

The Mamluks | Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem: Centres of Mamluk Intellectual Life

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Under Mamluk Rule, Egypt, Palestine and Syria enjoyed a tremendous economic, cultural, intellectual and artistic revival that was centred primarily in the urban centres of Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem. Cairo, the Mamluk capital, was celebrated as the ‘Metropolis of the Universe’ and the ‘Garden of the World’. It was the largest metropolitan centre in the world at the time, and one of the wealthiest cities in the Near East, providing a centre for intellectuals, scholars, scientists, artisans and traders.



Name:
Madrasa and Mosque of Sultan Hasan

Dynasty:
Hegira 764 / AD 1362 Mamluk

Details:
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
The Sultan Hassan Complex combined a mosque and four madrasas each of which specialised in teaching one of the Schools of Muslim Sunni religious jurisprudence (Fiqh). It also had student and employee lodgings, a library, a bathhouse (hammam) and kitchens.



Name:
Qur'an leaf

Dynasty:
Hegira 8th–9th centuries / AD 14th–15th centuries Mamluk

Details:
Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Medelhavsmuseet)
Stockholm, Sweden

Justification:
An illuminated leaf from a Qur'an; similarly precious Qur'ans were endowed to all the major mosques and madrasas throughout the empire.



Name:
Pen box

Dynasty:
Hegira mid-8th century/ AD mid-14th century Mamluk

Details:
The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
A pen-case symbolised the elevated status accorded to scribes, calligraphers and intellectuals in Mamluk society.