

Contemporary fashion design between western costumes and eastern jewelry

**Dr. Wedian Talat Madian,
Dr. Rasha Wagdy Khalil**

Apparel Design Management and Technology Dept., Faculty of Applied. Arts, Helwan University

Abstract:

The elegant language of drapery, and the way in which it both reveals and conceals the human form, was well understood in ancient Greece. They created costumes achieved by tucking, folding, and draping combinations or sections of fabric that had been cut to create different styles that fitted different sizes.

The Siwan large silver jewels worn by the bride on her wedding day were radically different from any other jewelry to be found in the country. They reflected the Berber origins of the oasis, and were definitely the most artistic. They are all pieces of flat jewelry with a variety of engravings. They used geometric patterns as well as motifs drawn from nature to embellish their jewelry.

The present research aims to create contemporary women's fashion design that fits different sizes inspired from the concept of the Greeks customs, and combine it with the Siwan jewelry details. The research shows that the historical study is useful to create fashion designs, which combines originality and contemporary. Studying the concept of the Greeks customs and the Siwan jewelry details is a perfect way to create contemporary fashion designs for women, which reflect the Egyptian identity and fits different sizes.

Keywords:

- *Contemporary fashion design*
- *Western costumes*
- *Eastern jewelry*
- *Greeks costumes*
- *Siwan jewelry*

Paper received 19th February 2013, Accepted 16th March 2013 , Published 1st of April 2014

Introduction:

As a result of the isolation, Siwa developed a unique culture manifested in its crafts of basketry, pottery, embroidery and in its styles of costume and silverwork. The most visible and celebrated example of this was the silver jewelry that was worn by women at weddings and other ceremonies. Siwan jewelry is so large that they are not worn on daily basis, only on special occasions. During the Classical Age, Greece enjoyed a golden age, one of the most creative eras in history of western civilization. Basically, their garments had no form in themselves that is they consisted of various sizes of rectangular pieces of cloth tied or pinned about the body rather than cut-and-sewn to shape. Thus, while draping techniques varied over the centuries, Greek apparel design never underwent major transformation.

In classical times, Siwa was well known to the Greeks, who had expanded into Egypt and established trading settlements in the Nile Delta and eastern Libya, as a station on trade routes to the Nile Valley and across the Sahara, and as a source of dates, palm wine, olives, and olive oil.

Though this research describes the jewelry at the highpoint of Siwan culture, and combines it with the concept of Greeks costume to create contemporary women's fashion designs that fit different sizes.

1- Problem statements:

In order to engage with problems arising from the issues outlined above, we have set out to examine the following:

1- How could we create contemporary women's fashion design inspired from the concept of western costumes and eastern jewelry?

2- How could we achieve harmony between different women's body sizes and contemporary fashion designs?

2- The aims of the research:

1- Creating Contemporary women's fashion design inspired of the concept of western costumes and eastern jewelry

2- Achieving harmony between different women's body sizes and contemporary fashion designs

3- The research approach:

The research follows the experimental approach.

2- Review of literature:

2-1- Ancient Greece:

2-1-1- Life:

Life in ancient Greece developed from three significant civilizations: the Minoans, the Mycenaean's, and the ancient Greeks. Archeologists have studied these civilizations and have found evidence of sophisticated societies. (Sara Pendergast, 2004, 113)

2-1-2- Art

The art of that time was highly stylized it is called "Geometric art" provides information about dress. The sculptures & vase paintings of Greece provide evidence concerning the costume of ancient Greece. The Greeks developed the concept of ideal human form & proportions. Their sculpture glorified the human body using new techniques to build in marble.

Major Greek vase painting styles include black

figures on an orange-red background; red figure painting, with red figures on black background;

and white ground vases. (Phyllis G.Tortora, Keith Eubank, 2010, 50-72)



www.ngv.vic.gov.au



(Judith Watt, 2012, 27)



2-1-3- Fabrics

Sheep herding was practiced in the mountains to get wool. Greeks also used linen which seems to have come to Greece from Egypt. Cotton fibers were brought by the soldiers of Alexander the Great from different countries. Weavers combined silk fibers with linen fibers to produce pleated fabrics. (Phyllis G.Tortora, Keith Eubank, 2010, 50-72)

