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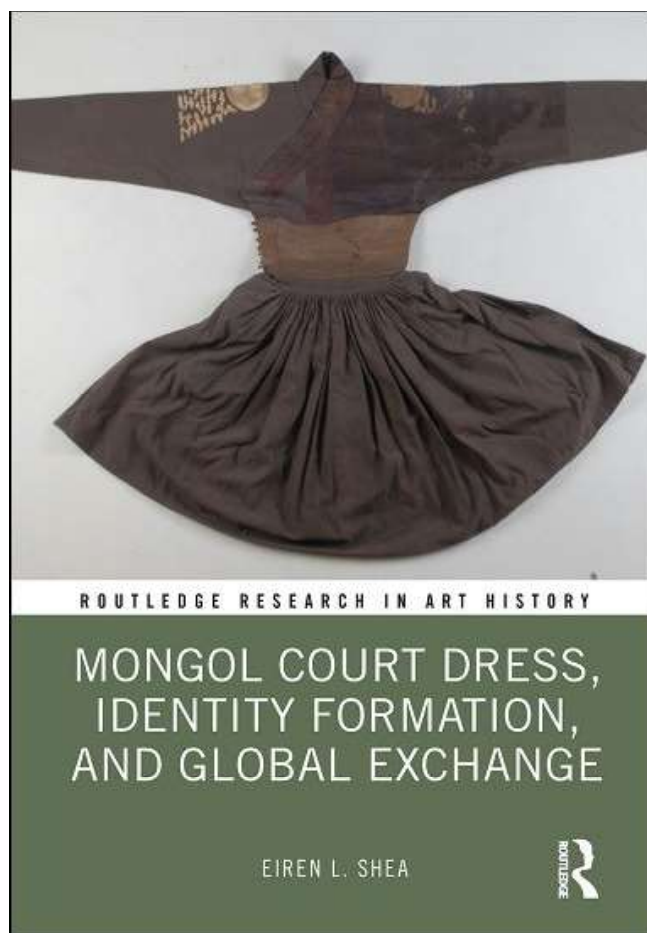
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The Journal of Dress History is the academic publication of The Association of Dress Historians (ADH) through which scholars can articulate original research in a constructive, interdisciplinary, and peer reviewed environment. The ADH supports and promotes the study and professional practice of the history of dress, textiles, and accessories of all cultures and regions of the world, from before classical antiquity to the present day. The ADH is Registered Charity #1014876 of The Charity Commission for England and Wales.

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The Editorial Board of The Journal of Dress History encourages submissions for publication consideration from students, early career researchers, independent scholars, and established professionals. If you would like to discuss an idea for an article, book review, or exhibition review, please contact Dr. Jennifer Daley at journal@dresshistorians.org.

The Journal of Dress History is designed on European standard A4 size paper (8.27 x 11.69 inches) and is intended to be read electronically, in consideration of the environment. The graphic design utilises the font, Baskerville, a serif typeface designed in 1754 by John Baskerville (1706-1775) in Birmingham, England. The logo of The Association of Dress Historians is a monogram of three letters, ADH, interwoven to represent the interdisciplinarity of our membership, committed to scholarship in dress history. The logo was designed in 2017 by Janet Mayo, longstanding ADH member.



Mongol Court Dress, Identity Formation, and Global Exchange, Eiren L. Shea, Routledge, New York, New York, United States, 2020, Notes on Transliteration, Acknowledgements, Bibliography, Index, 40 Black-and-White Illustrations, 30 Colour Illustrations, 168 pages, Hardback, £120.00.

Originally ruled by Genghis Khan, the Mongol empire (1206–1368) marked a major turning point of exchange in cultural, political, and dress history across Asia and Europe. The wide-ranging international exchange that occurred during this period is most apparent visually through the inclusion of Mongol motifs in paintings, ceramics, metalwork and as Eiren L.

Shea demonstrates in her book, dress. *Mongol Court Dress, Identity Formation, and Global Exchange* investigates how a group of newly confederated tribes from the Mongol region created a courtly idiom that permanently changed the aesthetics of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Mongol-produced luxury textiles became highly coveted and were rapidly disseminated across the Mongol region. Lampas, cloths woven with supplementary wefts in gold, and nasīj, weaves of gold-brocaded silks, were particularly popular, and Shea systematically traces their journey from their creation in the Mongol empire to their imitation in Italian weaving workshops. For Shea, textiles and dress “most clearly express the nuances of the changes brought by the Mongol rule, and unambiguously show the reach of Mongol culture” (p. 2).

Shea is at the forefront of this academic field. She is Assistant Professor of Art History at Grinnell College (in the United States) where she teaches on the arts of pre-modern Asia, and her previous research projects on the Mongols have led to this major book. Shea’s expertise in dress history is a testament to her time on the intensive textile analysis course at the Centre International d’Étude des Textiles Anciens (CIETA) in Lyon, France. This knowledge takes centre stage in the chapters dedicated to men’s and women’s court robes.

