

Weaving in Stones

Garments and their accessories in the
mosaic art of Eretz Israel
in Late Antiquity

Aliza Steinberg



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'To Shlomo, there is not a word in my tongue', Psalms 139, 4.

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Introduction

This book is the first comprehensive study of the dress and related accessories depicted on the mosaic floors from Late Antiquity (4th–7th centuries AD) in the historical-geographical region of Eretz Israel and will be used as a contribution to research, for study purposes.¹ It reviews the mosaic pavements of religious buildings such as synagogues, churches, and monasteries, as well as those in private homes and burial sites, and describes and analyzes the costumes and accessories worn by about 245 figures represented on approximately 41 mosaic floors (during work on this book, further examples have been discovered). It seeks to understand the ideological implications and social identities (gender, occupation and status) of the iconographic designs and examines how the figures are represented on the mosaics. It attempts to reconstruct developments and trends in the dress worn by a multi-cultural population of pagans, Jews, and Christians who lived alongside each other and embellished their homes and places of worship with mosaics, during a period that witnessed the establishment of Christianity in the Eastern Roman Empire.² Its location on the crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa meant that Eretz Israel was exposed to both Western and Eastern personal appearance.³ The visual imagery and designs of these traditions undoubtedly influenced the local artists and craftsmen.⁴

The book's research involved locating, describing, documenting, and cataloging the articles of clothing and accessories depicted on mosaics uncovered from the period within the geographic region of Eretz Israel. In the identification stage, figurative mosaics in Eretz

Israel were examined using on-site photography, mosaics and museum exhibits of actual costumes and accessories recovered from archaeological excavations, copies of works in libraries in Israel and abroad, excavation files, catalogs, websites, relevant articles, books, and discussions with historians, archaeologists, and costume historians.⁵ In cases where the mosaic had been damaged or covered over and only black-and-white photos were available, excavation reports and photographs from the *Israel Antiquities Authority's* scientific archives and research literature provided descriptions and details of the colors. The clothing was classified into male and female wear (as well as infants' and children's) and the various functions.

The book's structure was dictated by classifying the items of clothing, as described above. Two sections are devoted to each gender (male, female) and one to children. The first part of each section discusses typology and acts as a kind of inventory with dates, details of accompanying inscriptions, the location of works and their state of preservation, descriptions of the dress and accessories and their classification. It opens with a short introduction to each type of clothing, referring to its use, distribution and history, and to the number of examples of a specific article of dress in mosaics in the region. The second part, which deals with stylistic-iconographic aspects and iconology, examines the ancient sources and the function and dress of the wearers in various Western and Eastern visual representations in the relevant period and geographic region. The comparisons help determine the influences of Eastern and Western traditions and identify original elements that may shed light on the clothing and accessories depicted.⁶ The final section of the book is based on the previous sections and refers to a number of related accessories, such as jewelry, head coverings, belts and footwear, as well as the literary sources

¹ In the period covered by this book, Christianity was on the rise in Eretz Israel. In the 4th century, Eretz Israel became an important center for Christianity and in the 5th and 6th centuries pagan idolatry was eradicated and the vast majority of the population was Christian. Many churches and monasteries were built and the country's location, on the crossroads between East and West, together with the presence of sacred Christian sites, made it a focus of attention for the central authorities. Most of the Jewish population lived in Galilee.

² On 18 September 324, after the Western Empire's Emperor Constantine defeated Licinius in the Eastern Empire, a Christian governor was assigned to Eretz Israel, thus beginning the process by which the hegemony of pagan and Jewish communities was replaced by that of Christians. The transformation was particularly evident in cities with mixed populations.

³ This book also examines the dress of the nomadic tribes from Asia and the northern countries, including the Germanic tribes of the Goths, Franks, Vandals, etc. The way in which a certain figure is depicted relates to the reciprocity between the various elements of his or her dress, the inherent symbolism of garments, colors, hairstyles, facial hair, expressions, makeup, emphasis or concealment of various body parts, the stance and posture, and comparison of the figure being studied with other figures in the composition.

⁴ I use the term 'artists' to refer to the workshop masters who selected the designs (in consultation with the patrons) and planned and drafted the work. The term 'craftsmen' refers to the apprentices who tessellated the mosaics on behalf of the workshops.

⁵ Access to British Mandate and Israeli files was enabled courtesy of the *Israel Antiquities Authority* (IAA). The following museums were consulted: Tunisia: Bardo, Sousse, El Djem, Carthage; Jordan: The Archaeological Museum in Amman, Mount Nebo; Turkey: Archaeological Museum, Great Palace Mosaic Museum in Istanbul; Italy: Villa Armerina in Sicily, Vatican Museum, Via Latina Catacombs; Greece: Athens and Salonika Archaeological Museums; Cyprus: Nicosia Archaeological Museum; Paphos: The mosaic site; Paris: The Louvre; London: The British Museum; Germany: Cologne Roman-Germanic Museum; Trier: Roman Museum; Berlin: Archaeological Museum, Bode Museum, Byzantine Museum, Egyptian Museum, Pergamon Museum and Collection of Classical Antiquities Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Roman Museum; Munich: Glyptothek Museum; USA: Worcester Museum, Princeton University Art Museum, New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Corning Museum of Glass NY Utah University Museum; Canada: Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

⁶ Western: Greece, Italy, Sicily, Germany, Gaul, Spain, Britain, and North Africa. Eastern: Egypt, Cyprus, Eretz Israel, Persia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey.

that mention them.⁷ Each section has a summary and conclusions. The book ends with a general summary and assumptions about personal appearance, dress, and accessories in the mosaics of Eretz Israel.