The wealthiest Greeks could afford fine wool and finely woven linen for their costume. Others used cloth woven from the flax plant soaked in olive oil, and peasants used textiles made of coarse wool. The use of a vertical loom allowed greater dimensions of textiles. (Phyllis G.Tortora, Keith Eubank, 2010, 50-72)

Greeks found colors to dye cloth, decorate their skin, and create jewelry. The most commonly used dyes and pigments were locally available. Many came from plants; insects were the source of a few rich colors, and rocks, minerals, or earth provided others. Color -sometimes in the form of pattern-

origin. (Judith Watt, 2012, 38)

Wealthy aristocrats wore purple clothes dyed from a species of shellfish or pure white linen robes. Yellow clothes were worn mostly by women. Black clothes were worn by those mourning the death of a loved one. Peasants dyed their clothing a variety of greens, browns, and grays. Soldiers wore dark red garments to minimize the appearance of blood on the battlefield. In addition to dyeing, decorative designs were also painted, embroidered, or woven onto garments in many colors. Garments were also adorned with patterns of geometric shapes or trimmed with colorful border designs. (Sara Pendergast, 2004, 121)

2-1-4- Clothing

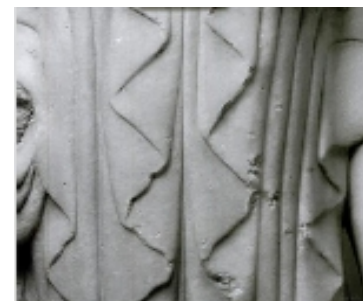
Evidence indicates that clothing for these civilizations served as decoration and signaled the status of the wearer. (Sara Pendergast, 2004, 113) It was made of simple elements draped to sophisticated effect. Loose-fitting and free-flowing, it was adaptable to different seasons. (Judith Watt, 2012, 24)



(Judith Watt, 2012, 38)



(Sara Pendergast, 2004, 120)



([Nikolaos Kaltsas](#), 2003, 13)

2-1-4-1- Chiton

The basic garment of ancient Greece worn by both sexes with or without belt. The feminine version reaching to the ankles, usually purple, red, blue or saffron. (R. Turner Wilcox, 1992, 72)

2-1-4-2- Doric Chiton

It was made from a large piece of woolen fabric, which allowed it to be pleated and draped. It was folded down at the top before being wrapped around the wearer, creating a short cape or over-

blouse at the top. This over-blouse was sometimes weighted at the edges with beads or pieces of metal so that it would stay in place. (Sara Pendergast, 2004, 124-126) The garment was pinned at each shoulder and held in place by various girdles, belts and cords. (Daniel Delis Hill, 2011, 51) Another feminine style involved wrapping one long belt around the body and crossing it between the breasts or across the back. It were often dyed in colors and striped designs, and decorative borders were also popular. (Sara Pendergast, 2004, 126)

2-1-4-3- Ionic Chiton

The simple Doric Chiton was replaced in popular fashion by the more elaborate Ionic chiton, which was more voluminous garment. (Daniel Delis Hill, 2011, 52)

The Ionic Chiton was formed from a single rectangular piece -often measuring twice the width of the wearer's outstretched arms- of light linen, dyed in bright colors and embroidered with stars, birds, or other designs. Some Ionic Chitons were even woven of silk. This lighter fabric allowed much more pleating than had been possible with wool, which created fuller, more flowing garments.

Those who wore the Ionic Chiton often increased the folds and drapery of the garment by tightly

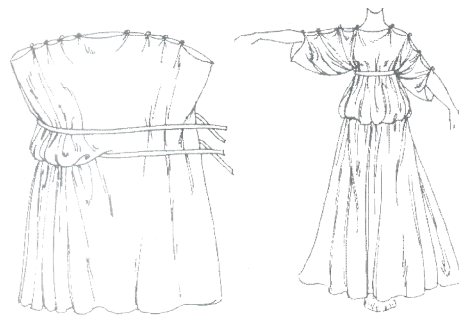
folding and twisting the fabric when wet, then allowing it to dry in order to set the folds in the cloth.



