

The Mamluks | Everyday life in the Mamluk Sultanate

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In the hierarchy of society within the Mamluk sultanate, the Mamluks themselves formed the elite who lived quite separately from the urban and rural populations. Contemporary society was astonishingly heterogeneous ethnically, religiously and even linguistically. In addition to the Mamluks, themselves of foreign, largely Turkish or Caucasian origin, Egypt accommodated significant communities of indigenous Egyptians and Arabs, Armenians, Syrians and Greeks. Sadly, comparatively little is known about the ordinary people of the Mamluk Empire, as the historical sources of the period tend to concentrate on the achievements of Mamluk sultans and their elite.



Name:

Comb

Dynasty:

Hegira 8th century / AD 14th century Mamluk

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

Everyday items like this comb give small glimpses into the daily lives of ordinary people.



Name:

Kohl Container

Dynasty:

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

Details:

Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:

A container used to hold kohl, a cosmetic used to accentuate the eyes, the use of which was common for both men and women of the period.



Name:

Lunch box

Dynasty:

Hegira 9th / AD 15th century Mamluk

Details:

The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:

Complete meals could be conveyed in these food containers. They were lockable to prevent anyone poisoning the contents.



Name:

Bottle or perfume sprinkler

Dynasty:

Hegira 7th century / AD 13th century Mamluk

Details:

Jordan Archaeological Museum

Amman, Jordan

Justification:

Perfume and incense were integral to a Muslim's personal hygiene, and in addition were used to fragrance the interiors of mosques and palaces.

**Name:**

Bottle

Dynasty:

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

Details:

Calouste Gulbenkian Museum

Lisbon, Portugal

Justification:

The upper-classes of the Mamluk Empire would have aspired to a lifestyle comparable to that of the Mamluk elite.