The classification work was aided by research on the terminology used for garments and accessories in specialist glossaries and in the literature, compared with the visual evidence. The use of different words for the same item of clothing in the literature stems from the problem of determining the correct term for certain garments that is also evident in ancient sources, since the different languages (Latin, Greek, and local dialects) used different words for the same item. The problem is compounded by the absence of suitable technology, such as the inability to place illustrations alongside terms in the relevant period, for example. In certain cases therefore, I have been obliged to choose one term from among several used in written sources and in the literature.⁸ The few existing studies of costume in mosaic art in general, as well as in other visual representations, supply useful information.

As a 'bearer' of symbols, dress provides an 'arena' for a social and governmental-political 'struggle' that reveals class, gender, and occupational identity and helps us understand the *habitus* and function of the figure expressed by the style of dress and personal appearance.⁹ This book attempts to decipher the relations between 'appearance' and 'identity' shown by mediation between the visual language and its system of signs, by investigating the repertoire of clothes and accessories depicted on numerous figures in archaeological finds, examining them, and reconstructing their symbolic systems within the

⁷ The jewelry repertoire in mosaics in Eretz Israel in Late Antiquity is the subject of my MA thesis, written under the guidance of Prof. Asher Ovadiah.

⁸ For example, the terms relating to the gathered folds of a garment. See: Lee 2004: 221–224; Chambers and Sylvester 2010: 72.

⁹ Bourdieu uses the word *habitus* as a sociological term to describe the world views, tastes, and social conventions that can be used to interpret social values and customs; see: Bourdieu 1984: 170; Ritzer 2006: 448–449. People's tastes in material culture, such as dress, furnishings, etc., are shaped by *habitus*, particularly through members of the upper classes; see: Bourdieu 1984: 170, 284; Ritzer 2006: 448–449. In his book, *Distinction*, Bourdieu focuses on differences in aesthetic taste. He argues that taste is a means by which the individual and those around him are given a sense of their place in the social hierarchy; see: Bourdieu 1984: 284; Ritzer 2006: 453. Although the term is a modern invention, it can also be applied to the behavior and customs of those people who lived in Late Antiquity, including their daily practices, food, and dress. Ancient literary sources record that pagan, Jewish, and Christian intellectuals all attempted to dictate the ways in which ordinary people dressed, ate, and celebrated festivals. In the concept of *habitus*, Bourdieu concentrates on the particular significance of certain customs and daily practices. His work emphasizes the fact that cultural ties shaped by specific consumer tastes reinforce a person's social status. The sermons of Chrysostom give an insight into the customs of the period and the hopes of those who shaped the generation of the time that a Christian environment would lead to a change in lifestyle, dress, food, and family life and that liberation from temptation and sin would result in salvation; see: Maxwell 2006: 146–147.

historical context in which they were produced.¹⁰ It also attempts to identify original elements in local costume and to detect and characterize any mutual reciprocity in dress and accessories in the relevant period, both between major artistic centers and the peripheral regions and among the various outlying regions themselves. The work examines similarities and differences between the dress of figures from religious works and Greek mythology, and figures from private buildings, synagogues, and churches.

The book discusses the degree of Western (Fig.97 p.68 Trajan Column 113AD, Public Domain) and Eastern influence on garments in Eretz Israel and whether the artists and craftsmen of the time created new dress styles by adopting innovative features and combinations. It rests on the assumption that the items of dress and related accessories depicted in mosaic floors during the relevant period represent actual garments, as dictated by the appearance, conventions, and taste of the time. While traditional iconographic formulas are employed, enabling us to identify certain personages by their dress and accompanying attributes, innovative aesthetic concepts are also introduced that convey the reality and changing trends of the time, such as Eastern influences and indications of styles and restrictions on appearance that were preached by religious and moral sages. All of these reflect the mutual interaction between tradition and innovation. I also argue that the items of dress, particularly the jewelry depicted on mosaic floors, are more modest than those shown on mosaics in other places, both in the East and in the West.

The subject of costume and related accessories in mosaics in Eretz Israel has received little scholarly attention and there have been no comparative studies or attempts to identify elements with widespread significance. This prompted me to examine the items of clothing and accessories worn by figures on mosaics in Eretz Israel and classify them into 'groups' according to subject, function, and class. I attempted to detect similarities, together with differences or unique aspects, and noted any discrepancies between the dress of these and comparative figures at other sites and in other forms of visual representation in the East and in the West.

The book examines the significance of the items of dress within the framework of an overall cultural system, incorporating methodologies from Art History and examining the subject from the typological,

¹⁰ The Greeks and Romans devoted a great deal of attention to body care, personal appearance, the outward impression given to others, and the way in which (a) the contours of the body, dress, footwear and jewelry, and (b) the face (facial hair, hairstyle, wigs, makeup, and perfume) were emphasized. 'Image' refers to general appearance, posture, expression, gestures, and mannerisms; see: DeBrohun 2001: 19–25.

iconographic, and iconological perspective, with some aspects based on works of art and on extant ancient sources that describe the subject from the (male) perspective of their writers. To provide the broadest possible perspective of how the body, dress, and accessories were regarded in antiquity, the work introduces concepts from other disciplines, such as literature (including poems and letters), history, theology, philosophy, aesthetics, and medicine. It also examines contemporary studies related to the subject in fields such as psychology, social sciences, and gender studies.¹¹

Visual depictions of ancient dress on works of art attest to male and female dress codes. The garments and adornments depicted in the different artistic media were an important form of visual communication at the time, as they convey symbolic conventions, reflect society's aesthetic and moral values, and reveal details about gender, age, role, and class while inspiring human creativity, the timeless desire for beauty, and the human need to adorn and bring attention to oneself.¹²

