

SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN MEDIEVAL TEXTILE ACTIVITIES AND THE EFFECT OF TURKS ON THESE DEVELOPMENTS

ORTAÇAĞ TEKSTİL FAALİYETLERİNE DAİR ÖNEMLİ GELİŞMELER VE BU GELİŞMELERE TÜRKLERİN ETKİSİ

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Abstract

Clothing, which is one of the most basic needs of human beings, has developed every period since the existence of humanity and has continued to the present day. In the study, the medieval period of clothing-textiles and the developments in the Egyptian region within this period were discussed. One of the reasons why Egypt is an Egypt-centred study is that it has a coast to the Eastern Mediterranean and is located in a strategic position between the Middle East, Asia and Europe. With this feature, it has hosted a blended structure where many different religions and races live together. In the Middle Ages, Egypt was also renowned as a producer of high-quality textiles. With their unique styles and variety of clothes, they were among the countries that sewed the most famous, most popular and demanded clothes of the period. They left their mark on the period with their colourful fabrics, dyeing techniques and ancient linen clothing traditions. In this study, while the textile activities in

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Egypt are discussed in general, it is also tried to include the very different textile products produced by Christians and Muslims working together in this sector in Egypt by reflecting their own traditions on the clothes they produce and blending them together. In the period within the scope of the subject, the activities of the Turks, Arabs and Byzantium in the field of textiles are also included.

Keywords: Textile, Fabric, Egypt, Turks, Copts, Byzantium.

Özet

İnsanoğlunun en temel ihtiyaçlarından bir tanesi olan giyim, insanlığın var oluşundan beri her dönem gelişerek günümüze kadar süre gelmiştir. Çalışmada giyim-tekstil konusunun Orta Çağ dönemi, bu dönem içerisinde de Mısır bölgesindeki gelişmeler ele alındı. Mısır merkezli bir çalışma olmasının sebeplerinden bir tanesi Doğu Akdeniz'e kıyısı olması, Orta Doğu, Asya ile Avrupa arasında stratejik bir konumda bulunmasıdır. Bu özelliği ile Mısır pek çok farklı din ve ırkın bir arada yaşadığı harmanlanmış bir yapıya ev sahipliği yapmıştır. Ayrıca Orta Çağ'da Mısır, çok kaliteli tekstil ürünleri üreten ülke olarak ün salmıştı. Kendilerine has tarzları ve kıyafet çeşitliliğiyle dönemin en ünlü, en çok ilgi ve talep gören kıyafetlerini diken ülkeler arasında yer almaktaydı. Renkli kumaşları, kıyafetlerde boya teknikleri ve kadim keten kıyafet gelenekleri ile döneme damgalarını vurmuşlardı. Çalışmada genel olarak Mısır'daki tekstil faaliyetleri ele alınırken ayrıca Mısır'da bu sektörde birlikte çalışan Hristiyanların ve Müslümanların kendi geleneklerini de ürettikleri kıyafetlerine yansıtıp birlikte harmanlayarak ortaya çıkardıkları çok farklı tekstil ürünlerine de yer verilmeye çalışılmıştır. Konunun kapsamı dâhilinde bulunan dönemde ise ağırlıklı olarak tekstil alanında Türklerin, Arapların ve Bizans'ın bu alandaki faaliyetlerine de yer verilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tekstil, Kumaş, Mısır, Türkler, Kıptiler, Bizans.

Introduction

Clothing is one of the three basic needs of human beings. As in other periods, clothing played a very important role in the Middle Ages, especially in inter-state political and economic relations. As nations commenced sharing their distinctive textile styles, fabric varieties, and production methodologies with one another, a noticeable proliferation of diversity ensued, leading to heightened demands in this realm. In this context, Egypt's distinctive production methods, coupled with the superior quality and diverse range of its textile fabrics, garnered considerable attention.

Europe used to buy textiles from Egypt¹, especially ones whose raw material was flax. Generally, the Middle East focused its textile production on cotton and silk materials. Cotton and silk production and trade were preferred and intensively practiced (Watson, 1983, p.43; Koslin and Snyder, 2002, p. 95). In addition to these, Egypt placed particular emphasis on flax production. Egypt's climate is also very favourable for flax production. Moreover, the use of flax in Egypt had become an ancient tradition as it had been practised for almost a thousand years. For these reasons, in the Middle Ages, Egypt was mostly associated with flax as a textile raw material and was called the "Land of Flax" (Snyder, 2002, p. 95-95).

In the field of textiles, the Middle East was much more advanced than Europe. We can also see this from the trade of that period. There is information that the fabrics found in many European countries came from the Middle East. As an example, we can show the silk fabrics found in Ireland in the IXth and Xth centuries. It is known that these silk fabrics found in Ireland were brought from the Middle East and even Egypt (Netherton and Owen- Crocker, 2006, p. 25). Here, we observe that Egypt was esteemed not only for its linen but also for its silk and cotton textiles.

During the Middle Ages, Middle Eastern countries held the foremost position in silk production and trade, surpassing not only Europe but also the rest of the world. This enabled the

¹ Egypt was conquered by the Islamic armies with an army of about four thousand people commanded by Amr b. As, Yazid b. Abu Sufyan, Amr b. Rabia and some Companions during the reign of Caliph Hazrat Umar. See. Kudâme İbn Cafer. (2018). Kitabü'l Harac. Trns. Ramazan Şeşen. İstanbul. Yeditepe Publication. p.55-56.

Muslim world to become the world's largest silk traders in textiles as well as in other fields in the Middle Ages (Durant, 1974, p. 142).

