

TOWARD A HISTORY OF THE SLEEVED COAT

A Study of the Impact of an Ancient Eastern Garment on the West

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"Voici le prince Guillaume, futur prince héritier, . . . il est dans le plus extravagant et le plus complet uniforme de hussards rouges qui se puisse voir."

This is how the French writer Jules Laforge, who had been employed by the Russian born empress Augusta, wife of Wilhelm I, the Prussian king destined to become emperor, characterizes the appearance of the Prince Imperial Wilhelm at one of the gala balls of the winter season of 1881 in the now demolished palace in Berlin.

The future Kaiser Wilhelm II is shown in the ordinary, not the dress, uniform of his regiment, the red hussars. He wears the dolman, a tight-fitting jacket and a sash from which hang the curved sabre and a pouch. He also wears the hussar's typical furred and frogged jacket, or rather coat, over his left shoulder, the empty sleeves pendent in the prescribed way. He lacks the dress trousers decorated with highly ornamental bows of braids called *schoi-tasch*—a Hungarian word—and the high leggings called *schalwary*—an age-old Oriental word.

It has often been said that the hussar's uniform is derived from the uniform of Oriental mounted soldiers. But there is no step by step analysis to prove this. Though

the ancestors of almost all the features of that uniform can be traced far back, we shall in our very brief survey consider only the characteristic combination of dolman and jacket which had existed, as we shall see, in a symbiotic relationship from very early times.

The hussars as a regular unit were a fairly recent element within the Prussian army. Before and during the Seven Years' War with Austria, Frederic II had established various regiments of hussars and incorporated into his army colorful units from the Balkans, the so-called Bosniaks, and also Tartars from Poland.

The Austrian empire, exposed over the centuries to the attacks of the multiracial Turkish armies, had been forced early on to counterbalance the superiority of the Turkish light cavalry by creating similar units, mostly of Hungarian origin. The Austrians could benefit from the fact that already the great Renaissance ruler of Hungary, King Mathias Corvinus, had created a mounted unit late in the 15th century called *hussars* modelled on Oriental cavalry units.

The hussars were not the only military unit which came into existence under the mounting pressure of the sultan's armies and which were modelled on them. In the Balkans which had been gradually forced

1 The future Kaiser Wilhelm in the uniform of the red hussars. (After *Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, Berlin)

Dedication
To Homer and Dorothy Thompson, "glücklichste Beschauer organisierter Oberflächen" (Goethe, *Campagne in Frankreich*, speaking of Lavater).



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into submission in the 15th and 16th centuries we meet the *stratiots* (the Greek word for soldier) or *Arnauts* (the Turkish word for Albanians). These were mounted daredevils who actually fought on both sides—together with and against the Turks.

The French historian Philippe de Commines, who accompanied King Charles VIII of France on his campaign in northern Italy in 1489, recalls an unpleasant encounter with a group of *stratiots* in the service of Venice, then enemy of France. It was experiences of this kind—proving the greater versatility and thus the superiority of such units over the heavily armored knights of late mediaeval times—which prompted Macchiavelli in his *Principe* to suggest light cavalry as the better answer to the demands of modern warfare. France took this to heart in the 17th century, other European nations in the 18th century.

We have a fair idea what 18th and 19th century hussars looked like, but how about their forerunners in the 16th century, the *stratiots* and the *Arnauts*?

ORIENTAL "UNIFORMS"

The Turks' first assault on Vienna in 1529 immediately fathered a whole new genre of broadsides reporting on the atrocities of the infidels. Hans Sachs, the cobbler poet, for instance, was the author of the explanatory couplets for a series of fifteen woodcuts by Niclas Stöhr depicting Turkish soldiers. One of them is headed "A Stradioth" and Sachs comments on the age-old vicious tactics of those mounted Orientals, the Parthians. As to the nation-



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ality of the horseman, there is evidence in two drawings by Dürer of 1518 for the Triumph of Emperor Maximilian. Two riders carry trophies made up of cylindrical hats and caftan-like jackets with wide straps in front and slashed sleeves draped over a composite bow as if on a hanger. One of the drawings is signed in Dürer's own hand "Die ungrisch troffea" ("The Hungarian trophy"). This outfit was considered Hungarian, at times also Greek, and even without explanatory inscriptions their contemporaries must have recognized its wearers as such.

A provincial document which helps to establish the colors of this semi-oriental uniform is an early 16th century fresco in the chapel of the Blessed Franciscan Belludi in the Basilica del Santo in Padua. It depicts a local historical event, the city of Padua being beleaguered by the blood-thirsty 13th century tyrant Ezzelino da Romano. We know from Dante that he was an ally of the *stupor mundi*, the Suebian emperor Frederic II. The emperor and his partisans had been excommunicated and a crusade against them had been called for. Thanks to the intercession of the blessed Franciscan hovering in the clouds above the city (beyond the limits of the photograph) Ezzelino's attack came to nothing.

It is in accord with the usage of the time that the participants in events long past should be depicted in contemporary costume. So we see the army of the 13th century tyrant and enemy of the church depicted like the multinational army of the latterday antichrist, the Turkish sultan. There are a few Christian knights about in

2 Woodcut by Niclas Stöhr depicting a Turkish soldier, a "stradioth" of 1529. He wears a cylinder-like hat, a sashed and buttoned caftan and boots, and carries bow and quiver. (After Geisberg IV, 1385)

3 Filippo da Verona, siege of Padua, fresco in the church of Sant Antonio in Padua. The 13th century soldiers are dressed like Turkish troops of the 16th century. Note the *stratiots* in high hats and coats with pendent sleeves. (After F. S. Pancheri, *Sant Antonio di Padova*, 1976)



4, 5
The Austrian nobleman Sigmund Freiherr von Herberstein in costumes he wore as ambassador between 1517 and 1541. (After *Waffen- und Kostümkunde* 1959)

contemporary Renaissance costume. But among the mounted *spahis* in typical Oriental dress we see other horsemen in dark cylinders and bright red coats over their shoulders with empty, pendent sleeves—stratiots, Arnauts, or Hungarians made to fight in the Turkish army, the infidels of the 13th century in the garb of the but too well known infidels of the 16th century.

More evidence for the garb of the people at the eastern periphery of Central Europe can be found in the handbooks of fashion which develop from immature precursors in the 15th into a recognized genre in the mid-16th century, Cesare Vecellio's *Habiti*



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antichi et moderni di tutto il Mondo of 1598 foremost. As a Venetian he was not only familiar with the garb of all the Orientals who called at the port of the Serenissima but particularly with the local costumes of those tribes and peoples on the Adriatic coast either under the rule of Venice or of her neighbors further inland.

There are, of course, differences between the outfits of those ethnic groups but, more important, there are general similarities. There is a sashed caftan of about three-quarter length, buttoned to the waist, with a collar: a furred, vented, narrow-breasted, at times frogged coat worn over the shoulders with pendent sleeves which may have slits. A scimitar-like sabre hangs from the sash. Military and civilian dress of the time do not seem to have been far apart.

Another important document is the six woodcuts which accompanied, as pictorial records, the memoirs of the Austrian nobleman Sigmund Freiherr von Herberstein who served as ambassador of two German emperors to Poland, Russia and Constantinople between 1517 and 1541. In meticulous detail he has himself depicted in the outfits he wore on those embassies or in the garments he was presented with by the various potentates he called on. They have rightly been called the origin of the fashion plate.