By understanding the symbolic layers behind the functional aspects of dress, we can determine the relationship between a figure's function, external appearance, and gender. The study of costume history focused on this subject from the mid-19th to the 20th centuries, when it was realized that various elements of dress provide an indication of gender and class. Scholars also examined those garments that could be worn by both men and women, a custom that also appears in the Talmud in spite of the biblical prohibition, 'A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing'.¹³ Since in certain periods there was no one way of determining the right and proper type of dress for a man or a woman, examples of items used by both genders reflect the conventions, customs, and aesthetic tastes of a particular culture in a given period and their contribution to maintaining or changing social order.¹⁴ Literary sources from the period, for example, state that women wore the *talaris* tunic. A man dressed in such a tunic was the subject of harsh criticism. To understand the predominant aesthetic taste at the time, we must understand the concept of beauty that

advocated symmetry and subscribed to values inherited from the Greco-Roman world and local traditions.¹⁵ The book examines the combination of different features of dress and the adoption of military and civilian elements manifested in clothing and particularly in its ornamentation and accompanying accessories.

Since art was influenced by economic interests driven by capital controlled by the emperor, the governor, functionaries such as priests, and public benefactors,¹⁶ items of dress obviously reflected politically motivated social systems.¹⁷ The figures depicted in the mosaic floors should therefore be understood mainly through the eyes of those patrons and donors who funded the art works and, in many cases, also dictated their composition. By approaching them in this way, we gain an impression of the patrons' tastes, preferred styles, aspirations, and expectations rather than realistic depictions of actual garments.¹⁸ Often, influential figures such as moral leaders, philosophers and theologians were not involved in the decisions of the patrons (whose principal interest was to glorify themselves), although they preached virtue and modesty and strove to inculcate such values in the collective subconscious, in the visual appearance of the figures, and in the way in which dress and accessories were presented. In this way, they sought to influence the masses who attended the various events in public buildings.¹⁹

In contrast with monochrome visual expressions, mosaic art reveals the diverse colors of garments and accessories depicted in murals, sculptures, and reliefs

¹⁵ Bychkov and Sheppard 2010: 171.

¹⁶ It is sometimes possible to know who the patrons were, since they immortalized themselves in inscriptions accompanying the mosaic works, murals, and sculptures. The church donors were bishops and clergy or devout members of the congregation, some of whom sought to glorify their own names; see: Dauphin 1978: 25. At a conference of the Israeli Association of Byzantine Studies held in January 2014 at Kinneret Academic College, Dr Lea Di Segni translated the Greek inscription found in the prayer hall at Kefar 'Otnay as reading 'Gaianus also called Porphyrius, centurion, our brother, has made the pavement at his own expense as an act of liberality, Brutius has carried out the work'. This and other inscriptions show that each patron donated as he wished. The donation was sometimes only enough to pay for a number of lines of mosaic floor. Christians viewed the contribution as a devotional act that commemorated the donor's generosity; see: Dunbabin 1999: 324. It is not clear to what extent the donors were involved in work on the mosaic. According to Dunbabin and Kitzinger, church dignitaries influenced the decorative content; see: Dunbabin 1999: 325; Kitzinger 2002: 596. In Kivity's opinion, in instances where there is a connection between the figurative depiction and the sermons and interpretations of the Church Fathers it can be assumed that, whether the patron was a member of the clergy or the church community, he was familiar with the sacred texts. See: Kivity 2007: 130; Hachlili notes that Jewish and Christian artists and craftsmen worked for pagan, Jewish, and Christian clients. The inscriptions are in Aramaic and Greek; see: Hachlili 2009: 232–280.

¹⁷ Meaning both in the artistic works and in reality. See: Arce 2005: 33–44; Antiquity, *Codex Theodosianus*: 14.10.1–4.

¹⁸ Blundell 2002: 144; Talgam 2012: 412; also referring to the condition of items of clothing and whether they are decorated, worn, patched, etc.

¹⁹ Rutledge 2012: 80–81.

¹¹ Soranus of Ephesus: IX [XXIX]; for the connection between the figure and the written word; see: Squire 2009: 190–193.

¹² Marshalek 2009: 14; Keenan 2001: XV; dress has both aesthetic significance (altering between places and over time) and functional significance, since it protects from the natural elements such as heat, cold, wind, and natural hazards like thorns, etc.; it has social significance with regard to age, beliefs, restrictions, modesty, customs, conventions, and laws; its form, materials, and colors are inextricably linked to the design and artistic styles of the period; see: Reich 1995: 16. In this book, therefore, I refer to the social groups wearing the clothing, the dress of other figures, and the way in which they were viewed by legislators, intellectuals, and opinion makers.

¹³ De Brohun 2001: 18; Eicer and Roach-Higgins 1992: 8–29; Deuteronomy 22: 5; BT, Nedarim 49, 72.

¹⁴ Hirsch 1979: 245–246; Scott 2006: 328.

that would originally have been painted.²⁰ The use of color will be examined in the context of ‘a language of color’, or visual language characterizing art in the relevant period.²¹

The book examines the extent to which dress and accessories reflected cosmopolitan or regional trends and whether the official recognition and establishment of Christianity led to a change in how clothing was perceived. The preserved remnants of clothing and accessories that have survived have also been examined, such as tunics, jewelry, footwear, and belts recovered from archaeological excavations in Eretz Israel.

