

# Dressing the Part: Jewelry as Fashion in the Medieval Middle East

The writings of al-Waššā' (d. 936), author of the tenth-century CE/third-century AH Abbasid-period *Kitāb al-Muwaššā* («The Brocaded Book»), provide some of the liveliest descriptions of medieval dress practices in the elegant rooms and streets of medieval Baghdad. Chapters are filled with descriptions of clothing, perfumes, and accessories so vivid one can easily imagine the sight, smell, and sound of the upper-crust denizens of that city. For example, in a chapter dedicated to the dress of women:

»Their well-known way of dressing themselves in jewelry arranged as necklaces consists of wearing chokers with fermented cloves, long necklaces of camphor and ambergris, chains of interlaced pearls, necklaces from which hang notched boxes with amulets, others decorated with twisted ribbons of gold, or of silk woven into the form of a chain [...] These women wear double rings, rings with hollow settings where they place red rubies, green emeralds, aquamarine, and beryl. They criticize wearing rings filled with glass pieces, carnelian, silver rings, iron rings, rings in unpolished metal and, equally, rings of turquoise, garnet, and small pearls, because all of those are better worn by men and slaves and are not at all appropriate to women of refinement<sup>1</sup>«.

Al-Waššā's text is of particular interest, because it contains detailed information about the behavior, manners, and dress of the elegant, with emphasis on their dress, and how it conveyed cues about gender and social identities. Al-Waššā's writings not only demonstrate the existence of a concept of «elegant dress» among non-ruling elites in the medieval Middle East, but they also offer evidence of jewelry as a part of fashionable dress, just as much as the cut of a robe, the shape of a shoe, or the wearing of belts, scarves, and other accessories.

Yet where al-Waššā's text makes the close relationship between jewelry and clothing apparent, modern scholarship on Byzantine and medieval Islamic dress practices tends to relegate adornments and apparel to separate disciplinary realms. Dress scholarship exclusively considers clothing, with most scholars in these fields trained in the study of textiles; scholarship on jewelry, whose practitioners focus on metalwork, rarely references work done on dress. The example of Anna Radene, a local elite woman from Kastoria, Greece who

lived in the twelfth century, powerfully demonstrates this observation. Studies discussing Anna's jewelry focus on her visage to best display the figure's crescent-shaped earrings<sup>2</sup>. However, when one turns to the full-figure painting, it is apparent that these earrings are just one element of Anna's presentation as a fashionably dressed woman, as she dons elaborate, colorful gowns made of patterned textiles and a turban-like headpiece (fig. 1).

Despite this partitioned approach, however, the methodologies and vocabularies developed in dress research are certainly relevant to those studying Byzantine and early Islamic jewelry. This paper will attempt to integrate these separate domains by proceeding from theoretical approaches advocated in medieval dress studies to case studies where jewelry and clothing are integrated to mutual benefit. The paper will focus on tenth through thirteenth century eastern Mediterranean and North African contexts, a period for which a significant amount of archaeologically documented jewelry make it possible to test out the theoretical arguments developed in studies on clothing. Thus the paper will consider how jewelry figured in concepts and practices of fashionable dress, particularly dress that moved between regions and cultures. While at first one expects that the multifarious and multi-confessional communities of the Byzantine and early Islamic eastern Mediterranean dressed distinctively according to regional, ethnic, or communal identities, this paper will show how material and textual evidence significantly complicate this picture.

## Jewelry and Dress, Jewelry as Dress

Research on Byzantine and early Islamic dress presents a theoretically exciting area of scholarship in the study of pre-modern dress. Jennifer Ball's work on the practices of non-ruling elites in the Middle Byzantine period is particularly compelling for complicating our understanding of medieval dress, particularly when it comes to concepts of fashionable clothing<sup>3</sup>. Her work contrasts the protocol-driven, largely genderless dress worn by the ruling classes, with non-ruling elites' clothing, worn as part of a constantly changing aesthetic for

1 al-Waššā', *Kitāb al-Muwaššā* 173f. (French trans: al-Waššā', *Livre du Brocart* 127-129).

