

The Mamluks | The Mamluk System

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Most important, however, he was highly trained in the art of war, archery and horsemanship. Indeed, in many ways the training of Mamluks can be compared to that of contemporary European knights. Regular tournaments were held with competitive games such as polo (jawkan) designed to refine the Mamluks' equestrian skills. Once their training was complete the Mamluk was set free and given a set of weapons and a horse. Now they were free to embark on military careers that enabled the most skilled among them to rise through the ranks to serve as senior commanders, provincial governors, the sultan's retainers, or indeed as sultans themselves.



Name:
Small water-basin

Dynasty:
Around hegira 700 / AD 1300 Mamluk

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum
Berlin, Germany

Justification:
A small bowl embellished with scenes of hunting and jousting, both of which were popular Mamluk sports designed to demonstrate courage and endurance.



Name:
Grenades

Dynasty:
Hegira 6th century / post-AD 1184 Ayyubid

Details:
Ajlun Archaeological Museum
Ajlun, Jordan

Justification:
Knowledge of explosive devices and projectiles was vital for effective warfare against the enemy.



Name:
Page from a manuscript on horsemanship

Dynasty:
Hegira 9th century / AD 15th century Mamluk

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
To keep fit Mamluk knights regularly practised fencing, weight-lifting and swimming.



Name:
Ajlun Castle

Dynasty:

Hegira 579–658 / AD 1184–1260 Ayyubid–Mamluk

Details:

Ajlun, Jordan

Justification:

Mamluks were trained in and stationed at citadels and fortresses. This one at Ajlun was strategically important, situated on the trade route between Syria and Egypt.
