

The Muslim West | The Co-existence of Three Cultures

Christians and Jews in Muslim lands

There is ample evidence of the presence of Jews and Christians in Muslim lands, from Tunisia to the Portuguese Algarve, although this cohabitation was more common in the towns than it was in the countryside on account of the commercial opportunities to be found there. In some instances, Christian communities even held some degree of power or sufficient economic strength to commission fine works of art. The Jewish communities found in the Muslim West before the arrival of Islam lived in their own districts alongside Muslims throughout the different dynasties, working as administrators or craftsmen and participating in social and economic life.



Name:
Latin funerary stele (gravestone)

Dynasty:
Hegira 397 / AD 1007 Zirid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
The inscriptions on these stones one of which suggests the existence of an ecclesiastical organisation, is proof of the presence of Christians in Muslim lands.



Name:
Tombstone

Dynasty:
Hegira 2 Muharram 379 / AD 21 March 991 Umayyad of Córdoba, Caliphate period

Details:
National Museum of Archaeology
Lisbon, Portugal

Justification:
The inscriptions on these stones one of which suggests the existence of an ecclesiastical organisation, is proof of the presence of Christians in Muslim lands.



Name:
Ornamental panel

Dynasty:
Hegira 339–90 / AD second half of 10th century Umayyad of Córdoba, Caliphate period

Details:
Lisbon Cathedral
Lisbon, Portugal

Justification:
The excellence of some works of art, such as these Eastern-influenced examples from Lisbon, bear witness to the economic power of certain Christian communities.



Name:
Decorated pillar

Dynasty:
Hegira 3rd–4th century / AD 9th–10th century Umayyads of Córdoba, Caliphate period

Details:
Carmo Museum of Archaeology
Lisbon, Portugal

Justification:
The excellence of some works of art, such as these Eastern-influenced examples from Lisbon, bear witness to the economic power of certain Christian communities.



Name:
Ornamental pilaster

Dynasty:
Hegira 3rd–4th / AD 9th–10th century Umayyad of Córdoba, Caliphate period

Details:
City Museum
Lisbon, Portugal

Justification:
The excellence of some works of art, such as these Eastern-influenced examples from Lisbon, bear witness to the economic power of certain Christian communities.



Name:
St Andrew's Church

Dynasty:
Hegira 13th-14th centuries / AD 19th centuries Alawid

Details:
Tangier, Morocco

Justification:
This Anglican church was partly funded by the Alawid sultan, al-Hasan I who donated the land and requested that it have the artistic features of a Muslim place of worship.



Name:
Danan Synagogue (Slat Rabbi Shelomo Danan)

Dynasty:
Hegira 1091 / AD 1680 Alawid

Details:
Fez, Morocco

Justification:
A new synagogue was built in Fez in 1666 for the Jews that Sultan Rashid had brought to the town to revitalise the economy and perform certain administrative functions.