Under Arab control, Egypt became very good at textiles, but it is important to emphasize that it was during the reign of the Turkish ruler Ahmad ibn Tulun that Egypt experienced its most brilliant period in the Middle Ages. Egypt became a country with huge revenues not only in textiles but also in agriculture, trade, production and exports (Ashtor, 1976, p. 127). In our study, we endeavour to explore the collaborative efforts of individuals from diverse racial and religious backgrounds in Egypt, whose textile productions left an indelible imprint on the era. We aim to elucidate how they amalgamated their distinct cultural and traditional elements to create textile products and techniques that reflect the rich tapestry of their shared experiences.

The Impact of Turkish Dominance on the Egyptian Textile Industry

The Tulunids ruled in Egypt between 868-904. During this period when the Turks dominated Egypt, many Turkish craftsmen from different countries came to Egypt and started to exhibit their skills here. Undoubtedly, this progression ushered in new experiences for Egypt, one of which was the craft of textile weaving. Ahmad ibn Tulun followed this process closely and gave more weight to the textile-weaving industry, which had a great place in the country's economy, and made great efforts in its development. With his efforts, the textile-weaving industry played a major role in the development of the Egyptian economy (Brockelmann, 1964, p. 128). Ibn Battuta listed five cities that have kept the Egyptian economy afloat. These are Tinnis, Dimyat, Alexandria, Dabik and Fayyum. These cities named by Ibn Battuta were already the most famous textile cities of Egypt. For example, silk fabric called Kimha, woven with mixed gold or silver threads, is produced in Alexandria (İbn Tagrıberdi, 2013, p. 417). The fact that Ibn Battuta made the determination shows that Egypt was able to maintain this feature in textiles for centuries (İbn Battuta, 2004, p. 45). In addition to these cities, there was also the city of Abbase founded by the Tolunids. Abbase was the name of Ahmed b. Tolun's daughter (Abu'l-Fidâ, 2017, p.110).

Egypt already had very skilled textile craftsmen. This segment was mostly composed of Copts². Upon amalgamating the techniques of the Turks with the expertise of the Copts in this domain, the result was the emergence of exceptionally beautiful and high-quality textile products. Ahmad ibn Tulun adeptly harmonized the distinct elements of these two traditions, resulting in a seamless balance of craftsmanship and aesthetic appeal. He neither kept the Turks away from the textile field nor alienated the Copts by inviting them. On the contrary, he often benefited from the Copts' experience in textiles. The Coptic craftsmen diligently persevered in their craft, imparting their wealth of experience to the newly arrived Turkish artisans. Blended textiles from both cultures began to emerge. In addition, the clothes worn by Muslims were similar to Coptic clothes (Atiya, 2005, p. 104). Naturally, this harmonious collaboration resonated across neighboring lands, attracting an influx of Turkish artisans to Egypt's textile-weaving sector.

During the reign of Ahmad ibn Tulun, the environment of free thought in Egypt, the ability of citizens from all walks of life to freely fulfill their religious beliefs, to worship without having to hide their religious beliefs and without fear, and the importance given to equality in taxes and the justice system led to an increase in the welfare of the Egyptian people and more income for the country's economy in every field. Examining Ahmad ibn Tulun's foreign policy reveals his strategic capture of the African trade routes traversing Egypt and Syria. Thus, this strategic move resulted in a significant economic influx. While Syria boasted a considerable production of silk textile goods, its export figures did not rival those of Egypt, despite its active participation in the trade. Silk was not part of Syria's traditional industry because there was no silkworm farming in Syria. These were mostly silks brought from China (Yusuf, 1985, p. 64- 65).

Textiles held a paramount position in the Egyptian economy; however, alongside this, the Tulunids demonstrated prowess in other domains such as metalwork, weapon crafting, handicrafts, and ornamentation (Tabakoğlu, 2005, p. 76). In addition to these, many ruined villages, towns, cities

² The name given to the indigenous Christian people of Egypt in the Middle Ages. See The Encyclopedia of Islam, Volume XXV, Article "Copts", p. 423 - 425 for the meaning of the name Copt, its origin and detailed information about the Coptic people.

and castles were repaired, dams were built, and bridges were repaired. Certainly, these advancements had a favorable impact on the economy, leading to a notable increase in tax revenues. During the Tulunid period, 4.3 million dinars were collected from Egypt (Ibn Fazlân, 2020, p. 243; Ibn Zûlâk, 1996, p. 29; Sağlam, 2020, p. 24- 25). This was an extraordinary amount in the Middle Ages. While it might be deemed expected to attain such figures from a sizable and fertile nation like Egypt, it's crucial to underscore that Egypt did not experience such prosperity neither before nor after the reign of Ahmad ibn Tulun. This shows us that such a result can only be achieved if this potential is used in a correct, planned and just manner. In addition, almost all of the Egyptian people were Arabs, only the state rulers and some of the armies were Turks. Despite this, there were still many Christians in Egypt. Despite these disparities, bolstering the country's economy and military to such a degree poses a formidable challenge.

During the era of Ahmad ibn Tulun, Egypt's strength in agriculture was evident. Abu'l Hassan ibn al-Mudebbir, the state official overseeing Egypt's financial affairs, remarked: "If all the land of Egypt were cultivated, its product would suffice for the world. 18 million feddân³ of Egyptian land can be cultivated. There are only 2 million feddân in our time" (Ibn Hawqal, 2017, p. 138), which clearly states the extent of the situation.