2 Albani, *Elegance*.

3 Ball, *Byzantine Dress*.

dressing well. This point comes through most strongly in her chapter on dress styles among »borderland elites« in Armenia, Cappadocia, and the Balkans. Ball argues that dress practices there reflected complex tastes that were at once local while also incorporating dress practices from neighboring regions<sup>4</sup>. For example, a large corpus of medieval donor portraits from churches in Kastoria, Greece, such as that of Anna Radene noted above, show the fashionable styles of both men and women in the region, which Ball argues derived from a number of sartorial traditions, including Byzantine, Islamic, and European<sup>5</sup>. Ball argues that these sorts of clothing styles were driven by a desire to dress fashionably; while dress practices did distinguish along gender lines, they transcended any »ethnic« or »national« connotations<sup>6</sup>. She furthermore notes that tastes in dress did not simply radiate out from the Constantinople, but rather reflect a more complex exchange between center and periphery, a phenomenon she attributes to the movement of people and goods from these frontier regions into and out of the capital.

Yedida Stillman describes similar interregional processes occurring at roughly the same time in the Arabic-speaking lands of the eastern Mediterranean and the neighboring Near East<sup>7</sup>. Her work paints a picture of a similarly complex, multi-directional relationship in the dress practices shared between urban centers and surrounding regions. Stillman outlines the evolution of a »pan-Islamic« mode (»the Islamic vestimentary system«) in the Abbasid period that incorporated a range of regional styles. She argues that tastes in clothes were driven not by the upper-most levels of the court in Baghdad, but by the multicultural secretarial class and the wealthy cosmopolitan »bourgeoisie«, of the kind described by al-Waššā'<sup>8</sup>. This group's ethnic and religious backgrounds varied greatly, and their ranks included Christians, Muslims and Jews; Arabs, Persians, Slavs and others<sup>9</sup>. In addition, Stillman's work on Fatimid Egypt explores dress practices among upper-class, non-ruling elites, specifically Jews, again in the same medieval period<sup>9</sup>. Using evidence from the Cairo Geniza, a hoard of documents from medieval Fustat's Jewish communities (itself not one, unified group), Stillman convincingly argues that Muslim and Jewish Egyptian upper-class, non-ruling women shared many of the same tastes in textiles and fashionable clothing, despite official proclamations forbidding similar dress among groups of different religious persuasion.

Ball's and Stillman's textile and clothing focused studies are important in demonstrating that dress of the non-ruling elites in the Byzantine and Islamic spheres did not always reflect entrenched political, ethnic, or religious identities, but rather could relay wearers' preferences in dressing luxuriously

and well. In evoking this line of argumentation, both Ball and Stillman react against theoretical biases in fashion studies more generally, where the concept of a premodern fashion system is controversial<sup>10</sup>. Although there is little consensus on when »fashionable dress« began, most scholars working on modern and contemporary periods argue that it only emerged in the later Middle Ages (as per example, work on Renaissance dress), with particular developments occurring in the later eighteenth-century and afterwards. This is because fashion, in these theoretical frames, is closely related to developments following the rise of industrialization and capitalistic (western) economies. In this view, fashion's underlying rationale is determined by constantly shifting consumer desires, which result in chameleon-like and rapidly changing practices of dress. According to fashion theorists focused on modern practices, there is simply no such thing as premodern fashion. Instead, these theorists tend to view earlier dress as determined by specific regional or cultural identities; premodern styles of clothing were typically described as »costume«, pointing to biases about an unchanging, customary nature of dress before the late medieval period<sup>11</sup>.

However, Ball's and Stillman's studies push back against these arguments with evidence to suggest that fashion was indeed a characteristic feature of medieval dress practice, especially among non-ruling elites. Their studies demonstrate that dress practices changed over time and were linked to consumption of goods traded long distances and their locally-made imitations, all key to any definition of fashion in modern and postmodern contexts<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, Ball's and Stillman's studies show that trends in clothing not only flowed out from capital cities to regional centers (along the lines of the way we might understand New York, Paris, or London to be major fashion centers), but rather in any number of directions, in a constant feedback loop between regions. This is apparent in al-Waššā's accounts of clothing, where he describes elegant women wearing head veils from Nishapur, shoes from Runān (China), furry shoes from Cambay, boots from Edessa, and other such fineries from far-flung locales, all recombined among Baghdad's elites<sup>13</sup>.

