

A Turk in the Dukhang? Comparative Perspectives on Elite Dress in Medieval Ladakh and the Caucasus

The murals in the Dukhang and Sumtsek shrines at Alchi in Ladakh have long attracted interest for the inclusion of both Indic and Islamicate elements in their west Tibetan Buddhist iconography.¹ The age of the paintings is still contested, with suggested dates ranging from the eleventh to the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries.² If, as many believe, the paintings in the Dukhang date to the decades around 1200, and those in the Sumtsek slightly later, then both coincide with a dizzying array of artistic developments in the Islamic world. These include the emergence in Iraq of a tradition of manuscript painting on a previously undocumented scale, the appearance of inlaid metalwork in eastern Iran and Afghanistan, and the deployment in Iran of revolutionary new ceramic technologies that enabled Islamic potters to more closely approximate the fine Chinese wares that circulated in the Islamic world. Some, perhaps many, of these developments can be related to the mobility of artisans, artifacts, techniques and technologies and to contacts with the lands that lay outside the political boundaries of the Islamic world, including the Indian subcontinent (Flood 2009b and 2012).

If the moment in which the Alchi paintings were created was one

of dynamic artistic developments *within* the Islamic world, it was also one of maximum receptivity on the part of non-Muslim elites living *outside* its boundaries to forms and modes of self-presentation and self-representation that were developed or popularized in the Islamic world during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This was in fact a moment when Islamicate forms of self-representation were more widely dispersed beyond the boundaries of the *dār al-Islām* than at any other time in history, a phenomenon closely related to political developments within the Islamic world, as we shall see. The dress worn by some of the figures depicted in the Alchi paintings provides perhaps the most tangible index of this receptivity to Islamicate forms on the part of non-Muslim elites. Although the Islamicate affiliations of the dress worn in some of the Alchi paintings have been challenged on the grounds that it is difficult to imagine “iconoclastic Muslims” providing models for Buddhist princes (Klimburg-Salter 1987: 695), this not only projects modern sectarian categories onto the past, but marginalizes the agency of medieval elites, their ability to make choices from among the range of possibilities available to them. In fact, the sartorial choices available to elites ruling over regions that were interstitial in a geographical sense was perhaps much broader than those available to the elites of more hegemonic cultural centers.

In a recent article on the Alchi paintings, Christiane Papa-Kalantari suggested that the presence of Islamicate or Persianate elements in the Alchi paintings should be seen not as reflecting a simple change in fashion associated with regional politics, but as “a reflection of a cultural stratum” (Papa-Kalantari 2007: 205). In what follows, I would like to build on this idea, bringing into focus a range of comparative

¹ Pal and Fournier 1982; Flood 1991 and 2005; Papa-Kalantari 2007; Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 111–15; Alafouzo 2014.

² For the suggestion of a tenth- or eleventh-century date see Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 31–33, pl. XVIII; Ishiguro 1977: 9–14; Seagraves 2001; Denwood 2014. For a later dating see Goepper 1990: 159–69; Goepper 2003: 18–22; Goepper and Poncar 1996: 18; Luczanits 1998: 152–53, n. 9, 155; Luczanits 2005: 74. Note the suggestion that some of the vessels depicted in the royal scene in the Dukhang find parallels in Iranian metalwork of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 111).

material not previously considered in relation to the Ladakhi paintings. Seen in comparative perspective, the adoption of Islamicate modes of dress in the Ladakhi paintings is far less surprising than might at first appear. One can, in fact, point to formal and iconographic parallels between the self-representations of medieval Ladakhi elites and those produced by contemporary elites living in other regions that, like Ladakh, lay on the margins of the Islamic world. In particular, I would like to draw attention to analogies between the sartorial choices made in depicting Ladakhi elites and those associated with the depiction of contemporary Christian elites in the Caucasus, another mountainous region that lay to the north of the Islamic lands. Like Ladakh, this was ruled by a non-Muslim elite in contact with, but politically independent and culturally distinct from the larger transregional Islamic polities to the south. The comparative approach adopted here cannot resolve the dispute regarding the date of the paintings definitively (although, for reasons that will become clear, it might support a late twelfth- or even early thirteenth-century dating). It does, however, reveal the adoption of Islamicate dress in the Alchi paintings not as a local anomaly, but as a micro facet of a macro phenomenon with transcultural and transregional dimensions. This phenomenon constitutes a spatio-temporal horizon linking the self-representations of Muslim and non-Muslim elites who drew upon a shared reservoir of sartorial forms and vestimentary codes. Many of these had earlier histories, but their (re)emergence as the chosen vehicles of aspirants to authority in the eleventh and twelfth centuries can be clearly associated with the Turkic elites then in the ascendancy in the central Islamic lands.