The plight of the craftsmen who sustain Egypt's economy (Copts)

The Muslim Arab conquest of Egypt in 641, under the caliphate of Hazrat Umar, did not precipitate a significant alteration in the living conditions of the indigenous Coptic Christian population. Particularly in their daily lives and among the tradesmen, many Coptic Christians

³ Feddân was an ancient unit of area measurement. It was mostly used in Egypt and Syria. The origin of the word is known to be derived from Arabic or Aramaic. In ancient times, it was used for the area that an ox or a pair of oxen could plow. This situation had different names. The area that could be plowed by a pair of oxen was called Feddân-ı Rumân-î, the area plowed all day long was called Feddân-ı İslâmî, and the area plowed from morning until noon was called Feddân-ı Hurrâs. Feddân was used especially in Egypt after the Islamic conquests to measure agricultural areas or to determine the areas of tribute. The measurement of Feddân varied according to time and country. On average, 1 Feddân corresponded to 5929 square meters. For detailed information about Feddân, see Cengiz Kallek, "Feddân", DİA, C. XII, İstanbul 1995, p.293-294

persisted in practicing the same professions as before the Arab conquest. There was no change in their organization. On the contrary, the Arabs preferred Coptic craftsmen in the construction of architectural structures such as mosques, palaces and weaving workshops in Egypt, as well as in the fabric production of these weaving workshops. They even allowed the Copts to use their own style in most of the productions. Once more, the Copts played a prominent role in the production of embroidered fabrics. (Dimand, 1982, p. 249; Sağlam, 2020, p. 27).

Despite their prominence in the textile industry and diligent work ethic, the Copts typically remained among the poorest and most marginalized segments of society in Egypt. Regardless of who ruled Egypt, the Copts were made to work for a pittance in return for their services. In this period, they were employed for a daily wage of half a dirham (Lewis, 2009, p. 121). The dresses embroidered by Coptic craftsmen were highly appreciated. Today, many museums have examples of dresses made by Coptic workers and their craftsmanship is still admired. The materials used by the Coptic craftsmen were mainly linen and wool. When describing the exquisite motifs adorning the vibrant garments embroidered by the Copts during this era, the phrase "It competes with paintings" was employed to convey their exceptional artistry and visual appeal. It is observed that the shade of brown was used more in daily clothes (Atiya, 2005, p. 156- 157). As mentioned in the IXth century, it was possible to see the Coptic style in the embroidery of clothes. It is highly probable that Coptic fabric craftsmen made these styles in their own traditional style. Among the extant examples of such products, textiles featuring the figure of a peacock are particularly renowned (Dimand, 1982, p. 252-253).

The story of the smell of fish and the difficult working conditions of Copts

Where does the smell of Coptic fabric come from?

The techniques and craftsmanship of the Coptic cloth workers were commendable; however, their cleanliness left much to be desired. Several travelers who observed the Copts concurred that these workers were unclean and untidy. An intriguing aspect about these workers was revealed: Particularly in the city of Tinnis, workers consumed a notable amount of fish during their meal breaks,

likely influenced by the city's peninsular geography. However, they would eat this fatty fish with their hands, not with cutlery, as one might expect. While such practices might have been commonplace, it is noteworthy that after consuming oily fish with their hands, these workers proceeded directly to the weaving workshops without washing their hands, potentially compromising the cleanliness of the textiles they produced. Thus, the smell of oily fish permeated the fabrics woven in these workshops (Ashtor, 1976, p. 153). The interesting thing is that this smell became identified with the fabrics over time and became known as the smell of Tinnis fabric.

Working Conditions of Copts

Workers in the textile sector were employed under harsh conditions and with low wages. They also did not have the right to go and work in another workshop other than the one they were working in. In other words, they were not allowed to go to other workshops if they did not like the conditions. This situation was considered surprising even at that time. Indeed, even in the most strenuous occupations of the period, such as mining and construction work, the working conditions were comparatively less demanding. If construction and mining workers did not like the conditions, they could quit at any time or start working in a different construction site. In textiles, however, it was absolutely impossible to move to another workshop or another master.

In comparison, the rules were very strict in the weaving workshops. Egypt exported textiles almost all over the world. It had thousands of workshops and tens of thousands of workers. Workers were employed for so long and under such harsh conditions that production was continuous and mass-produced. A work stoppage or interruption would have been a huge loss and could even cause diplomatic problems between countries. For these reasons, the workers at the bottom of this sector were almost like slaves. Private life for these workers was almost non-existent. Workers were strictly prohibited from removing small fabric remnants leftover from the weaving process out of the workshops, or attempting to sell these remnants, even if they were destined to be discarded as waste. Even if there was fabric to be thrown away, it was forbidden to take fabric out of the workshop.

In our research, we have seen that the same situation was experienced in Ancient Egypt hundreds of years ago and that this situation became almost a fate for the workers working in this sector in Egypt. The more interesting part of the matter is that in Ancient Egypt, workers were employed under very harsh conditions (working for long periods of time without breaks, inadequate food, unhealthy housing, etc.) and since they mainly ate fish and touched the fabrics without washing their hands, the smell of fish and its oil permeated the fabrics (Dölen, 1992, p. 462). It is intriguing to observe that this tradition persisted in Egypt for centuries, with no discernible alterations made to the working conditions or diet of the workers. However, the Copts experienced their most comfortable period during the Abbasid rule followed by the rule of the Tulunids and the Ikhshids.

Workers were divided into various classes and were paid according to their class. Artisans also worked on behalf of the state, not on their own account. Some of them worked for a set daily wage, while others were paid by the piece they produced. During the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries, the salaries of high-ranking officials were notably generous; however, a decline in salaries occurred, particularly following the reign of the Tulunids and Ikhshids, beginning from the latter half of the 10th century onwards (Ashtor, 1976, p. 153). In general, the period after the Tulunid rule was already characterized by a decline in almost every field in Egypt. Manufacturing in textiles was very heavy and required mastery. The workers in these workshops had to devote all their labor and time to this work with great patience.

