A Man’s Caftan and Leggings from the North Caucasus of the Eighth to Tenth Century: A Genealogical Study

ELFRIEDE R. KN AUER

Dedicated to Rudolf and Utta Kassel

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM’S Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art has, over a period of years, acquired a number of textile fragments of no evident Glamor and of unknown provenance. Among the better-preserved pieces is a caftan and a pair of leggings. Closer investigation reveals that they are testimony to the historic, cultural, and economic interconnections between Europe and Asia that have existed for millennia. This study focuses on the period between the sixth and the tenth centuries that corresponds to the early medieval period in Europe. The overthrow of the Roman Empire was prompted by the ascendancy of Germanic, Iranian, and Altaic tribes, whose gradual assimilation of the remnants of Late Roman culture in the West and aspects of the emerging Byzantine civilization in the East directly pertain to our concerns here. The epoch was as crucial to the formation of national identities in Western Europe as it was for the eastern part of the Classical world. Less well known are conditions in the Near East, where the alternation of confrontation and cohabitation between sedentary populations and the nomadic world differs from conditions in the West. This article investigates the historical background of the coat and the leggings (Figures 1, 2), as well as the related issues of geography, costume history, and commerce. A number of features, specifically the cut and the materials employed in the outfit, make it possible to approximate the date and to pinpoint the region where it may have been produced. Climate plays a major role in the preservation of perishable fibers, and, in general, desert conditions are most conducive to their preservation. As we shall see, the Museum’s garments do not come from regions of extremely dry conditions, making their conservation all the more astounding.

Since Nobuko Kajitani presents a comprehensive technical analysis of the caftan and the leggings in “A Man’s Caftan and Leggings from the North Caucasus of the Eighth to Tenth Century: A Conservator’s Report” (pp. 85–124 above), I shall give only a brief description of their salient features. Measuring about 142 centimeters in length, the coat must originally have come down to the mid-calves of a tall male (Figure 1; Kajitani, Figures 1–9). Unlike modern coats, the caftan is composed of a tight-fitting portion over the chest to which a skirt-like lower part is attached at the waistline. The garment closes at the proper left side of the body and is fastened with frogs.

The basic fabric of the caftan is finely woven bleached linen, cut into pieces that were stitched together. The two front panels of the skirt and the one of the back are composed of three pieces each: a wider central length of linen is flanked by narrower gussetlike pieces that widen progressively toward the lower edge. Two deep slits in the coat’s skirt are positioned at either side of the back—not (as one might expect) at the sides below the arms. The solution is practical for a coat that was worn for horseback riding, since the rather narrow back panel of the skirt permitted the wider front panels to better protect the horseman’s legs. A minute fragment of skin—as yet unidentified—preserved on the caftan’s interior attests to a fur lining.

The riding coat’s most spectacular feature is its trimming of patterned “Sogdian” silk, which originally ran along all its edges, including the slits in the back, both outside and inside (Silks A and B; Kajitani, Figures 28–33). They consist of two different patterns of samit—that is, weft-faced compound twill—pieced together to form strips about 8 centimeters wide. On the lapel of the right panel, which is preserved up to the neck, only the outward-turned underside of the lapel is trimmed, not the outside, since it was turned toward the body and was therefore invisible, thus saving a bit of the precious material. On the back of the coat, although the slits do not run up to the waist, their trimming does, as confirmed by the preserved part at the right side of the back. Instead of smoothly disappearing in the seam at the waistline, the ends of the two trims bordering the slits are doubled up face
to face, sewn together, and thus jut out like little humps that accentuate the waist and hip (Kajitani, Figures 2, 3). An additional practical purpose of this detail may have been to hold the obligatory belt of the riding coat in place. Most likely, the missing (and presumably extremely long) sleeves, too, were embellished with silk at the cuffs.

The leggings, which were worn with the riding coat, measure 65 centimeters in height (Figure 2; Kajitani, Figure 4). The leg portion, which is funnel-shaped, consists of patterned silk (Silks C1 and C2)—differing in design from the caftan’s borders—as far as the ankle, while the feet are tailored from sturdy linen. The stitching is meticulous throughout.1

**Provenance of the Metropolitan Museum’s Caftan**

Recent publications have shed considerable light on fabric finds made intermittently throughout the twentieth century in the northwestern part of the Caucasus Mountains and their piedmont, modern Karachayevo-Cherkesskiya and Kabardino-Balkarskiya. The set of garments in the Metropolitan Museum’s possession certainly comes from the same region. The main site, Moshchevaja Balka, is situated in a ravine, high above a mountain stream. Densely wooded and situated at an altitude of about one thousand meters, not far from the confluence of the rivers Beskes and Bolshaja Laba, a left-hand tributary of the mighty Kuban, the site is hard to reach even today (Figures 3, 4).2 Exten-
sive burial grounds were laid out on limestone terraces with overhanging ledges. The tombs are either built up from slabs on these terraces or hollowed out in the rock face. Favorable microclimatic conditions helped to preserve garments and burial furnishings in the harsh climate. The local population seems to have picked over these cemeteries long before the first scholarly investigation of this important find spot ever took place in 1900–1901, and they have continued to do so. The name of the site, Moshchevaja Balka, that is, Ravine of Mummies or Relics, indicates the significance of the site to the local people.

The noted Russian archaeologist N. I. Veselovskii briefly reported on his 1900–1901 investigations of the region to the Archaeological Commission without, however, specifying the exact location. Because his finds were well preserved, he considered them of recent date and relegated them to the Ethnographic Section of the Russian Museum in Saint Petersburg. An amateur archaeologist, N. I. Vorob’ev, followed in Veselovskii’s footsteps in 1905. The eight hundred objects collected by Vorob’ev were consigned to the former Kunstkammer of Czar Peter I (today’s Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences). They were transferred to the Oriental Department of the Hermitage in 1935, a move that rescued them from total oblivion. The Veselovskii finds joined them there in 1951. However, some rare pieces were lost during World War II. The stylistic identity of the two groups of materials puts their common origin from Moshchevaja Balka beyond doubt. The site was again visited and adequately described for the first time by the scholar A. A. Iessen in 1950. By then, about one thousand objects were preserved in the Hermitage, ready at last to be conserved and studied.

In 1962 Anna A. Ierusalimskaja was appointed curator of the North Caucasian antiquities in the Hermitage. Thanks to her tireless and painstaking examination of the largely fragmentary materials from Moshchevaja Balka, to which she added considerably thanks to four excavation campaigns of her own between 1969 and 1976, we can now appreciate their intrinsic importance. In close to thirty articles, written with few exceptions in Russian (and thus not easily accessible to readers in the West), she elucidated the multifarious problems the materials posed. Her two latest publications, in German, not only represent the sum of almost four decades of work but conveniently illustrate the results to a public unfamiliar with Ierusalimskaja’s mother tongue. The benefits are immeasurable for the present study.

Besides garments, shoes, caps, veils, napkins, rugs, and small bags, some made of silk from China or the eastern Mediterranean, materials from the Moshchevaja Balka cemetery consist mostly of ceramic jugs and bowls, trinkets, amulets, knives, agricultural tools, occasional weapons (e.g., bow and arrows with their receptacles), and wooden containers, particularly small lidded boxes (see Kajitani, Figures 15–18). Much of these materials were apparently destined for burial since metal objects were rarely recovered. Clearly, metal was too costly a substance to be wasted, and cheap substitutes were fashioned for funerary purposes. Objects made of precious metals are lacking; they must have fallen victim to local looters. Few imported objects from the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor were found (glass, beads, bracts, and Arabic coins used as amulets, etc.), indicating that this was not an affluent society, a fact corroborated by the scant remains of a walled settlement on the plateau above the cemetery. In addition to the objects of foreign manufacture, Ierusalimskaja uses the ceramic finds from the larger North Caucasian region to date the burial grounds and the settlement to the eighth and ninth centuries. However, the chronology of neither the imported objects nor the ceramics is as well established as she maintains. In view of the present state of information, closer dating seems premature. Neither the age and places of manufacture of the majority of Chinese silks nor of those from the eastern Mediterranean recovered at the North Caucasian sites can as yet be defined with absolute certainty. In the absence of further criteria, Ierusalimskaja’s dates can only be accepted with caution.

A great number of tribes seem to have shared a fairly uniform and—were it not for the textile finds—unspectacular material culture, known as the Saltovo-Majak culture. Fragments of silk were recovered in tombs in the foothills and plains north of the Caucasus, too. But none are as striking as the clothes found at Moshchevaja Balka, most notably a blue-green silk caftan with a seminry pattern. Dated to the early ninth century, it may have belonged to the chief of a tribe. It has been exhibited at various international venues over the last decade (Figure 5).

The Historical and Geographical Context of the Adygo-Alanic Tribes

The mountain chains that stretch from the Black to the Caspian Sea, with two peaks, Elbruz and Kasbek, over five thousand meters high, virtually block access from the South Russian steppes to Anatolia, the highlands of Iran, and the Fertile Crescent (see Figure 4). Yet, since prehistoric times, waves of peoples succeeded in surmounting these ranges, attracted by the
Figure 3. The site of the cemetery at Moshchevaja Balka seen from across the ravine (after Anna A. Ierusalimskaja, *Die Gräber der Mosevaja Balka* [Munich, 1996], pl. 1, fig. 1)

Figure 4. Map of the larger Caucasus region (map: Anandaroop Roy)
wealth and culture of the civilizations in the south. Ever since Milesian settlers founded colonies on the eastern shores of the Black Sea, for example, Dioscurias/Sebastopolis (today’s Sukhumi) in the seventh century B.C., the Caucasus was known to the Greeks—at first somewhat vaguely—as adjacent to the land of Colchis. The region’s strategic importance was not lost on the Romans; they gained dominion over Armenia, which was, next to Georgia, the most powerful regional kingdom in the first century A.D. Armenia functioned as an outpost, first against the Parthians, then against the Sasanians. Later on, as part of the Byzantine empire and an early adherent of Christianity, it served the same purpose. Over time, the Caucasus also provided refuge for the remnants of successive invading tribal confederations that headed west from the depths of Asia: Huns, Alans, Avars, Khazars, and many more. Hence, the ethnic spectrum was vast, including indigenous races, Indo-Iranians, and Turkic and Mongolian groups. Pockets of linguistically well-defined areas are relevant in our context. The Alans, who had roamed the Pontic steppe since the first century A.D., were
swept along by the Huns in the fourth century A.D. and found refuge in the central portion of the mountain chain, in the modern Republic of North Osetiya–Alaniya.\(^{18}\) They have been identified as constituting the Adygo-Alanic tribes responsible for the Moshchevaja Balka settlement and cemetery.\(^{19}\)

Four photographs will illustrate the arduous passages through the Caucasus chains (Figures 6–9). Of the many passes, we have chosen the central and most important one, which was among the three that were critically important in antiquity and medieval times.\(^{20}\)

While the defile at Derbent close to the Caspian coast served the eastern Caucasus, it was the Darial (Iranian: Dar-i Alan = Gate of the Alans = Porta Alanica) that carried the main traffic and still does today. When Russia wrested Caucasia from the Persians and the obstinate mountain tribes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, she made use of the Porta Alanica for the so-called Military Gruzinian Highway built in 1811–64. Our sequence approaches the pass from Georgia, that is, south of the range. The road ascends the denuded and eroded flanks of the Krestovaya Gora (Mountain of the Cross) to the most elevated point of its course (at ca. 2,400 m; Figure 6). It then descends into a valley formed by the upper reaches of the river Terek (Figure 7). The rare villages are still dominated by medieval watchtowers that once served to spot approaching caravans or to provide shelter for the inhabitants during all too frequent invasions. The road then skirts mighty Mount Kasbek (Figure 8) and literally squeezes through a forbidding ravine, together with the waters of the Terek, to emerge finally into the foothills of Transcaucasia at Vladikavkaz (Hold the Caucasus!; Figure 9). In antiquity, the narrow defile seems to have been closed by actual iron-clad gates. Yet it remained a genuine Highway of Peoples through the ages.

**Current Interpretation of the Moshchevaja Balka Textiles**

One of the most pressing questions posed by the fine textiles from Moshchevaja Balka is why silks of such varied provenances and value found their way to this remote and inhospitable area at all. Anna Ierusalimskaja has argued that the prevailing political constellations in the Caucasus region from the sixth through the ninth century necessitated a northward shift of the established routes used by the caravans through the Caucasian passes on their way between China or Central Asia and Iran and Byzantium. Control and high taxation by the Sasanian authorities, who continued a practice already enforced by their predecessors, the Parthians, during the first three centuries of the common era, compelled the traders to find other roads. Therefore, the passes of the eastern Caucasus were neglected in favor of inconspicuous yet perilous transit routes across the western stretch of that formidable mountain barrier. One of them led through the Laba
(or Tsegerker [sic]) Pass in the immediate vicinity of Moshchevaja Balka. After this pass, the caravans must have followed the short courses of some of the Abkhazian rivers, for example, the Bzyb', the Kodori, and the Enguri, or the larger Rioni (Phasis) to ports on the Black Sea (Pitsunda [Pityus], Sukhumi [Dioskurias], Poti [Phasis]). From there, the merchandise was shipped to Byzantium and elsewhere. This transit trade required local guides, carriers, and pack animals; such services were provided by the tribes who commanded the defiles. Tolls and rewards were paid in kind, that is, with various textiles, among them silk. That this type of remuneration continued can be gathered from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers' accounts from the same region, when the payment mostly consisted of lengths of linen, tailored shirts, or leather. The porters' teams cut the fabric into individual pieces right after receiving their lengths as payment (which may account for the patchwork character of many of the garments found). The practice was continued until early in the twentieth century (see Figure 10). Ierusalimskaja assigns these circumstances to explain the evidence from the burial grounds. It should be noted that similar situations are attested for Bohemia in the tenth century and for the northern Crimea and southern Ukraine in the mid-thirteenth century. Textiles were the usual currency of predominantly rural societies.

