The Fatimids | Sartorial Splendour: Tiraz and Contemporary Costume

'Fatimid Egypt was famous for its so-called dar al-tiraz textile workshops.'

Fatimid Egypt was famous for its luxury textile production and in particular the so-called dar al-tiraz textile workshops in Damietta, Dabiq, Tanis, Alexandria and Shata. The Persian word tiraz denotes an embroidered decorative band, attached near the edge of a fabric or a garment, that included blessings and – in the Fatimid period – the name of the ruling caliph or high-ranking patron. Each tiraz workshop had a designated manager to oversee the production, packing and transportation of the textiles, in particular those destined for the caliph himself. The status of this individual was very high; he commanded an impressive salary and was honoured with a welcoming procession and reception whenever he visited Cairo.



Name:
Handkerchief/ textile fragment

Dynasty:
Hegira 365–86 / AD 975–96 Fatimid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Cairo, Egypt

Justification:
A textile fragment that bears the name of the caliph al-'Aziz bi-Allah (r. 365–86 / 975–96).



Name:
Fragment of woven linen

Dynasty:
Hegira, late 5th–early 6th century / AD 12th century Fatimid

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

Justification:
The inscription on this textile fragment has been deciphered as 'Victory comes from God'.



Name:
Fragment of woven linen

Dynasty:
Hegira 6th century / AD 12th century Fatimid

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

Justification:
On some tiraz textiles the inscription bands are executed too casually to be read. This may be due to the fact that they were produced for the commercial market.



Name:
Fragment of woven linen and silk

Dynasty:
Hegira 570–96 / AD third quarter of the 12th century Fatimid

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

Justification:
The inscription on this textile fragment originally formed part of a blessing.