dynasty:
Hegira 630 / AD 1233 Ayyubid

Details:
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
A magnificent school complex, the patron of which was Rabi' Khatun, sister of Saladin.



Name:
Ribat and Mosque of the Sayyida

Dynasty:
Hegira mid-3rd century / AD 9th century Aghlabid and Zirid

Details:
Monastir, Tunisia

Justification:
The complex is associated with an unknown Aghlabid princess remembered only as 'al-Sayyida', 'the Lady'.



Name:
'Imara al-'Amira (Flourishing Edifice)

Dynasty:
Built in around hegira 964 / AD 1557 Ottoman

Details:
Jerusalem

Justification:
This charitable complex is attributed to Haseki Hürrem Sultan, the wife of the famous Ottoman Sultan, Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 926–74 / 1520–66).



Name:
Endowment Charter (Waqfiyya) of Haseki Hürrem Sultan

Dynasty:
AH 964 / AD 1556–7 Ottoman

Details:
Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts
Sultanahmet, Istanbul, Turkey

Justification:
A document that relates to the financial matters of the Al-'Imara al-'Amira (The Flourishing Edifice) commissioned by Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent's wife, Haseki Hürrem Sultan.



Name:
Cauldron

Dynasty:
Hegira 10th century / AD 16th century Ottoman

Details:
Islamic Museum, al-Aqsa Mosque / al-Haram al-Sharif
Jerusalem

Justification:
A cauldron that was used to cook food in Al-'Imara al-'Amira (The Flourishing Edifice) to be delivered to the poor.



Name:
Nilüfer Hatun Imaret

Dynasty:
Hegira 790 / AD 1388 Early Ottoman

Details:
#znik, Bursa, Turkey

Justification:
A structure that probably provided shelter for itinerant dervishes, may also have served other charitable purposes.



Name:
Great Mosque and Hospital of Divri#i

Dynasty:
Hegira 626/ AD 1228–9 Mengücekli Emirate

Details:
Divri#i, Sivas, Turkey

Justification:
Turan Melik built the bimaristan in collaboration with her husband Ahmed Shah, who constructed the adjoining mosque.