Except for the few outstanding pieces of apparel that must have belonged to the upper crust of the tribe, linen garments from Moshchevaja Balka are often embellished with only the tiniest snippets of silken material. Although the patterns or designs hardly ever match, care was taken to match colors. Sorting the textiles according to their place of origin, Ierusalimskaja assigns the majority of the silk finds to "Sogdian" workshops, about 150 samples with more than 40 different patterns. Next in number comes the group of Far Eastern silks. There are about 100, mostly monochromatic or simply patterned, some with resist-dye printing; many have parallels in finds from Dunhuang in western Kansu and the Turfan Oasis (Xinjiang). Finally, there are silks from the Mediterranean realm, Byzantium, Syria, and Egypt—more than 50 smallish samples with about 20 different patterns. The finds, therefore, clearly reflect the gamut of textiles traded along the Silk Routes, even if this branch was only a minor one among many others. The vicissitudes of survival have singled out Moshchevaja Balka as a paradigm of the large-scale exchange of goods and cultural contacts. A wealth of artifacts recovered in excavations of sites on the Asian trade routes over the last decades indicate that mercantile transactions were already initiated in a fairly organized way early in the first millennium A.D.

A number of Chinese and western—that is, Byzantine or Syrian—silks found at Moshchevaja Balka can be matched with fabrics recovered in excavations in Chinese Central Asia, found in western collections, or incorporated into European church treasures as
relics. However, among the “Sogdian” silks, which form the majority of the silk textile finds, one group seems to represent an entirely local phenomenon. Footnotes are provided for details.

Fragmentary studies of this very circumscribed group have so far not been unearthed beyond sites in the northwestern Caucasus. This is surprising and invites a number of reflections. Within the range of “Sogdian” silks, they are technically much inferior to the rest of the material, in both dyeing and weaving. Their formerly bright colors have largely faded, reducing the spectrum to the brown of the background and the eggshell-colored pearl roundels with their double-ax, star, or blossom motifs (see Figures 11–13; Kajitani, Figures 28–36). However, the original color scheme must have been striking and powerful, with red, yellow, and blue bands framing the images within the roundels as well as the smaller motifs in the interstices. The brown ground may have been black initially, the pearl roundels and central motifs a creamy white.

The double-ax motif has received particular attention from Ierusalimskaja and provides additional, significant evidence for characterizing the local silks. As Ierusalimskaja astutely recognized, the double-ax is a stylized version of confronted boars’ heads. The source of the motif is to be found in Sasanian textiles, stucco panels, wall decoration, and metalwork. There, the boars’ heads occur mostly as individual heads within roundels, not as two facing ones as in the majority of the “Sogdian” silks from Moshchevaja Balka. In the latter a split palmette frames the heads below and above, rendering their orientation ambivalent. However, once one understands the source, the eyes and snouts of the confronted heads can still be discerned in the less stylized examples. Ierusalimskaja suggests that the local Adygo-Alanic tribes had a special affinity with the motif, based on age-old beliefs—alogous to, and derived from, the significance of the boar in Sasanian royal ideology. This may well be so in view of the fixation on the image in its various permutations.

Only four different patterns occur in the caftan and leggings at the Metropolitan Museum (Kajitani, pp. 99–105). There are two variations of the boars’ head, that is, the double-ax motif. In the first, more complex, form, pearl roundels are linked by miniature ones, in both the warp and the weft direction (Silk C1; Kajitani, Figure 34). The large orbs encompass confronted heads between split palmettes while heads without palmettes fill the spandrels. In the second, entirely stylized, pattern, the pearl roundels just touch in the weft direction but are not linked in that of the warp; there are simple double-axes within the orbs and in the spandrels (Silk A; Kajitani, Figures 28–30). The third pattern has horizontally linked pearl roundels containing star-shaped blossoms and smaller ones in the spandrels (Silk B; Kajitani, Figures 28–30).
31–33). Finally, the piece of fabric at the top of the better-preserved of the two leggings shows an unexpected change of design; the more complex boars' heads/double-ax pattern is here replaced by one of unframed dotted blossoms with rounded petals (Silk C2; Kajitani, Figure 36). Despite crucial disparities between the technically and artistically highly refined silks, which seem to have originated in Sogdia proper—specifically in Buchara and Samarkand—and the distinct double-ax group from Moshchevaja Balka, Ierusalimskaja includes them under the heading “Sogdian.” This does not appear very convincing.31 The iconographic peculiarities, the technical mediocrity, and the limited diffusion combine to suggest that the “Sogdian” silks were not produced in Sogdia proper as deliberately inexpensive fabrics with which to pay the transport tax or tariffs levied by the hill tribes, but were manufactured locally for home consumption or regional export. As we shall see, the draw looms required for that type of fabric can hardly have stood in the exposed settlements high up in the mountains. The looms may, however, have existed in any of the many fortified communities of the Saltovo-Majaki and Proto-Bulgarian cultures that are attested through excavations in the North Caucasian foothills and plains. All that was needed was silk yarn, which must have been considerably less expensive than woven patterned fabric and was probably levied as tax. The coveted products of Chinese or western looms, which were accessible only to individuals of status or as snippets by the poor, could have been imitated at lower cost and decorated with symbols and patterns that fitted local traditions. Ierusalimskaja briefly considers this scenario but dismisses it as implausible.32

The garments from Moshchevaja Balka are of exceptional interest not only for the textiles but also for the way in which they were cut. Here again, Ierusalimskaja’s work has been fundamental. We summarize her conclusions. While female attire seems to have taken some of its inspiration from eastern Mediterranean models, the outfit of males follows Persian and Central Asian traditions.33 The garb of the steppe nomads also exerted some influence. Ierusalimskaja stresses, however, a strong local component, distinctive of the Adygo-Alanic tribes of the central Caucasus, whose descendants, the modern Ossetians, are still settled there today.34 Their ancestral garb, the caftan with wide skirt, was worn in the region until recently. Ierusalimskaja refers to the “karts,” a fur coat of similar design common among the Ossetians in the central Caucasus. The Ossetians are of Alanic extraction.

Figure 12. “Sogdian” silk with confronted boars’ heads in spandrel, found at Moshchevaja Balka in 1974. State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, Kz 6984 (photo: W. Haberland, courtesy Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich)

Figure 13. “Sogdian” silk with star pattern in pearl roundels and spandrels and confronted boars’ heads in pearl roundels in the bottom row, found at Moshchevaja Balka in 1905. State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, Kz 4879 (photo: W. Haberland, courtesy Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich)
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REAPPRAISAL assigned Iranian (Lindisfarne-Tapper and Bruce Ingham, eds., Languages of Dress [Richmond, Surrey, 1997], fig. 22; for description of the frogging in the illustration, see note 36 below)

and still speak an Iranian language. A lighter unlined linen caftan with frogging is called the “kurta,” also an Iranian term. Though cut without a collar, the well-known “cherkeska” must be of the same Iranian parentage (Figure 14). An older yet seminal study provides the required wider perspectives.

A Reappraisal of the Textiles from Moshchevaja Balka

Jerusalimskaja’s emphasis on the domination of trade and its obstruction by the Sasanians as the compelling factors for the transfer of caravan routes to out-of-the-way passes of the northwestern Caucasus may be pertinent for the sixth and early seventh centuries. But by the eighth to tenth century, to which the finds from Moshchevaja Balka and other sites in Ciscaucasia can be assigned with some degree of confidence, different political circumstances prevailed. The Arabs had subdued and replaced the Sasanians and had made deep inroads into Central Asia, which they finally conquered in the eighth to tenth century. The North Caucasian and Transcaspian steppes up to the Aral Sea were part of the Khazar empire that also comprised the lower course of the Volga and the North Pontic plains. Of Turkic stock, the Khazars had embraced Judaism as their state religion. They ruled over a great number and variety of tribes and they encouraged a highly lucrative trade. Most of the peoples subject to them and the groups of merchants they taxed appear in the sources either as already well known or as relative newcomers: Avars, Oguz, Bashkirs, Bulgars, Slavs, Varangians, and Rus. The culture and artifacts of these tribes became amalgamated into the existing traditions. Moreover, the political resurgence of Byzantium made itself felt in the region. Slowly emerging from the throes of iconoclasm, the Byzantine emperors reasserted control of parts of the Crimea and the northern shores of the Black Sea during the ninth century. Thus, contact with the Transcaucasian regions intensified, and mercantile patterns followed suit. At that time, one may indeed speak of a diversion of trade, however not in the sense stressed by Jerusalimskaja. The cause was Arab dominance of the Levant and northern Africa. It significantly curtailed seaborne commerce in the eastern Mediterranean but furthered it in the Black Sea and along the great Russian rivers, the Volga, Don, and Dnieper.

Among the most informative sources on the activities of those tribes, on political alliances and commercial activities between the late sixth and tenth centuries are literary documents. We shall refer to two that are especially enlightening for the period and the region under consideration. The first report is part of the History of Menander the Guardsman, a Byzantine author writing under the patronage of the emperor Maurice (582–602) who seems to have had access to the imperial archives. The main Caucasian pass, the Darial/Porta Alanica, is at the heart of a sixth-century diplomatic mission conducted by the West Turkish ruler (khagan) of the name Istāmi (Greek: Sizaboulo) to his western neighbors on behalf of Sogdian silk manufacturers and merchants, who had recently become his subjects and whose lucrative trade he strongly supported. The Western Turks had at first been allies of the Sasanians in defeating the Hephthalites or White Huns—a confederation of Iranian and Turkic groups—who had held sway over Central Asia for more than one hundred years. Under energetic and talented rulers, the Western Turks replaced the Hephthalites in Central Asia in the sixth century. Ongoing warfare between Byzantium and the Sasanians allowed the Turks to occupy Sasanian Afghanistan. They were now as powerful as both empires. Nomads
by tradition, they incorporated into their policy fruitful collaboration with their sedentary subjects.

As mentioned, Istāmi/Sizaboulos, the khagan of the Western Turks, sponsored a Sogdian embassy to the Sasanian court in 568 to obtain permission for the merchants to trade raw silk freely within Sasanian territory. The Sasanians tightly controlled the transit trade at the western end of the Silk Routes, as had the Parthians before them. The khagan’s request was declined, and as a powerful signal, the Sasanian king bought the silk the Sogdians had brought and had it burned in the presence of the ambassadors. Greatly annoyed, the khagan now promoted a mission “via the Caucasus” to the Byzantine court asking for the same privilege, since the Sogdians knew that “they [the Romans = Byzantines] made more use of it [i.e., silk-yarn] than other people.” Silk production had by then been established in Byzantine lands, but demand remained high. The Byzantine emperor responded by sending a return embassy under the general Zemarchos to Sogdia and to the khagan’s itinerant court in Central Asia, where a deal was struck. Zemarchos’s description of the most lavishly decked-out tent-residence demonstrates the importance of silk fabrics as a status symbol. Not only does his report represent a superb piece of early ethnography, it also vividly evokes the dangers and vicissitudes to which caravans or embassies were exposed. On the arduous way back into Byzantine lands, across waterless deserts and along “that enormous, wide lake”—it is not clear whether the Aral or the Caspian Sea is meant—the ambassador, protected by the khagan’s guides and anxiously avoiding a Persian ambush, was finally kindly received by the king of the Alans in Ciscaucasia. To deceive the watchful Sasanians, the Alans advised Zemarchos to send the porters with their load of silk across the Caucasus through the region called Miusimia and—though it required a detour—to use himself the “Dareine road.” Whether the “Miusimian” defile can be identified with today’s Mamison Pass that carries the Ossetian Highway is uncertain; the “Dareine road,” however, clearly designates the Darial/Porta Alanica. Zemarchos safely reached the Black Sea, took one boat to Phasis and another one to Trapezus, and returned to Byzantium on horseback, provided by the imperial postal service. One cannot wish for a more informative sketch of the circumstances at a time when considerable amounts of raw silk were traded. As pointed out above, we believe that “Sogdian” silk was produced locally from imported raw materials. Menander’s narration seems to support our hypothesis concerning silk weaving in the “land of the Alans.” By the seventh century, the Chinese in their most daring westward foray ever, annihilated the empire of the Western Turks. It was replaced by that of the Khazars. Here, our second historical source gains relevance.