As Papa-Kalantari suggests, seen from the perspective of their Islamicate elements in general, the Alchi paintings are but one facet of a much broader transcultural horizon visible in the visual arts produced by and for elites in regions from the Mediterranean to Afghanistan between roughly 1050 and 1250. The most basic manifestations of this horizon are analogies in the material culture and courtly iconographies of Islamic, Christian and Buddhist elites, a common iconographic repertoire characterized by cameos of hunting, drinking, dancing and music-making widely dispersed throughout the Islamic world and beyond. To take just one example, the scarf dancers painted on the roof of the Sumtsek (Fig. 1). These are assumed to represent textile designs, while their iconography has often been compared to similar scenes found in Tang or Sogdian metalwork, or even on the textiles depicted on some Himalayan metalwork (Goepper 1995: 115, fig. 28; Becherini 2010). However, images of the sleeve or scarf dancer were also the stock in trade of the Islamicate courtly iconography that circulated and was popular-

ized on portable media such as luxury ceramics during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Fig. 2). Perhaps more importantly, such imagery circulated outside the Islamic lands, appearing for example in the courtly art of Christian rulers in the Mediterranean (Fig. 3) and in more peripheral contexts and humble media such as this sgraffito bowl from Georgia (Fig. 4), a region that offers interesting comparisons for the Islamicate elements at Alchi, and to which I will return (Bakhtadze *et al.* 2013: 92, no. 114).

My point, I should emphasize, is not that all such elements in the Alchi paintings represent borrowings from the Islamic world, but simply that they bear witness to a moment around 1200 when certain kinds of visual tropes associated with, or derived from the arts of the court, enjoyed a wide circulation in both permanent and portable media around and beyond the Islamic world. In other words, they confirm the existence of what Christiane Kalantari has referred to as an "International Courtly Style," which she sees as deriving "from a shared cosmopolitan Turkic-Iranian cultural milieu in this region around 1200" (Papa-Kalantari 2007: 200).³ It is conceivable that some of these analogies and shared iconographies, including the hunting scenes depicted at Alchi, ultimately reflect a common origin in a widely dispersed koine of post-Sasanian art (Flood 1991), but their proliferation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries represents a distinct historical phenomenon.

If shared iconographies marked by formal variations represent a horizon of commonality whose directional impulses can be hard to pin down, this is not the case with the second facet of the transcultural horizon with which I am concerned. This horizon is manifest in striking commonalities among the sartorial conventions adopted in the self-representations of elites living in regions such as Ladakh, regions located outside the political boundaries of the *dār al-Islām*, but in close proximity to, and contact with, the various Islamic polities that proliferated during a period of political fragmentation but cultural florescence in the Islamic world.

The obvious place to begin is with the well-known drinking scene at the entrance to the Dukhang in Alchi (Fig. 5). This shows a seated ruler with a female figure to his left (perhaps the king and queen mentioned in a nearby Tibetan foundation text) and a male figure, perhaps a son, to his right (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 31, pl. XVIII). The prominent nimbi provided to the Alchi ruler and his

³ This differs from the so-called Inner or Middle Asian International Style mooted for Himalayan and Tibetan art of the eleventh through fourteenth centuries, about which a degree of skepticism has been expressed. See Klimburg-Salter 1998; Luczanits 1998: 153–56.