The multi-directional trends outlined by Ball and Stillman are arguably invaluable to specialists in jewelry from the same periods. One particularly vexing problem for jewelry specialists has been to make sense of stylistic and technical similarities of adornments around the premodern Mediterranean, particularly in the Byzantine and early Islamic periods. Scholars have focused on the role of court centers like Constantinople as »trend setters« as a way to explain why so many pieces of jewelry share similar shapes, details, and methods of manufacture<sup>14</sup>. This line of reasoning thus

4 Ball, *Byzantine Dress* 58

5 Pelekanides/Chatzedakes, *Kastoria*.

6 Ball, *Byzantine Dress* 61.

7 Stillman, *Arab Dress*.

8 Stillman, *Arab Dress* 28-61.

9 Stillman, *Medieval Female Attire*.

10 Craik, *Fashion*.

11 Welters/Lillethun, *History of Dress and Fashion*; Ball, *Byzantine Dress* 1-4.

12 Maynard, *Dress*; Crane/Bovone, *Approaches to Material Culture*.

13 al-Waššā', *al-Kitāb al-Muwaššā'*: male dress in chapters, XXIII-XXVI; female dress in chapters XXVII and XXVIII.

14 Petrina, *Jewellery from Late Antique Egypt*.

argues for a center-periphery flow of styles and technological developments from capital cities onwards to provincial outposts. However, Ball's and Stillman's work describing the multidirectional spread of clothing styles might nuance the center-periphery model current in jewelry studies. Their work opens up the possibility of multiple »trend-setting« centers, or possibly the movement of jewelry styles in and out of major capital cities where sophisticated artisans honed their craft. For this reason, archaeological jewelry provides critical evidence that can bolster theoretical arguments about the complex transregional (and intercultural) paths between Byzantium and Islamic spheres described in scholarship on dress practices, which until now has only relied on textual and visual evidence to support its claims.

## Jewelry and Intercultural Fashions: Case Studies

The following case studies attempt to extend the work done on medieval dress to jewelry, with two goals in mind. The first study on inscribed jewelry attempts to integrate jewelry and dress, with the aim of demonstrating in concrete terms the existence of a premodern fashion system. The second endeavors to show how material evidence drawn from a hoard discovered in North Africa manifests the interregional processes described in Ball's and Stillman's work. Both of my cases focus on women's jewelry: first, because there is good evidence that the pieces worn here were owned and worn by women; and secondly, to foreground their roles in the development and spread of these interregional fashions.

A group of enamel crescent-shaped earrings found in Crete are important because they make it possible to trace the adoption and translation of dress between regions, while also presenting strong evidence for the existence of a premodern fashion system<sup>15</sup>. The earrings are part of a supposed hoard that included various pieces of jewelry dated through accompanying coins to the mid-tenth century, a period coinciding with the island's Arab rule, which ended in 961<sup>16</sup>. The earrings include one singleton and two pairs of gold earrings enameled in yellow, blue, green and red and feature, on one side, Arabic inscriptions, and on the other scrolling vines, dogs, or birds. They appear to be of two distinct kinds. One type includes kufic inscriptions filled with enamel. One pair of this type reads »Blessings from God« (*baraka min Allāh*) and »for its owner Zainab« (*li-ṣāhibihi* [sic] *Zainab*) (fig. 2)<sup>17</sup>. Another earring of this type, of a different pair because it does not include the gold granulated triangles at its edges,

Fig. 1 Depiction of Anna Radene, H. Anagyroi, Kastoria. – (Photo J. Ball, reproduced through the permission of the Ephorate of Kastoria).



reads »for its owner Aisha« (*li-ṣāhibihi* [sic] 'Āi'ša) (fig. 3)<sup>18</sup>. Another type features its inscription in gold wire inlaid directly into the enamel (fig. 4). This includes one earring with a highly fragmentary inscription, possibly reading *baraka min Allāh*<sup>19</sup>.

These earrings can be compared to archaeological evidence, art market finds, and textual sources, which when combined, suggest that taste for inscribed jewelry was popular in several regions around the Mediterranean more or less simultaneously in the tenth through twelfth centuries, a sudden and Mediterranean-wide vogue which can only be explained as reflecting changing fashionable taste. For example, an excavated enamel disc, dated to the tenth to twelfth century and found in Fustat, Egypt was possibly a brooch or sewn on a garment; it includes an inscription in floriated kufic reading »God is the Best Protector« (*Allāhu ḥayrun ḥāfīzān*, a quotation possibly from the Qur'an, Sura 12:64) framed above and below by scrolling vegetal motifs in red<sup>20</sup>. Another comparable example, a crescent-shaped enamel placed in the eleventh to twelfth century and purchased on the nineteenth-century art market, features a similar color scheme, inscription, and scroll motifs<sup>21</sup>. It reads »Victory is from Allah« in a fluent script, and was possibly part of a pin. Still another

15 Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck* 131-133.