The fabric was wrapped around the wearer and pinned along the shoulders and arms in as many as eight to ten places. Once the Chiton was belted below the breasts or at the waist, the pinned shoulders formed elbow-length sleeves that covered the arms with soft folds of fabric. Women sometimes wrapped a belt behind the neck and around the shoulders to hold the Chiton in place during physical activity. (Sara Pendergast, 2004, 128)



(Carl Koehler, 1928, 99)



(Daniel Delis Hill, 2011, 53)



(Sara Pendergast, 2004, 128)

2-1-4-4- Tonic or Peplos

A Tunic comprising two rectangles of cloth joined at the shoulders and sides. It could be arranged in many ways, and cut to different lengths. (Judith Watt, 2012, 24)

The Peplos was worn exclusively by women. It was styled as a cylinder of wool or linen similar to the form of the Chiton, only much longer. This extra length of material allowed a section to be turned down at the top creating a bib-like flap in the front and a hood-like flap in the back. To keep the front flaps from flying up into the face, the ends were sometimes lightly weighted with metal

beads. As with the Chiton, the Peplos was pinned at each shoulder. (Daniel Delis Hill, 2011, 53-54)

2-1-4-5- Himation

Himation was the cloak which comprised a piece of fabric, usually white loosely woven thick wool, draped about the body and over the shoulder. Women are pictured wearing it as the sole garment, in which case it appears to be securely belted at the waist, without the Chiton. (R. Turner Wilcox, 1992, 171)

These garments were often dyed bright colors and covered or bordered with intricate designs that were either woven into the fabric or painted on.

(Sara Pendergast, 2004, 126)



(Sara Pendergast, 2004, 127)



(Carl Koehler, 1928, 98)

2-2- Siwa:

2-2-1- Life:

Siwa Oasis is in the western desert of Egypt that is blessed with a dense landscape of olive and palm trees, numerous natural springs and salt lakes. (Tarek Hatem, 2007,2)

While Siwa may be compromised by the modern world, it remains above all an oasis, self contained, renewable, remote.

2-2-2- Materials:

The desert dwellers resort to less expensive metals, like silver, or white metal to make forms of jewelry. All the intricate designs on the clothes and on the head do not leave much space for jewelry. That is why when the Bedouin women decides to make a piece of jewelry, she chooses the simplest of methods, that of stringing beads, which has become a characteristic of the jewelry of this area, particularly for necklaces. She strings everything she can lay her hands on the environment: stones, old coins inherited from the family, a stray blank bullet made of brass or some seashells, and adds them to the beads which are

the main component. (Azza Fahmy, 2007, 56- 57) However, most of the rich Siwan girls are parting from the old tradition of wearing the heavy silver ornaments and prefer to use gold necklaces and gold finger- and ear-rings, which they wear along with some of the traditional silver ornaments. (Aleya Serour, 2012)

2-2-3- Jewelry:

The most significant traditional feature of Siwa was the unique style of its silver jewelry, developed over centuries of semi-isolation. A woman would have a large collection of ornaments over her lifetime, starting with the items that comprised her “*Mahr*”, that is the bride wealth. These would be worn only at ceremonial gatherings and festivals. (Margaret M. Vale, 2014, 11)

2-2-3-1-Tilakeen:

It is a big crescent shaped ornamental piece worn over the head with two pendants on both sides of a woman’s face. At the end of each pendate there are 19 chains end with silver balls. (Nabil Osman, 120)



(Nabil Osman, 153)



(Azza Fahmy, 2007, 76, 57)



2-2-3-2- Tadlilt

It comprises a headband from which hang up to twelve leather straps, reaching to just above the shoulders. They are decorated with amber beads. The straps end with silver rings and beads. (Vivian, Cassandra, 199, 121)

2-2-3-3- Leather strap “Issudan” or “Lugiyet”:

It is worn across the forehead and covered with mother of pearl buttons. Supported by the strap, and dangling from the temples so as to frame the face, are three silver bangles. (Vivian, Cassandra,

199, 118)



(Margaret M. Vale, 2014, 121)



(Vivian, Cassandra, 199, 118)

2-2-3-4- Pendants “Agrawati Talat” :

Consisted of large pendants that have long hanging chains ending in orbs that tinkle with every move, a large silver piece covered with geometric designs hanging on a thick collar (Azza Fahmy, 2007, 65)



(Rawah Alfalah Badrawi, 2011, 35)

2-2-3-5- “Lagsusa” or “Khiara”:

It is used to be worn on either side of the head, consisting of silver cylinder, sometimes followed by a piece of yellow amber. Attached to the cylinder is a ring from which a number of pendants with variety of forms. (Nabil Osman, 120)



(Nabil Osman, 120)

2-2-3-6- (Aghrow) and (Adrim):

It is the most essential and very typical silver ornaments of Siwa, worn by generation after generation. The (Adrim) is a large silver disc hanging from the (Aghrow). It was a heavy solid silver coil open at the back, with a loop on one side and a hook on the other. It is the only piece of jewelry allowed to the unmarried girls. (Aleya Serour, 2012)



(Salah M. Hassan, 1987)

2-2-3-7- Swedish (Al-Suwidi):

It is a short necklace of coral, onyx, and silver beads that exhibits striking red and black stripes ends up looking like a net. The net of beads falls into precisely aligned stripes when it is hang around the neck. (Margaret M. Vale, 2014, 116)



(Azza Fahmy, 2007, 68)

2-2-3- 8- “Ilzam”

It is composed of silver or white metal balls, primitive in shape and design. The balls are sometimes strikingly large. They are used to separate the beads in various compositions, especially in the placement of the coral side by side with the amber. (Azza Fahmy, 2007, 64)



(Margaret M. Vale, 2014, 117)

2-2-3-9- Aghaiz Nesalhat or Salhayat:

Consisted of six matching, open work crescent-shaped pendants, strung with red coral and silver beads. The corals are composites of three cylinders or threaded bundles of three. The deep crescent enclosed a variety of designs. (Margaret M. Vale, 2014, 112)



(Azza Fahmy, 2007, 74)

2-2-3-10- Timisnakt:

The Timisnakt consisted of a short bead necklace of silver spherical beads, red coral cylinders, and green glass beads, from which hang up to twelve long chains ending with five-sided (pentagonal)

plates. (Vivian, Cassandra, 199, 113)



(Azza Fahmy, 2007, 66)

2-2-3-11- Ring “Mahbas”:

The Siwan women wear a different ring on each of her fingers, with the exception of the pointer finger which is left unadorned. All the rings are flat and the bands being the same, while the top part of the rings is soldered. All the top parts of Siwan rings bear engravings and decoration made with hammer or chisel or both. (Azza Fahmy, 2007, 65)



Field Study

2-2-3-12- Bracelet “Dumluj”:

Bracelet is one of the most important pieces of jewelry in the Egyptian desert. The Siwan bracelet had different motifs such as the fish, the crescent, the star, and the bird. (Nabil Osman, 120)



(Nabil Osman, 120)

3- Methods and analysis:

Fashion designs are much more than the fibers and chemicals needed to make them. They are signs and symbols, expressions of culture, newness and tradition. They link us to time and space and deal with our needs, manifesting us as social beings, as individuals.

Thus historical issues in fashion are as much about cultural, economic, identity and social phenomena as material and manufacturing ones. The Greeks concept in fitting their costumes around the body is a very important concept of clothing. It aims to use simple pieces of fabrics draped to create loose-fitting and free-flowing silhouette by using belts, cords and broaches, it was adaptable to different sizes.

The most significant traditional feature of Siwa

was the unique style of its silver jewelry. Siwan choose the simplest of methods to produce jewelry, they used everything they can lay their hands on the environment: silver, stones, old coins, seashells, and adds them to the beads to create wonderful ornaments inspired from the environment surrounded them.

That is why this research we are presenting four contemporary fashion designs, two belt designs, and eight sketches inspired of the Greeks costumes concept and the jewelry of Siwa and can fit different sizes in different ways to form each time a different style:



Design (1): A double-faces cap.

Fabrics: Red and black wool.

Decorative Motifs: A row of different sizes of white buttons around the neckline.

Handmade embroidery with colorful motives – inspired from Siwan jewelry- on the back and the two sides of the Cape.

Colored cords of silk threads at the front opening of the neckline, end with Silver chains each has colored stones at the end.

Colors of decorative Motifs: Yellow, saffron, red and green

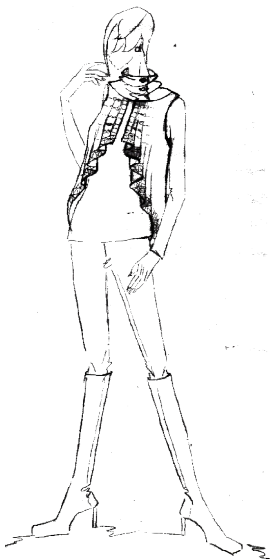
Functional aspects: Semi-circular shape and suitable length of the cap were useful to create a multi-sizes design.

