Women | Muslim Women’s Costume and Jewellery

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In Egypt, female attire could include the izar, a cloth wrapped round the torso and upper thighs, and the mi’zar, worn around the waist over the garment. The jubah was a common over-garment, closed at the chest and open below at the skirt. Shirts of various lengths were made of linen or cotton, the width of their sleeves indicative of a woman’s affluence. The shimla, finally, was meant to cover the whole body. Other countries had different dress conventions for women with a wide choice for the body and head. Turbans as well as a variety of headdresses were worn, as were an assortment of scarves or handkerchiefs.



Name:
Fresco panel: 'Dancers'

Dynasty:
Hegira first third of the 2nd century / AD first half of the 8th century Umayyad

Details:
In situ at Qusayr 'Amra
Amman, Jordan

Justification:
An Umayyad dancer whose outfit comprises a shirt, over the top of which is an izar worn around the lower half of the body.



Name:
Fragment of a mural painting

Dynasty:
Hegira 109 / AD 727 Umayyad

Details:
National Museum of Damascus
Damascus, Syria

Justification:
A woman wearing a turban on her head and whose black fronds of hair just show, fashionably, around the edges allowing her dangling earrings to be seen.



Name:
Dish

Dynasty:
Hegira, early 11th century / AD early 17th century Ottoman

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

Justification:
The woman on this dish wears a tall head-cover apparently formed from a folded scarf which is decorated with tulips and leaves in red and blue.



Name:
Ewer

Dynasty:

Hegira 629 / AD 1232 Atabeg / Ayyubid

Details:
The British Museum
London, England, United Kingdom

Justification:
Ayyubid women's court costume included wide, loosely fitting outer garments and a turban that allowed some locks of hair to show. The lute-player's face-veil as seen here is not prescribed by Islam but it was often adopted.



Name:
The 'Lady of Sabra' plate

Dynasty:
Hegira, second half of the 4th century / AD 10th century Fatimid

Details:
Museum of Islamic Art
Raqqada, Kairouan, Tunisia

Justification:
The woman seen on this dish wears an elaborately decorated layered and flowing dress, in keeping with her assumed profession as a dancer.