16 Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck* 41-46; Miles, *Byzantium and the Arabs*.

17 Athens, Archaeological Museum Σr483, Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck*, cat no. 66a, b.

18 Athens, Archaeological Museum Σr484, Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck* no. 67.

19 Athens, Archaeological Museum Σr485 and Σr486, Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck* nos 65a and 65b.

20 Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, Inv. no. 4337; Bahgat, *Fouilles* pl. 30; O'Kane, *Islamic* 56.

21 L. A. Mayer Museum of Islamic Art, Jerusalem, Inv. J31; Hasson, *Jewellery* no. 115.



**Fig. 2** Earring. – (Photo National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Photographic Archives, Στ483 © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund).



**Fig. 3** Single earring. – (Photo National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Photographic Archives, Στ484 © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund).



**Fig. 4** Earring with inscription. – National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Photographic Archives, Στ485 © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund.

**Fig. 5** Earring fragment. – (Photo Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., BZ.1953.12.66 © Dumbarton Oaks, Byzantine Collection, Washington, D.C.).



earring pair attributed stylistically to twelfth-century Spain includes an inscription about God's oneness (*tawhīd*) from Sura 112: 1-2 («God is One, the Eternal God») rendered in a particularly fine script<sup>22</sup>. Other possible parallels include a fragment, possibly from an earring, inscribed with the name »Helen« in Greek, now in the Dumbarton Oaks collections, of uncertain date (fig. 5)<sup>23</sup>.

The objects and their contexts provide information about how such jewelry was worn and by whom, which contribute directly to our understanding of trends in the period's dress practices. First, the inclusion of women's names on the earrings suggests that pieces were made specifically with women in mind. Secondly, the range in the pieces' quality and their technique, from very fine scripts to more awkwardly rendered kufic, suggests that they were produced in several workshops and were worn by a broad social spectrum. Perhaps most importantly, however, evidence suggests that inscribed jewelry such as these were worn by people of different sectarian and regional identities, and not strictly by Arabic-speaking Muslims. Indeed, some pieces of jewelry do nod to doctrinal distinctions appropriate only to wear by Muslims, such as the explicit proclamation of *tawhīd* on the earrings from Spain, part of a phrase evoked in arguments against the Christian trinity<sup>24</sup>. Other pieces of jewelry, however, are more ambiguous: the earrings from Crete, for example, may have arrived on the island as a diplomatic gift from Constantinople, and as such were intended for an Arabic-speaking wearer, but made in a Byzantine workshop<sup>25</sup>. Taken together, the evidence suggests that such pieces of jewelry did not always indicate the wearer's religious persuasion, but rather that there were widespread tastes for inscribed jewelry that transcended »customary« dress practices determined by ethnic or religious identifications.

Jewelry was not the only item of fashionable apparel inscribed with words. In the same text cited at the beginning

of this chapter, for example, al-Waššā' provides ample information about inscribed clothing, dedicating several chapters to describing clothing bearing extended poetic verses<sup>26</sup>. Al-Waššā' records sayings on blouses, the edges of coats, and sleeves, which he notes included elegant verses, most often concerning unfulfilled desire or despair over a beloved's absence. In a chapter dedicated to inscriptions on shirts, coats, and sleeves, al-Waššā' recounts the dress of a beautiful woman who wore an inscribed belt and an embroidered coat with verses about being banished from one's loved one; in the same chapter, he describes the appearance of a well-dressed slave girl wearing a silk dress with an embroidered sleeve and inscribed gold belt, again, with love poems<sup>27</sup>. The popularity of such garments is attested in the archaeological record, where the innumerable surviving examples of *tirāz* in Arabic – and at times even in Coptic – underline the popularity of inscribed apparel from the eighth century onwards (fig. 6)<sup>28</sup>. Thus the material evidence drawn from textiles and jewelry manifests textual sources describing a medieval vogue for wearing words of all kinds, a trend which developed with particular force in the Abbasid period and seems to have been come into fashion in a number of regions around the Mediterranean. That these styles developed with particular force in jewelry from the tenth through twelfth century points to a particular taste for inscribed adornments at a particular moment in time. As such, jewelry strengthens Ball's and Stillman's case for a pre-modern fashion system, for the pieces demonstrate how fashionable dress changed according to wearers' tastes and aesthetic sensibilities.

