

The Muslim West | Jewellery: Wealth, Prestige and Protection

Wedding gifts

In the Muslim West during the Middle Ages, it was customary for the groom to give the bride a wedding gift consisting of jewellery, clothes and cosmetics so that she could present herself appropriately for the marriage celebrations, which would last for several days. The bride's father would also lend her jewellery to wear in public which she returned to him after the wedding was over. The wedding would begin with the women of the family visiting the bride, who would have had her hair and clothes prepared especially for the occasion. The bride would wear as much jewellery as the economic position of her groom and her family would allow. She would receive the congratulations of her visitors impassively seated on a throne or positioned in the place of honour.



Name:
Earrings

Dynasty:
Hegira 524–668 / AD 1130–1269 or Hegira 627–982 / AD 1229–1574 Almohad or Hafsid

Details:
National Museum of Setif
Setif, Algeria

Justification:
Muslim women from powerful families adorned themselves with colourful, brilliant, decorative and elaborate jewellery.



Name:
Coin

Dynasty:
Hegira 516 / AD 1123 Almoravid

Details:
Royal Coin Cabinet
Stockholm, Sweden

Justification:
Muslim women from powerful families adorned themselves with colourful, brilliant, decorative and elaborate jewellery.



Name:
Necklace (lebba)

Dynasty:
Hegira 13th century / AD 19th century Alawid

Details:
Museum of the Udayas
Rabat, Morocco

Justification:
Muslim women from powerful families adorned themselves with colourful, brilliant, decorative and elaborate jewellery.



Name:
Medallion (bracteate)

Dynasty:
Hegira 524–668 / AD 1130–1269 or hegira 627–982 / AD 1229–1574 Almohad or Hafsîd

Details:
National Museum of Cirta
Constantine, Algeria

Justification:
As well as being ornamental, some jewellery had a prophylactic function, offering protection against the evil eye.



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Details:
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