While the situation for the workers was so harsh and strict, the civil servants in charge of the workshops, on the contrary, had more rights and their salaries were almost the highest among all Egyptian civil servants. In addition, these officials had almost a hundred workers under their command, all of whom were responsible for carrying out the orders of the head official in the workshops in different towns. The responsibilities of these officials were also high, for example, ships were placed at their disposal for the transportation and supply of products. Ship types called "Asārī Düt-mās" and "Dekkāsāt" were allocated to them for this task. The captains and crew of these ships received their salaries from the divan (Bakır, 2005, p. 208- 209). In addition to these high-ranking responsible officials, we can gain further insight into the plight of field workers through a quote

attributed to Makrizi. Al-Maqrizi generally divides the people in Egypt into 7 classes according to their income. In the first part, he counts the people in power, that is, the people of the state. In the second section, there are rich merchants and wealthy people. The third group included merchants and middling people. It is noted that within this third section, there were also cloth merchants, often described as minor artisans who received salaries. In the fourth section were farmers, in the fifth section, the impoverished and military factions, in the sixth section, artisans and wage earners, and in the seventh section, the destitute (Maqrizī, 2021, p. 87). As seen here, cloth merchants were in the third class.

Al-Maqrizī said of this third class of cloth merchants: “They live on what they earn as profit during these hardships. One of them would try to make as much profit as he could, and after a few hours on the same day, he would have to consume what he earned for his necessary expenses. This is enough for him if he does not have to borrow for the rest of his needs. As the ancients say, he is content with his situation” (Maqrizī, 2021, p. 89). It is interesting to note that while the textile industry can almost single-handedly make a country rich, the workers in this sector worked for a pittance.

Tulunid Textile Style in Egypt

During their reign, the Tulunids cultivated a distinctive style, particularly evident in the intricate human and animal motifs woven into fabric, thereby showcasing a unique aesthetic in their textile productions. In addition, linen tunics of various sizes, headscarves and curtains woven for churches were among the most preferred textile products (Atiya, 2005, p.156-157). Weavers were skilled in weaving both plain and figured fabrics, especially from linen and hemp fibers. The lotus flower form was the most common motif in Egyptian floral decoration (Ward, 1909, p. 89).

An intriguing example of Tulunid production influenced by Coptic traditions is a sizeable portion of a black wool scarf or shawl, adorned with four ribbons of varying widths intricately woven from wool and linen in an array of colours. The main band is decorated with medallions with different ornamental motifs woven in white, yellow and black on a red background, separated by different bird shapes. This circle is surrounded by a white kufic inscription on a black background (Dimand, 1982,

251). In another distinct depiction, human, animal, floral, avian, and abstract vein motifs were intricately woven within hexagonal fields. These are exhibited in various museums as examples of the fabric fragments from that period that have survived to the present day.

Clothes that are not allowed to be sewn without the Sultan's Seal (Shataviyya)

In Egypt, there is mention of a garment known as the "Shataviyya," crafted from exceptionally high-quality cotton. The Shataviyya was named after the region called Shata, where quality cotton was produced. The Shataviyya was so valuable that Coptic craftsmen would not sew it without the sultan's seal. They even had to sell these precious cotton garments through brokers with whom they had an agreement. The sultan's representative was present and recorded every sale. A unique tax, under a distinct denomination, was levied on those who meticulously tended to the cotton utilized as the raw material for the shatawiyyah, gathering and compressing it into bales (Muqaddesī, 2015, p. 236). The raw materials used in the preparation of these garments were in a different category like the garment itself.

Gold Stranded Fabrics (Bedne)

One of the most famous garments sewn in Tinnis was the "Bedne". The gold-stringed cloth was planted only for the Caliphs (Nâsir-I Khosrav, 1967, p. 128; Dimand, 1982, p. 250; Sağlam, 2008, p. 37).

While special fabrics were preferred for caliphs, palace officials and high-ranking commanders, general fabrics were used for the general public (Ülgen, 2008, p. 37). In other words, the fabric quality of the clothes worn by palace officials and commoners was not the same. Shirts made of linen and gold glaze were worth approximately one thousand Moorish dinars. One of the reasons why these shirts were so expensive, besides the quality of the fabric used, was that only two ounces of linen was used. All the other materials were gold. Bedne was woven in the form of a shirt. Two uggiye eriş and argach (lehme) rope were used to weave this fabric. The price of these Bednees was approximately one thousand dinars (Elçibey, 1997, p. 149). Again, the value of the turbans woven

for the caliph was five hundred Moorish dinars (Bakır, 2005, p. 204). These were very considerable amounts at that time. In addition to the fabrics specific to Egypt, Egypt's textile industrial zones started to produce fabrics specific to different regions and cities in the following periods. Some special silk fabrics in Byzantium were even produced by imitating fabrics from the Palestinian region (Ashtor, 1976, p. 198). Byzantium was very interested in the fabrics produced in the Middle East during this period and closely followed the developments in the field of textiles.

Sewing the Cover of the Ka'bah

The quality of Tinnis fabrics was well known in the Islamic geography for many years. The Caliph Umar had specifically requested that the embroidered silk cover of the Kaaba be brought from Egypt (Tignor, 2011, p. 143). Hence, Egyptian fabric attained the esteemed status of adorning the Kaaba. There were even some interesting stories about this issue. For example, it is stated that the names of some Abbasid caliphs were embroidered on the Kaaba cloth. This way, pilgrims coming to the Ka'bah on pilgrimage would see the name of the caliph on the cover (Yedida, 2003, p. 126). For this reason, it is emphasized that the caliphs attached great importance to this. The absence of the caliph's name embroidered on these cloths sent from Egypt to enshroud the Kaaba symbolized defiance, rebellion, and disobedience. This meant a great loss of reputation for the caliph. In Egypt, Tinnis workshops were chosen for this important process. It was usually decided that the Kaaba cover would be sewn every year in the city of Tinnis with fabrics produced in Tinnis. In line with this demand, approximately 5,000 looms in Tinnis worked day and night with great care and attention to sew the Ka'bah cover. Some of the workshops in Tinnis would also quit their jobs to help in the sewing of the Ka'bah cloth. One of these workshops was in the town of Tūna in Tinnis. In this context, the fabric export figures of Tinnis reached very high figures.