The second case study focuses on a hoard of jewelry known as the »Tarabia Hoard«, said to have been discovered in 1930 in Le Kef, Tunisia. The hoard has been dated to the eleventh century through accompanying Fatimid coins ranging in date from 394 AH/1003-1004 CE to 436 AH/1044-1045 CE, a period when the area was under the control of

22 Kuwait, National Museum, al-Sabah Collection, LNS 30Jab, Jenkins-Medina, Islamic Art 91.

23 Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks, BZ.1953.12.66, Ross, Byzantine no. 93.

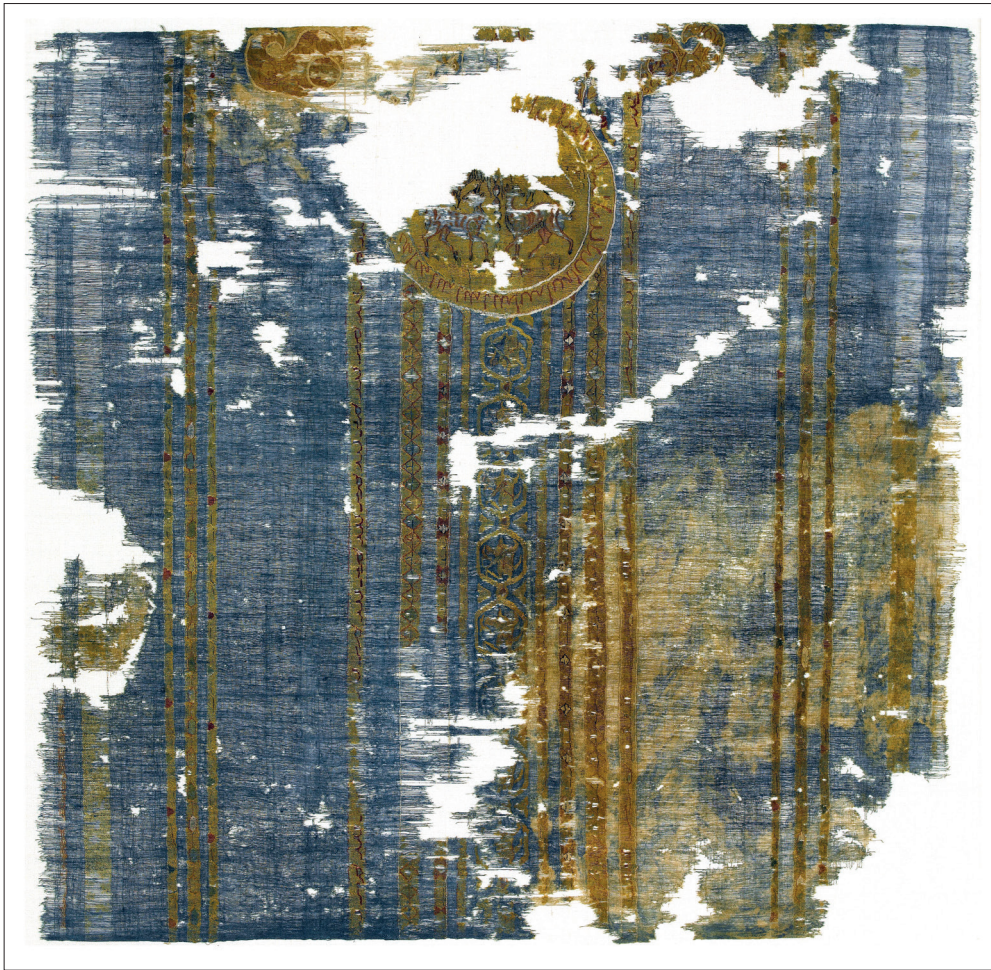
24 Thomas, *Tat'h lith*.

25 Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck* 41-46.

26 al-Waššā', al-Kitāb al-Muwaššā', Chapter XLI: »Poverty is better than humiliation«; (Chapter XLII: »He who regards his beloved too often will sigh endlessly«).

