

**Twelfth Conference of the School of Mamluk Studies
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA
July 23-25, 2026
[document updated 4-11-26]**

Dear Colleagues,

This circular contains information for organizing your travel arrangements and accommodations and transportation in Philadelphia, as well as preliminary information on the conference schedule, which will be updated in the coming months. Please contact Paul Cobb, your local host, at the conference email (sms2026philadelphia@gmail.com) or at pmcobb@sas.upenn.edu with any questions.

We look forward to welcoming you to Philly in July!

Paul M. Cobb, University of Pennsylvania
On behalf of the organizing committee:
Frédéric Bauden, Université de Liège
Antonella Ghersetti, Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia
Marlis J. Saleh, University of Chicago

1. Conference Fees

The conference registration fee is \$60 for participants and non-participating attendees.

Please note that all attendees, including audience members, must register for the conference. We are pleased to report that graduate students will be offered a discounted fee of \$45. To register for the conference and pay the registration fee, please visit

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/school-of-mamluk-studies-2026-conference-philadelphia-tickets-1567051907439>

Payment of the fees must be received by April 30, 2026. Any enquiries should be sent to sms2026philadelphia@gmail.com

2. Dinner

We are pleased to offer an optional farewell dinner at Estia Restaurant in downtown Philadelphia on Saturday, July 25 at 7pm. With thanks to an anonymous donor, this event is free of charge, but registration is required by April 30. To register, please visit the following link, and add the “Farewell Dinner (Optional)” to your shopping cart:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/school-of-mamluk-studies-2026-conference-philadelphia-tickets-1567051907439>

3. Excursion: Guided tour of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA)

On the afternoon of Saturday, July 25, between our last session and the farewell dinner (exact time tbd), we invite you to a guided tour of some of the few Mamluk-related holdings of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, including some Frankish and Mamluk swords once housed in the armory of Alexandria and some Mamluk-era carpets, among other treasures. Participants in this tour are free to roam the rest of the museum after the brief guided tour. The PMA offers a magnificent collection of modern and contemporary art, as well as unique early American collections, among many others. For information on the PMA's collections, please visit www.philamuseum.org

This museum visit is free of charge. However, we regret that space is limited to 20 participants due to the size of the galleries, and so registration is required. To register, please visit the following link, and add the "Museum Tour (Optional)" to your shopping cart:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/school-of-mamluk-studies-2026-conference-philadelphia-tickets-1567051907439>

4. Conference Venue

The conference will take place in the Orrery Pavilion in the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, on the 6th Floor of Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania (aka "Penn"). The library front desk will have a list of all registered attendees, but you will need to show a valid ID to them.

5. Accommodations

Philadelphia offers a range of hotel accommodations, ranging from luxurious to frugal. The following hotels are located in the neighborhood of Penn, known as "West Philly" or (to realtors at least) as "University City." These are all within a short walking distance to the university and offer convenient access to restaurants, coffee shops, and bars, but other options abound.

- The Study at University City:
<https://reservations.travelclick.com/99716?groupID=5216528>
We are pleased to report that The Study will offer a discounted rate of \$201 per night for conference-goers.

The Study at University City
20 S. 33rd Street | Philadelphia, PA 19104
T 215.387.1400 | E info.uc@studyhotels.com

- Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel:
<https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/phlus-sheraton-philadelphia-university-city-hotel/overview/?scid=f2ae0541-1279-4f24-b197-a979c79310b0>

3549 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104
Tel: +1 215-387-8000

- The Inn at Penn:
<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/phlidhh-the-inn-at-penn>

3600 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19104, USA
Tel: +1 215-222-0200
Email: PHLID_Hotel@hilton.com

6. Arrival and Transportation in Philadelphia

To confirm your visa and passport requirements, all international attendees should consult the websites of the offices of US consular officials in their country of residence well before departure. **In some cases, officials may ask visa applicants for an invitation letter, which can be supplied upon request.**

Participants arriving by plane will typically arrive at Philadelphia International Airport (PHL). We recommend taking a Taxi or Ride-Share (Uber or Lyft are widely available) from the airport to your hotel, a roughly 20-minute-long trip to West Philly. One-way cost is typically around \$30, not including tip.

Alternately, you can take the less-frequent Airport Line train operated by the city's regional rail system, known as SEPTA, which also controls the city's public transportation system of buses, trolleys, and subways. The Airport Line runs from the airport to 30th Street Station, from which you can walk to your hotel in West Philly or take a taxi or ride-share.

The taxi stand is located on the east side of the Station, in the direction of the statue of the angel.

For more information on SEPTA's offerings, go to: www.septa.org

Participants arriving by train (Amtrak) will disembark at 30th Street Station, and should follow the options above from the station.

7. Conference Organization

The conference extends over three days, from Thursday July 23 to Saturday, July 25. The first day, July 23, is devoted to the conference theme, "The Mamluks and the Crusades," while the remaining two days are devoted to pre-organized panels on various topics.

Each paper is allotted 20 minutes. The chair of each panel will ensure this time limit is kept by using the traditional bell. Please keep to this time limit as you prepare your paper. We would like to ensure thirty minutes of discussion at the end of each panel

Please send PowerPoint presentations to pmcobb@sas.upenn.edu at least a day in advance of your talk. There will be a PC available in the conference space; if possible, bringing your own laptop and appropriate connectors should allow you to avoid any compatibility issues.

A conference welcome desk will be set up just outside the elevators on the 6th Floor of Van Pelt Library from **8:45am on Thursday the 23rd and Friday the 24th of July.**

Lunch, morning and afternoon coffee breaks will be provided on-site during the three days of the conference. There will be a reception on the 6th Floor of Van Pelt just outside the conference venue on Thursday July 23rd, exact time tbd.

The Kislak Center and the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies have kindly arranged for an exhibit of various Crusades-related highlights from our collections for your perusal on Thursday, July 23, exact time tbd.

8. Local Philly

July 2026 is an exciting time to visit Philadelphia. Earlier in the month, on July 4th, the city will host the 250th anniversary celebrations of the signing of the US Declaration of Independence, a key moment in the various narratives of American mythology that one imbibes here. Perhaps more importantly, in late June and early July, Philadelphia is also scheduled to host a number of FIFA World Cup matches—a new addition to Philly's busy professional sports schedule!

All of this is to say that Philly will be well-prepared to welcome visitors this summer, and I encourage you all to take advantage of the city's many museums, historical attractions, and irrepressible diverse neighborhoods.

We look forward to welcoming you in July!