Cords were used to close the neckline opening according to the size.

Aesthetic aspects: a harmony of shapes and colors were created by combining the concept, colors and shapes of both Greeks costumes and Siwan jewelry with draping technique on dress stand



Design (1): A double-faces cap



Decorative Motifs: Different sizes of white buttons in collar closure and around borders. Handmade embroidery with colorful geometrical motives –inspired from Siwan jewelry- around the borders and armhole of the Cape.

Colors of decorative Motifs: Yellow, brown, red and green

Functional aspects: Circular shape, wide collar, large armhole and suitable length of the cap were useful to create a multi-sizes design. Buttons placements were used to close the collar according to the size.

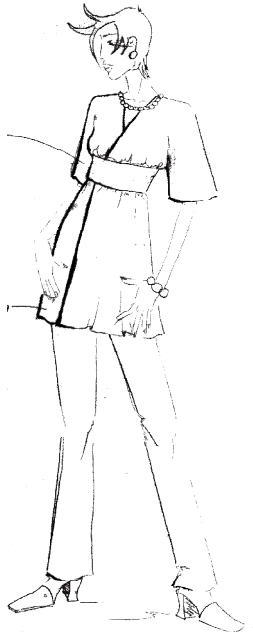
Aesthetic aspects: a harmony of shapes and colors were created by combining the concept, colors and shapes of both Greeks costumes and Siwan jewelry with draping technique on dress stand

Design (2): Cap.

Fabrics: Beige and black wool.



Design (2): Cap.



Design (3): Warped double-faces jacket.
Fabrics: Red and black linen.

Decorative Motifs: handmade embroidery decorative motifs with various lengths on the front and the back.

Colored cords of silk threads at the front opening, end with silver chains each has colored stones at the end.

Colors of decorative motifs: Saffron, red, blue and orange.

Functional aspects: Warped jacket with short wide sleeves without dressmakers helped to fit different sizes.

This jacket is wearable on both sides to gives tow different colors.

The jacket can be warped and closed using cords or wide belts according to the size of the wearer.

Aesthetic aspects: a harmony of shapes and colors were created by combining the concept, colors and shapes of both Greeks costumes and Siwan jewelry with draping technique on dress Stand



Design (3): Warped double-faces jacket



Design (4): Warped jacket.

Fabrics: Striped beige lining.

Decorative Motifs: handmade embroidery

decorative motifs with beads and buttons on the shoulders.

Colored cords of silk threads at the front opening, end with silver chains each has colored stones at the end.

Using striped fabric with different directions on the design gives the feeling of pleats and folds used in Greeks costumes.

Colors of decorative motifs: Yellow, red and orange.

Functional aspects: Warped jacket with short wide sleeves without dressmakers helped to fit different sizes.

The jacket can be warped and closed using cords or wide belts according to the size of the wearer.

Aesthetic aspects: a harmony of shapes and colors were created by combining the concept, colors and shapes of both Greeks costumes and Siwan jewelry with draping technique on dress Stand



Design (4): Warped jacket
different sizes.

Design (5): belt.

Fabrics: Natural leather covered by embroidered linen.

Decorative Motifs: handmade embroidery, decorative motifs with threads and buttons.

Colors of decorative motifs: Saffron, yellow, red, orange and green.

Functional aspects: different width belts that fit

Aesthetic aspects: combination between tradition and contemporary through the use of the belt -the idea of the Greek outfit which uses belts ribbons and laces in order to determine the clothing on the body and fits multiple sizes- and the decoration on the belt units of Siwan ornaments.



Design (5): Belt

Sketches for eight more contemporary women’s fashion design which fit different sizes, inspired of the concept of western costumes and eastern jewelry:



Sketches

4- Results:

Using the concept of Greeks costume and combining it with the Siwan jewelry is a perfect mix to create contemporary women’s fashion design which fit different sizes.