From Tinnis to Iraq alone, an average of 30 dinars worth of cloth was exported annually (Dimand, 1982, p. 250; Ashtor, 1976, p. 152; Bakır, 2005, p. 206-207; Sağlam, 2020, p. 27; Hasan, 1985, p. 260; Mazaherî, 1972, p. 333). For sure, the reason for this was not only the quality of the fabric but also its prestige. Because sewing covers for the Kaaba was a great prestige in the Islamic

world. In fact, there was a race among states to sew covers for the Kaaba and this race started in the Middle Ages and continued until the Modern Age (Robinson, 2005, p. 183). Many of the finest fabrics exported from Egypt were produced in small, highly specialized workshops where spinning, weaving, dyeing and embroidery were carried out in separate work units. Customers individually ordered special pieces from the best of these specialized artisans (Tignor, 2011, p. 143). Some of the Arab geographers sometimes had to limit their praise of Tinnis for fear of the Abbasid caliphs. Nevertheless, it is clear from their praise that Tinnis was the Baghdad of Islamic geography in the textile industry (Ashtor, 1976, p. 199; Yusuf, 1985, p. 64- 65). Baghdad also held an important place in textiles. Like in Egypt, certain neighborhoods were so known for specific fabrics that the fabric took on the neighborhood's name. For example, "Attabi fabric" and the "Attabi silk carpet" were highly famous during this period. These textiles were crafted using a firm, red-and-yellow-colored fabric, specifically woven in Baghdad's Attabiye district. This is why it came to be known as "Attabiye fabric." (İbn Tagrıberdi, 2013, p. 58).

Clothes that require waiting in line for years even if they were paid for

Tinnis fabric became so famous that even those who could afford it sometimes could not get the fabric they wanted or had to wait for years. Those who paid had to wait for their turn. One of the examples about this in the sources is as follows: The Moroccan ruler of the period was very interested in the famous fabrics of Tinnis. He requested an outfit to be tailored specially for him. He sent his men to Tinnis with 20 thousand dinars to order the clothes he wanted to be specially sewn, and his men were only able to return to Morocco 2 years later with the clothes, which had already been ordered and the money was more than ready (Muqaddesî, 2015, p. 216; Nâsır-ı Husrev, 1967, p. 54). Considering the time and money the rulers spent on these clothes, it can be understood that they also used these clothes as a sign of power.

Interesting Information about Flax in Egyptian Mythology

Flax is the oldest plant among fiber crops. The flax plant likes abundant water and deep alluvial soil. In the accounts provided by chroniclers, there is a deliberate emphasis on the abundance

of flax in Egypt, often symbolizing Egypt itself due to the prevalence of this crop in the region. Indeed, it is known that flax has a history of almost 5 thousand years in Egypt. Moreover, papyrus, cultivated in the Nile Delta and Dimyat regions of Egypt, was also utilized in the production of linen paper (Wickham, 2005, p. 764, 765). Papyrus was the monopoly of Egypt (Mc Evedy, 2004, p. 22). As commonly understood, Egypt is the foremost nation associated with the practice of mummification. The primary material utilized for the embalming cloths employed in ancient Egypt was also composed of linen. Within the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt, there exists a linen cloth measuring 2 meters by 7 meters. The history of this tomb is estimated to date back to 1346 BC⁴ (İbn Havkal, 2017, p. 160; Dölen, 1992, p. 275). However, linen was very valuable in this period and was a type of fabric that could only be used by the clergy and noble class except for mummification (Dölen, 1992, p. 105). Flax also has an important place in Egyptian mythology. According to mythology, linen was an invention of the gods, and they created it for themselves and sent it to the world (Dölen, 1992, p. 277). The rationale behind the preference of kings to be embalmed with linen and the exclusive association of linen fabric with royalty can be attributed to this information.

Misunderstandings about Tiraz Clothes

While special clothes were sewn for the rulers and clergy in Egypt, special quality clothes were also sewn for commanders and high-ranking state officials. The garments tailored specifically for monarchs were adorned with their personal emblems, known as shiars, and Egypt maintained unparalleled leadership in this regard, never relinquishing its prominence to any other nation (Ross Lewis, 1951, p. 171; Bakır, 2005, p. 189). However, remarkably, the motifs adorning these garments, long mistaken for decorative embellishments, were later discovered to be Greek inscriptions. This revelation occurred during the reign of Umayyad Caliph Abdulmalik, prompting an immediate cessation of this practice by the direct decree of Caliph Abdulmalik himself. Abd al-Aziz b. Marwan, who was the governor of Egypt during this period (685-705), took immediate action with the order

⁴ For detailed information about the period See Hüsrem Çelik, *Eskiçağ'da Anadolu'da Dokuma* (M.Ö. 1974-1719), Denizli Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Basılmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Denizli 2014.

he received from the caliph and removed the Greek inscriptions from the Qirāz with his instructions to all workshops, and after this date, new models with Arabic words embroidered with Arabic letters began to be produced in the Qirāz workshops (Zeydan, 1971, p. 190). Thus, this inadvertent continuation of the Greek tradition in the attire intended for the Muslim world was brought to an abrupt halt.

