

The Mamluks | Everyday life in the Mamluk Sultanate

‘Religious minorities were protected by directives in the Holy Qur’an.’

While Islam was the main religion of the empire, large Catholic and Orthodox Christian communities, particularly the Coptic Church in Egypt, contributed to its spiritual and cultural fabric, as did various Jewish groups. Both religious minorities were protected by directives in the Holy Qur’an and enjoyed a largely peaceful co-existence alongside their Muslim co-nationalists. The Egyptian Copts made some of the most significant contributions to the economic, cultural and artistic vibrancy of the Mamluk era. Their traditional expertise was concentrated in architecture and the textile, pottery and woodworking industries.



Name:
Two ivory plaques

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

Details:
The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
These ivory panels symbolise the peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Mamluk society.



Name:
Niche from a Samaritan house

Dynasty:
Hegira 10th century / AD 16th century Mamluk and Ottoman

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

Justification:
Stylistic trends introduced by Muslim Mamluks were also adopted by other communities.



Name:
Footed bowl

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

Details:
National Museums of Scotland (NMS)
Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom

Justification:
Many of the Copts were prolific potters, producing a variety of wares in their workshops in Fustat near Cairo.



Name:
Bowl

Dynasty:

Hegira 8–9th century / AD 14–15th century Mamluk

Details:

Jordan Archaeological Museum
Amman, Jordan

Justification:

Mamluk potters, Muslim and Christian, produced a plethora of wares that were distributed all over the empire.



Name:

Storage jar

Dynasty:

Hegira 8th / AD 14th century Mamluk

Details:

Victoria and Albert Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:

The spice trade was often the speciality of a particular ethnic or religious community; spices were generally stored in jars similar to the one seen here.