There is a striking similarity between the long fur-lined *Schaube* he wore in Poland, the frogged brocade coat which he got in 1517 from Prince Basilios in Moscow and the robe of honor he was presented with by the sultan in 1541. On the latter occasion, the by-now rather elderly ambassador had appeared in a highly fashionable but most unbecoming Spanish court costume. The sultan Suleiman must have been relieved to see him put on the Turkish outfit instead of the shockingly 'naked' western costume.

Apart from these early fashion plates contemporary representations of the costumes worn in eastern Europe and Russia are very rare, because only in the late 15th/early 16th century did Russia succeed in shaking off the Tartar yoke for good. The Mongol invasion of the 13th century had cut off Russia culturally from Europe to which she had been linked over centuries by a flourishing trade.

The mounted Mongol nomads had on their way west adopted the rich costume of their Islamic opponents, now their subjects in Central Asia and Persia, and carried it into eastern Europe. This helps to explain the great similarity between the robes of honor given to Herberstein in

Constantinople and in Moscow. Oriental costume was worn in Christian Russia before the time of the 'reformer' Peter the Great early in the 18th century, but outside the few big cities it lingered even to the verge of the 20th.

In such Oriental or quasi-Oriental monarchies as Turkey and Russia, costume was less subject to the constant change western Europe had experienced since the time of the Crusades. Eastern costumes seem always to have been instruments of social distinction within a rigidly structured multinational society to a greater extent than in the West. In spite of the frequent regulations imposed on the various strata of society in the medieval western town there was far more variety and freedom. Time and again we hear of those regulations only to see them cleverly circumvented by the fashion conscious.

THE GARMENT OF MOUNTED TRIBES IN THE EAST

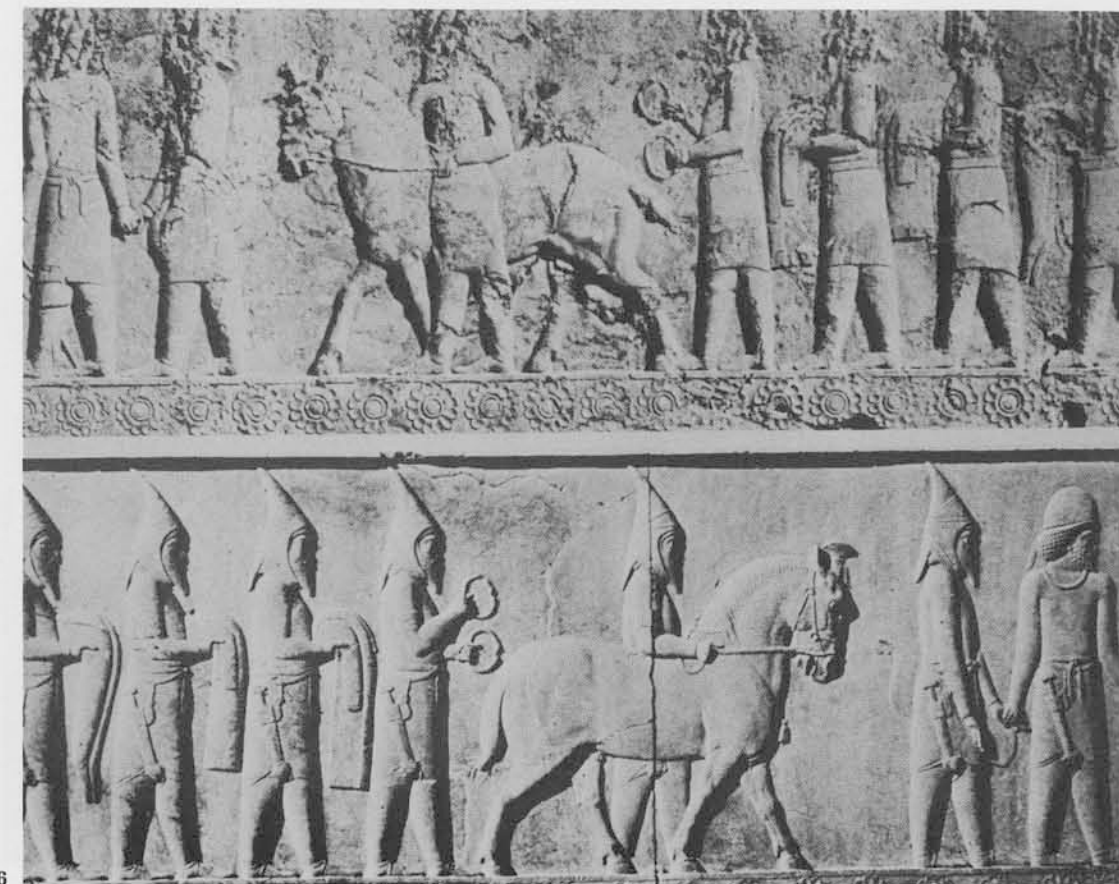
Already the monarchies of the ancient Near East were multinational, and we will have to go far back for the roots of the costume we find so uniformly spread over the Near East and eastern Europe in the 15th century—a costume whose *pièces de resistance* we have come to know quite

intimately by now: a girt caftan and an ungirt jacket or coat, frequently worn over the shoulders with pendent sleeves.

Strikingly well preserved are the sculptured friezes from the monumental staircases and door jambs of various buildings in Persepolis begun late in the 6th century B.C. and not yet completed when Alexander set fire to them in retaliation for the Persians' burning of the Acropolis in Athens in 480 B.C. Once a year the king received delegations from all over the empire, from Asia, India and Africa with locally produced gifts. Those tribute bearers are, e.g., depicted on the staircase of the so-called Apadana, a vast audience hall. Members of the Iranian tribes in the procession bring sleeved coats, sleeved tunics or jackets and curious pairs of long hose-like leggings. Though they bring them, they do not wear the coats themselves. They are worn exclusively by the Median nobility, members of the elder of the two Iranian tribes—Medes and Persians—which shared power in the Achaemenid empire.

Worn over the shoulders with pendent sleeves, these coats do not seem to have been meant to be slipped on as the sleeves are closed at the end and show only a kind of pocket shape at the cuffs. We know from contemporary Greek authors, especially

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Relief from the Apadana in Persepolis: Iranian tribute bearers. They bring sleeved coats, sleeved tunics or jackets and pairs of long hose-like leggings. (After E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis I*, 1953)



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7 Red-figure cup fragment showing Persian in kandys with pendent sleeves. In the Bryn Mawr College collection. (Courtesy Kyle M. Phillips)



8 Figure in jacket, sleeves pendent, on leg of 9th century B.C. bronze stand from Hasanlu, Iran, in the University Museum. (Courtesy Robert H. Dyson, Jr.)