In 921–22, Ibn Fadlan, an expert in matters of Islamic religion, served as secretary of a large embassy sent from Baghdad by the Abbasid Khalif al-Muqtadir and through the Khazar empire. Bulgar, then still an encampment at the site of the yet to be built city, was located south of the confluence of the rivers Volga and Kama. At this northernmost point of the voyage, Ibn Fadlan had to present the khaliﬁ’s message and gifts to the king of the Volga Bulgars, who was a Muslim. The Volga Bulgars were the most populous of the many tribes subject to the Khazars. Ibn Fadlan’s matter-of-fact yet very vivid report, completed in 923, attests to an ambitious political attempt on the part of the Abbasid empire to enter into friendly relations with the Khazars and the Turks. Access to the middle reaches of the Volga with its potential for trade was of great importance to the Arabs. It was the Khazars who had—exactly as during earlier attacks by the Sasanians—blocked the Arab advance across the Caucasus in the middle of the seventh century, and they continued to do so for almost one hundred years. The Arabs never gained lasting military access to the North Pontic plains, which definitely prevented them from attacking eastern Europe, while western Europe stood open to the Muslim armies after their capture of Spain. However, the constantly changing battle-grounds on either side of the Caucasus chains deeply affected the local mountain tribes.

As in the case of Zemarchos’s mission, Ibn Fadlan’s travelogue is a marvel of acute observation. Having proceeded from Baghdad via Hamadan, Rayy, and Bukhara to Gurganiya (Urganch) in Khwarizm, he and his companions joined a caravan of three thousand men and five thousand animals headed for the future town of Bulgar on the Volga. These figures attest to the enormous volume of merchandise traded by the Arabs for northern goods: primarily slaves, but also furs, wax, honey, weapons, and other commodities. Tangible proof of the amount of exchange are the some hundred thousand Arabic dirhams of the early medieval period found on the island of Gotland and elsewhere in Scandinavia, in the Baltics, and in Russia. The Russian rivers served as arterial roads for the northmen (Varangians) and, soon, for the Rus who established their kingdom in Kiev. They would topple the Khazar empire in the later tenth century.

Nothing escapes Ibn Fadlan. He comments on the climate, on the lay of the land, on trade, currency, and religion, and—most important in our context—on the customs and costumes of the multitude of tribes encountered along the way. Warned by the locals of
the harsh winter, he provides his group with victuals for three months, and he lists the array of clothes considered necessary for the trip: "Everybody put on a qurtaq, then a caftan, above it a bustin (sheepskin coat) and on top of it a coat made of felt, together with a fur cap that left nothing but the eyes uncovered; simple underpants, quilted ones, followed by trousers; boots of soft leather and real boots. When mounting our camels, we were hardly able to move."

Moreover, Ibn Fadlan points out local differences of some interest for our study. The long or full “qurtaq” is worn by the Khazars, the Bulgars, and the Petchenegs, while the short one is characteristic of the Rus. Fourth Qurtaq means “jacket,” apparently available in various lengths. Caftan is an upper garment with overly long sleeves, often worn with a belt. Among other precious pieces of attire, Ibn Fadlan presents a Turkish commander—on whose hospitality he had to rely—with two qurtaqs which he has especially made for him out of “two suits of clothes from Merw.” We do not know what those suits looked like, but it seems that our ambassador felt they were not appropriate for the military man and had them adapted to local fashion. During his stay at the tent city of the king of the Volga Bulgars, he reports a conversation with “a tailor of the king, a man from Baghdad who had come to this region.” Ibn Fadlan’s travelogue culminates in the description of the funeral of a trader of the Rus on the banks of the Volga. He admires their build: “They are tall like date trees, blond and with such good circulation that they do not need qurtaqs or caftans but wear instead a kisa [=sleeveless woolen vest].” However, in death, the merchant from the north is decked out in costly oriental garments and fabrics especially tailored for the occasion: two pairs of trousers, qurtaq and caftan of brocade with gold buttons, a brocade cap trimmed with sable. According to custom, a young Rus servant girl is killed and cremated with the merchant to serve as his companion in the beyond. His boat functions as pyre. As a Muslim, the eyewitness Ibn Fadlan is simultaneously fascinated and appalled.

It is notoriously difficult to pinpoint the exact meaning of the various Persian, Arabic, or Turkic terms for attire used by contemporary authors. However, the terminology reflects the ubiquity of garments developed and worn in the Asian steppe since at least the first millennium B.C. and destined to spread very widely. Originally fashioned of leather, felt, wool, or hemp, by late antiquity and in the early medieval period these garments were made of silk, by then a coveted material. A number of studies have traced the background of those “nomad” garments—sleeved coats and leggings specifically—which differ radically from the untailed clothes of the ancient Near East and the Classical world. Over the last decades, this quest has been greatly furthered by spectacular textile finds. They generously supplement attempts to recreate the gamut of oriental clothes based on contemporary or later depictions.

The few passages concerned with clothes that we have chosen from Ibn Fadlan’s text are indicative of the international flavor of Khazar civilization. Commerce was its motor and its contacts were truly global. The apex of the Khazar khaganate partly coincided with that of the Chinese Tang dynasty in the eighth century, when Silk Route trade was at its height and firmly linked east and west. With Chang’an and Byzantium at the ends of that well-established axis, another one was added under the Khazars. Ibn Fadlan’s voyage traces it at least up to the middle course of the Volga. It extended—upriver—north and northwest via the Volkhov, Neva, and Dvina during the eighth and ninth centuries and included the Don and Dnieper as of the tenth century. A network of portages and smaller rivers draining into the Baltic joined these routes with Northern Europe. Through excavations at various Scandinavian and Frisian sites, we are well informed about the Baltic and North Sea trade that handled the oriental merchandise. Settlements such as Birka, Kaupang, Hedeby/Haithabu, Ribe, and Dorestad served as entrepôts and meeting grounds for a truly international crowd. Many objects of eastern provenance have been recovered from sites and cemeteries, and evidence of a sartorial nature from tombs attests to the presence of Central Asians in the trading communities of the Norsemen. They, in turn, adopted foreign fashions, among them sleeved jackets and lapelled coats. On their far-flung voyages, whether as raiders, traders, or mercenaries—for example at the Byzantine court—the Scandinavians and the Rus had ample opportunity to comprehend and appreciate garments that were splendid as well as serviceable. In the late tenth century, when the Kievan Rus overthrew the Khazar khaganate, trade along the Russian rivers diminished greatly. Continuous warfare, the decline of the khilafate’s central authority, and the depletion of the Central Asian silver mines were to blame. Frankish silver currency replaced the dirham in the North, and the improved European road system redirected traffic.

The Metropolitan Museum’s Caftan: Its Larger Context and Its Specific Features

It is time to return to our Caucasian coat. As shown above, it can be assigned approximately to the eighth
to tenth century by the archaeological context of closely related finds. Having established the contemporaneous environment of the garment, we must now go beyond its immediate context to place the caftan in a larger setting. We shall attempt to trace the most characteristic features—the trimming, the lapels, and the frogs—to their earliest occurrence and follow their development over time. Our main sources in this process are two- or three-dimensional depictions. The three features we singled out are age-old, basic components of the accoutrements of peoples with varied ethnic backgrounds but a lifestyle dictated by the harsh steppe environment. The Museum’s caftan is clearly a descendant of this nomadic apparel.

Fundamentally unchanged in cut and decoration for centuries, the traditional steppe costume, also worn by Parthians and Sasanians, spread widely when East Germanic peoples settled in the Pontic and Danube regions during the second to fourth century. Converts to local sartorial steppe traditions, these tribes were swept west by the invasion of the Huns in A.D. 375 and were soon recruited into the Roman army or assigned land at the eastern frontiers to defend them against further nomadic invasions. Consequently, the importance of Germanic and Iranian military men and administrators in both East and West Rome rose steadily. As a consequence, their “barbarian,” that is, their recently adopted steppe attire, became acceptable in the ancient centers of the classical world. The proximity of the Parthians to the Romans, and later the Sasanians to the Byzantine Empire, led to rivalry as well as alliances between them over extended periods. Inevitably, large-scale cultural cross-fertilization occurred. In other words, transmission of the steppe apparel was effected by the cohabitation of Germanic as well as Iranian powers within the later Roman Empire. Byzantium’s nomadic neighbors were mostly of Turkic stock. Shared borders in the North Pontic and Caucasian plains also led to shared fashions.

The Silk Trimming

The silk trimming certainly has one of its roots in the embellishment of leather jackets or coats with rare furs so clearly depicted on fourth-century precious metal vessels with Scythian themes. The edges of the garments shown are adorned with costly pelts—easily distinguishable from the sheepskin body of the coats—and with embroidery and metal roundels (Figure 15). The jackets are belted and close, Iranian fashion, on the proper left side of the body. They have no lapels. Woven garments received the same treatment. The rare full-length coats do not overlap at the front as documented by the example from Katanda (Figure 16). Before silk was widely available in Central and Western Asia, the specific zones of jackets or coats—that is, seams, edges, and cuffs—were decorated with strips of embroidery or with woven bands. By the time of the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 8), silk trimming was a ubiquitous feature in the steppe environment.

Silk had reached the nomad tribes from China by exchange or as “gifts”—in other words, as tribute extorted by them—late in the first millennium B.C. It became a commodity once the Silk Routes were established and commerce developed in an organized way. As demonstrated by the historical sources quoted above, trade between China and the West was controlled and directed by a succession of Iranian and Altaic dynasties who all had their roots in a nomadic environment: the Parthians (247 B.C.–A.D. 227), the Kushans63 the Sasanians (A.D. 227–651), the Chionites/Hephthalites (4th–6th centuries), the Turks (A.D. 552–742), and the Khazars (ca. A.D. 630–1016). Piping or trimming of the traditional steppe outfit, that is, jackets and coats of silk or other fabrics, was a standard feature under each of these empires, for garments of the upper class as well as for those of the common man. Such trimming remained in fashion throughout the early medieval period in the Near East and Central Asia.

The Lapels

Lapels are not a feature found on Parthian, Kushan, or Sasanian caftans. They do, however, occur in many variants on monuments in Central Asia, situated either in Hephthalite sites both north and south of the Hindukush (present-day southern Uzbekistan and Afghanistan), in Sogdian cities involved in the silk trade, or in Buddhist settlements at oases on the more southerly branches of the Silk Routes that ran through Chinese Central Asia (Xinjiang). The wealthy appear in wall paintings, either feasting or as donors in sanctuaries from about A.D. 500 to about 800. A few examples must suffice. An important source is the large banqueting scene in the residence of a local grande at Balalýk-tepe, north of Termez in southern Uzbekistan (Figure 17). The large urban centers and the residences of the Sogdian nobility and merchant aristocracy in Afrasiab (Samarkand), Pendjekent, and other sites also furnish abundant depictions of both sexes in either single- or double-lapelled caftans and in sleeved coats, worn draped about the shoulders. Farther south, in the oases at the edge of the Taklamakan desert, we once again see the native aristocracy and foreign merchants in comparable...
Figure 15. Scythians in fur-trimmed leather coats with metal studs (clasps or buttons?) tied with strings. 4th century B.C. chased gold vessel from Kul Oba kurgan (Crimea). State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, GE KO 11 (photo: Bruce White)

Figure 16. 5th–4th-century B.C. leather coat studded with gold-covered wooden ornaments, from Katanda kurgan (Altay). State Historical Museum, Moscow, 54660/1801 (after The Oasis and Steppe Routes: Grand Exhibition of Silk Road Civilizations [Nara, 1988], no. 137)

Figure 17. Mural with banqueting couples from a ruler’s residence at Balalyk-tepe near Termez (Uzbekistan), early 7th century A.D. (after L. I. Albaum, Balalyk-tepe: K istorii materialnoj kultury i iskusstva Tocharistana [Tashkent, 1960], pl. 105)
outfits, now including leggings.60 They are represented as donors and devotees in Buddhist cave sanctuaries (Figure 18).70

To resolve the question of the possible origin of the lapels, we briefly return to Menander’s mission of 568 to the khagan of the Western Turks discussed above. The report makes evident that Sasanian predominance in the region had been replaced by ascendant Turkic confederations at approximately that time. Though differing ethnically from the native Iranians, the Turks were steppe dwellers, too, and wore the appropriate outfit. There is general agreement that regional fashions in Sogdia as well as in Xinjiang where the Turks held sway had been strongly influenced by the sartorial models of the long dominant Sasanian court. There are, however, important differences, notably that there is no evidence for the lapelled coat in the Sasanian realm. We are not yet in a position to state where the (eminently practical) lapels were first added to the age-old nomad outfit. It may have originated in a Turkic ambient. A fresh source of images has recently been investigated thoroughly and may corroborate our assumption: the stone statues of seated and standing males on grave mounds or in memorial monuments of Turkic tribes spread over a wide area between the Altay and Mongolia. They are dated to the sixth to eighth century (Figure 19). The authenticity of these costumes is validated by textile finds from Turkic burials (Figure 20).71 The appearance and diffusion of the lapelled caftan seem to coincide with the ascendancy of the Turkic tribes as successful builders of empires.72 It is worth remembering that it was the khan of the Western Turks who lived the life of a nomad ruler but supported and sponsored the activities of the Sogdian merchant aristocracy. Such contact zones facilitated assimilation.

