

# The Atabegs and Ayyubids | War and Horsemanship

'Swords were identified by their place of origin and the suppleness or hardness of the metal.'

The success of the cavalry came about from intense practice and good quality equipment. The soldiers trained in a hippodrome (maydan) where they carried out gruelling drills and took part in competitive sports including polo and javelin- or mace-throwing. In battle the Turkish soldiers employed a combination of tactics, using archery from a distance, and the lance or sword at closer range. Both Arab and Turkish warriors were adept with the lance, able to strike an enemy at close range while travelling at full speed. Swords were cherished weapons often identified by their place of origin and the suppleness or hardness of the metal employed. Shields were usually circular for Muslim soldiers, but kite-shaped shields were popular among the Muslim, Byzantine and Frankish military.



**Name:**

Painting

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid

**Details:**

The British Museum

London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

A painting illustrating the type of armour and weaponry used by soldiers of the period, such as kite-shaped shields.

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**Name:**

Ewer

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 629 / AD 1232 Atabeg / Ayyubid

**Details:**

The British Museum

London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

Detail from an Ewer of an equestrian soldier holding a straight sword, typical of the weaponry seen on the battlefield during this period.

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**Name:**

Bowl

**Dynasty:**

Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Ayyubid

**Details:**

The British Museum

London, England, United Kingdom

**Justification:**

A soldier who, on horseback, holds a bow and arrow, weaponry that was typical on the battlefield during this period.

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**Name:**  
Crac des Chevaliers

**Dynasty:**  
Hegira 5th - 10th century / AD 11th - 16th century Kilabite-Seljuq (AH 422–504 / AD 1031–1110); Counts of Tripoli (AH 504–37 / AD 1110–42); Knights Hospitallers (AH 537–669 / AD 1142–1271); Mamluk (AH 669 / AD1271–16th century)

**Details:**  
Homs region, Syria

**Justification:**  
One of the few Crusader strongholds that remained in Frankish hands, Crac des Chevaliers finally fell to the great warrior, the Mamluk Sultan al-Zahir Baybars, in 669 / 1271.



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**Details:**  
Homs region, Syria

**Justification:**  
Crac des Chevaliers, aerial view of the complex.



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**Details:**  
Homs region, Syria

**Justification:**  
Crac des Chevaliers, detail.

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