10 Small Attic wine jug showing little boy in sleeved coat. (After G. M. A. Richter, *The Sculpture and the Sculptors of the Greeks*)

11 A Persian fighting in his kandys from the late 4th century Alexander sarcophagus. (After F. Winter, *Der Alexandersarcophagus Sidon*, 1912)



from Xenophon who knew Persia well, that this coat was originally a Median garment adopted by the Persian nobility, including the king. We learn that it was called *kandys*, an Iranian word of not yet satisfactorily explained origin. In the presence of the king the noblemen had to slip on the sleeves for safety reasons. The cul-de-sac character of the sleeves and, at times, their great length were supposed to prevent any attempt on the king. So this peculiar—and as we shall see—very long-lived feature may be the result of imperial safety requirements. In the milder climate of the Achaemenid realm the ancestral garment of the steppe must have acquired status symbol character. We are told that the *kandys*, like most of the Persian articles of dress, was made of leather, frequently dyed red and adorned with a furry edge. Similar coats dating from the late 5th/early 4th century have been found in the frozen barrows of nomad rulers in Siberia. Most likely they were local imitations of Persian models.

Such highly complex garments must have had precursors. Yet none have been pinpointed so far. I think one of the stylized figures on the legs of a 9th century bronze stand found by the University Museum expedition under Dr. Dyson at the site of Hasanlu in northwestern Iran in 1959 depicts in profile a man in a jacket worn over the shoulders, sleeves empty. The arm emerges from under the front panel. Of local manufacture, it is presumably the product of those first Iranian tribes, the Medes foremost, who early in the 1st millennium B.C. penetrated from southern Russia into northwestern Iran. They must have brought the *kandys* with them.

There are very few Greek representations of Persians in the *kandys* contemporary with the Persepolis reliefs. A red-figure cup fragment by the Stieglitz Painter of about 475 B.C., in Bryn Mawr, depicts what must have been the moving occasion Herodotus describes: citizens of the Boeotian town of Thebes who had befriended the Persian invaders meet for a symposium shortly before the battle of Plataeae in 479; one of the Persian guests predicts the

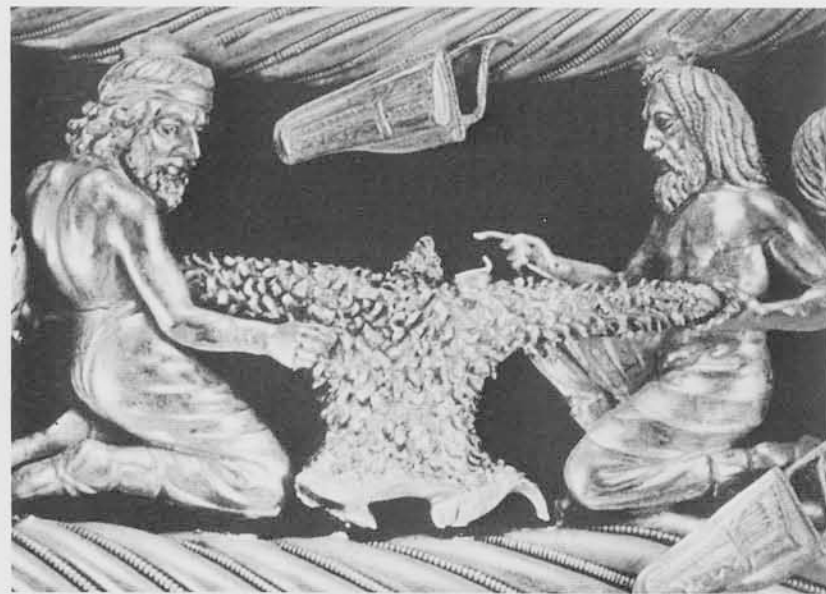
unavoidable and complete rout of the Persian army. The fragment shows one of the Persians, his furred and patterned *kandys* over his shoulder, the sleeve pendent.

In the 4th century the Greeks represented their Persian opponents more frequently wearing the *kandys*—yet never with closed but with very long tube-like sleeves flying gracefully in the air when the wearer is engaged in fighting. The finest example is the so-called Alexander sarcophagus. The coats were red, purple and blue with yellow cuffs and spotted fur front edges, and were lined in contrasting colors. One seems even to be made of what looks like fur mosaic.

Late in the 5th century there was a sudden fashion fad among Athenian women and boys—they adopted the Persian *kandys*. What made the garment suddenly acceptable? Perhaps the impact of Euripides' *Medea* first performed in 431. Until then vase paintings show us *Medea*, the Eastern sorceress, in ordinary Greek dress, but by 420 she appears on one of the well-known three-figure reliefs wearing the heavy coat *kandys* fashion. By 400, on the splendid Talos vase in Ruvo, she dons a richly woven sleeved jacket of the type Athenian women of the time craved and quite a few little boys wear with slipped-on sleeves on the small wine jugs made for the toddlers at the occasion of the *Anthesteria*, the Athenian spring festival. That Athenian women did not wear the coat *à la persane* but with sleeves put on is shown on a grave monument now in California.

Greek craftsmen depicted another tribe, the Scythians, ethnically related to the Persians, in their particular garb, on the jewelry and gold- and silverware produced for their wealthy clientele in South Russia. On a splendid pectoral in Kiev, we see two Scythians at work with needle and thread on the manufacture of a fur jacket—the really great couturiers of this globe seem to have been male right from the beginning.

We also see a variety of tunics, or rather jackets, depicted on the famous 4th century Tchertomlyk vase in Leningrad: some of them probably woven of hemp, some with



12 Gold pectoral made by Greek artisans for Scythian customers: detail showing two Scythians fashioning a sleeved fur coat. (After catalogue *From the Land of the Scythians*, 1975)

side vents and an offset border, some fur-lined, most of them double-breasted and closing at the left side and worn over trousers and boots. All these proved to be very long lived. I want to draw your attention to a curious feature—one of the Scythians on that vase has slipped off the right sleeve of his fur jacket, his right forearm is broken off, so we do not know what activity he engaged in. The garment is held in place by the belt. We shall encounter this way of wearing a coat again later. It is the typical outfit of mounted nomads and is eminently suited to that particular way of life. Yet the Scythian men never seem to have worn their fur jackets *kandys* fashion—just their women or goddesses. For instance, on gold plaques destined to be sewn on garments, also from South Russia, we frequently see a veiled or hooded female in a *kandys* with pendent sleeves to whom a drinking horn is being offered by a male.

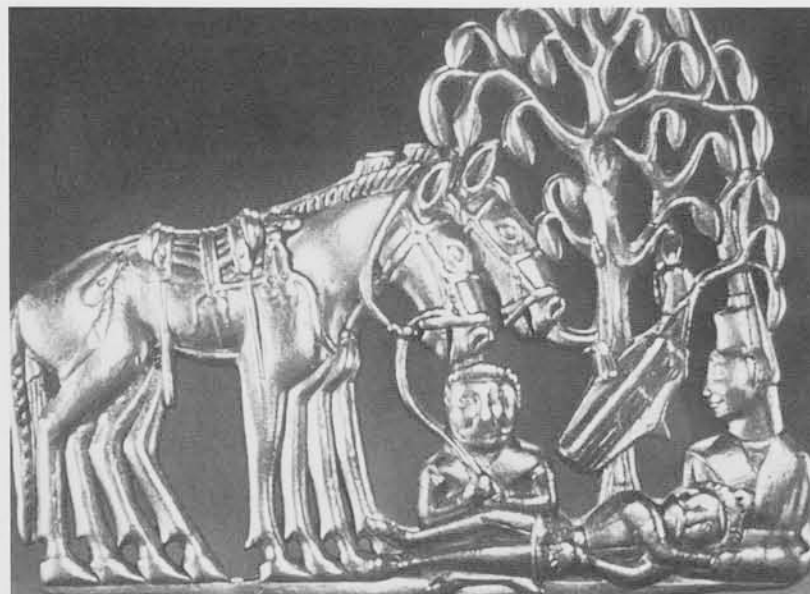
The Scythians and other mounted tribes roamed the whole of the Asiatic steppe right to the borders of China. Their sleeved coat caught on in the Far East too. A 4th century B.C. bronze statuette of a Mongol youth, from Honan, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, shows him dressed in boots and an elaborate sleeved and collared coat. He sports Mongolian pigtails and earrings and carries two jade birds on perches. I assume them to be hawks for hunting. Recent investigation has established Inner Asia as the place of origin of this noble sport early in the 1st millennium B.C.

