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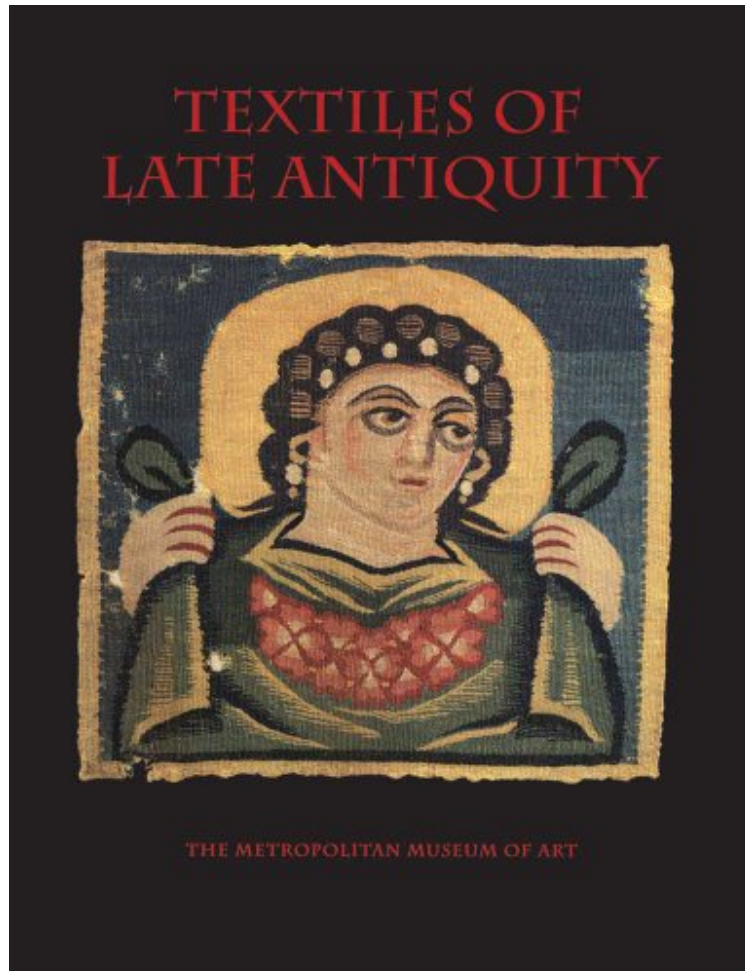
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Textiles of Late Antiquity

Annemarie Stauffer : Textiles of Late Antiquity before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Textiles of Late Antiquity:

To this day Late Antique textiles found in Egypt are widely designated as Coptic textiles, following a tradition established a hundred years ago when excavators first reported on the discovery of such pieces. The term Coptic, however, refers to native Egyptian Christians, while the design and imagery of these textiles can only very rarely be attached to an unequivocally and narrowly Christian-Coptic context. Until fairly recently it was difficult to place Egyptian decorated textile fragments in a larger perspective and to recognize them as the late products of an industry that had already blossomed for centuries in the Near and Middle East. One reason for this difficulty was the apparent lack of contemporary and earlier finds in neighboring regions. For a long time this absence of comparative material caused the Egyptian pieces to stand out as the sole examples of weaving from classical antiquity. Textiles from other

regions of the Near East have since come to light, leading to a reassessment of the weaving finds from Egypt and for some of them a redetermination of their place of manufacture. It also became clear that most textile finds from Egypt can be dated to the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. by stylistic comparisons to works of art produced in other media. In those centuries, however, the eastern Mediterranean and Egypt were still strongly influenced by cultural and iconographic traditions inherited from Hellenistic and Roman times. This was especially true among traditionally educated aristocrats and wealthy citizens who were largely the owners of elaborately decorated textiles. At the turn of the twentieth century, Alois Riegl and Joseph Strzygowski undertook significant studies of the third through sixth centuries A.D. After this research waned until the 1970s when two important exhibitions were held in New York and Frankfurt. These catalyzed a new interest among archaeologists, art historians, philologists, and scholars of other disciplines in an epoch whose fascination lies in the many levels of understanding and diverse possibilities for interpretation allowed by its artistic forms of expression. [This book was originally published in 2001 and has gone out of print. This edition is a print-on-demand version of the original book.]