27 al-Waššā', al-Kitāb al-Muwaššā', Chapter XXXIV: Inscriptions along the bottom of shirts, the edges and embroidered selvages of coats and sleeves«.

28 Fluck, *Inscribed Textiles*; Fluck/Helmecke, *Textile Messages*.



**Fig. 6** Part of a garment with *ṭirāz* inscription dating to the reign of al-Musta'li (r. 1094-1101). – (Photo The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 32.96 www.metmuseum.org).

the Zirids<sup>29</sup>. Its finds included two bracelets, a pair and one unmatched earrings, a number of beads, and six triangular plaques, all in gold (figs 7-8). The hoard's content relates to other examples documented both in archaeological contexts and described in textual sources from several locations around the Mediterranean, presenting a microcosm of fashions borrowed from other regions and reassembled in medieval North Africa, notably in its earrings and hoops.

The group, for example, includes a pair of polylobed earrings, made of layered sheets of gold. A close parallel to the Tarabia earrings is a piece in the L. A. Mayer Museum of Islamic Art in Jerusalem, itself attributed to eleventh-century Egypt<sup>30</sup>. While technically different, the lobed shape of the Tarabia earrings evoke a type known as »basket earrings« for their resemblance to baskets. Bosselmann-Ruickbie has shown that the preponderance of examples come from sites in Fatimid-controlled regions, particularly in Egyptian and Syrian contexts<sup>31</sup>. Several exceptional examples, for example, were found in an archaeological hoard in Tiberias<sup>32</sup>. A »bas-

ket earring« was also found in a grave in a church at Amorium, pointing to the popularity of this style into Anatolia<sup>33</sup>.

The geographical range of basket earrings and the innumerable technical variations of the type present an intriguing case study for the transregional spread of jewelry types. One might indeed view these variations as the result of countless local workshops producing »basket earrings« for clients in a number of regions simultaneously<sup>34</sup>. The widespread popularity of the type in geographically connected, yet disparate, regions suggests high demand, presumably driven by some common notion of fashion in these areas. The flattened, polylobed earrings from Tarabia are particularly intriguing in that they evoke the »basket earring« type, without exactly replicating it. They appear instead as an emulation of the style popular along the eastern Mediterranean, crafted in a North African idiom by local craftsmen. These observations of course point back to Ball's model for describing the spread of clothing styles from one region to the next, where the »origins« of a clothing type come to be obscured in the innumerable emulations and recombinations of dress styles in new regional contexts.

29 von Gladiss, Goldhort; Marçais/Poinssot, Objets kairounais 469-474 pls 68 and 69; Cat. Tunis 1997, 111.

30 Hasson, Early Islamic Jewellery no. 101.

31 Bosselmann-Ruickbie, Byzantinisch, Islamisch.

32 Lester, Hoard; Bosselmann-Ruickbie, Byzantinisch, Islamisch 83-96.

33 Lightfoot, Amorium fig. 7.10.

34 Shamai, A Goldsmith's Workshop; Khamis, Shops; Petrina, Goldschmiedewerkstatt.

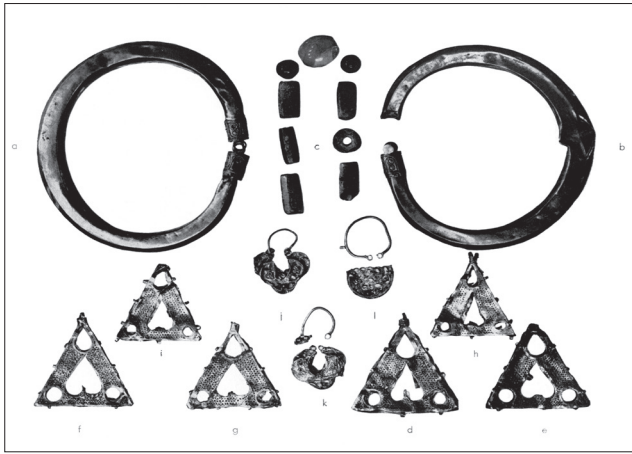


Fig. 7 Tarabia Hoard. – (After Marçais, *Objets kairouanais* pl. 68).