The Sarmatians, another Iranian tribe, replaced the Scythians in southern Russia between 300 and 100 B.C. One of a pair of Sarmatian gold clasps from Siberia in the Hermitage shows the possible representation of a hero or epic tale: a moustached warrior in boots, trousers and girt jacket, his head in the lap of a woman who sits in the shadow of a tree while a groom stays with the horses. The woman has a sleeved coat draped over her shoulders, sleeves



13 Gold plaque from south Russia: woman in coat with pendent sleeves. 4th century B.C. (After catalogue *From the Land of the Scythians*, 1975)

14 Detail from the Tcheratomyk vase, a Greek-made silver amphora of the 4th century B.C., showing Scythians in sleeved jackets, one of them with bared right arm. (Courtesy, The Hermitage, Leningrad)



15 Sarmatian gold clasp depicting an epic scene. The seated woman wears a coat with pendent sleeves. (After catalogue, *From the Land of the Scythians*, 1975)

16 Chinese bronze statuette of a Mongol youth in sleeved coat, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (After *Propyläenkunstgeschichte*, vol. 17, 1968)

empty. Her hand can be seen emerging from under the coat's front edge to caress the head of the hero who may be asleep or dead.

Also of Iranian stock were the Kushans whose empire reached from the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea. Their heartland was Afghanistan. Under the benevolent reign of the Kushan kings in the 2nd to the 5th century, Buddhism spread all over Asia. The iconography of Buddhist art was created in the realm of the Kushans under the impact of Late Hellenistic art in Central Asia and is documented in Gandhara art. This art has preserved for us fine examples of the sleeved coat, foremost the over-lifesize sandstone statue of King Kanishka in the museum of Mathura in northwestern India. His dates are debated but he presumably lived in the 2nd century A.D. The king carries a club and a sword, he wears heavy felt or leather boots, a girt caftan and a sleeved coat studded with pearls at the edge. Typical and long lived are the backturned front panels of the king's coat.

The western neighbors of the Kushans were the Parthians, another of the countless Iranian tribes from the steppe of Central Asia. They had moved in after the breakdown of the realm of the Seleucids, Alexander's successors in the east of his empire. We do not have too many monuments of pure Parthian art. One example is the grandiose 1st century B.C. tomb monument of King Antiochus of Commagene at the summit of the Taurus mountains in eastern Turkey. This small kingdom led a precarious existence as a buffer state between the Romans, by then firmly established in Asia Minor, and the Parthians. Political convenience made Antiochus claim Persian and Parthian ancestors. They appropriately appear in fine sleeved coats on this relief from Nemrud Dağ.

As to the Parthians proper—on the obverse of their coins we see an Oriental in flapped Persian tiara, tunic, trousers and boots, a *kandys* worn over his shoulders, bow in hand, and seated on an *omphalos*,



17
 Statue of the Kushan king Kanishka in boots, girt caftan and sleeved coat. (After *Propyläenkunstgeschichte*, vol. 16, 1971)

18
 Relief from the tumulus of the 1st century B.C. Commagenian king, Antiochos I, on the Nemrud Dağ in Turkey. A Parthian ancestor of the king wears a sleeved coat. (After Humann/Puchstein, *Reisen in Kleinasien und Nordsyrien*, 1890)

19
 Tetradrachm of Mithridates II of Parthia (123-91 B.C.). Reverse shows a Parthian king in kandys with pendent sleeves. (After *Propyläenkunstgeschichte*, vol. 2, 1967)



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20
 Floor mosaic in the vestibule of the bath in Piazza Armerina, Sicily, showing women in sleeved silk coats. (Courtesy German Archaeological Institute, Rome)

21
 Stater of the Persian satrap Datames, showing him in kandys with pendent sleeves. 4th century B.C. (Courtesy J. Dörig)

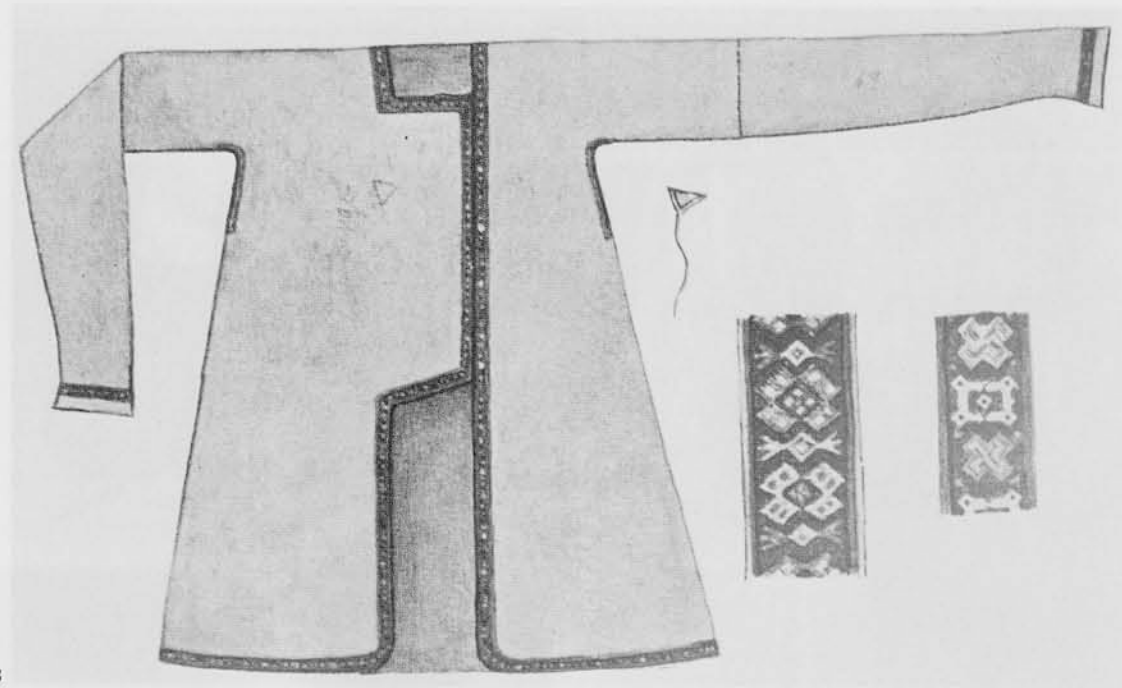


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22
 Statue of King Uthal of Hatra in Mesopotamia wearing Parthian dress: note the fur-trimmed silk coat. In the Museum in Mosul. (After *Propyläenkunstgeschichte*, vol. 2, 1967)



22



23

the wreathed 'navel' stone sacred to Apollo in Delphi. It has rightly been pointed out that Parthian coins were modelled on the obverse types of Seleucid coins with Apollo seated on his *omphalos*, bow in hand. But we must look for additional prototypes, for instance the rare coins of the 4th century B.C. Persian satrap Datames minted in Tarsus in Cilicia. The Parthians very consciously styled themselves the legitimate successors of the Achaemenid empire, making clever use of both heritages—Persian and Greek. Datames of course wears the *kandys*.