_The Frogs (Proto-Buttons)_

The final, and perhaps most elusive, feature that requires consideration is the frog closing. From our modern perspective, frogging seems intimately connected with East Asian clothes. In the Far East, buttons and loops, both fashioned from fabric, appear to be a hallmark of traditional garment fastening. A closer look, however, reveals that frogging seems unattested before the Tunguse Jurchen state—known as the Northern Song dynasty in China—in the early twelfth century (Figure 21).73 This observation is corroborated by the absence of a term for frogging in the traditional Chinese lexica. It may indicate the age-old Chinese contempt for the habits of “barbarians” who had not reached the necessary level of civilization to qualify as partners of the Central Kingdom. The modern Chinese colloquial term, _panniu_ , “twisted fastener,” is purely descriptive and does not reveal anything etymologically or historically.74 We may thus assume that frogs were an alien feature, introduced into China comparatively late from the nomad realm. Being a relatively minor detail, they are not easy to pinpoint in their Central Asian avatar. It appears that they are shown on some of the “ballbals” mentioned above. They are attested in depictions of foreign (Sogdian?) merchants in the Buddhist cave paintings at the northern edge of the Tarim Basin, specifically in Cave 20 at Bezelik near Turfan. They become a salient feature of the finds at Moshchevaja Balka and similar sites. Despite a dearth of depictions, a virtual explosion in the use of frogs must have taken place among the Bulgars, the Rus, and the Slavs (Figure 22), all subjects of the Turkic Khazars. The latter were probably the propagators of certain sartorial features of the New York caftan and its relatives.

The multicultural character of the Khazar empire that was entirely based on trade created ideal circumstances for the dissemination of cultural artifacts. Its influence extended to neighboring Byzantium. The so-called scaramangion, a splendid court dress often mentioned in the “Book of Ceremonies” by the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetus (912–959), seems to have been cut like the Museum’s caftan and fitted with froglike features.75 Practical and decorative at the same time, frogging is found somewhat later in abundance76 and as a permanent feature in late medieval Russia on caftans and sleeved coats. These frogs no longer resemble the simple contraptions found on the New York garment; instead, they are rather elaborate mechanisms fashioned from precious metal threads. Not content with the functional double strap, embroidery and studs are added, resulting in the characteristic “galloons.” As decorative features, they took Western Europe by storm in the sixteenth century and became known under the name “brandebourgs” from the seventeenth century on. The term is indicative of Eastern descent, even if, as we have seen, it comes from regions much more remote than the realm of the Elector of Brandenburg. He and his counterparts in Central and Eastern Europe, whose attire drew heavily on “oriental” models because of the proximity and long cohabitation with peoples originating from the steppe, became the mediators of an age-old functional device (Figure 23).77 Precious metal frogs on caftans and related upper garments are a standard feature in post-Mongol Persia, best documented in a multitude of miniatures, which often extol the heroic history of the country (Figure 24). An early twentieth-century photograph attests to the
Figure 18. Mural with family of noble donors and Buddhist monks. The older males wear caftans with double lapels, the younger ones with single lapels (perhaps an indication of lower rank) and leggings, from Cave 19, Qumtura, Xinjiang (China), 7th century A.D. (?) (after Albert von LeCoq, Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mittel-Asiens [Berlin, 1923], fig. 11)

Figure 19. Stone statue of seated Turkic grandee in belted patterned silk caftan with two lapels from memorial monument in Mongolia, 6th–8th century A.D. (after Dowdoin Bayar, Turkic Stone Statues of Central Mongolia [Ulan Bator, 1997], p. 124, fig. 79; courtesy of Gleb Kubarev)

Figure 20. Reconstruction by G. V. Kubarev and D. V. Pozdnyakov of two Old Turkic caftans on the basis of textile finds at Yustud XXIV, barrow 13 (left), and at Altai-Barburgaza I, barrow 20 (right), (after G. V. Kubarev, Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropology of Eurasia 3, no. 3 [2000], fig. 4)
persistence of the frogged caftan in the Near East until modern times (Figure 25). The Turkic Ottomans played an important role as mediators. Encroaching ever more on Central Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their presence also contributed to the adoption of frogging in the West. For Western Europe, the exotic “galloons” clearly became a mark of wealth and distinction (Figure 26). Both the Persian Il-Khans and the Ottomans were largely of Turkic stock and thus heirs to the sartorial tradition we have been investigating.78

**Conclusion**

At the end of this inquiry into seemingly minor features, we should ask whether the Metropolitan Museum’s caftan and its North Caucasian relatives

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**Figure 21.** Group of Mongolian entertainers in frogged caftans from tomb of Jiao Zuojin in Xifengfeng, Henan Province (China), Jin Dynasty (1115–1234) (after Shen Congwen, *Zhongguo gudaifushi yangjiu* [Hong Kong, 1992], p. 429, fig. 203)

**Figure 22.** Heathen Bulgar in frogged caftan slaying Christian martyrs. Detail of miniature in the Menologion of the Byzantine emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025). Byzantine (Constantinople), ca. 985. Tempera and gold on vellum, 36.5 x 28.5 cm. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 1613, fol. 345 (photo: Vatican)

**Figure 23.** Hungarian nobleman in frogged caftan. Woodcut (after Cesare Vecellio [1521–1601], Vecellio’s Renaissance Costume Book: All 500 Woodcut Illustrations from the Famous Sixteenth-Century Compendium of World Costume [reprint, New York, 1977], fig. 403)
Figure 24. The first Sasanian king Ardashir (r. 226–41) recognizes the royal descent of his grandson Hormuzd by the way the latter recovers the hockey ball from under the horse. Persian miniature of the 16th century. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Persian MS 10, fol. 533v (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek).

Persian—indeed a local phenomenon. Anna Jerusalimskaja, to whom we owe immense gratitude for making this material accessible and intelligible, sees the caftan, because of its long survival in the region, essentially as an indigenous product that differs from other Eastern examples in having a skirtlike lower part attached to a tight-fitting top. Indeed, at first sight it appears to lack obvious convincing parallels. However, a few specimens invite comparison, first from the Byzantine realm. Depictions of the wide array of garments we know were worn at the Byzantine court are limited. The strictness of the protocol and the quasi-religious context of the extant images deprive us of detailed representations. Yet the splendor and variety of the costumes worn by the emperors and their bureaucracy are evident from the written sources. As in the case of Persian, Turkic, and Arab terminology, the Greek sartorial vocabulary can rarely be reconciled with the few surviving images or garments. In a number of significant cases, however, the impact of foreign models can be demonstrated. It is noteworthy that they are dated to the Khazar khaganate, that is, to the post-Sasanian period to which the caftan in New York belongs.

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A somewhat later chance find furnishes tangible proof. The recently discovered caftan of red silk, with splendid golden embroidery and studs along the front, the

Figure 25. 'Abbas 'Ali Khan, supervisor of the Royal Photography Studio (left) with Mohammad Baqer (right), a page of 'Ayn al-Molk. Early 20th century (after A Treasury of Early Iranian Photography).

Figure 26. Aelbert Cuyp (Dutch, 1620–1690). Starting for the Hunt: Michiel (1638–1653) and Cornelis Pompe van Meerdervoort (1639–1680) with Their Tutor and Coachman. Oil on canvas, 109.9 x 156.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931 (32.100.20).
edges, and the sleeves and with a gathered skirt, from the burial mound of a Polovcian khan in Ukraine, has all the features of the more modest New York garment. According to the excavators, it was fashioned in Byzantium in the thirteenth century and reached the North Pontic steppe as a gift or tribute. That may well be the case. Yet Byzantine manufacture does not contradict the basic steppe background of this caftan. As part of the trade network that connected it with Central and East Asia, the Byzantine civilization was subject to influences from that zone over time, but it also dispatched its own cultural messages into it. As close neighbors of Byzantium, the Christian Armenians and Georgians evince such influences. Between the seventh and the thirteenth centuries, the sculpted or painted donor figures on their churches display a variety of caftans and draped, sleeved coats (Figures 27, 28). Another observation may reinforce this analysis. Though mostly closing Chinese fashion on the right and lacking lapels, the caftans worn by the Mughal emperors and their retinue (Figure 29) are constructed exactly like the one in New York.

As a last point, to demonstrate the multiple links that connect the Metropolitan’s caftan with the wider world of Central Asia, mention should be made of a set of miniature garments recovered at various times in the Moshchevaja Balka cemetery and called “doll’s clothes” by Ierusalimskaja (Figure 30). Since no remains of dolls were ever found at the site, a different function for these miniature outfits should be considered. During recent excavations of a burial ground at Yingpan in the Lop Nor region of Xinjiang, China, a mummified male, wearing a mask, was found with all his clothes preserved. Exceptionally precious, these garments are neither of local nor of Chinese manufacture but clearly point to Central Asia, if not the eastern Mediterranean, as their place of origin. At the belt of the man’s caftan was placed a superbly tailored
natural that a region deeply involved in the transit trade should take sartorial inspiration both from the commodities it handled and from the foreign traders who passed through. An extraordinary set of eight-to ninth-century documents from the burial ground at Moshchevaja Balka epitomizes the truly global connections of the site. These are papers and objects that may have belonged to a Chinese merchant. They include a list of locally made purchases of victuals, a Buddhist text (sutra), and religious images painted on silk and fragments of a small Buddhist votive banner. Contrary to a widely held belief that merchants from either end of the Silk Routes rarely traveled the entire way but rather used middlemen to execute transactions in stages, these documents attest to exceptions. Seen in the light of this evidence, the complex ancestry of the Metropolitan Museum’s caftan that we have tried to trace in this study appears quite persuasive. Each individual feature of this splendid coat can be shown to belong to the vast realm of the nomads whose contribution to world history and culture is becoming ever more apparent.

minature silk outfit, suggesting a “change of clothes” for the beyond. This is not an isolated feature in Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang). The drawing of the miniature clothes reveals the upper garment—though closing on the right side and secured with ribbons, not with frogs—to be constructed exactly like the Metropolitan Museum caftan. The deceased may have been a wealthy merchant from Sogdia or even from the late Roman East. The find is certainly earlier than the objects from the Moshchevaja Balka cemetery. Perhaps similar ideas were current among the “heathen” Adygo-Alans. However this may be, the “doll’s clothes” from Moshchevaja Balka also confirm that a variety of options for the cut of caftans and caftan collars was available locally, among them “Mandarin” and “kimono” types (see Figure 30). The famous senmurv caftan from the site mentioned earlier has lapels on both sides (see Figure 5). It seems only

Figure 29. Mughal period (1526–1857) courtiers in white caftans, some closing on the left, others in the center of the body. Maharaja Sindh Sen Receiving an Embassy, ca. 1700–1710, by the Mandi Master (Punjab Hills). Ink and opaque watercolor on paper, 37 x 27 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Florence and Herbert Irving Gift and Rogers Fund, 1995 (1995.39)

Figure 30. "Doll’s clothes" from Moshchevaja Balka; note the frogged linen kaftan with "Mandarin" collar and the trimmed coat. State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, Kz 6726–6728 (caftan, dress, and trousers found in 1972), Kz 4872 (coat found in 1905), Kz 6718 (boot found in 1974) (photo: W. Haberland, courtesy Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich)
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I would like to thank Prudence O. Harper for entrusting me with the publication of the Caucasian coat. Nobuko Kajitani has been a source of inspiration for the textile technology and conservation neophyte. I am, as so often, deeply grateful to Joan Mertens, whose sense of style and proportion has saved this study from many infelicities. Responsibility for the opinions expressed here rests with me alone.

ABBREVIATIONS

Barber

Ierusalimskaja

Ierusalimskaja and Borkopp

Otavsky

PW

Roth

Tilke 1923

Tilke 1925

Togan

Werbart

Widengren

von Wilckens

NOTES

1. For well-preserved garments from the deserts of Central Asia, see, e.g., Barber; J. P. Mallory and Victor Mair, The Tarim Mummies: Ancient China and the Mystery of the Earliest Peoples from the West (London, 2000); Archaeological Treasures of the Silk Road in Xinjiang Uyguur Autonomous Region, exh. cat. (Shanghai, 1998).

2. A 4th-century a.d. text attesting to this feature so specific to mounted tribes is Ammianus Marcellinus’s comment on the dress of the Persian (Sasanian) adversaries of the Romans under Emperor Julian the Apostle during his Mesopotamian campaign in 363: they wear bright-colored tunics open (that is, not sewn up) in front and at the sides (indumentis . . . sinus lateraque dissueta; Rerum gestarum libri 23,6,84). A disposition of the Abbey of Beaulieu near Limoges, France, of a.d. 971 decrees that a serf or his descendants cannot be promoted to the rank of an arms-bearing soldier (miles) and must not wear a garment slit in front or behind (non habeant vestem scissam de antea et de retro), a privilege of the mounted nobility; Cartulaire de l’abbaye de Beaulieu en Limousin, Maximin Deloche, ed. (Paris, 1854), pp. 91–93, cited by Franco Cardini, Alle radici della cavalleria medievale (Florence, 1981), p. 324. The feature is documented in countless representations of knights and members of the upper social strata on horseback in the medieval West as well as of eastern horsemen, be they depicted by their own artists or seen by Westerners. As a practical device, the riding coat with slits clearly was adopted and retained in the West during the Migration Period. The term redingote (= riding coat), that is, a long, double-breasted coat with a slit, encapsulates the concept. The slits are clearly visible in a number of early Sasanian graffitis at Persepolis depicting mounted nobility; see Peter Calmeyer, “Zur Genese altiranischer Motive, V, Synarchie,” Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, n.s. 9 (1976), pp. 63–95, figs. 3-4.

