

Fabric fragment - Annunciation

Textile and Costume Collection

Accession Nr.:	82.158.1 
Manufacturer:	Coptic
Date of production:	8th century
Place of production:	Egypt
Materials:	unbleached linen; wool weft
Techniques:	woven
Dimensions:	height: 10 cm width: 8,7 cm

The piece with details of a figural representation fragmented on all sides was probably part of the vertical decorative strip (clavus) on a tunic. The ground colour of the clavus is red framed by stylized leaves. (The fragment has a tiny detail of the left border.) The woven picture is meaningful by the Christian iconography: on the right is the Virgin sitting on a simply indicated chair or throne flanked by stylized trees. Above her head there is a halo or scarf. Under her feet there is a blue stool in axonometric projection. Ochre and golden yellow details of the attire appear, her upper body is perhaps bare. Standing before her is the archangel Gabriel in profile, wearing a dark blue cloak, his head turned back is surrounded by a golden aureole his right is lifted with the gesture of speaking. The Annunciation is not a typical theme among Coptic representations. Despite its wear and fragmentariness, the rare picture type as an ornament displays the distant influence of 7th–8th century prototypes of Constantinople, Syria or the Palestine. The iconographic connection between the Museum of Applied Arts' treasure and the late 8th century Byzantine silk fabric hung up in the Sancta Sanctorum in the Vatican points at a prototype of Constantinople.

Literature

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