At the interpretive level of mosaic costume research, the symbolic and material significance of the figures is revealed by how the types, colors, and raw materials (wool, linen, gold, purple, and silk) of the cloth are rendered. Garments and their ornamentation contain layers of meaning that expose class-related issues. The social hierarchy revealed by the repertoire of dress therefore allows us to recognize features from everyday life and provides an indication of a figure’s social and economic status. The study identifies gender and class characteristics and social codes related to the values and beliefs that characterized the dress of people from the highest social strata or workers engaged in various trades, such as hunters, warriors, vintners, drivers, charioteers, sailors, shepherds, porters, and woodcutters. Personifications and figures from the Holy Scriptures and Greek mythology in an assortment of attire are also represented in mosaic art. Fine clothing symbolizes high status and conveys power. Those who wear it are therefore depicted with additional attributes, such as a regal or imperial crown or the weapons of a hunter-soldier, etc. This book examines how art provides a complementary source by which to understand the semiotic and symbolic role of clothing and accessories. It examines the use, significance, messages and images which the artists sought to reflect through clothing and accessories. Comparative research of floor mosaics and other visual representations, such as murals, sculpture, reliefs, coins, figurines, wall mosaics, etc. from centers of artistic influence, both at the heart of the classical world and in the peripheral regions, sheds light on garment types, uses, colors, and ornamentation. All of these outward indicators provide visual clues as to the personality, status, and lifestyle of the wearers and point to traits such as modesty, self-glorification, vanity, or ostentatiousness.

²⁰ Zinserling 1972: 44; Scholars have noted that floors paved with mosaics were cheaper than those paved with marble; unlike marble, however, mosaics reveal colorful geometric and figurative designs; Vriezen 1998: 247.

²¹ Karmon 1993: 7; color was used as an identifying element in attributes and iconographic formulas.

Descriptions of the figures, stylistic-aesthetic analysis, and comparative research into other visual representations in and prior to the relevant period use iconographic analysis to help detect the artists’ sources of inspiration and reach subsequent conclusions.

By studying the different dress elements, we gain an impression of the skills and abilities used by craftsmen and artists to transform colored mosaic tesserae into an illusion of ornate items of clothing. The stones were cut into different shapes and sizes, from tiny tesserae used to render jewelry, embroidery, and the drapes of fabric over the body to larger stones for the rest of the garment.²² We examine whether, in an attempt to give their works an opulent appearance, the mosaic artists deviated from accepted decorative conventions of the time and used colored tesserae in imitation of precious metals and gems. I also examine the likelihood that the artist was often given free rein in the design of items of clothing and accessories.²³ This book also addresses the reasons why garments that had previously been forbidden became common and accepted in the relevant period. It should be noted that in a significant number of instances, a work of art’s dating relies on the items of dress that appear in it.²⁴

The book’s structure follows the above-mentioned classification. Two sections are devoted to each gender (male, female) and one to children. The first part of each section, which discusses typology, provides a kind of inventory with dates, details of accompanying inscriptions, the location of works and their state of preservation, descriptions of the clothing, and classification. This part opens with a short preface introducing each item of clothing and describing its use, distribution and history, and the number of

²² In the fifth *Ennead* of his eighth treatise, Plotinus states that a stone becomes beautiful not because it is a stone, but in virtue of the form or idea introduced by the artist; see: Plotinus: V.8.1. Notably, the advantage of mosaic as a visual medium capable of imitating the texture of a material, shading, and outlines is reflected in the size, uniformity, and color of its tesserae. The artist prepared the design and the craftsmen (apprentices) cut and shaped the stones according to the desired size and color. Once the foundation of earth and stones was prepared, it was covered with a layer of mortar in which the artist sketched out the mosaic. The artists laid the tesserae for the more complex parts of the work, while the craftsmen began laying the tesserae in the simpler areas. Finally, the surface of the mosaic was polished with stones until it was smooth and even. See: De Vecchi 2006: 7–17.

²³ The research literature contains few references to the mosaic artists and craftsmen, since there is very little information about them; see: Ovadia 2004a. Scholars have identified a number of workshops and schools of mosaic in different centers, which the artists moved between or were invited to. For example, in *De Aedificiis* (‘Buildings’), Procopius records that Justinian gathered artists from throughout the world; see: Procopius, *Buildings*: VII, I.i.23, 24. A few sources also record the cooperation that existed between the artist who traced the mosaic ‘cartoon’ and the craftsman who tessellated the stones. Cartoons may have been exchanged between artists; Bruneau 1984: 247–248, 254–258, 261. For mosaic artists and workshops in Eretz Israel; see: Ovadia 2004a: 85–96.

²⁴ In cases in which the mosaic was damaged.

figures shown wearing such an item in mosaics from Eretz Israel. It is important to note that the location of figures depicted on mosaic fragments sometimes makes it difficult to identify them and ascertain their role in the decorative composition.²⁵ The second part, which addresses stylistic-iconographic aspects and iconology, relates to ancient sources and the function and dress of the figures in various Western and Eastern visual representations in the relevant period and geographic region. These comparisons help determine the influence of the different traditions and identify original elements that may shed light on the clothing and its accessories.²⁶ The seventh and final part of the book is based on the previous sections and discusses items such as jewelry, head coverings, belts and footwear, and the literary sources that mention them. Each section ends with a summary and conclusions. The final summary presents conclusions about appearance, dress, and accessories as reflected in the mosaics of Eretz Israel.

It is worth emphasizing that there are two different approaches to the iconographic analysis of mosaics in the research. One attributes a symbolic meaning to the overall composition and figures, a 'significance beyond' what the viewer sees; the second approach examines the figures themselves and refrains from attributing further meaning to them. In his book on the terrestrial world in Early Byzantine Art, Maguire states that mosaics with more complex and varied decorative compositions are more likely to correspond to texts that reflect the spirit of the times. The works must be interpreted in comparison with other works of art, taking into consideration their architectural function, the date of the mosaic, its documentation, literary works of the relevant period and spiritual concepts, accompanying inscriptions, style, and technique. Maguire notes that in cases where it is not possible to attribute symbolic significance and interpretation to the mosaic, one should refrain from symbolic interpretation and adopt research methods based on comparisons, stylistic analysis, and accompanying texts.²⁷ Furthermore, in the absence of an accompanying explanatory inscription, they can be interpreted in different ways as being either devoid of symbolism, partial allegories, or allegoric-symbolic interpretations. Sometimes, there is more than one way of interpreting the images and a figure's meaning can be ambiguous or obscure.