The Parthian impact as felt in Commagene was also considerable on the nobility of the so-called caravan cities of the Mesopotamian desert, Dura Europos, Palmyra and Hatra, which flourished in the first three centuries A.D.

The Parthians controlled the silk roads from China via Central Asia to the Mediterranean and it is at the western ends of these caravan roads that the cities with their wealthy Semitic merchant class developed. In the beginning they were culturally under the spell of the Hellenistic heritage, but in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. we see their garb being replaced by that of the mounted Parthians; for instance, in the over-lifesize statue of a 2nd century king of Hatra, by the name of Uthal. His silk tunic shows a leaf motif which will survive for at least another thousand years in Byzantine textiles. He wears the high Persian tiara, a fur-edged silk *kandys*, trousers and the Iranian sword which is not worn on a baldric but on a special belt, in addition to the costly metal belt. It is curious to think that Uthal was a contemporary of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius—his outfit looks almost medieval and it is precisely this kind of 'uniform' which was to shape the costume of the Germanic tribes of the early medieval West.

The Romans first met with Chinese silk in the Parthian banners and pennants during the fateful battle of Carrhae in 53 B.C. where a Roman army under Crassus was totally routed. The Romans were to crave the material ever after. With the silk, Parthian costume also reached the West, though we have but rare examples. Rich, wide-sleeved purple coats were worn by female members of high Roman society. This is attested by one of the mid-4th century A.D. mosaics of the Imperial villa at Piazza Armerina in central Sicily.

In the 3rd century A.D. the Parthians were subdued and replaced by their kin, the Sasanians, yet another of the Iranian tribes from the apparently bottomless

Asian reservoir. That they, like their predecessors, wore the *kandys*, though rarely with pendent sleeves, is amply attested by the rock monuments in the province of Fars in western Iran. One example must suffice: a graffito representing the father of the first Sasanian king Shapur. It is, as with the Scythians, again their women who wore the coat with pendent sleeves. The Goddess of Fertility, Anahita, can be seen several times in a beaver trimmed silk coat on the reliefs at the 5th century Water Sanctuary of Taq-e-Bostan in Persia. The Sasanians' opponent in the West is no longer Rome but Byzantium. The age-old war between East and West, first consciously recorded by Herodotus in the 5th century B.C., goes on. Between the 5th and the 7th centuries A.D. Byzantine Greeks and Sasanians fight each other and influence each other also sartorially.

Upper Egypt was briefly under Sasanian, then under Byzantine administration until the Arabs swept in in the 7th century. Among the garments luckily preserved by the dry climate are elegant greenish-blue and red dyed sleeved coats of wool cut like the narrow-breasted Sasanian coats we know from the rock reliefs in Fars. Yet they have one particular and unprecedented feature that has gone unexplained so far. The seams just under the armpits are left open. This may have facilitated ventilation. We must keep in mind that these coats were originally created for regions with an inclement climate and that they had in this particular case obviously been transplanted by the eastern invaders, Persians or Byzantine Greeks, into the Nile valley. Our example is in the Coptic Department of the Berlin Museum. I suspect that the openings in the seam were used to bypass the sleeves. My assumption rests on the parallels of the preserved linen tunics of late antiquity which frequently show a deliberate opening under the arm.

That this was used not only for ventilation proper is proven by a 6th century mosaic from an early Christian basilica near Tegea in the Peloponnesus representing the twelve months. The month of August shows the beholder not only the products of the season but also the habit of passing the arms through the openings in extreme heat. This feature should prove consequential.

Both Persia and Byzantium were powerful, highly civilized monarchies ethnically closer to each other than is readily understood because of the many Germanic tribes which had migrated into the eastern realm. The lifestyle and habits of these

23
Woolen coat from 6/7th century A.D. tomb in Upper Egypt. It is of Sasanian cut and has vents in the seams under the armpits. (After M. Tilke, *Kostümschnitte und Gewandformen*, 1948)

24
Sasanian graffito from the province of Fars in western Iran, showing the typical outfit of trousers, sashed caftan and sleeved coat. (After E. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, 1945)

25
Early Christian mosaic from basilica near Tegea in the Peloponnesus, showing the month of August in a tunic with arm vents through which he has slipped his arms. (After A. K. Orlandos, *Christianika Mnemeia Tegeas*, 1973)



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26 Byzantine ivory diptych with scenes from the life of Saint Paul. The lay people wear their fur coats kandys-fashion with hanging sleeves. (After R. Delbrück, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler*, 1929)

27 Mosaic from the "Villa of the Falconer" in Argos, showing hawking Goth in jacket with empty sleeves. (After G. Akerström-Hougen, *The Calendar and Hunting Mosaics of the Villa of the Falconer in Argos*, 1974)



27

stripes at cuffs and edges, *kandys* fashion. His hairstyle is that of Theodosius' Germanic bodyguard, his coat that of the 'barbarian' tribute bearers.

One more example of the Iranian *kandys* fashion among the East Germanic tribes is the well-known 6th century ivory diptych Carrand in the Bargello. Events from the career of the Apostle Paul are depicted in three registers, for instance the snake adventure on the island of Malta. The Constantinopolitan artist seems to have imagined the shores of the Mediterranean completely occupied by Germanic tribes in nomad garb: trousers, tunics, fur coats worn *kandys* fashion.

When looking at contemporary Byzantium we are far less well informed. There are practically no extant examples of Byzantine secular art to be found in the capital, and the strictly circumscribed iconographic types of post-iconoclastic religious art teach us very little about the costume of Byzantine gentry. Yet we learn

'barbarians' deeply influenced the world of later antiquity.

A famous example of early Byzantine art in the East is the late 4th century base of the obelisk in the hippodrome in Constantinople erected by the emperor Theodosius. We see him surrounded by his Germanic bodyguard, receiving tribute from kneeling 'barbarian' tribes. One group is dressed in trousers, sashed tunics and fur coats worn *kandys* fashion. Their ethnic affiliation is debated. I assume them to be Goths whom Theodosius is known to have fought.

Before heading for Rome the Visigoths under Alarich ransacked Greece; some of them seem to have settled there. There is an interesting early 6th century document demonstrating their impact on the region in the mosaics of the so-called Villa of the Falconer in Argos in the Peloponnesus. No great work of art, for sure, but it gives us pictures of a hunting party of the local nobility. The game is wild ducks and hares. The hunters are hawking already in the classic medieval fashion with tethered birds and gloves. The leader wears a sleeved furred jacket with bright colored

from historical sources the names and shapes of ceremonial garments worn by the emperors and the nobility, now, of course, of locally produced silk. The secret of the silkworm came to Byzantium in the 6th century not directly from China but from Central Asia. The most important source is the *Book of Ceremonies* by the 10th century emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, a learned and literate man who collected much earlier source material and thus allows us precious glimpses into the cultural osmosis taking place between Byzantium and her aggressive nomadic northern and eastern neighbors—the Sasanians, Turks, Bulgars, Avars, Slavs and many more. Feared and despised they were by the Byzantine Greeks and yet they had to be dealt with, to be bought off with gold and robes of honor, frequently even pacified by marriage links. Barbarian princesses became Byzantine empresses and vice versa, and with the respective dowries foreign costumes became fashionable.