Mongol Court Dress is compellingly written and brilliantly researched. Whilst the content is weighty and often complex, Shea's authorial voice alleviates the tone and makes each chapter stimulating and accessible to wide audiences. The book is rigorously researched and her rich archive comprises of Venetian sculpture, Egyptian embroidery, and tomb murals in Shanxi, China and artefacts from the National Silk Museum, Hangzhou and the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada. The work presents a visual treat on the breadth of Mongol design with thorough analysis and pertinent links to its impact on socio-cultural histories. A detail shot of a green twill silk fragment with a printed gold stag is a notable highlight of Shea's sources (p. xiii).

The Mongol court occupied a vast territory and as such, Shea's research project is ambitious. She successfully tackles the disparate aspects of Mongol clothing by weaving together different geographic locations—from the Eastern steppe to Mediterranean towns. She constructs her text in a logical and effective way; the book is divided into five sections, each investigating the establishment and spread of Mongol elite dress, and concluding on its legacy. Chapter 1 focuses on the origins of the Mongol aesthetic and key materials used in court dress including painted silks, thick felts, and practical leathers. Chapter 2 looks at clothing at the court of Khubilai Khan of the Yuan dynasty, grandson of Genghis Khan. Chapter 3 illustrates women's dress at the Yuan court, and Chapter 4 explores dress in western Asia. Chapter 5 goes beyond the Mongol region and investigates the spread of Mongol making and dressing practices across Europe, analysing how aesthetics were copied and exported through trade and gifting.

Shea acknowledges the limitations of her research. She chooses to focus solely on elite dress and therefore leaves out descriptions of clothing worn by those outside of the wealthy walls of the court. Additionally, Shea only dedicates a small section to noting the diverse populations that made up the Mongol empire: Uighurs, Muslims, and Naimans, among others (p. 42). A more thorough contextualisation of these different communities would have benefitted parts of the book as these groups certainly influenced the making and designing of Mongol dress. Subsequently, due to the nature of Shea's research, there are few remaining artefacts that allow her to draw conclusive ideas about historical dress. For instance, the resources from the Ilkhanate region are mainly paintings or manuscripts rather than physical garments like those found in China. Shea combines her selection of primary sources of court robes and textile fragments with extant portraits and writings of the time. However, some of these portraits also raise questions about accuracy as they were often created posthumously.

Contemporary Chinese fashion has been a recurring theme in recent publications and exhibitions. In 2015, the Metropolitan Museum of Art hosted the exhibition *China: Through the Looking Glass*, curated by Andrew Bolton, and explored how China has continued to be a source of inspiration for the Euro-American fashion imagination. When discussing Chinese dress history, academics have often favoured research on Maoist China or cosmopolitanism in Shanghai, and dismissed clothing in the Mongol period. In Shea's words, studies often adhere to the view that "Mongol artistic patronage and taste were 'influenced' by other, better-established cultures" and "only worthy of study when situated in the rubric of Chinese art" (p. 2). Shea's book is a welcome piece of research that shifts the paradigm from widely disseminated studies of fashion history to exploring cultural exchange between Asia and Europe throughout the Mongol period.

Chapter 3 provides a key in-depth analysis of clothing worn by Chabi, Khubilai's wife. Shea dissects the ways in which gender was performed, or not, through clothing and discusses how Chabi often advised her husband on politics, religion, and most notably dress. For instance, Chabi was credited with adding brims to hats to protect soldiers from the sun (p. 88). In this chapter, Shea cross-references pictorial representations of women at court with excavated garments. She complements this with historical texts including the *Yuan shi*, which cites Mongol textile workshops and shows the tailoring style and materials that were likely used to make the clothing of Chabi and her fellow female courtiers.

Chapter 5 unpicks the global reach of Mongol dress. The Ming dynasty (1368–1644) followed the Yuan dynasty and stamped out Mongol customs. However, certain styles were retained, and Shea concludes her book by noting garments that outlived the empire such as the "Mandarin square' badges, which continued to be worn through the Qing dynasty" (p. 147). Shea also highlights the reception of Mongol dress in the Mediterranean and touches on European perceptions of Asia, "...the idea of the East...fuelled a desire by European powers to chart maritime routes to India and China, searching for luxury goods such as silk, porcelain and spices" (p. 148). This fascination with Asian commodities was a precursor to the mass colonisation that occurred later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by European countries, and Shea prompts the reader to question the power dynamics surrounding influence, inspiration, and import.

Mongol Court Dress is the first study in which the broader complexities of Mongol textile production are treated in a single tome. The book is a refreshing and comprehensive introduction to dress in the Mongol empire and the aesthetics of the Yuan dynasty that will also appeal to the specialist historian and researchers interested in narratives of global exchange.

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