

A Mamluk's Best Friend: Some Remarks on the Mounts of the Military Elite of Egypt and Syria in the Late Middle-Ages

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It should not come as a surprise that the Mamluks took their horses very seriously. The mainstay of their military might was a large mobile field army mostly composed of mounted archers. In this they were similar to the armies based on troopers of Eurasian Steppe provenance. However, unlike the Mongols and the Turkmen, the Mamluk horses were not primarily fed by grazing, but rather by fodder. Like the Mamluk soldiers, their mounts were "city dwellers", although they may have spent some time every year out in the country. This presented all kinds of logistical challenges, some of which will be discussed in this paper. In addition, we will review some of the evidence for the types of horses that the Mamluks used, comparing it to the mounts of their Mongol enemies. If there is time, other matters may be raised: training, veterinary health, and breeding.