The present research explores the idea of creating contemporary fashion design inspired of western costumes and eastern jewelry. Within this research fashion design is used in its broadest sense, not just as stylist or shaper of things (though this too has an important role), but also as a promoter of traditional taste and economical idea. The goal is to show that there is a wealth of creating contemporary women’s fashion design which fit different sizes, inspired of the concept of western

costumes and eastern jewelry. It is a production and use of fashion that goes beyond traditional ideas or expectations, so we used the concept of Greeks costume and mixed it with the Siwan jewelry in creating contemporary women’s fashion design which fit different sizes. This can give women a chance to create their own styles, use the dress for a longer period, wear it in various situations and reuse old clothing.

References:

- 1- Aleya Serour, “Writing Egypt, History, Literature, and Culture”, The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, Egypt, 2012
- 2- Azza Fahmy, “Enchanted Jewelry of Egypt... The Traditional Art and Craft”, The

- American University Press, Cairo ,Egypt, 2007
- 3- Carl Koehler, “ A history of costume”, New York, Dover publications, INC, 1928
 - 4- Daniel Delis Hill, An abridged history of world costume and fashion, Pearson education, Inc., New Jersey, 2011
 - 5- Judith Watt, Fashion: the ultimate book of costume and style. London, Great Britain, Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2012
 - 6- Margaret M. Vale, “Siwa Jewelry, Costume, and life in an Egyptian Oasis”, The American University Press, Cairo ,Egypt, 2014
 - 7- Mary G. Houston, Ancient Greek, Roman & Byzantine Costume
 - 8- Dover Publications, Inc., New Yourk, United States of America, 2012
 - 9- Nabil Osman, Egyptian folk Arts, Ministry of Information, State Information Service, Cairo, Egypt
 - 10- Nikolas Kaltsas, Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece J. Paul Getty Museum , 2003
 - 11- Phyllis G.Tortora, Keith Eubank. Survey of Historic Costume. 5th ed. United States of America. Fairchild Books, 2010
 - 12- Rawah Alfalah Badrawi, Siwa legends & lifestyles in the Egyptian Sahara, Haven Books Limited, Hong Kong, 2011
 - 13- R. Turner Wilcox. The Dictionary of Costume. London. B.T. Batsford LTD.1992
 - 14- Salah M. Hassan,” The Adrim or “virginity Disc” Marking the Passage to Womanhood in Siwah”, Exhibition, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1987 Available on website: www.pennmuseum.org 8- 2015
 - 15- Sara Pendergast and Tom Pendergast, Sarah Hermsen, project editor. Fashion, Costume, and Culture Clothing, Headwear, Body Decorations, and Footwear through the Ages Volume 1: the ancient world United States of America Thomson Learning, Inc., 2004
 - 16- Tarek Hatem, “Siwa Sustainable Development Initiative”, United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA, 2007
 - 17- Vivian, Cassandra, Siwa Oasis: Its History, Sites and Crafts... Trade Routs Enterprises Souvenir Series, International Publications, Maadi, Egypt 1991
 - 18- www.ngv.vic.gov.au
 - 19- Ahmed Fakhry, The Oasis of Egypt...Siwa Oasis, Vol. 1, the American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, Egypt, 1973, 1982
 - 20- Auguster Racinet, The Costume History, Taschen GmbH, Germany, 2003
 - 21- Batterberry, Michael, and Ariane Batterberry. Fashion: The Mirror of History. New York: Greenwich House, 1982.
 - 22- Bigelow, Marybelle S. Fashion in History: Western Dress, Prehistoric to Present. Minneapolis, MN: Burgess Publishing, 1970.
 - 23- Hope, Thomas. Costumes of the Greeks and Romans. New York: Dover, 1962.
 - 24- Houston, Mary G. Ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Costume and Decoration. 2nd Ed. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1947.
 - 25- Laver, James. Costume and Fashion: A Concise History. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2002.
 - 26- Norris, Herbert. Costume and Fashion: The Evolution of European Dress through the Earlier Ages. London, England: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1924.Reprint, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1931.
 - 27- Payne, Blanche, Geisel Winakor, and Jane Farrell-Beck. The History of Costume: From Ancient Mesopotamia through the Twentieth Century. 2nded. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.
 - 28- Pistolese, Rosana, and Ruth Horsting. History of Fashions. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1970.
 - 29- Symons, David. Costume of Ancient Greece. Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988.