This book covers a large number of figures wearing numerous kinds of dress. Since many of the mosaics in Eretz Israel are fragmentary, it is often difficult to identify a figure's place and role in the decorative composition. In addition, it is not possible to identify the function of the building for every mosaic or the exact period of its construction. These facts are consistent with Maguire's approach. The iconographic interpretation in this book therefore relies on the thematic, formal, practical, and conceptual comparison and examination of inscriptions and dress as well as on the social perspectives supplied by contemporary literary and theological sources.²⁸

Current research status

Overall, the dress and costume accessories depicted on mosaic floors in Eretz Israel have long been neglected as a research topic. There is no previous comprehensive study of the subject and it remains a largely unexplored field. This book, which approaches the subject from different and varied viewpoints, aims to rectify this situation. Ancient literary sources and costume research addressed by different disciplines — such as gender studies, sociology, philosophy, literature, and theology — enable the examination of the moral and ideological significance of clothing and accessories in the framework of an overall cultural system.²⁹ The book draws on available data from the few related studies that discuss mosaic art in general and on research into the subject in other artistic media.

Ancient literary sources

Ancient literary sources that mention clothing and appearance provide an important contribution to the study of the significance of dress in Late Antiquity and the social, economic, and aesthetic aspects in addition to the moral and religious implications of dress and personal appearance.³⁰ These are reflected in pagan literature, in the sages' interpretations of the scriptures, in Talmudic prohibitions, in the New Testament, in the writings of the Church Fathers, and in official legislation. Such sources reflect the spirit of religious law, which aims to correct and to serve as a deliberate 'spiritual guide' in response to the reality it aspires to change. The attitudes of conservatives and those preaching morality in the ancient sources focus on the social-moral aspect of providing the poor with covering.³¹ Descriptions of dress styles that were

²⁵ For example, fragments of figures in the Huqoq synagogue mosaic discovered in the 2013 excavation season are dressed in elaborate clothing. Archaeologists hope to reveal further fragments at the site that will shed light on the finds and enable them to identify the subjects. See: Plates 4, 5.

²⁶ In the West: Greece, Italy, Sicily, Germany, Gaul, Spain, Britain, and North Africa. In the East: Egypt, Cyprus, Eretz Israel, Persia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Turkey.

²⁷ Maguire 1987: 5–13.

²⁸ Betzer 2007: 3–13; Maguire 1987: 51.

²⁹ For the contribution of ancient sources to an understanding of daily life and social and religious views, see: Allen and Mayer 1993: 260–280.

³⁰ The titles of most of the sources are given in their original form, even when they are referred to in translation.

³¹ Compare Exodus 22: 25, 'If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset. Because that cloak is the only covering your neighbor has. What else can they sleep in? When they cry out to

viewed as corrupting and leading to morally degenerate pretensions and wastefulness give an important perspective on the meaning of dress and its social, moral, economic, and aesthetic aspects in the relevant period.³² Comparison of the written word with the visual image furnishes us with a comprehensive view of the types of clothing, their accessories, and their visual and literary representations. The written descriptions, revealing an inventory of clothing and jewelry that was adopted from the Greco-Roman repertoire, for example, refer to the wearer's identity and his relation to topics drawn from mythology, religion, rural or urban life that are reflected in his dress.³³ The literary sources that describe the establishment's attitude to appearance and adornment are replete with condemnation for the feminine image, which is singled out for particular censure, but also frequently express disgust and dismay at the attire and appearance of men. Ancient writings give reliable historical sources on dress give few details of the exact design of garments, how they were worn, and with what added accessories.³⁴

Ancient Roman literature contains references to clothing, accessories, the correct way of wearing them, and how they can be used to identify a person's social status and geographical origin. Pliny the Elder identified Etruscan, Phrygian, Babylonian, Gallic, Syrian and Egyptian influences in Roman dress. He also distinguished between the different spinning and weaving techniques, which determined the fabric used for tunics.³⁵ Suetonius added a special note on the fastening of the *toga* and attributed a certain personality to those securing it without due care.³⁶ The male authors' critical comments reflect the importance they placed on the ideal of the perfect image and the ability to 'read' and identify the social class of a person by means of his garment, its color, and any accessories. Intellectuals denounced various phenomena that were linked to permissiveness and blamed them for social disintegration.

Such admonitions reveal the 'regimented' social construct in which a calm, submissive appearance conveys a sense of modesty that will result in redemption of the soul. The research reveals the moral and ethical principles underlying the stylistic-iconographic depiction and the aspirations of moral leaders and philosophers, such as chastity, moderation,

and frugality. Their wrath was directed not only at clothing that was considered promiscuous, but also at signs of waste and extravagance. Augustine, who was born in the 4th century, complained of the 'lust of the eyes' indulged in by mankind through different arts and crafts and manifested by a passion for clothing, shoes, and other objects far exceeding those needed for an expression of modest piety.³⁷ Clement of Alexandria, who stressed the common need of men and women to cloth their bodies, deplored the fact that women were not content with simple apparel and chose fine fabrics with gold embroidery that revealed their body contours.³⁸ Ovid referred to the head coverings of Roman women as a sign of their marital status.³⁹ The theologian Clement of Alexandria, writing in the early 3rd century, demonstrated remarkable proficiency in the variety of accessories and means at the disposal of women, such as hairnets, ribbons, chest girdles, veils, *chitons*, beads, anklets, and cosmetics like rouge and eye paint.⁴⁰