3. Similar designs are found in Near Eastern, Baltic, and Eastern European folk costumes; see, e.g., Tilke 1923, pls. 54, 57, 61; and Tilke 1925, pls. 56, 51. Also Ilmari Manninen, “Die Kleidung,” Kansatieteenlinen Arkisto 13 (1957)—a very useful survey of the costumes of the Finno-Ugric peoples—figs. 113, 117f., 120f., 131, and pp. 132–35.

The humplike accent at the hip occurs as a constant feature
in a great many of the splendid silk caftans worn by the Ottoman sultans between the late 15th and the 16th centuries and preserved in Istanbul. They also close on the left with multiple buttons—attached to the edge of the right breast—and frogs, not unlike the Metropolitan’s caftan. We shall see that this tradition seems to be a legacy of early Turkish tribes. See Hulye Tezcan and Selma Delibaş, *The Topkapı Saray Museum: Costumes, Embroideries and Other Textiles*, trans. and ed. J. M. Rogers from Turkish (New York, 1986); and *Palace of Gold and Light: Treasures from the Topkapı, Istanbul*, exh. cat., Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 2000).

4. Although the pair has feet, we prefer the term *leggings* to *stockings*, because the use of precious silk suggests a decorative function. See, in this volume, Kajitani, p. 98. Low boots must have been worn with them, perhaps of the kind found at Moschchevaja Balka; see Ierusalsimskaia and Borkopp, no. 25; and Ierusalsimskaia, pp. 54–56, 156–57, nos. 336–347, and pl. 77, fig. 204.

5. See Ierusalsimskaia, 343 pp., 88 pls. with 228 figs., 18 line drawings in the text; and Ierusalsimskaia and Borkopp, 108 pp. with black-and-white and color figs. The first volume is a catalogue and interpretation of the most important objects found at this site and preserved in the Hermitage; the second is the catalogue of an exhibition in Munich (October 25, 1996–January 26, 1997) presenting only the choicest objects from Moschchevaja Balka and other North Caucasian sites in the Hermitage. This catalogue presents excellent technical analyses of the textiles. For a review of both works, see von Wilckens; and for an important review of Ierusalsimskaia, see Roth, who provides an English military map giving the exact location of the site.

6. See Ierusalsimskaia, p. 17; the local population apparently considered the tombs to be those of Christian saints.

7. For the history of the investigation of the site, see Ierusalsimskaia, pp. 17–20; Ierusalsimskaia and Borkopp, pp. 9–12; and Roth, pp. 52f.

8. She has augmented the holdings in the Hermitage by one-third. Other scholars have continued the exploration of the site, and the objects found are kept in various North Caucasian museums. They remain unpublished; see Ierusalsimskaia, p. 20; and Roth, p. 52f.

9. See note 5 above. Unfortunately, in Ierusalsimskaia the original Russian titles of her rich bibliography were translated into German. Her sources thus cannot be traced. In addition, she did not summarize the findings of the scholars she refers to. Access to information of primary importance is thus effectively blocked for the non-Russian-speaking reader. Except for a bare handful of titles, there is no bibliography in Ierusalsimskaia and Borkopp.

10. The detailed categorization and interpretation of the various kinds of objects in Ierusalsimskaia is useful but tends to be somewhat repetitive; it also entails many inconsistencies. Roth, pp. 525–29, draws attention to them in detail.

11. See Roth, p. 527f., who favors dates between the 8th and 10th centuries, against Ierusalsimskaia’s 8th to 9th century.

Besides the vessels published in Ierusalsimskaia and in Ierusalsimskaia and Borkopp, see Alexander Leskov, *Grabssäfte der Adygen: Neue Entdeckungen im Nordkaukasus* (Munich, 1990), no. 262, fig. 213; and Werbart, fig. 6, p. 214.

12. See Ierusalsimskaia, pp. 234ff. For the uncertainties of dating and locating silks, see von Wilckens, Roth, p. 526. See also the review by David Jacoby, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 92, no. 2 (1999), pp. 536–38, of Anna Muthesius, *Byzantine Silk Weaving 340 to AD 1200* (Vienna, 1997). Muthesius, p. 95, accepts Ierusalsimskaia’s dates as firmly based on archaeological evidence—clearly a risky assumption. However, the valiant attempt to define the character and date of a group of “Central Asian” textiles recently acquired by the Abegg Foundation in Riggisberg, Switzerland, demonstrates what can be achieved by a concerted effort: *Entlang der Seidenstrasse: Frühmittelalterliche Kunst zwischen Persien und China im Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberger Berichte 6*, ed. Karel Otavsky (Riggisberg, 1998). Apparently recovered from Tibetan burials, these silks emulate Sasanian patterns and may have been produced in China (Sichuan) in the 7th to 8th century. The results of an interdisciplinary colloquium at the Abegg Foundation, “Textile Art between Persia and China in the Early Middle Ages,” October 7–8, 1999, to be published as Riggisberger Berichte 9, will throw additional light on the problem.

13. Ierusalsimskaia varies in her designation of that culture: Alano-Saltovan or Adygo-Alanic, probably to indicate the circumscribed region of the northern Caucasus. The culture, which encompassed a wide area, takes its name from the hill fort Verchnjeje Saltovo on the Donets, not far from Charkov (Ukraine) and the Majaki hill fort near the river Don; see Werbart, p. 201. A. Belinsky and H. Härke, “Cemetery Excavations at Klin Yar, North Caucasus, 1993–94,” *Newsletter of the Centre for the Archaeology of Central and Eastern Europe* 3 (1995), pp. 4–5, report on one hundred excavated Alanic tombs containing many Khazar metal objects. For the Alans, see below, note 18; for the Khazars, note 40.

14. The most important findspot there is Khasaut, southwest of Kislovodsk. For examples, see Ierusalsimskaia and Borkopp, where the concordance (pp. 106–8) facilitates identification of the pieces.

15. See Ierusalsimskaia, no. 24, pls. 73f., figs. 19f., where an early-9th-century date is convincingly argued (confirmed by von Wilckens, pp. 252f.); Ierusalsimskaia and Borkopp, no. 1, figs. 1 and 1a; and see also Krishna Riboud, “A Newly Excavated Caftan from the Northern Caucasus,” *Textile Museum Journal* 4, no. 3 (1976), pp. 21–42; Anna A. Jerousalisskaia, “Le caftan a simourghs du tombeau de Mochtschevaja Balka (Caucase Septentrional),” *Studia Iranica* 7, no. 2 (1978), pp. 183–211, pls. 1–14. The caftan is occasionally figured closed on the wrong side—a regrettable mistake, e.g., *Cultural Contacts between East and West in Antiquity and Middle Ages from USSR* (in Japanese), exh. cat., Tokyo National Museum; Museum of Art, Osaka (Tokyo, 1985), no. 121; and—strangely—Anna A. Ierusalsimskaia, *Kaukas na shelkovom puti* (The Caucasus on the Silk Road), exh. cat. (Saint Petersburg, 1992), no. 1, figs. 11, 35. A line drawing of the caftan in Csánd Bálint, *Die Archäologie der Steppe: Steppenvölker zwischen Volga und Donau vom 6. bis zum 10. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, 1989), p. 29, fig. 7, shows the relevant features more clearly than a black-and-white photo. A semmuru is a mythical animal: a winged dog’s forepart with a peacock’s tail.

17. See PW 5, 1 (1903), s.v. "Dioskurias," cols. 1123–25 (Tomashchek); David Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity: A History of Colchis and Transcaucasian Iberia* 350 B.C.–40 562 (Oxford, 1994); Gocha Tsetskhladze, *Die Griechen in der Kolchis (historisch-archäologischer Abriss)* (Amsterdam, 1998); idem, "Cultural History of Colchis (6th–1st Centuries B.C.)," Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 1998 (British Library Document Supply Center), was not accessible to me. In our context, it is worth noting that Colchic linen was much appreciated in antiquity, as was hemp, endemic in the North Pontic plains, and mentioned already by Herodotus (4.74) as a Scythian material. He comments on the difficulty of distinguishing between linen and hemp. It was much used for garments (however, only occasionally in the finds from Moshchevaja Balka, where linen prevails). See PW 6, 2 (1909), s.v. "Flachs," cols. 2435–84, esp. col. 2450 (Olcik); PW, suppl. 9 (1962), cols. 1001f; and Victor Huhn, "Der Flachs: Der Hanf," in *Kulturpflanzen und Haustiere in ihrem Übergang aus Asien nach Griechenland und Italien sowie in das übrige Europa*, 9th ed. (Leipzig, 1953), pp. 164–93.


23. Jerusalimskaja, pp. 120f. For another report on such payment practices, see Sir Robert Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia etc. etc. during the Years 1817, 1818, 1819 and 1820* (London, 1821), p. 80, with a suggestive engraving (pl. 3) of the Darial defile (Terek gorge). Von Wilcken, p. 252, questions Jerusalimskaja’s concept by referring to the widespread European habit of furnishing the deceased with used and mended clothes instead of new ones. Hence, the patchwork might rather be the result of funerary clothes being put together from worn garments. I wish to thank William Hanaway for his translation of the Persian captions for Figures 10 and 25.

24. For Bohemia, see Georg Jacob, *Arabishe Berichte von Gesandten an germanische Fürstenhöfe aus dem 9. und 10. Jahrhundert* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927), p. 13. The 11th-century author Al-Bekri, drawing on information by the 10th-century Jewish merchant Ibrīm Ibn Jāqub, reports on the "currency" of the country: small, loosely woven pieces of cloth, which are the inhabitants’ assets and are useless for any other purpose than payment for goods. For Ukraine, a country famous for its linen and hemp, see "The Journey of William of Rubruck," in *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, ed. Christopher Dawson (New York, 1955), pp. 87–220, esp. pp. 93: "cotton" serves as payment ("dant duas telas de cotone"). Cotton had been introduced from India to Europe by the Arabs; see Henn, *Kulturpflanzen und Haustiere,* pp. 515f; and PW 3, 1 (1897), s.v. "Baumwolle," cols. 167–73 (Wagler). Rubruck was apparently familiar with the designation. Whether cotton was grown in Ukraine already in the 13th century, I cannot judge; the Franciscan may have mistaken hemp for cotton. Rubruck returned from his mission to the Great Khan in Mongolia via the pass of Derbent at the Caspian, of which he gives a gripping description.


26. The literature on this topic is vast; for a recent summary, see Elfriede R. Knauser, *The Camel’s Load in Life and Death: Iconography and Ideology of Chinese Pottery Figurines from Han to Tang and Their Relevance for Trade along the Silk Routes* (Zurich, 1998), pp. 30–33; and Otavsky.


museums remain unpublished, it seems premature to assume that the silk patterns of the Metropolitan Museum’s caftan occur only at Moshchevaja Balka.

29. Ierusalimskaja, p. 267 (text to no. 86); also pp. 116, 131. For another sample with a single boar’s head, see Golikov et al., “Experimental Research”; cf. Figure 11.

30. Still basic: Kurt Erdmann, “Eberdarstellung und Ebersymbolik in Iran,” Bonner Jahrbücher 147 (1942), pp. 345–82. For examples of textiles or on wall paintings, see, e.g., Otavsky, figs. 89, 92, 94, 100, and Kajitani, Figure 43. In Sasanian iconography, the boar symbolizes the god of victory, Verethragna; see the contribution by A. D. H. Bivar, in Riggisberger Berichte 9 (note 12 above).