28 Mural with donors from Kirish in eastern Turkestan. The man wears his fur-lined jacket with pendent sleeves. (After A. von Lecoq, *Bilderatlas*, 1925)



28

We select a Central Asian example: an 8th century Buddhist wall painting from an oasis on the silk road in Kirish in eastern Turkestan showing a couple of donors, the men in vented, short-sleeved caftans, boots and trousers plus leggings. Their ermine-lined coats are worn *kandys* fashion. It is not easy to establish to which ethnic group the wearers of this 'uniform' belong—they may be either Iranians or Turks. But this proves only that it is not the ethnic background which determines this particular garb. Instead, it had become the widely accepted costume of the ruling classes of peoples of different stock but of a common way of life, a way of life dictated by the physical surroundings: the steppe. Some of them embraced Buddhism, some Manichaeism, some were Nestorian Christians. Their costumes became fashionable also in the Far East. The Silk Road ran both ways.

For the realm of early Islam which overthrew the Sasanians in the 7th century

there is not quite the same blank on the sartorial map of the eastern Mediterranean as is encountered in Byzantium. Just enough material—literary and archaeological—is extant to teach us that the Arab sheikhs not only took over from the Sasanians their administrative know-how but that they also donned the silk trousers and the caftans and coats of their former foe.

The only region in the East which provides us with a fairly clear idea what secular dress of the late 1st and early 2nd millennia looked like is Armenia, the buffer between Greeks and Muslims. The reliefs on the walls of her remarkable churches show us the local garb—silk caftans and coats and the *kandys* made of fur or broadcloth. The rider shown here is in the museum in Tiflis in Russian Armenia. His short-sleeved jacket, heavily frogged and worn *kandys* fashion, looks almost like a hussar's.

As the Mongols laid waste vast regions of the Islamic realm in the 13th century the rare documents of high medieval Islamic art come from a country they luckily spared, Mamluk Egypt. From the famous inlaid bronze basin preserved in the Louvre and produced in Syria or Egypt around the year 1300, the so-called 'Baptistère de Saint Louis', we learn what the Mamluk emirs of Turkish stock wore at the time. It comes as no surprise that it was the silk version of the old nomad dress—boots, trousers, caftan and the sleeved coat. One of the emirs on horseback even wears a coat with one arm slipped through an underarm vent; the lower part of the sleeve hangs down from the elbow. The sleeve which could be bypassed must have been a fairly common feature in the Near East of the time.

THE WEST LOOKS EAST

It is with this set of garments that the Christian knights were confronted when arriving in the Near East. The sudden outburst of exotic fashions in the Crusading West can be explained only by this contact. There had been no such thing as a sleeved coat in early medieval Europe. Just one example of those new garments: a 12th century French Old Testament manuscript in the Morgan Library in New York shows what I take to be the 13th century western adaption of the eastern sleeved coat with arm vents. The elegant young knight sports gloves, also an ancient eastern invention, and has bypassed the pendent sleeves of his ermine-lined coat.

But also the Oriental prototype is accurately depicted very early in a mid-14th century Venetian illustrated copy of the



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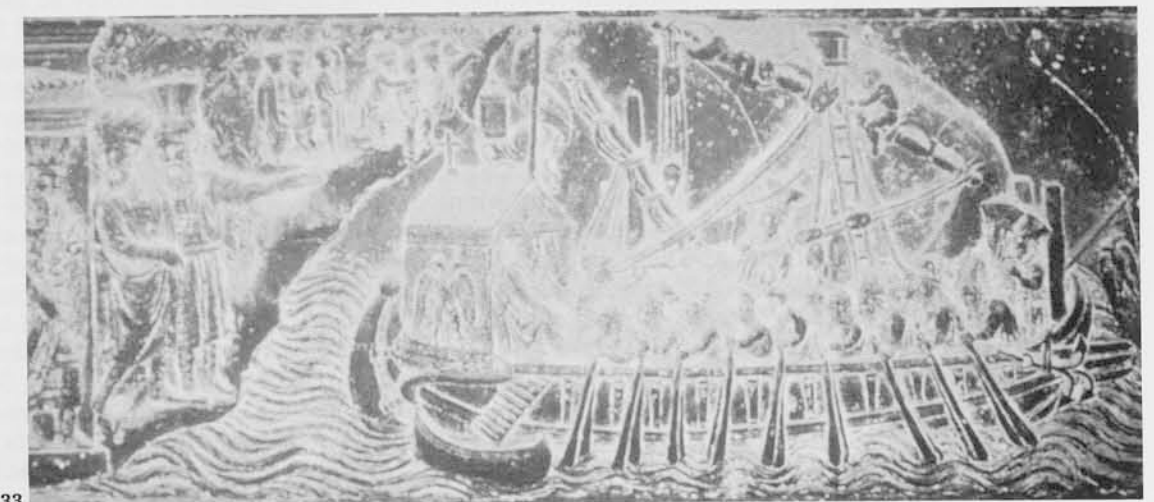
29 Mediaeval relief from Etshmiadsin in Armenia: a rider wears his frogged coat hussar fashion. (After Documenti di architettura armena, Khatchkar, 1969)

30 Detail of Islamic inlaid metal vessel of the early 14th century showing mounted emir in boots, caftan and coat with arm vents through which his right arm is slipped. (After D. St. Rice, Le Baptistère de Saint Louis, 1953)

31 Parisian Old Testament manuscript of the 13th century in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M-638, showing a young man in coat with pendent sleeves. (After H. Buchthal, Historia Troiana, 1971)

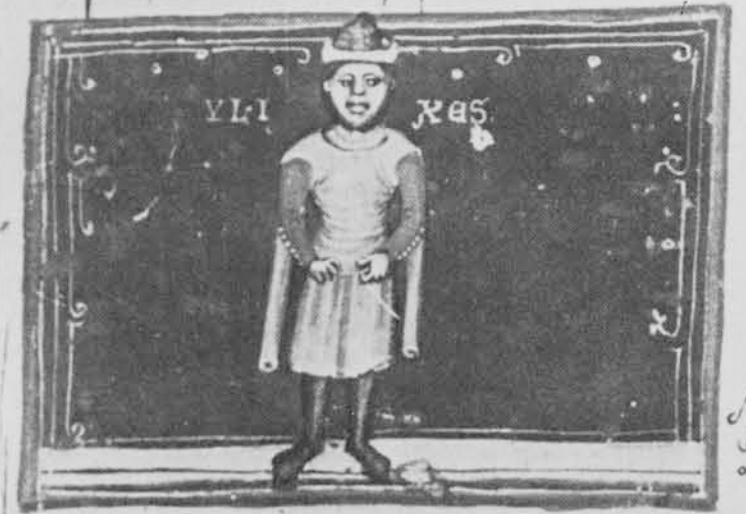
32 Miniature from Venetian manuscript of the 14th century in the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana in Geneva (Historia Troiana of Guido) showing Odysseus dressed like a contemporary Oriental in a coat with pendent sleeves. (After H. Buchthal, Historia Troiana, 1971)

