The history of monasteries exhibits the gradual transformation of the Middle Eastern countryside from Christian to Muslim during the first seven centuries of Islam. Muslim Books of Monasteries and geographical dictionaries show that Christian traditions continued at rural monasteries, where caliphs and poets attended festivals and Muslims and Christians sought intercession and healing. Muslims built tombs and mosques alongside monasteries located at sites that both traditions considered sacred. In times of religious strife, however, monasteries became sites of contention and competition, leading to their appropriation by Muslim rulers.

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