31. See note 27 above.


33. Ierusalimskaja, chap. 3, “Kleidung”: pp. 41–45, “Frauengewänder”; pp. 45-54, “Männerkleidung”; and pp. 57f., the summary; on p. 53, she declares—among other features—as unique the construction of the women’s shirts from narrow pieces. However, interesting parallels to these shirts are to be found in the linen garments of Finno-Ugric tribes. The silk trimming is here replaced by embroidery; there also occur comparable asymmetric neck openings of shirts composed of narrow pieces of material; see Manninen, “Die Kleidung,” p. 107, who hints at the range of the type (Caucasus, Persia, Turkistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Egypt, and Morocco); see his figs. 86f., 91f. See also Tilke 1925, pls. 51, 82, 90; and Tilke 1925, pls. 64, 67; depicting shirts with asymmetrical necklines, very reminiscent of female shirts from Moshchevaja Balka. According to him, the asymmetrical neck opening is a typical “Persian” trait. Since he pictures “modern” garments, this is correct; in the context of our study, one would speak of “Iranian.” This puts the women’s shirts into a much wider frame, perhaps less dependent on Mediterranean than on “steppe” models. It is helpful to remember that the Byzantine official and historian Priscus, in his report on the embassy he led to the court of Attila the Hun in 449, describes a visit he pays to Kreka, the wife of Attila. He finds her in her beautifully carved wooden abode, resting on a kind of sofa, surrounded by women seated on the floor who embroider linen pieces to be sewed on garments “of the barbarians.” The memoir is preserved in the Excerpta de legationibus of the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetus. I have used the annotated translation of E. Dobhoffer, Byzantinische Diplomaten und östliche Barbaren: Aus den Excerpta de legationibus des Konstantinos Porphyrogenitos ausgewählte Abschnitte des Priskos und Menander Protoktor (Graz, Vienna, Cologne, 1955), p. 48. Ierusalimskaja (p. 53) deplores the lack of regional evidence for the survival of features of female attire that occur at Moshchevaja Balka. There are, however, striking parallels available from the Caucasus as well as Central Asia, documented as being worn into the early 20th century, for instance the elaborate female headgear. See Ierusas-
lmskaja, pl. 78, figs. 205f., and p. 158, figs. 10 and 12, with the identical kulutapushak caps worn by women in Bukhara and Samarkand. The caps are fitted with baglike extensions for the pigtails and are covered with veils and tiara-like bands, exactly like the early medieval models from the Moshchevaja Balka; see Facing West: Oriental Jews of Central Asia and the Caucasus, exh. cat., Jooods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam; Russian Museum of Ethnography, St. Petersburg (Zwolle, 1997), p. 41 and nos. 30–32, 52. The last venue of this exhibition was the Jewish Museum in New York, fall 1999. The catalogue text repeatedly states that the Jewish communities adopted indigenous dress (that is, of peoples mostly of Muslim persuasion) to such a degree that distinctions are impossible to make. Ierusalimskaja’s emphasis is on ethrogenes; see Ierusas-
lmskaja, p. 38 and passim, an approach that clearly has its limits. For a good analysis of such hypotheses, see Werbart.


35. See Languages of Dress, ed. N. Lindisfarne-Tapper and B. Ingham (Richmond, Surrey, 1997), fig. 22, which gives a good description of the garment with its frogs (“Fastened at the centre with five fasteners, not buttons . . . but bobs of braid . . . which fit into cotton loops serving as button-holes”); the Georgian and Abkhazian terminologies are on p. 94. Noblemen prefer the coat to be white. See also George Hewitt and Zaira Khiba, “Male Dress in the Caucasus with Special Reference to Akhazia and Georgia,” in ibid., pp. 93–106. The cartridge holders at the chest are, of course, a relatively late addition to the traditional outfit. A splendid collection of traditional Caucasian and kindred coats is in Tilke 1923, pls. 49f., 54, 56f., 59, 61, 65, 69, 83; and Tilke 1925, pls. 65, 89. They show many of the salient features of the Metropolitan Museum’s caftan. The American Museum of Natural History, New York, has a fine collection of Caucasian costumes where the relevant features can be studied.

36. Widgren, in his linguistic and art-historical study, on the basis of still current Ossetian dress terminology, traces the remarkable constancy of the basic steppe garments—in cut and vocabulary—from the Scythians to the Persians, the Parthians and Palmyrans, the Kushans, the Sasanians, the Sogdians to modern times. See also Elfriede R. Knauer, “Le vêtement des nomades eu rasiaux et sa postérité,” in Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres: Comptes Rendus des Séances de l’Année 1999 (Paris, 2001), pp. 1141–85; and Andreas Schmidt-Colinet et al., Die Textilien aus Palmyra: Neue und alte Funde, Damasener Forschungen 8 (Mainz, 2000), p. 92.

37. Ierusalmiskaja, p. 120 and passim.

38. Ierusalmiskaja, p. 120 and passim.


40. See the thorough study of D. M. Dunlop, The History of the Jewish Khazars (New York, 1967), with the important review by Vladimir Minorsky, “A New Book on the Khazars,” in The Turks, Iran and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages (London, 1978), pp. 122–44; Peter B. Golden, Kazar Studies, Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica 25, nos. 1–2 (Budapest, 1980); and idem, An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples: Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 233–44. The most useful feature of Kevin A. Brook, The Jews of Khazaria (Northvale, N.J., and Jerusalem, 1999) is its bibliography. For the archaeological evidence, see S. A. Pletneva, Die Chasaren: Mittelalterliches Reich an Don und Wolga (Leipzig, 1978); eadem, Ocherki Khazarskoi Archeologii (Moscow and Jerusalem, 1999). See also Werbart for an excellent analysis of the “multicultural” character of the Khazar state. For the technical aid provided by Byzantine engineers, see
Gennady Afanassiev, "Les forteresses du royaume Khazar,” L’Archéologue, no. 46 (February–March 2000), pp. 4f. In early December 2001, the Second International Colloquium on the Khazars, organized by the Jewish University in Moscow and the State Historical Museum, will take place at the State Historical Museum (Kremlin) accompanied by a special exhibition of Khazar materials.


42. The Mamonskij Perea does not figure in M. Vasmer, Russisches geographisches Namenbuch (Wiesbaden, 1964–). For its location, see Braund, Georgia in Antiquity, map 2.


44. For the role of the Bulgars, see Dunlop, History of the Jewish Khazars, passim; and Golden, Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples, passim.

45. Togan, pp. 136f. The numbers are probably somewhat exaggerated.


47. For maps of East Central Europe in the 7th–8th centuries and the 9th century, see Paul R. Magocsi, Historical Atlas of East Central Europe (1993), pp. 8–12.

48. Ibid., pp. 226f., 240f.

49. Ibid., p. 29.

50. Ibid., pp. 53f.

51. Ibid., pp. 82–97. Understandably, Ibn Fadlan does not distinguish between Swedes and Rus, see note 55 below. For the international makeup of these groups of enterprising traders, see the highly suggestive introduction by Omeljan Pritsak, The Origin of Rus’, vol. 1, Old Scandinavian Sources Other than the Saga (Cambridge, Mass., 1981). Pritsak calls them “fluvial nomads,” p. 21.

52. Still valuable is Reinhart P. A. Dozy, Dictionnaire détaillé des noms des vêtements chez les Arabes (Amsterdam, 1845); Leo Ary Mayer, Mamluk Costume: A Survey (Geneva, 1953); Yedida Kalfon Stillman, Arab Dress from the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times, ed. Norman A. Stillman (Leiden, 2000); Karl Lokoitsch, Ethnologisches Wörterbuch der europäischen (deutschen, romanischen und slawischen) Wörter orientalischen Ursprungs (Heidelberg, 1927). See also, for the various terms, Encyclopaedia of Islam, new ed. (Leiden, 1960–).


54. See, e.g., Barber; Mallory and Mair, Tarim Mummies. More, as yet scarcely known materials will be presented in Rigginsberger Berichte 9 (note 12 above).

55. E.g., silk garments, metal frogs, buttons, and other oriental accoutrements were certainly the possessions of resident foreign members of the international trading houses. Only a choice of publications dealing with such textile finds will be listed. Agnes Geiger, Die Textilfunde aus den Gräbern, Birka, Untersuchungen und Studien 3 (Uppsala, 1938); eadem, “The Textile Finds from Birka: Birka III. The Textilfunde aus den Gräbern,” revised by the author, Acta Archaeologica 50 (1980), pp. 209–22; Valdémars Ginters, Tracht und Schmuck in Birka und im ostslavischen Raum: Eine vergleichende Studie (Stockholm, 1981), reviewed by Elfriede R. Knauer, American Journal of Archaeology 87 (1983), pp. 125f.; Inga Hägg, "Mantel och kjortel i vikingatidens dräkt," Fornsvinen 66 (1971), pp. 141–53 (with German résumé p. 153); eadem, Die Textilfunde aus dem Hofen von Haithabu (Neumünster, 1984); Hildegard Elsner, Wikinger Museum Haithabu: Schaufenster einer frühen Stadt (Neumünster, n.d.), pp. 45–54. "Instrukcja." The important but elusive trading post of Reric on the Baltic has apparently just been located on the east coast of the Bay of Wismar (Germany): Gerd Lobin, "Wir haben Reric entdeckt," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, June 19, 1999; and Wolfgang Korn, "Die Hanse der Nordmänner," Bild der Wissenschaft 3 (2000), pp. 22–27. The population of these "viks" (traders, shippers, craftsmen), consisting of Norsemen, Wends (Slaves), Balts, or Finns and others, relied on slave labor. Caught in razzias in the Central Asian steppes and the North Pontic plains, slaves (Arabic: Saqlābi) were also their main "merchandise," coveted in both the Carolingian and the Abbasid empires. While the slave trade had been in the hands of Jewish merchants—who traveled unhindered through the Mediterranean to the Khazars even after the Arabs dominated its eastern part — during the 8th and early 9th centuries, it was taken over by the Norsemen—whose access to the same markets was via the Baltic and the Russian rivers—as of the middle of the 9th century; see Pritsak, The Origin of Rus’. It is also worth consulting the entry "Birka at the Silkroad! A Town of 'Vikings' or Merchants?" (1997) on the web (Mat Philip and Björn Axelson, eds., http://home1.swipnet.se/~w14729/birka/birke010.html). The Birka excavations have also yielded Khazar pottery: M. Bäck, "Importkeramiken i Birka," Medeltidsarkologisk Tidskrift (1995) was inaccessible to me. For reports by oriental traders on the Rus, see Heinz-Joachim Graf, Orientalische Berichte des Mit- telalters über die Germanen: Eine Quellensammlung (Krefeld, 1971), pp. 28–105. For a discussion of the debated etymologies of Rus, Varangian, or Saqaliba, see ibid., nn. 26–28; see also Pritsak, The Origin of Rus’, pp. 24–28, who localizes the Rus near Rodez, France, and makes them the descendants of the Ruteni or Ruti of Celto-Roman times. Togan’s addendum on the Saqaliba, pp. 295–331, has been challenged by Vladimir Minorsky, A History of Sharan and Darband in the 10th–11th Centuries (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 108–16. For more recent overviews, see Les Vikings . . . les scandinaves et l’Europe 800–1200, 28° exposition

56. The Rus modeled their state after the Khazar khaganate; see Pritsak, Origin of Rus; Golden, Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples, passim. For the interaction in the field of art, see Vladimir J. Petrukhin, "The Early History of Old Russian Art: The Rhyton from Chernigov and Khazarian Tradition," Tor 27, no. 2 (1995), pp. 475–86.


58. It appears that glorified versions of the steppe garb even reached and inspired wealthy chiefs in Scandinavia to emulate its distinctive features in the 5th century. See Margareta Nockert, "Vid sidenvägs ände: Textiller från Palmyra till Birka," in Palmyra: Ökens dromning (Stockholm, 1988), pp. 77–112, and cadem, in her publication of the chieflain's tomb in Högömm, Sweden: The Högom Find and Other Migration Period Textiles and Costumes in Scandinavia. Högom Part II (Umeå, Sweden, 1991), "Oriental Tunics and Trousers," pp. 116–22; also pp. 112–14. The decorative bands of the tunics are tablet-woven; horsehair serves as weft, which gives them a silky sheen. They were stitched onto fine woolen jackets of vermilion color. Another Eastern feature are the splendid metal clasp or buttons. Apparently copied from Parthian or Sasanian claps, which served to close coats at the neck: one circular "button" fastened at both edges of the neckline and tied together with ribbons; the Scandinavian claps were used on cuffs, at side slits of tunics, and at the ends of narrow trousers. They went out of fashion after the Migration Period. For Parthian and Sasanian claps, see Friedrich Sarre, L'art de la Perse ancienne (Paris, 1921), fig. 57; and Roman Ghirshman, Iran: Parthians and Sasanians (London, 1965), p. 170. Buttons do not reappear in Western Europe en masse before the 14th century, certainly again inspired by Eastern models. The adaptation is probably due to crusader contacts with Byzantium and its eastern neighbors. Fine series of silver gilt buttons attached to a decorative woven metal band from the 13th–14th centuries have been excavated in North Caucasian tombs (see Leskov, Grabschätze der Abyggen, fig. 216), bell-shaped ones are known from Moshchevaja Balka (Ierusalimskaja, p. 82; from a man's caftan, attesting that metal buttons coexisted with the textile samples from frogs), and other North Caucasian cemeteries. To the best of my knowledge, there exists no "History of the Button." My own attempt at a survey is Knauer, "Ex oriente vestimenta," pp. 652–54. I would suggest that the button fad (mostly attested in late medieval paintings) was mediated to Western Europe by, among others, Italian merchants settled in the East, e.g., in Kaffa (Crimea) in the 14th century. Actual series of buttons fashioned of cloth were found in excavations in London; see Elisabeth Crowfoot, Frances Pritchard, and Kay Staniland, Textiles and Clothing c. 1150–c. 1450, Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 4 (London, 1992), figs. 141–47. They are dated to the 14th century and confirm the widespread use also among the common people. Contemporary paintings mostly depict the upper classes and show metal buttons.