33 Bronze door of Saint Peter's, Rome, by Filarete, about 1445, showing the Byzantine emperor John VIII and his retinue on his way to the Council of Ferrara/Florence. They wear Oriental garb—boots, caftans and silk coats with pendent sleeves. (Courtesy G. Daltrop, The Vatican)

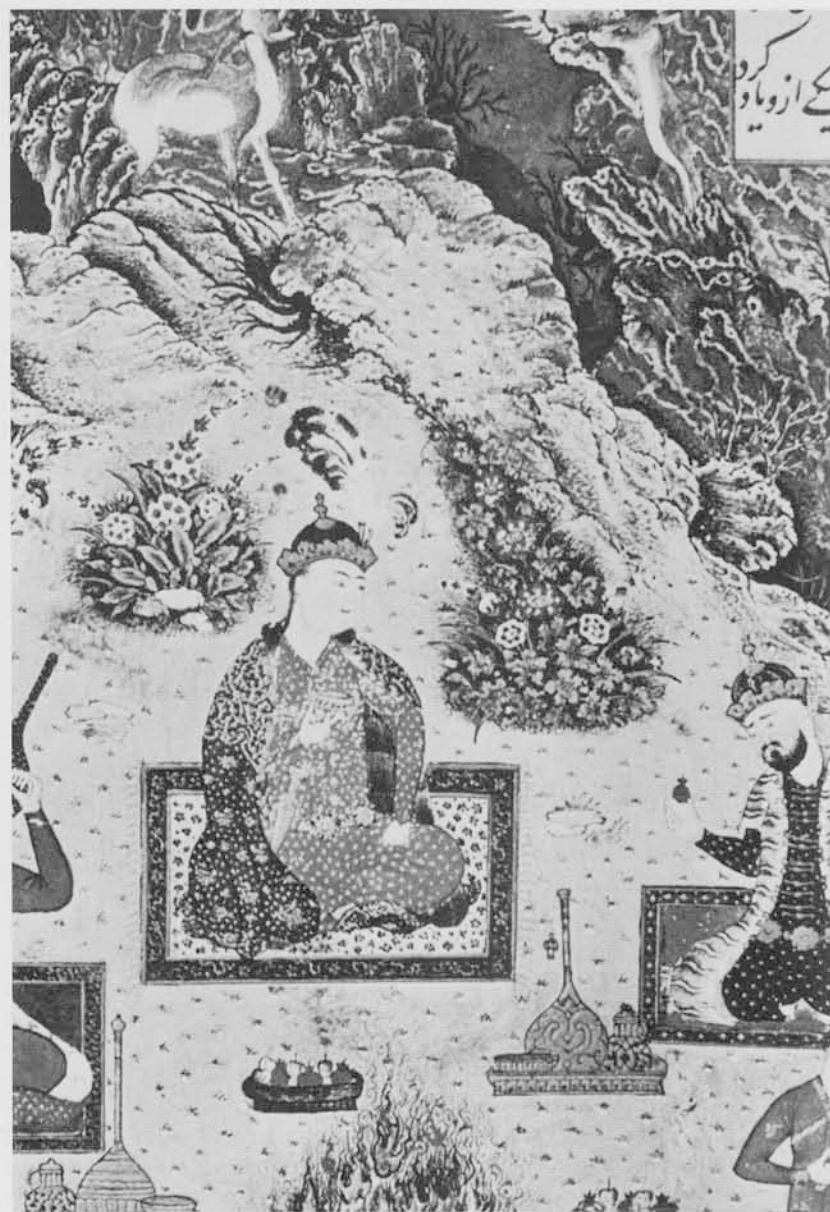


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Quia vero omnes alios grecos fixa ostia te precessit strenuus quidem fuit si omni astutia et dolositate plenus mendacior manu comentator multa diffundens uerba iocosa set lepos tanta fecundia disertus q' nemi neq' sibi pare hnt in co positoe uerboz.



Tomedes multa fuit proccutatis distefue amplo pectore robustio scapulis asfice tu ferre in promuffis falax in armus strenuus uictorie cupidus timentus a multio cur



34

34 Sixteenth century Persian Shah-name miniature: drinking prince, his sleeved coat draped about his shoulders. (Houghton Shah-name, Metropolitan Museum, New York, after postcard)

35 A Burgundian "houppelande" of the 15th century, a long coat with slits in the full sleeves. (After M. Beaulieu/J. Baylé, *Le Costume en Bourgogne*, 1956)

Historia Troiana of Guido. Both Trojans and Achaeans in that manuscript are dressed like contemporary Orientals, according to the habit of the late medieval artist. It was believed in the West that no change of dress had occurred in the eastern Mediterranean since Classical times—so the garb of contemporary Orientals seemed a reliable guide when it came to the representation of Classical garb. Thus we find the Homeric heroes in coats with pendent sleeves, arms slipped through the openings.

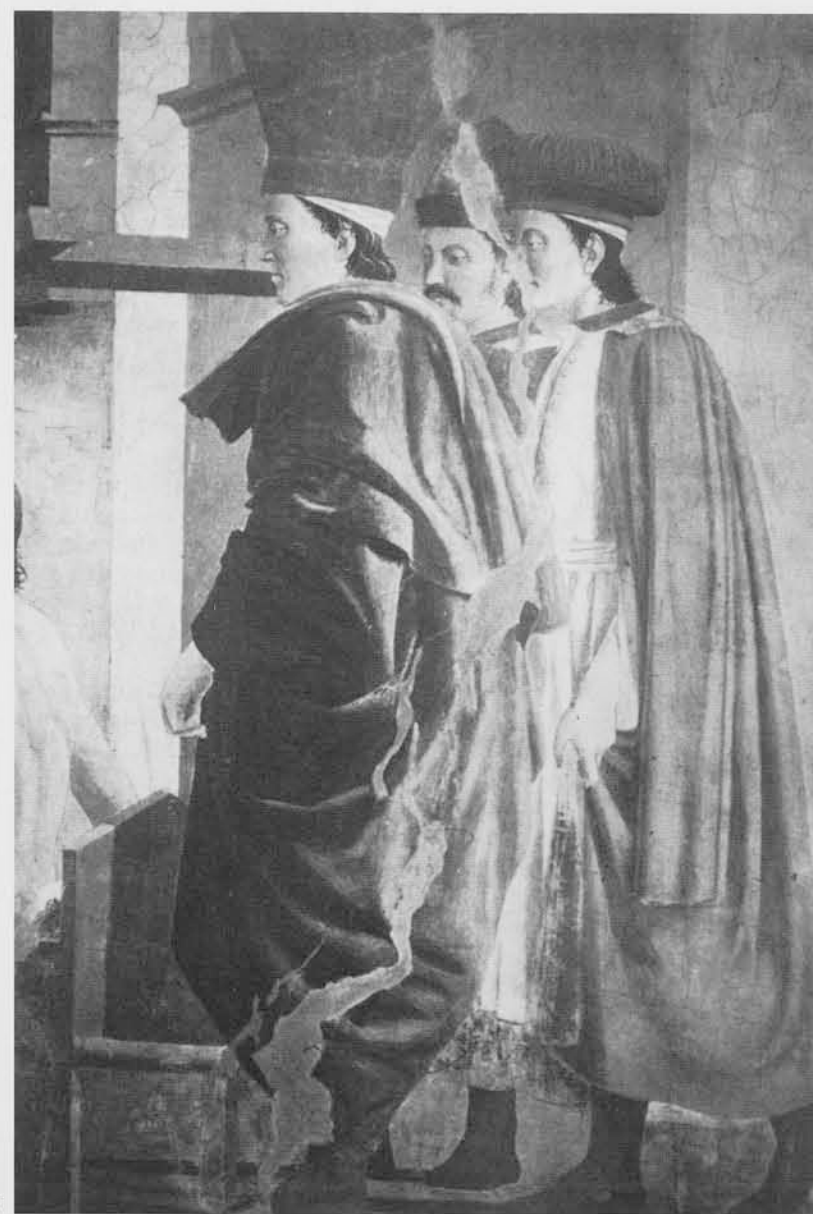
How uniformly Oriental the eastern Mediterranean world dressed, including Byzantium, which sadly denies us sufficient documents on her own soil, is proved by the wonderfully accurate depictions of the emperor John VIII Palaeologus and his retinue on Filarete's bronze doors in Saint