The literary sources and legislation regarding dress reveal concern and dismay in their criticism of male attire. Juvenal was sarcastic and highly critical of male fashions imported to Rome from the East (Antioch), which he considered effeminate.⁴¹ Tertullian, who lived in the early 3rd century, criticized the *toga* for its lack of comfort and advocated wearing the *pallium*.⁴² In the 1st century, Quintilian wrote about how the *toga* was worn, its length and the fall of its folds. He criticized those who wore it in the incorrect manner, adding instructions for the recommended position for a military tunic's belt.⁴³

The displeasure of the 'guardians of morality' led rulers to introduce legislation and civil regulations. The laws governing dress were adopted to encourage simplicity and to prevent excessive spending and the import of precious materials such as fine fabrics and jewelry.⁴⁴ Just how important the issue was can be seen by the rules governing who was permitted to wear what, restrictions on the purchase of expensive fabrics and jewelry, and the punishments meted out for infringement. The need to revise and reiterate the dress codes in successive legislations during the various imperial reigns attest to the fact that some people disregarded them. Further data on costume can be gleaned from the books of laws published by the emperors, such as the price edict (*Edictum Diocletiani*) issued by Diocletian in 301 in an attempt to halt inflation, which reveals the price ceilings

me, I will hear, for I am compassionate'. See also *Isaiah* 58: 7 'Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter, when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?'

³² Eliav-Feldon 2003: 50.

³³ For the connection between the visual image and the written word, see: Elkins 1999: 83–84.

³⁴ Pipnçoise and Mane 1997: 7.

³⁵ Pliny: VIII, LXXIV, 194–196. This book refers to Pliny the Elder as Pliny.

³⁶ For Julius' appearance, with a garment fastened carelessly and draped in loose folds, see: Suetonius 31, 45.

³⁷ Augustine: 53.

³⁸ Clement of Alexandria, *Chr.* 10: 106, 107.

³⁹ Ovid, *The Art*: 3. 483

⁴⁰ Clement: *Paed.* 2.124.1–2.

⁴¹ Juvenal: 2. 6. 65–68, 87.

⁴² Tertullian: *De Pal.*: V, 2.

⁴³ Quintilian: 11.138–139.

⁴⁴ Wolff 1992: 39–40; Pipnçoise and Mane 1997: 9. For the import of various fabrics and shipping costs; see: Horden and Purcell 2000: 352–364.

imposed on items of clothing and footwear. The section on textiles lists items for both sexes: Undergarments and *dalmatics* (overtunics) without stripes and overgarments that included long and short coats and short hooded cloaks for women, which were rated by quality into three different tariffs.⁴⁵ The *Theodosianus Codex* stated the items of clothing, fabrics, and colors adopted by the imperial household and noted those that members of other classes were forbidden to wear, such as garments made of silk or embellished with gold and purple. There was also a prohibition on garments studded with pearls.⁴⁶ The Jewish sources (the Bible, *Mishnah*, and Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds) supply us with information about dress and its uses. For example, the Jerusalem Talmud explains how to wed a woman who has previously vowed not to wear dyed garments, and Rav Zeira states that the fine linen garments from Beit She'an (Scythopolis) are equivalent to the dyed garments and luxury clothing that some women vow not to wear.⁴⁷

The research literature

Early 20th-century studies of clothing cover the fashions, fabrics, and changes occurring in dress throughout history, from Ancient Egypt to the time of their publication. Concentration on the historical approach helped date items of clothing and their distribution at the time when they were worn.

A number of studies discuss male clothing and personal appearance in Late Antiquity. Gutmann (1992) and Rothgus (2006) distinguish between the tailored garment with side seams such as the *tunica*, *colobium*, and trousers, and loose garments made of rectangular pieces of cloth and fastened around the body, such as the *himation*, the *pallium*, and the *toga*. An article by Geddes (1987) focuses on changes in fashion and their significance in 5th-century BC Athens, as depicted on vases and other vessels. Geddes cites ancient writers such as Thucydides, Herodotus, and Homer, who mention articles of clothing like the *chiton*, *himation*, and *chlamys*.⁴⁸ Gleason's book on the male image, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Gleason 1995) discusses the dress, behavior, masculine appearance, physiognomy and semiotics of gender in ancient Rome. Delmaire (2004) refers to the dress laws governing the inhabitants of the Roman Empire.

Newbold (2005) examines the clothing and accessories mentioned by historians writing in Late Antiquity, such as the 4th-century Ammianus Marcellinus, who described garments that symbolized class, and the 6th-century Gregory of Tours who advocated modest clothing while attributing miraculous powers to clothes of the saints. Hotchkiss (1996) addresses the aspect of gender in medieval women's clothing and the link between identity and dress. This book helps us understand the differences relating to social order and the female-male dress code in Western culture.