59. The jackets of the Chertomlyk vase are trimmed with fur, with only the seam in the back appearing to be covered with embroidery (see Widengren, fig. 2); the Scythians on the Kid Oba bottle, however, show a wealth of embroidery on their garments, combined with rows of metal (?) roundels (see Figure 15). Isolated buttonlike roundels on the chest may have served to secure the closing of the jacket in addition to the belt. To judge from later examples, strings must have connected the "buttons" across the chest. I assume that the hooplike ornaments at the chest of the Scythians' jackets on the vessel from the Gajmanova Mogila served as closing devices, too ("proto-frogs"); they are used only above the belt (see Gold der Steppen: Archäologie der Ukraine [Sleswigs, 1991], no. 96a. Besides embroidery, the jackets display a double trimming of precious fur. Interestingly, the legs of the lambkins have not been cut off the jackets but serve as additional protection for the thighs—waste was not in the nature of nomad societies.

60. Herodotus (4.110, trans. Aubrey de Selincourt [Harmondsworth, 1954], p. 306), speaking of the Budini and Geloni, neighbors of the Sycopians, reports that "otters and beavers are caught in the lake and another sort of creature . . . whose skin they use for making edgings for their jackets."

61. The leather-mosaic coat from the 4th-century B.C. kurgan in Katanda (Altay) (Figure 16) and the Persian kandys, also fashioned of leather and best known from the Persepolis reliefs, are almost contemporaneous; see Henry Frankfort, The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, 1958), fig. 182. They are fastened with ribbons at the neck and were worn draped over the shoulders with very narrow dangling sleeves. Some of the finds from the permafrost burials in the Altay evince strong Achaemenid influence. It should be kept in mind that the more "civilized" Persians—before creating an empire—shared a steppe background with the tribes in the Altay which includes traditional clothing.

62. This fashion persisted as demonstrated by the passage from Priscus describing the activities of the servants of Attila's spouse (note 33 above, trans. Dobhoffer, Byzantische Diplomaten, p. 48).

63. See the garments from the 1st-century A.D. Hsiung-Nu tumuli in northern Mongolia; S. I. Rudenko, Die Kultur der Hsiung-nu und die Hügelgräber von Noin Ula (Bonn, 1969); also the trimmed silk "caftan" from Nyia (Xinjiang) of the Han period, no. 49, in Archaeological Treasures of the Silk Road in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region; and Wen Wu 1 (2000), pp. 4–40 (English
résumé, p. 40). The importance of braided bands as decoration of garments becomes apparent from clothes either stitched together entirely from woolen ones or decorated with them (see Barber, pls. 6A, 6B, and 7A, 7B); they both date from the 1st millennium B.C. See also the recently discovered tapestry bands found in Xinjiang, Fabulous Creatures from the Desert Sands: Central Asian Textiles from the Second Century B.C. to the Second Century A.D., Riggsberger Berichte 10, ed. Dominik Keller and Regula Schorta (Riggsbergen, 2001).

63. The nomadic Yūeh-chih, of Indo-European extraction, who called themselves Kushans, after they had wrested Bactria (northern Afghanistan) from the Greeks and created a powerful state in northwest India during the 1st to 3rd century A.D., continued wearing a refined version of the steppe outfit. Embroidered (?) bands with floral motifs are visible on King Vima Kadphises’ jacket (closing in the center) and are studded with metal roundels; B. Rowland, The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist-Hindu-Jain (Harmondsworth, 1959), pl. 43. The ones lined up at the jacket’s edges may have been linked by strings (no longer visible) to hold the tight-fitting garment in place. See Widengren, figs. 26f.; fig. 28 shows a Kushan grandee with banded and girt caftan, without lapels, that closes on the left side of the body. See also Knauer, “Ex oriente vestimenta,” pp. 629–31; and eadem, “Le vêtement des nomades eurasiatiques,” pp. 1152–55.

64. See, e.g., the trimmed coat of an ancestor of King Antiochus of Commagene, 1st century B.C., from Nimrud Dağ, Turkey; Knauer, “Le vêtement des nomades eurasiatiques,” fig. 14. The rather flimsy (silk?) material of the Parthin warrior’s jacket seems to be strengthened with a wide trimming of firmer stuff; see Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1967), pl. 392. This bronze statue from Shami in Khuzistan is dated to the first half of the 2nd century B.C. He wears baggy leggings. A similarly trimmed Susian example is found on the monumental statue of King Shapur I (sculpted from a stalactite) in the Mudan cave near Bishapur, of the later 3rd century A.D.; see ibid., pl. 412.

An open trimmed silk coat, tunic, and leggings are worn by the Palmyrene Makkia; see Widengren, figs. 9–11 (Shami) and 8 (Palmyra). See also Knauer, “Ex oriente vestimenta,” pp. 631f.; and the trimmed and belted coat with side slits of an Umayyad khalif's statue from Khirbat al-Mafjar (second quarter of the 8th century) in Jerusalem, Janine Sourdel-Thomine and Bertold Spuler, Die Kunst des Islam, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte (1966) 4 (Berlin, 1973), pl. 58.

65. In a single instance, the late Susian king Khosrau II in the relief at Taq-i Bustan, near Kermanshah (Iran), which shows him hunting bears from a boat, wears a belted caftan closing at the left side of the body but with a high neckline. If opened, the upper right part might have formed a lapel, but it is not shown that way; see Bulletin du CIETA 74 (1997), p. 24, fig. 10.

66. Compelling evidence for single lapelled and trimmed Hephthalite caftans comes from murals at Dalverzin-tepe in the Surkhpan-darya valley (southern Uzbekistan); see Irina T. Krouglikova, “Peinture murale de Delbarjîn,” Sovetskoi-afganitskaiia arkeologicheskaiia ekspeditsia (1969–73) Drevniaa Baktria (Moscow, 1976), pp. 185–87, fig. 56, specifically in rooms N 12 and N 13. For parallels, the author rightly refers to the Hephthalite murals in the niche of the 35-m-high Buddha at Bamiyan, recently destroyed, and to those of the cave temple in Kizil (Xinjiang); for an instructive juxtaposition of the relevant images (Hephthalite “knights” in trimmed, single-lapelled caftans that close on the left and Tocharian “knights” in similar outfits from the Cave of the Sixteen Sword-Bearers in Kizil, dated between 600 and 650), see Takayasu Higuchi, “Studies on Buddhist Sites in Northern Central Asia,” Silk Roadology 4, Bulletin of the Research Center for Silk Roadology (1997), p. 188, fig. 7:1; see also Knauer, “Le vêtement des nomades eurasiatiques,” figs. 18, 19. For the political history and the numismatic evidence, see Roman Ghiroshman, Les Chionites-Hephthalites (Cairo, 1948).

67. The site is not closely dated. (7th century? Some Russian authors prefer a date between the 5th and 6th centuries; however, Boris Marshak opts for the very early 7th century, oral communication.) If the copies of the fragmentary wall paintings from the site is trusted, there is a single participant whose outfit is distinguished by a jacket with double lapels and sleeves; coming down only to the elbows worn over a patterned undergarment—all the other males sport just one lapel and long sleeves, see L. I. Albaum, Balalyk-tepe: K istorii materialnoj kultury i iskusstva Tocharistana (Tashkent, 1960), figs. 106f. He may be the most honored member of the gathering and the lapels a sign of rank, and he also balances by far the largest cup among the banqueters. For an interpretation of the “Susian” textiles depicted in Balalyk-tepe, see Otakovsky, pp. 165–67. A feature that has, to the best of my knowledge, never been addressed is the cut of the female coats on these murals. They are worn draped over the shoulders, giving them the semblance of a cape with a single lapel on the right; ribbons to close them are attached on either side at the height of the breast. In rare instances, however (Albaum, Balalyk-tepe, figs. 101f.: a line to the left of the ribbons under the lapel indicates the empty sleeve), it becomes obvious that these are coats worn with dangling sleeves, like the Old Persian kandys, also favored by females during Susian times. See also the ladies in a 7th-century mural from Kalai Kafirnigan (Tokharistan), Cultural Contacts, no. 101. Identical coats worn in the same fashion, but not recognized for what they are—are found on wall paintings in 12th-century Buddhist temples in western Tibet depicting high-ranking laypeople, male as well as female. See, e.g., Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, Tabo, A Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalayas (Milan, 1997), figs. 29gf. and passim; for male lapelled sleeved coats, see figs. 40 and 137 and passim. The 12th-century Nepalese temple in Alchi provides other examples; see P. A. Pal, A Buddhist Paradise: The Murals of Alchi, Western Himalayas (Hong Kong and Basel, 1982), fig. LS 30, a ruler on horseback, in a draped sleeved coat. For a survey of the phenomenon, see Knauer, “Le vêtement des nomades eurasiatiques.”

68. For Afrasiab, see L. I. Albaum, Znizpis Afrasiaba (Tashkent, 1973); Boris I. Marshak, “Le programme iconographique des peintures de la ‘Salle des ambassadeurs’ à Afrasiab (Samarkand),” Arts Asiatiques 29 (1994), pp. 5–20; Markus Mode, Sogdien und die Herrscher der Welt: Turkigen, Sasaniden und Chinesen in Historiegemälden des 7. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. aus Alt-Samarqand (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1993); on the cover is a drawing of two Turkish soldiers in lapelled caftans. The one on the right has shed the top of his caftan and knotted the sleeves like a belt, the silk-trimmed cuffs are visible, middle of the 7th century A.D. For Pendjikent, A. M. Belenitskii, Monumental’noe iskusstvo Pendzhi- kenta (Moscow, 1973), note, e.g., pl. x, the mural with female and young male donors in draped sleeved coats and a caftan who worship a god, from a Sogdian residence in Pendjikent (Tadjikistan), second half of the 7th century, Boris I. Marshak


69. A peculiarly shaped single lapel is worn by the painters in the Cave of the Painters in Kizil, dated ca. A.D. 500 (see Albert von LeCoq, Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mitteleuropas [Berlin, 1925], fig. 7)—but cf. the new dates suggested by Ma Shichang, “Dating of the Kizil Caves,” in In The Footsteps of the Buddha: An Iconic Journey from India to China, exh. cat., Department of Fine Arts and Museum University and Art Gallery, University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong, 1998), p. 92. Leggings are more in evidence in Xingjian than in Central Asia. Their history has been explicated by Seyrig. “Armes et costumes iraniens de Palmyre,” and Widengren. Actual boots with strings at the top, of the 5th century, were found by Folke Bergman at grave 10 at Kroraïna; see Mallory and Mair, Turan Mummies, p. 222 and fig. 133. Similar models are still being used in Asia today; see Tilke 1925, pl. 103 and p. 29 (from Tibet), and the Mongolian boy victors in a horserace wearing leggings tied to the belt, second quarter of the 20th century, Carl Diem, Asiatische Reiterspiele (Berlin, 1942), fig. 14, p. 45. There are two kinds: stockinged or without feet. Poor-quality silk was fashioned into leggings for the Byzantine army in the 10th century; see David Jacoby, “Silk in Western Byzantium before the Fourth Crusade,” Byzantinische Zeitschrift 84–85 (1991–92), p. 474, n. 118. The majority of “Sasanian” leggings comes from the excavations in Antinoe, Egypt; they are dispersed over many European museums. For one in Berlin, see Tilke 1925, pl. 28 and p. 13. The latest survey is by Dominique Béznath and Patricia Dal-Prà, “Quelques remarques à propos d’un ensemble de vêtements de cavaliers découverts dans des tombes égyptiennes,” L’armée romaine et les barbares du IIe au VIIe siècle, ed. Françoise Vallet and Michel Kazanski (Rouen, 1999), pp. 367–82. The leggings of the kneeling Sogdians (?) are apparently held up with two strings; see the mural from Buddhist Temple 9 at Bezeklik near Turfan, Xinjiang (China), 8th century A.D. (?), Kunst und Kultur entlang der Seidenstrasse, ed. H. G. Franz (Graz, 1986), p. 53. The pair of leggings in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 2) may have been fashioned for funerary purposes. The unlined silk could hardly have withstood daily use.

70. Albert von LeCoq, participant in the four German missions to Chinese Turkestan between 1902 and 1914, was the first to analyze thoroughly the pedigree of costumes depicted in those murals, in his Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mittelasiens. His astute observations are still valid today, while some of his conclusions need revision in the light of many new finds. For the German involvement in the exploration of Central Asia, see M. Yaldiz, "The History of the Asian Collection in the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin," in In the Footsteps of the Buddha, pp. 41–50. See also Along the Ancient Silk Routes: Central Asian Art from the West Berlin State Museums, exh. cat., MMA (New York, 1982). For the Tocharians in Central Asia, see The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia, ed. Victor H. Mair (Washington, D.C., 1998); also Barber, and Otavsky, pp. 173–84, for textiles from the region. The dates of the ( stylistically more Western) murals in the Buddhist sanctuaries at Kizil are still debated; see Ma Shichang, “Dating of the Kizil Caves," p. 92. Tests conducted by the Leibnitz Laboratory in Kiel in 1999 on behalf of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, will certainly lead to a revision of some of the murals' dates (Marianne Yaldiz, oral communication).