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Peter's in Rome of 1445. The Greeks had come to Ferrara and Florence via Venice in 1438/39 for the council which was meant to achieve the union of the churches.

Byzantine nobility of the time, of course, did not don the turban—their headgear is a special chapter I cannot touch here—but otherwise their outfit was closely related to what their Islamic neighbors wore: boots, trousers, buttoned silk caftans and the sleeved coat, sometimes worn *kandys* fashion, sometimes with one sleeve slipped on, the other tucked under the arm, exactly the way the 4th century B.C. Scythian on the Tchertomlyk vase wore his fur and the 8th century A.D. Iranians in Central Asia wore their silk coats. In fact, hundreds of Islamic miniatures from the 13th century on teach us that that was also the fashion among the



36

36 Piero della Francesca, the Legend of the Cross, San Francesco in Arezzo. Citizens of Jerusalem in typical 15th century Byzantine dress: boots, sashed caftans, characteristic hats and coats with pendent sleeves. (Photo: G. Knauer)

37 The geographer Ptolemaios in Raphael's "School of Athens" in the Vatican wears 15/16th century Byzantine dress. (After Propyläen Kunstgeschichte, vol. 8, 1970)

nobility of the Islamic realm.

But once more back to Italy: the impact of the Byzantine emperor's visit was enormous. Italian Renaissance art suddenly abounds with very exact representations of Byzantine dress. Piero della Francesca's frescoes of the *Legend of the Cross* in Arezzo may serve as an example. The citizens of the eastern realm wear the same garb: caftans, frequently sleeved coats, either *kandys* fashion or one sleeve slipped on, the other tucked under the arm.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, many Greeks settled in Italy. Their specific costume, the sleeved coat, at times with slits in the sleeves and a square collar, was no longer strange to the Italian artists. That it was used almost rubber stamp-like to



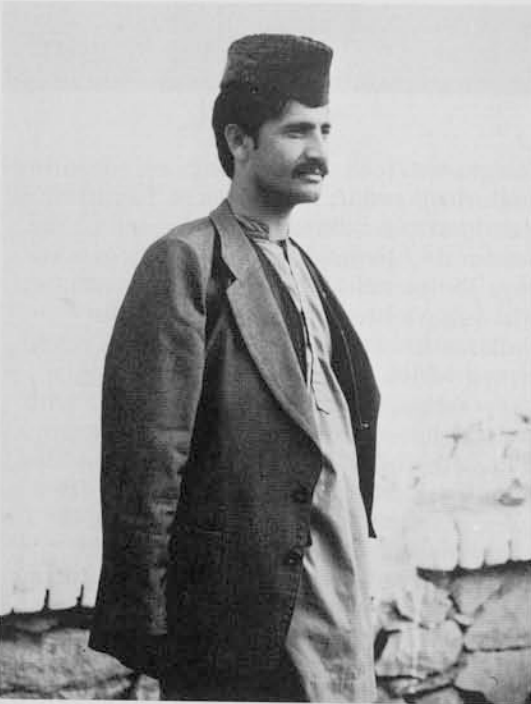
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designate Greeks in paintings representing 'historical' events or figures is, for instance, clearly attested in Raphael's fresco of the *School of Athens*. Here the Greek geographer Ptolemaeus, whom the Renaissance still believed to be identical with the Hellenistic king of Egypt, wears the rayed crown which Raphael, the archaeologist, knew from Ptolemaic coins, together with the typical contemporary Greek sleeved coat with collar. That the Three Wise Men from the East in Adoration pictures frequently wear these coats is but natural.

But also the sleeved coat which the Crusaders introduced into Western Europe lived on. Among the sumptuous coats being worn particularly by the nobility in France and Burgundy is a long one with collar, fur-lined and trimmed, with slits in the



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French fashion plate of 1840 showing "paletot grec" worn kandys-fashion. (After C. Piton, *Le costume civile en France*, 1926)

39
A modern Afghan wearing his Western-style jacket kandys-fashion with empty sleeves. (Courtesy R. Pinder-Wilson)

sleeves. It is called the *houppelande*. This garment which gets shorter, almost jacket-like at times, in the course of the 15th century, has rightly been called the ancestor of one of the most widespread outer garments of Renaissance Europe, the German *Schaube*. Now the word *Schaube* is derived from the Arabic *djubba*. One was obviously aware of the Oriental origin.

It is hard to pin down how exactly this development was influenced by contemporary Osmanic court fashion. That there was constant interaction between East and West is, for instance, made very clear in Baldassare Castiglione's *Cortegiano* of 1528 where the well-bred participants of a fictitious conversation at the court in Urbino wonder about the urge of the Italians to copy foreign fashions, especially Turkish dress. That seems but too normal if one considers the enormous bulk of trade going on between East and West, particularly since the Crusades.

We have come full circle. This ancient Oriental garment has naturally lived on in its original realm. A modern Afghan can still be seen today wearing his sleeved coat, *chapan*, *kandys* fashion—but also his Western-style jacket.

One of the latest and long lasting Western adaptations of the sleeved Oriental coat occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries in England when the landed gentry, fond of riding and hunting, sported a vented, narrow-breasted coat, closed on the right, the so-called *riding coat*. It caught on in France under the name of *redingote* and it has fathered our modern coats.



Suggested Reading
Knauer, Elfriede R. In press "Ex oriente vestimenta. Trachtgeschichtliche Beobachtungen zu Armelmantel und Armeljacke," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt, Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, hrsg. von Hildegard Temporini und Wolfgang Haase, Berlin-New York.

Elfriede Knauer received her doctorate at the University of Frankfurt am Main, studying Ancient History, Archaeology, Art History and Ethnology. Formerly on the staff of the State Museum in West Berlin (Antikenabteilung Charlottenburg), Mrs. Knauer now lives in Philadelphia with her husband, a professor in the Classics Department of the University of Pennsylvania.