In fact, the same was true for the Greeks; Byzantium was very interested in Egyptian textiles. For this reason, Byzantium imported very large quantities of textile products from Egypt. Especially in the XIth century, it was more oriented towards this market. Byzantium's imported garments often had animal motifs with iconography, as well as kufic bands with Islamic ornaments. The name of the maker

was also inscribed on the garment in kufic script (Tez, 2001, p. 218).

The head of Tiraz who made the governor stand on his feet-Tiraz outfits shape state politics

The duties and responsibilities of the head of al-Tirāz were quite high. Particularly when garments and textiles were being prepared for the caliphs and high-ranking state officials, the governor of the city would act as a guarantor for the quality of the fabrics procured by the head of the Tārāz before the shipment process commenced (Bilindir, 2022, p. 55). In the presence of state officials, the cloth bundles were opened, and final checks were made. It is an important detail to see the hierarchy between them that the chairman of the Tārāz was sitting in his chair and the governor was standing next to him (Ross Lewis, 1951, p. 207; Bakır, 2005, p. 211).

Tiraz clothes were not only textiles but also had political significance. This is why they were under such strict control. Mistakes in these clothes could affect inter-state relations. The names of the caliphs were intricately embroidered on the special Tiraz garments tailored for the rulers, signifying a crucial detail of distinction and honor. An illustration of the significance of this practice can be demonstrated through the actions of Ahmad ibn Tulun. When his relations with the Abbasid caliphate soured, he omitted the names of the Abbasid caliphs from the khutbahs and had their names removed from the Tiraz garments as well. This was one of the signs of sovereignty, and the removal of the

caliph's name from the Taraaz was a sign of rebellion (Yedida, 2003, p. 126; Hitti, 1970, p. 452). After the khutba and the coin, the most important sign of sovereignty was the Tyrāz. The name or pseudonym of the sovereign was embroidered on these clothes in gold. This was as formal and important as the ranks embroidered on military uniforms today (Zeydan, 1971, p. 177, 189; Elçibey, 1997, p. 149). Just as the removal of ranks from military uniforms stripped them of their significance and officiality, similarly, the absence of the ruler's titles embroidered on the Tiraz garments rendered them devoid of official recognition. Consequently, this development prompted an immediate reaction in Baghdad, leading Caliph al-Mu'tamid to issue orders for Ahmad ibn Tulun to be denounced in the Friday sermons (İbnü'l Esîr, 1991, p. 334). This example vividly illustrates the significance of Tiraz attire in shaping inter-state relations.

The Preparation of Colourful Clothes in Textiles and Byzantine Value of Silk

Many different colour derivation methods were used in this period to produce high quality-colored clothes. The most widely used and appreciated alum in the industry during this period was the alum produced in Egypt. Alum was one of the first chemical compounds known and obtained at that time (Ashtor, 1976, p. 98; Dölen, 1992, p. 461). In addition to soap and potash, alum materials were also used for washing yarns and fabrics (Dölen, 1992, p. 460). To obtain the blue colour in dyes, indigo⁵ and indigo plants were used (Mazahari, 1972, p. 294). To achieve the yellow colour, artisans utilized the flower of the saffron plant and the root of the turmeric plant.

Once Byzantium commenced silk production in Constantinople, it rigorously guarded its production techniques, keeping them confidential and refraining from sharing them with others. Byzantium did not merely regard silk as a textile material. Silk served as a foundational material utilized across various domains within Byzantium. In addition to economic income, it was often included in treaties between countries. Indeed, the immense value attributed to silk, coupled with the

⁵ Indigo was the most important dye in medieval Europe during this period. Moreover, indigo was never utilized in Ancient Egypt; rather, Egyptian blue was the preferred pigment. This underscores the prominence of indigo as one of the most utilized raw materials in textiles across a vast geographical expanse for many centuries. See (Dölen, 1992, p. 462, 463).

stringent secrecy surrounding its production techniques, led to its characterization as the "Blood of the Romans" (Kaleli, 2019, p. 219, 220).

The Importance of Purple Colour for Byzantium and the Difficulty of Obtaining Purple Colour in Textiles

Obtaining the purple colour was much more laborious. The purple colour in fabrics was obtained from Murex Trunculus and similar shellfish. However, from 8,000 shellfish, only 1 gram of dye could be obtained (Dölen, 1992, p. 460) and this caused purple clothes to be very rare and their prices to be very high. Byzantine Emperors typically favoured garments dyed in purple using this method. They believed that garments dyed in this manner better reflected their wealth and authority. Byzantium did not regard purple textiles as ordinary fabric. Given its association with authority and power, the use of purple textiles was restricted and not accessible to everyone. Only the elite and courtiers could wear this fabric (Lopez, 1945, p. 1- 42). In Byzantium, those who were tasked with producing purple fabric dye held a highly esteemed and privileged position within the Imperial weaving guild. The craftsmen responsible for this task passed down their expertise from generation to generation, typically from father to son. Indeed, the artisans specializing in purple-coloured textiles adorned with gold embroidery held positions of prominence within the palace (Kaleli, 2019, p. 219).

The Byzantine held the purple colour in high esteem, associating it with everything they deemed significant and prestigious. This included not only textile products but also architectural structures. If fountains, roads, churches, or other structures in Istanbul were adorned with purple colour or purple fabrics, it signified an exceedingly valuable building in Byzantium. In fact, the wives of the emperors would give birth to their future rulers in the purple room. These children were given the title of "Prophyrogennetos or Porphyrogenitus", meaning born in the purple room. For instance, Constantinos, the son of Leo VI, was born in the "purple room" in 905 to his mother Zoe, thereby earning the prestigious title (Güneş, 2021, p. 40; Kaleli, 2019, p. 221).