In the field of modern research, the works by Davenport (1948), Wilcox (1958), Köhler (1963), Lister (1967), Gorsline (1991), Laver (1995), and Broby-Johansen (1968) contain general studies of costume and accessories between the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods and the 20th century. Potthoff (1992) studies items of clothing and the literary sources that refer to them. Hollander's research gives an insight into the clothing shown in various forms of Western art. She concludes that the garments depicted in artistic works are more elaborate than those that existed in reality. In her opinion, clothing acts as a means of 'constructing the body' and in each period there are different concepts of the body that lead to emphasis on different parts of it. This is achieved by 'creating' disparity between the 'natural' body's contours and its artificial representations. In the Archaic and Classical Greek world, one can discern different styles of clothing because of different 'constructs' of the body.⁴⁹

A few studies focus on a specific period, such as the study of Greek dress by Bieber (1928). Others concentrate on certain kinds of clothing like headgear, footwear, and military dress. Houston (1947) reviews the development of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine dress worn by men, women, and soldiers with relation to the various parts of the garment, decorative elements, jewelry, and hairstyles. Hope (1962) examines the clothing worn by mythological figures, priests, soldiers, and civilians in Ancient Egypt and describes the changes in hairstyles in Greece and Rome as depicted in sculptures, vases, tombstones, and murals. Wilson (1938) relates to the repertoire of male and female Roman civilian dress in sculptures and on vases. She reviews the production methods and literary sources describing Roman dress. Brown (1992) attributes the preservation of Greek heritage to the Roman elite, expressed by its use of the Greek language, literature, culture, and fashion tastes.⁵⁰ Toynbee (1972) and Poulsen (2012) surmise that use was made of pattern books that have not survived. Poulsen also notes that the decorative patterns that were popular in certain regions were adopted from shared

⁴⁵ Diocletian, *Edic.*: XVII–XVIII, XIX, 26–28; *CTh*: 10.20.18, 21. Overgarments of men and women recovered among archaeological finds from the northern Roman imperial provinces show that the women wore long coats and the men were dressed in shorter jackets. Stig Sørensen 2000: 140.

⁴⁶ Ploumis 2001: 68; *CTh*: 14.10–12; 15.7.11; 15.9.1. The Codex contains a number of laws, speeches and letters written to the Senate and governors from the time of Constantine to that of Theodosianus II. See: Harper 2011: 359–360.

⁴⁷ JT, Kiddushin 2: 5, 62c; Derech Eretz 1: 1.

⁴⁸ Geddes 1987: 307–331.

⁴⁹ Hollander 1993: 3.

⁵⁰ Brown notes that Roman dress was widely used during religious and public celebrations such as the summer festivals.

iconographic sources and distributed throughout the empire by various means. In his research of Roman dress accessories, Johns (1996) claims that throughout history those of both sexes have attempted to assert their position in the social ladder through clothing and its accessories, thus helping peers to recognize their status. He maintains that it is important to study dress and accessories in order to understand a society's values and challenges those who underrate the issue.

The body of research on costume in the Roman and Early Byzantine periods includes a collection of works edited by Sebasta and Bonfante (2001) that addresses several aspects of the imperial Roman period: garments, hairstyles, dress accessories, and how they were worn by women, men, and children. They also discuss the use of jewelry as a status symbol, the incorporation of Eastern and Western motifs, and the development of the distinctive dress and accouterments that bestowed imperial authority, power, and legitimacy on the ruler. Their book contains a chapter on Roman footwear in sculptures, reliefs, murals, mosaics, literary sources, and archaeological finds. Swift (2009) covers Roman jewelry and dress styles. Rothe (2009) discusses dress as a reflection of social identity, concentrating on the Rhine region of Moselle during the imperial Roman period. Gardner (1986) researched the Roman family, status, and law. The theories compiled by Ariès (1979) on the status and education of children in France during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the 18th century have influenced subsequent research.

Papaconstantinou and Talbot (2009) published articles on various aspects of childhood in the Byzantine period including dress and nutrition, which have contributed to this volume. In her discussion of gender and archaeology, Stig Sørensen (2000) devotes one chapter to the subject of clothing and its ornamentation with an appraisal of costume studies, differences in the apparel worn by both sexes, and social messages. She studies the formation of identities through the link between the garment and social conventions and its potential to reveal shifts in moral, religious, and political norms. All of these studies, which are based on visual depictions, have contributed to a wider understanding of the field of clothing and accessories. By discussing the form and vibrancy conveyed by articles of clothing and providing the opportunity to discuss the Greco-Roman traditions reflected in the relevant period, they have made a distinctive contribution to this work. They also substantiate the underlying assumption discussed in this book (outlined in note 2).

The last decades of the 20th century witnessed a turning point in the study of costume. The understanding that the issue is multi-disciplinary led to a shift in emphasis, which is evident in the current research. Whereas

previous research examined dates and changes in styles of costume in different periods, scholars began to focus on their interpretation and analysis. The topic of fashion was studied in disciplines such as sociology, art history, cultural history, anthropology, economics, gender studies, material culture, and semiotics, which discussed the symbolism of dress and its affinity with the language of unspoken communicative symbols. The sociologist Edward Sapir (1931) discusses the concept of 'fashion' and the science of design, changing color fashions, embellishment, and symbols.⁵¹ Members of the linguistic circle established in Prague in the 1930s studied semiotics, the elements of a symbol, and the rules driving it. Geertz (1990), who holds that culture is a semiotic concept requiring the interpretation of a system of signs, claims that man is a being imprisoned in the webs of meaning he has spun, which reflect cultural experiences and lifestyles. He states that a person is capable of communicating with his surroundings and with others through meaningful symbols such as verbal and non-verbal language, myth, and art, which all help the individual organize his life. Therefore, he asserts, analysis of cultural values is not an exact science but an interpretive science that strives to discover meaning. Humankind's clothing has been fashioned from time immemorial, attesting to man's humanity as a cultured being. The fig leaf, or any other accessory used by a person, emphasizes his or her humanity.⁵² Bogatyrev (1976) views dress as not just a utilitarian and practical necessity, but as a form of language signifying gender, social and economic class, etc. Furthermore, the various features of a garment – its color, ornamentation, and the quality of its fabric – enable one to understand culture and society. He maintains that in order to understand the social role of clothes, one must study a garment's language and signs in the same way as one learns a foreign language.⁵³ Eicher and Roach (1965) also treat clothing as a form of language. The anthropologist Levi Strauss (1976) published a number of papers on the structural similarity between language and dress. He states that one can detect quantifiable and measurable links in dress that are similar to the systems that make up language.⁵⁴ The semiotics scholar Roland Barthes (1991) relates to the study of the signs and symbols of fashion and detects in the subtext a language of meanings characterized by a syntax and combinations of codes that constitute a 'peg' from which symbolic, moral, aesthetic, gender-related, and semiotic meanings can be hung.⁵⁵ He holds that fashion is a code for an entire language with its own meaning and that even if a garment's wearer remains silent, he is actually making a statement. The garment stands for social and political structure, whereas fashion

⁵¹ Sapir 1931: 139–144.