71. Though often badly abraded, these so-called balbals are dressed in belted and lepelled caftans that occasionally display Chinese silk patterns. These features are confirmed by actual finds of garments fashioned from Chinese silk in contemporaneous regional Turkic cemeteries. Foggery is attested. The majority of the caftans shown have either one or two lapels and are closed on the proper left side. A few others close, Chinese fashion, on the right, a feature that is probably to be explained by the proximity and frequent contacts of those tribes with the Ctesiphon Empire. I am much indebted to Dr. Olek Kubarev, Novosibirsk, who outlined the results of his excavations and analyzes for me and provided a number of images; his dissertation, “The Culture of the Ancient Turks of the Altay (on Materials of the Burial Monuments)” (in Russian), Novosibirsk, 1997, 445 pp., was not accessible to me, but see his "The Robe of the Old Turks of Central Asia According to Art Materials,” Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropology of Eurasia 3, no. 3 (2000), pp. 81–88. He also drew my attention to Dovdoin Bayar, The Turkic Stone Statues of Central Mongolia (in Mongolian) (Ulan Bator, 1997), equally beyond reach as yet. However, Dr. Kubarev kindly sent a summary and some images from his and the latter work. Interestingly, the caftans were closed with either ribbons or frogs (Russian: galuny = galloons, from French "galon") and medallions via Poland; see Max Vasmer, Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch [Heidelberg, 1953–], reference supplied by Rainer Stichel. These stone “balbals” have Bronze Age and Scythian predeces sors in the vast steppe region between the Danube and the Altay; see Alexej Kovalëv, “Die ältesten Stelen am Erisk: Das Kulturphänomen Xemirxek,” Eurasia Antiqua 5 (1999), pp. 135–78; and P. B. Belozor, "Stone Statues in the Context of the Scythian Ethnographic Problems" (in Russian, with brief English summary), Archeologia 4 (1996), pp. 41–50. They are æsthetically less informative than the Turkic statues. For the latter, see Vladimir D. Kubarev, Kamennyie issouaniia Altaia (Novosibirsk, 1997), with English summary. An interesting passage from the early Tang annals illustrates the sinification of the inhabitants of the Turfan oasis in today’s Xinjiang. Its (Turkic) ruler rendered homage to the Chinese court and, returning home with a Chinese noblewoman as his consort, he decreed: ‘Formerly, since our dynasty was in a savage frontier country, we wore our hair hanging down the back and buttoned our garments at the left... Let the people and all above them undo their braids or knots of hair and do it in the Chinese fashion, and change the lapel which crosses to the left on their garments.” Edouard Chavannes, Documents sur les Tou-Kiou occidentaux (Saint Petersburg, 1903), pp. 102f.; English trans., in Jane Gaston Mahler, The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T’ang Dynasty of China (Rome, 1959), pp. 26f. Long braided hair and garments closing on the left are typical for the Turkic tribes, as well as among the
residents of multicultural Turfan. China herself, moreover, did not remain unaffected by the fashions of this newly occupied province. The lapelled coat became a fad, even for ladies, in this most internationally minded period of Chinese history. See also Joachim Hildebrand, *Dass Ausländerbild in der Kunst Chinas als Spiegel kultureller Beziehungen* (Han-Tang) (Stuttgart, 1987); and Knauer, *Le vêtement des nomades eurasiatiques,* pp. 1156-59. Chinese statuettes of Central Asians often show them with single buttons at the end of the lapel, indicating that they could be closed high on the neck.


73. The result of consultation of the splendid volume by Shen Congweng, *Zhongguo gudai fashi yanjiu* (Hong Kong, 1992)—reference to this work kindly supplied by Xinru Liu. The statuettes of performers (p. 429, fig. 203), chiseled from baked brick, come from the tomb of Jiao Zuqin in Henan Province, see *The Quest for Eternity: Chinese Ceramic Sculptures from the Prophets Republic of China,* ed. Susan L. Caroselli, exh. cat., Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 147f., nos. 92-94. The statuettes we picture are part of the group but were not shown in that exhibition.


75. The first to address the problem of the "scaramangion" was N. P. Kondakov, *"Les Costumes orientaux à la Cour Byzantine," Byzantion* 1 (1924), pp. 7-49. Many of his observations are still valid. I do not think that the type of riding coat presented by A. Geijer, *"A Silk from Antinö and the Sasanian Art," Orientalia Suecana* 12 (1963 [1964]), pp. 9-36, fig. 2 (flopped; the coat should close on the left), could be called a "scaramangion" since it is neither constructed from several parts nor does it display frogs. These are the salient features described in Du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Graeciae* (Lyons, 1688; reprinted, Graz, 1958), s.v. "ektapamfron/ekpanikon," p. 198f., and idem, *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis,* ed. G. A. L. Henshel (Paris, 1840-50), s.v. "scaramanga." I have discussed the garment and its etymology in Knauer, "Ex oriente vestimenta," pp. 657f., esp. n. 231. See also F. Cumont, *"L’uniforme de la cavalerie orientale et le costume byzantin," Byzantion* 2 (1925), pp. 181-91.

76. For precious metal braids and frogs from tombs in Birka, see Hägg, "Mantel." For a summary of closing devices, including frogs, in the early medieval period, see Knauer, *Ex oriente vestimenta,* pp. 651-55 and 685, n. 331. In Europe, embroidery with precious metal threads is documented since the late 10th century; see Kay Staniland, *Medieval Craftsmen: Embroiderers* (London, 1991), pp. 77. For Byzantium, see *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford, 1991), s.v. "embroidery" (A. Gonosova); and Angeliki Chatzemichale, "Ta chrysolabirika-syrmataina-syrmatikis kentemata," *Mélanges offerts à Octave et Milto Merlis,* Collection de l’Institut Français d’Athènes 92-93 (Athens, 1956), vol. 2, pp. 447-98 (reference supplied by Rainer Stichel). As a specialized craft it is called "passementerie" in French (a guild was established in Paris in 1588), "pas- samerania" in Italian, and "Posamentierarbeit" in German.

77. See Knauer, "Ex oriente vestimenta," pp. 689 (with n. 331), 705-11.

78. A rare pictorial document of the 11th century—a period otherwise devoid of images—are the murals in the Ghaznavid palace of Lashkari Bazar in northern Afghanistan. Mahmud of Ghazni, the founder of this Turkic dynasty and conqueror of northern India, and his grandees must have worn single-lapelled, trimmed, and belted caftans that closed at the left and were fashioned of magnificent post-Sasanian silks. This is what we can perceive on the walls of the audience hall where the "corps d'élite" of the ruler is depicted; see Daniel Schlumberger, "Le Palais Ghaznivide de Lashkari Bazar," *Syria* 29 (1952), pp. 251-70, pl. 32, 1. For the history, see Clifford E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran* (Edinburgh, 1963). Tilke 1923, passim, refers to frogs always as a Turkic feature.


80. Still fundamental in our context is the work of Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica,* vol. 1, *Die Byzantinischen Quellen der Geschichte der Türkvolker,* and vol. 2, *Sprachreste der Türkvolker in den Byzantinschen Quellen,* 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1958). Military and matrimonial alliances between the Byzantine and the Khazar courts are well attested (see ibid., vol. 1, pp. 81-85): the emperor Heraclius offers his daughter in marriage to the Khagan khan in 626; they unite forces against the Sasanians. Exiled from his capital to the Crimea, the emperor Justin II flees to Khazaria in 704 and marries the sister of the khan. The emperor Constantine V (r. 741-75) marries the daughter of the khan. As empress, she takes the name Eirene and introduces a Khazar garment into Byzantium. Its name, *Tzizakion*—from Turkish *čiçek* = "flower"—is suggestive without our being able to visualize it; see Gyula Moravcsik, "Die Herkunft des Wortes Tzizakion," *Semi-narium Kondakovianum* 4 (1931), pp. 69-76 (German résumé, p. 76); he suggests that the Khazar princess's name was "Flower." Under the emperor Theophilus (r. 829-42), Byzantine architects construct the Khazar stronghold Sarkel on the river Don. In the 9th and 10th centuries, Khazars serve as imperial bodyguards in the capital and Khazars participate in Leo VI's war against the Bulgars in 894. It is only in the early 11th century that collaboration ceases. Basil II, supported by the Russians, conquers the remnants of the Khazar khaganate, already threatened in the east by the Kumans (Polovtsy)—yet another tribe from the depth of Asia (the genuine "officina gentium aut certe velut vagina nationum," the "manufactory of peoples"
and certainly like the vagina of nations," as the 6th-century author Jordanes calls remote Scandinavia, which had just sent forth the Gothic tribes; see *Jordanis Romana et Getica*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctorum Antiquissimorum 5 [Berlin, 1882], p. 60, ll. 6f).

81. See *Gold der Steppe: Archäologie der Ukraine*, ed. Renate Rolle et al. (Schleswig, 1991), no. 208b; see pp. 274f., fig. 1, and pp. 418f. Remains of three caftans were found in the kurgan.

82. See, e.g., Rusudan Mepiasashvili and Vakhtang Tsintsadze, *The Arts of Ancient Georgia* (London, 1979), pp. 86: Demetre, founder of the Ivari church in Mskheta (early 7th century); and 245: Ashot II, founder of the early-10th-century church at Tbei. Closest to the Metropolitan’s coat is the caftan worn by King Saul in the scene of David and Goliath, a relief on the church of the Holy Cross at Aght’amar, 10th century. It closes on the left, has a single lapel on the right breast, and is girded (see Figure 27). See also Knauer, "Le vêtement des nomades eurasiatiques," p. 1165 and fig. 15.

83. Of Turco-Persian stock, the Mughals invaded India in the 15th century and imposed their—by now highly refined—civilization on the venerable culture of large parts of the subcontinent. The garment has survived until today, e.g., among the cattle-breeding Rabaris in Ahmadabad in the north Indian state of Gujarat and other "foreign" groups in this country. See Aditi Shah, Mitu Banga, and Erol Pires, *The Rabari of Ahmedabad: A Study of Their Costumes* (Paldi, Ahmedabad, 1992), figs. 17A and 18. The cotton garment is called “kediu.” It closes on the left, at the neck with a cloth button and loop and at the waist with ribbons; it also features a “hidden” inside fastening. The authors are unaware of the costume-historical connections. For similar garments, see Tilke 1923, pls. 95f., and the Parsee cotton coat, pl. 97, closing on the left and with shirred skirt. The Parsees arrived in India in the 10th century as refugees from Iran, where they had been persecuted since the overthrow of the Sasanians by the Arabs in 766.

84. *Ierusalimskaja*, pl. XXIII, fig. 51, nos. II 79, II 106, II 201, II 338; *Ierusalimskaja* and Borkopp, nos. 28–32. They are exact copies of full-size garments.

85. *Archaeological Treasures of the Silk Road in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region*, nos. 132–35, and pp. 228–33. The miniatures are clearly visible in the photo on p. 132; the date is given as between A.D. 265 and 420. See now *Wen Wu* 1 (1999), pp. 3–16; the drawing is on p. 15. The author of the article, Xiuxing Guo, presented the find at the Abegg Foundation colloquium, October 7–8, 1999, mentioned in note 12 above; she dates Tomb 15 to the 2nd century a.d. See also Knauer, "Le vêtement des nomades eurasiatiques," pp. 1178–87. Von Wilckens, p. 252—unaware of this recent find—rightly refers to similar miniatures found in tombs from the same region: Vivi Sylvan, *Investigation of Silk from Edsen-Gol and Lop-Nor and a Survey of Wool and Vegetable Materials*, Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin 32, VII, Archaeology 6 (Stockholm, 1949), pp. 57f. Add to this the miniature objects, bolts of silk, etc., found in the tomb of Lady P’eng in Astana; Valerie Hansen, "The Path of Buddhism into China, the View from Turfan," *Asia Major*, 3rd ser., vol. 11, no. 2 (1998), p. 48. Miniature articles of clothing of the Tang dynasty (618–907) were also found in the underground rooms of the Famen temple (Shaanxi); see *XIAN: Legacies of Ancient Chinese Civilization*, 2nd ed. (Beijing, 1997), p. 190 bottom. The objects will be presented by Han Jinke in the forthcoming colloquium publication Rüggsißer Berichte 9 (note 12 above).

86. The until now unpublished caftan (see Kajtani, Figure 19) that guided the reconstruction of the Metropolitan Museum’s garment shows that single lapel models were current, too.

87. *Ierusalimskaja*, pp. 127–29, figs. 21f.; *Ierusalimskaja* and Borkopp, pp. 101f., no. 120. Again, this is not an isolated case in our context: a Chinese inscription, dated as early as the 2nd–3rd century A.D., was found in the Crimea; see B. I. Staviskii, "Central Asian Mesopotamia and the Roman World: Evidence of Contacts," *In the Land of the Gyrpons* (Florence, 1995), pp. 191–202, esp. p. 192, with reference to *Sovetskaia Arkheologcia* 1972, 2, pp. 135–45, fig. 3 (p. 137), and p. 140 (I was unable to find the report at the indicated spot).

88. Topics relevant for costume history were broached at the Third International Archaeological Conference, "The Cultures of the Steppes of Eurasia of the Second Half of the 1st Millennium A.D.,” in Samara, Russia, in March 2000. I am grateful to Dr. Gleb Kubarev for alerting me to the meeting and to Dr. D. Stashenkov, Regional Museum, Samara, for providing me with a preliminary program.