As such, control was very strict. Even silk producers, highly esteemed in Byzantium, were prohibited from utilizing the colour purple. This also included merchants. Even if they somehow got

their hands on a purple-coloured garment, they had to hand it over to state officials. Certainly, this prohibition extended to silk garments adorned with gold embroidery as well (Güneş, 2021, p. 40). The extraordinary value attributed to purple clothing led to its integration into their religious beliefs. In fact, there was a belief among the people in Byzantium that no evil could spread to anyone who wore purple; this colour was only worthy of those who deserved it by God. Indeed, the sight of these individuals adorned in purple garments was aesthetically pleasing. It was believed that purple crowns and purple caftans were sent to them as gifts from God (Kaleli, 2019, p. 223-224). The exceptional value of purple silk underscores its worth, surpassing even that of currency. The value Byzantium attributed to the colour purple was not limited to these. The documents signed by the Emperor were signed with purple ink. Even the Emperor's private secretary, responsible for correspondence and known as the "Kanikleiosun," was entrusted with safeguarding the purple ink and inkwell. He would stand by the Emperor's side while he signed documents and take back the inkwell and purple ink after the signing was over (Güneş, 2021, p. 63). The people appointed to this task were chosen among the emperor's most trusted men.

Chameleon (Flammable Fabrics)

Egypt had a highly specialized industry in colourful clothing, as well as in other textile fields (Yusuf, 1985, p. 63) In the Egyptian city of Susa, commercial production thrived, boasting numerous weaving houses dedicated to textile manufacturing. The significance of dyes in textiles and the heightened demand for colourful garments is underscored by the fascination surrounding colour-changing fabrics, such as those resembling a chameleon.

In Egypt, a very famous type of linen dress was made from spun linen. This dress was named after the chameleon because it changed into various colours at different times of the day (Dimand, 1982, p. 250; Mazaherî, 1972, p. 332; Ross Lewis, 1951, p. 207). The stamps used to impart this characteristic to the garment were obtained through an intricate and laborious process. These stamps were not available everywhere. Particularly in the Maghreb region, these stamps were collected from chameleons found in a city called Shenterin on the Atlantic Ocean. In fact, these chameleons would

rub against the rocks and shed their scales only on certain days of the year. Especially during these periods, the colourful scales collected from the rocks were used in chameleon outfits. These clothes were very special and became famous in almost every country. There was significant demand for these stamps due to their novelty and allure. It is even documented that the Umayyad Caliphs prohibited the sale of these garments to the Byzantine Empire due to the strained relations with Byzantium, thus denying Byzantium access to these coveted textiles despite its fascination with them (Bakır, 2005, p. 205). As mentioned previously, the Byzantine Emperor, palace dignitaries, and high-ranking officials held a keen interest in textile products originating from the Middle East. The boycott imposed on them in the textile field served as a significant punishment. It could also serve as one of the reasons for initiating warfare. Byzantine emperors were also particularly interested in the linen, wool and silk clothes grown in the Nile Delta. However, their particular interest lay in garments made with Chameleon fabric, a luxury they were deprived of. The technical details regarding the creation of these garments and their colour-changing properties were closely guarded secrets (Bryennios, 2008, p. 172; Özdal, 2019, p. 117). This being the case, the curiosity for this garment increased even more in the Byzantine country. Chameleon cloth was produced in Asyut, a lesser-known town (Dimand, 1982, p. 250; Ashtor, 1976, p. 152). Another name for chameleon fabrics was "flaming fabric". This textile product called chameleon was not produced in any country in the world (Nasser al-Husrev, 1967, p. 55). As a result, the curiosity and fascination surrounding these garments spurred the export of chameleon fabrics to nearly every corner of the world. However, due to the limited availability of the stamps used in their production, these garments were exceedingly expensive and produced in limited quantities compared to others. Consequently, individuals desiring to possess such clothing often had to wait for years.

Conclusion

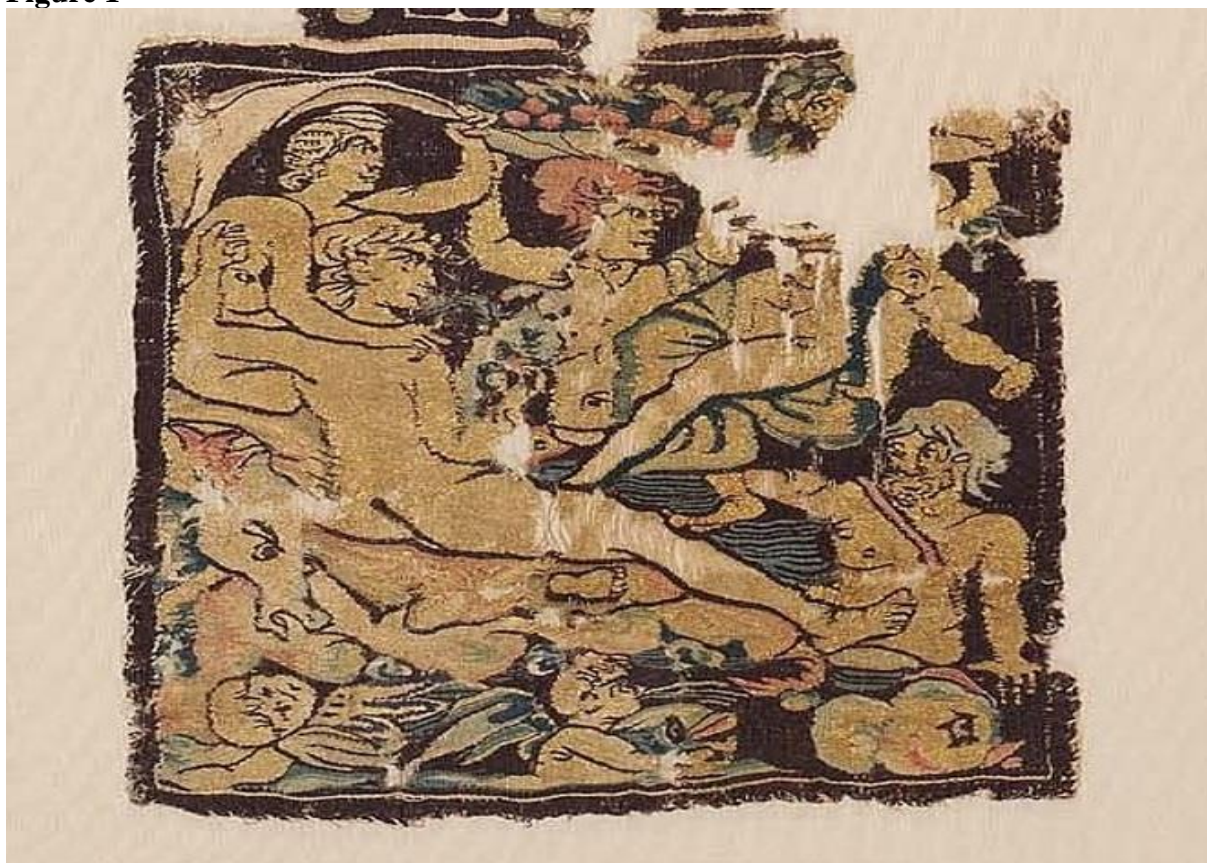
The period encompassing the 9th and 10th centuries in the Middle Ages, which falls within the scope of our discussion, witnessed notably diverse and high-quality textile activities in the Anatolian and Egyptian regions bordering the Eastern Mediterranean. One common characteristic