⁵² Geertz 1990: 17, 34, 37, 44, 47, 55.

⁵³ Bogatyrev 1971: 82–85; Bogatyrev 1976: 13–19.

⁵⁴ Levi Strauss 1969: 59–62.

⁵⁵ Barthes 1991; Barthes 2006.

influences religion and social values and represents fears, hopes, and aspirations. Scholars have traced the process of identity formation through the link between dress, which supplies a means of detecting changes in moral, religious and political norms, and social conventions. The subject of dress has recently attracted the attention of cultural researchers since it opens up an opportunity to examine their research subject through clothing. Another trend in this field examines costume through the wider perspective of social sciences while considering psychological, social, sociological, and anthropological aspects. Peter Brown (2008), who researched the connection between the body, society, men, women, and theories of sexuality in early Christianity, is one of the pioneers in this field of study. Flugel (1966) discusses the social and psychological significance of garments, their ornamentation, styles, and the power of fashion.⁵⁶ Kroeber (1919) refers to changes in fashion resulting from social forces and media reports on new fashions, dress styles, fabrics, cuts, and ornamentation in different cultures.⁵⁷ A collection of papers edited by Crane (2000) deals with the link between fashion, which is the most visible marker, analysis of the wearer's gender and social status, and the ability to detect identity and social changes through a person's dress.⁵⁸

Studies of different artistic media emphasize the subject's importance and provide an understanding of the cultural and moral values, social conventions, and status of the wearers. Martin and Cos Miller (2005) note the 'cultural direction' taken in Late Antiquity studies, which shifted the emphasis from a single theoretical or methodological approach, studying cultural, anthropological, and social influences, to exploration through a wide range of theories and methods borrowed from post-structuralism and dealing with the body, feminism, and gender. A number of works employ feminist theories to study the social formation of masculinity. Young (1994) discusses the theory of being a man and masculinity as reflected in *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Studies dealing with women have indirectly referred to male sexuality. Kampen (1996) deals with the history of gender and maintains that ancient art and literature do not reflect gender norms, but are part of socially determined practices.

Cavallaro and Warwick (1998) examine the relationship between the garment and the body and discuss the question of whether a garment should be treated as part of the body or separately. They also ask whether clothing is designed to fit the body, or if the body has to be adapted to clothing and 'reshaped' with various

appendages.⁵⁹ The French philosopher Lipovetsky (1994) addresses the ability of the language of dress to communicate, reflect social changes, and indicate gender differences.⁶⁰ In his book on understanding the media, McLuhan (1994) writes that, when used as a second skin, clothing is making a political statement.⁶¹ Clark (1993) points out that images of clothing enable us to examine the artist's choice and perception through how he dresses the figure and whether a garment emphasizes or conceals the contours of the body.⁶² Batterberry and Batterberry (1982) examine the link between fashion and history. Writing on clothing, Ribeiro (1998, 2003) discusses the connection between the wearer and articles of clothing, the moral aspects of the subject, and its ability to act as a 'barometer' for contemporary trends and feelings. Carter (2003) reviews the work of eight leading dress and fashion theorists including Flugel, Laver, and Barthes. Breward (1998) notes that the study of fashion alongside interdisciplinary topics raises questions about appearance, gender, and social identity that can equally be applied to cultures in ancient times.

A very limited number of works exist on costume in mosaic art. Voight (2000) studies fashions, jewelry, and changes in their design from the 2nd to 6th centuries in the mosaics at Roman Antioch. Zielinski (2010) analyzes the dress of a number of figures in mosaic pavements in Turkey, Jordan, and Israel. Two papers deal with the costume accessories depicted on mosaic murals in the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna. Brown (1979) attributes several of the early-Byzantine accessories to workshops that served the royal court. The author describes the precious gems that symbolized or glorified the court and compares the accessories in the mosaics with museum exhibits of finds belonging to dignitaries of the period that were produced in a court workshop. Empress Theodora's attire and Emperor Justinian's jewelry in the mosaic mural at the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna are analyzed by Kanaan-Kedar (2000), who interprets them as statements of authority. In his discussion of Byzantine aesthetics and its roots, Mathew (1963) attributes significant influence to the Church Fathers in determining the highest ideals, expressed by their views on beauty, light, image, symbol, sign, and art.⁶³

General studies of the mosaics of Eretz Israel, written by Ovadiah and Ovadiah (1987), Roussin (1985), Figueras (2003), Hachlili (2009) and (Talgam 2014) and describing the mosaic pavements' locations have contributed to establishing and consolidating knowledge of the subject,

⁵⁹ Cavallaro and Warwick 1998: XV–XVI, 25, 52.

⁶⁰ Lipovetsky 1994.

⁶¹ McLuhan 1994: 119–122.

⁶² Clark 1993: 105–107.

⁶³ Namely Athanasios of Alexandria, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, and the Neoplatonist Dionysius the Areopagite.

⁵⁶ Flugel 1966.

⁵⁷ Kroeber 1919: 253–263.

⁵⁸ Crane 2000.