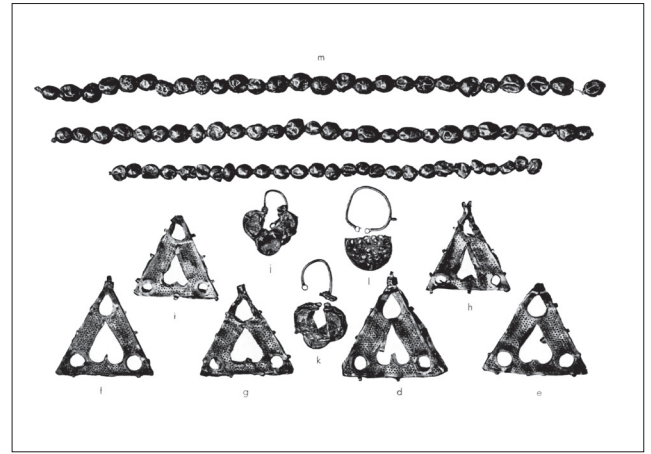


Fig. 8 Tarabia Hoard. – (After Marçais, *Objets kairouanais* pl. 69).

The hoard's gold hoops are informative in what they demonstrate about the interregional connectivity of eleventh-century North Africa as well. The hoops relate to bracelets, armlets, and anklets popular in regions from North Africa through the eastern Mediterranean coast, comparing most closely to a cluster of contemporary archaeological finds from Jerusalem, Ramla, and Caesarea that included large, hollow gold and silver bracelets, armlets, and anklets (fig. 9). Similar examples purchased for European and American collections in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have also been attributed to Syria, presumably because they had been purchased there, suggesting that they were found in that region and sold on the local art market<sup>35</sup>.

Large hooped bracelets and anklets are indeed described in accounts of jewelry from the Geniza trousseau lists that Stillman drew from to describe interregional dress practices in the Arab world. The lists – drawn up for Arabic- and Hebrew-speaking Jews in Fatimid Cairo – include words for jewelry that suggest that Egyptian women appreciated and distinguished several regional types, which they recombined in their own fashionable ensembles. Terms for bracelets hint at interregional processes in their very vocabulary. Words used for these kinds of jewelry include *siwār* (a general Arabic term for bracelets); *dastaynaq* (possibly from a Persian word for hand, *dast*); *dumluġ* (claimed by Goitein to be related to an Ethiopian term, undefined); and *hadīd/hadīda* (an Arabic term generally meaning iron, though used in Geniza documents in conjunction with silver or nielloed bracelets, likely to have held sleeves)<sup>36</sup>. This parallels descriptions of garments in the same documents, which similarly incorporate words linked to other regional traditions. For example, the term *rūmīya* appears in the Geniza lists to describe a woman's garment, a term associated with Byzantium; other words suggest associations with dress customs current in the Persianate sphere<sup>37</sup>. Clothes and jewelry were indeed appreciated



Fig. 9 Bracelet hoard from Ramla. – (Photo Elie Posner, Collection the Israel Antiquities Authority, IAA 2008-640-648 © The Israel Museum).

not only from the inherent material value of the textiles or precious metals used to make them, but also from their associations with other locales, which might be either the source of the objects, but more likely represent some vestigial idea about the regional associations of different types. Interest-

35 Hasson, *Early Islamic Jewellery* nos 67-93.

36 Goitein, *Daily Life* 219-222 and appendix D.

37 Goitein, *Daily Life* 190f.

ingly, the styles of dress recombined in Egypt clearly made their way back out to other regions as well. al-Muqaddasī's descriptions of North African dress practices in his tenth-century CE/fourth century AH. *The Best Divisions of Knowledge of the Regions (Aḥsān at-taqāsīm fī ma'rifat al-aqālim)*, for example, emphasize that this »Egyptian style« of dress was also considered fashionable into the Maghrib<sup>38</sup>.

In this sense, the jewelry of the Tarabia hoard provides invaluable archaeological testimony to the process of recombination described by Ball and Stillman, who rely on textual and visual depictions to trace the movement of dress styles from one region to the next. The various elements of the jewelry hoard from Le Kef show that medieval dress practices did not straightforwardly reflect the fashions popular in one single center then subsequently copied in the provinces, but rather that the styles of dress varied from one region to the next as groups recombined elements of dress according to changing tastes.