shared by these two regions is their multinational composition. Particularly in Egypt, the region underwent frequent changes in rulership during this period, fostering an environment where diverse cultures, traditions, and beliefs coexisted. This being the case, the ground was prepared for very different cultures, traditions and beliefs to live together.

This characteristic of Egypt manifested in the realm of textiles, resulting in the creation of exceptionally distinct and high-quality garments that captivated the curiosity of many. Sometimes, the states that ruled in this geography even kept the production techniques of the specially designed textile products that were highly admired secret. This trend was observed not only under the rule of the Arabs in Egypt but also under the Turks and Byzantium. Furthermore, the production of numerous valuable garments was prohibited without the Sultan's seal, in addition to those whose production techniques were shrouded in secrecy. Moreover, not content with these measures, garments favoured and worn by palace inhabitants were prohibited from being worn by anyone outside the palace. The public was not free to wear any clothing they desired; rather, restrictions were also imposed on the general populace. Due to the intricate process involved in crafting certain colourful garments, even if rulers or high-ranking officials from other countries commissioned these garments, it could take years before they were completed and delivered.

In the Middle Ages, textiles were not just a means of clothing. The head of some textile workshops had more authority and power than even the governor. After major wars, textile articles were always included in the treaties. Failure to embroider the Caliph's name on the clothes meant rebellion and insubordination. These and similar developments show that textiles conferred great power, prestige and authority to those who possessed this power. The significance of textiles during the Middle Ages, coupled with the conflicts, intriguing laws, and rivalries surrounding them, has spurred our interest and research in this field. We also recognize that there has been insufficient research conducted in this field. As such, there is a need for much more research to be conducted on textile activities during this period.

Figures
Figure 1



The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston - Access Number: 46.401

Technical Information: (3-4th century AD), Egypt. Neck Ornament Piece, Found in Egypt, Pre-Islamic period a mixture of linen and silk, 56,9 x 15,8 cm (22 3/8 x 6 1/4 inc).

Description: Ground of dark brownish-purple wool; green, red and brown wool, natural-coloured linen and gold-wrapped silk; composed of two squares, one slightly larger than the other, connected by two bands; the larger square represents dolphins and sea gods, including nereids, erots and a triton; the square panel at the other end shows a sea creature holding the rudder; the two bands show jewel-like motifs and three heads in each band; the central head, crowned with garlands, probably represents Dionysus.

Figure 2



London Victoria and Albert Museum - Access Number: 291-1891

Technical Information: (7-9th century AD), Egypt. Red plain weave linen and wool coloured fabric with appliqué trim. Height: 131cm, including sleeve width: 209cm, excluding sleeve width: 124cm.

Description: Two large circular motifs at base, segmenta and on both shoulders, each with a seated figure in the centre, partly surrounded by floral ornament emerging from four vases. On the arm two large rectangular panels, each with a figure seated in a circle in the centre, with floral decoration and busts to the right and left. There are some Greek letters. The borders of all these decorations are multicoloured geometric borders with floral branches on a white background. A small tapestry band sewn around her neck has pairs of birds in circles.

Figure 3



London Victoria and Albert Museum - Access Number: T.311-1998.

Technical Information: (7-10th century AD), Egypt. Length: 17cm, width: 12,5cm.

Description: Fragment of tapestry woven oval motif on tabby wool. Decorated with a stylised animal in the centre and other stylised creatures woven in red, yellow, blue, green, green, white and black and applied on red tabby wool.

Figure 4



London Victoria and Albert Museum - Access Number: 2194A-1900

Technical Information: (7-10th century AD), Egypt. A woven silk fabric. Green and dark cream silk warp and green cream weft. Height: 33mm, width: 40mm.

Description: The fabric features a floral and geometric design. The image on both sides is actually inverted. The painting shows a man on horseback with one arm outstretched holding a staff. An eagle sits above the horse's head with its head looking over its shoulder. Below the horse are a stylised tree, a man with a spear and a bird. On both sides of the fabric are heart-shaped symbols and the top/bottom is encircled by a solid green line.

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