This last observation naturally prompts questions about the mechanisms through which such styles spread across regions. Fashions could certainly have been transmitted through the mobility of trade objects, or they might also have spread thanks to the movements of people, who carried jewelry and clothing with them through family and trade networks in the eastern Mediterranean. Koray Durak's work on the eastern Mediterranean networks of merchants is particularly interesting in this regard, for he has shown that people, goods, and trade orders moved along networked, medium-distance entrepôts situated throughout the eastern Mediterranean and beyond, from Islamic lands deep into Byzantine territories. His work allows us to imagine the »medium distance« vectors through which interregional fashions travelled, in which trade moved along shorter distances between regions<sup>39</sup>. Individuals might also have played an important role in transferring fashions, as well, as in the case of the ninth-century courtier Ziryāb, a courtier from Baghdad whose clothing, manners, and etiquette was emulated in the Umayyad court in al-An-

dalus<sup>40</sup>. Another possibility for the transfer of jewelry styles between regions could be the movements of itinerant goldsmiths, whose portable, lightweight tools would have made it easy to travel from one region to the next, a phenomenon well-documented in fourteenth-century Italy<sup>41</sup>. Lastly, women themselves were certainly catalysts in forming these interregional fashions, as they brought their best clothing to new homes, copied the clothing and jewelry of visiting relatives, or sent orders for jewelry and clothing along with family members and merchants travelling throughout the networked Mediterranean<sup>42</sup>. Their tastes for clothing and jewelry were far from »customary« or traditional in the way that a specialist in fashion might expect from premodern dress. Instead, these tastes were shaped in a desire to dress the body according to fashions, as they looked at others and were seen by them.

## Conclusions

This paper has attempted to apply theoretical models applied in work of medieval dress to re-evaluate jewelry as part of medieval dress practices. The first case study on inscribed jewelry showed how jewelry featured as part of changing fashions, as non-ruling elites dress according to complex and ever-changing notions of fashionable dress. The second case study on Le Kef concretely demonstrated the complexities of inter-regional styles only hinted at in texts. Taken together, these case studies directly challenge fashion theorists' biases against premodern fashion. The cases studies evoked demonstrate that fashionable jewelry and clothing in the medieval Middle East had little do with ethnic and religious identities, nor did it simply emulate the protocol-driven practices of the imperial court. In the final analysis, incorporating jewelry into discussions of dress enriches our understanding of these cross-regional trends, particularly in foregrounding women's roles as tastemakers, consumers, and wearers of fashionable dress.

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38 al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsān at-Taqāsīm* 213.

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40 Cat. New York 1992, 42.

41 Stuard, *Gilding the Market* 165-169.

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## Summary / Zusammenfassung

### Dressing the Part: Jewelry as Fashion in the Medieval Middle East

This paper considers textiles and jewelry together to explore trends in dress practices in the eastern Mediterranean from the tenth through thirteenth centuries. By bringing together archaeologically-documented jewelry with textual and visual representations, it is possible to trace developments in dress and follow the movement of styles between regions and cultures. While at first one expects that the multifarious and multi-confessional communities of the Byzantine and early Islamic eastern Mediterranean dressed distinctively according to regional, ethnic, or communal identities, this paper argues that material and textual evidence significantly complicate this picture. Instead, changing practices and adoption of styles across cultures suggest trends in fashionable dress shared between Byzantium and the Islamic Near East.

### »Dressing the Part«: Schmuck als Mode im mittelalterlichen Nahen Osten

In diesem Artikel werden Textilien und Schmuck gemeinsam betrachtet, um Trends in der Bekleidungspraxis im östlichen Mittelmeerraum vom 10. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert zu untersuchen. Indem man archäologisch dokumentierten Schmuck mit Text- und Bilddarstellungen zusammen betrachtet, ist es möglich, die Entwicklung der Kleidung und die Stilbewegungen zwischen Regionen und Kulturen zu verfolgen. Während man zunächst erwarten würde, dass sich die vielgestaltigen und multikonfessionellen Gemeinschaften des byzantinischen und frühislamischen östlichen Mittelmeerraumes unterschiedlich nach regionalen, ethnischen oder kommunalen Identitäten kleideten, wird hier argumentiert, dass materielle Zeugnisse und Textquellen dieses Bild erheblich komplexer darstellen. Sich verändernde Praktiken und die Übernahme von Stilen über die Kulturen hinweg erlauben vielmehr die Annahme, dass es in der damaligen Kleidermode Trends gab, die von Byzanz und vom islamischen Nahen Osten geteilt wurden.