queen, and the axe that he holds find parallels in the royal iconography of the eastern Islamic world, as does the role of the drinking vessel that forms the focus of the royal scene. Of particular interest is the robe worn by the ruler, for it corresponds to the *qabā'*, a type of dress well known in the medieval Islamic world. The *qabā'* was a sleeved, tailored mid-calf-length coat, closed by one side being fastened across the other, generally to the left, or open down the front as seems to be the case at Alchi, where the robe also has inscribed arm-bands (*tirāz*) whose significance will be considered below. The *qabā'* was often worn above a cotton shirt or undergarment known in Arabic as a *qamīṣ*, and with a thick girdle, baggy trousers and boots, all of which are present at Alchi (Dozy 1845: 352–362). Here the robe is decorated with a repeated pattern of roundels containing rampant lions; the robe of another enthroned figure in the Dukhang bears prominent peacocks, also signifiers of royalty.

Since the Alchi paintings were first published, research at Mangyu to the west of Alchi has brought to light related wall-paintings of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (van Ham *et al.* 2010: 96–97, 121). They include ceiling paintings (some probably emulating textiles) that feature pearl roundels, mythical beasts and mounted hunters employing the “Parthian shot” very similar to those that appear on the ceiling of the Sumtsek at Alchi. In addition, a royal drinking scene is depicted near the entrance to the western temple at Mangyu. Like the closely analogous scene in the Dukhang at Alchi, the painting shows a seated figure with pendant leg holding a mace (rather than an axe) and dressed in a *qabā'* with characteristic arm bands and closed by a cloth girdle (Fig. 6), turning to face a female figure who offers a shallow cup; the smaller, presumably younger, male figure to the left wears a similar dress, also with armbands.

Noting the presence of Islamicate (and, more specifically, Persianate) themes in the Alchi paintings, Pratapaditya Pal made the suggestion, repeated more recently by A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, that the dress and self-presentation of the royal figures in the Dukhang reflect the court culture of the *sultāns* of Ghaznī in Afghanistan, who, between 1000 and 1150 dominated the eastern Islamic world and who acted as major patrons of art and architecture (Pal and Fournier 1982: 26–29; Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 113). The use of the *qabā'* with inscribed armbands at the Ghaznavid court is attested textually and by wall-paintings and portable objects that undoubtedly disseminated images of enthroned figures wearing Turko-Persian modes of dress (Flood 2009a: 65–67). There is, moreover, evidence for the adoption of Islamicate forms of dress, including tailored garments such as jackets, tunics and trousers in north-west India during the course of the twelfth century, even before the region came under the control of the

Turko-Persian sultanates of Afghanistan (Chandra 1960: 22), whose impact was almost certainly responsible for this development.

There are, however, two potential problems with this suggestion of a Ghaznavid connection. The most minor of these is iconographic: the lack of the wide lapels found on depictions of Ghaznavid (and Qarakhanid) *qabā'*s in the dress of those depicted Alchi paintings. This seems to indicate a specific regional variant of the *qabā'*, rather than a direct borrowing. It might even raise the possibility that the broader relation to the dominant sartorial trends in the Islamic world was mediated rather than direct, perhaps by the court culture of neighboring Kashmir, a point to which I will return. A second objection to the idea of a Ghaznavid connection is chronological rather than iconographic. If we accept, as some scholars do, that the Alchi paintings date to the decades either side of 1200, then they are unlikely to offer a reflection of Ghaznavid courtly life. The Ghaznavid sultanate had been in decline since around 1150, when Ghaznī was brutally sacked by the amirs of Ghūr in central Afghanistan, former vassals of the Ghaznavids, whose meteoric rise finally ended Ghaznavid rule in 1186. If one accepts the later date for the Alchi paintings, their Islamicate elements, whether mediated or direct, are likely to reflect and refract the growing importance of the court established at Ghaznī by one of the *sultāns* of Ghūr, Mu'izz al-Dīn Shansabānī, in 1174. A relationship to the Islamicate culture established in north India by the Turkic *mamlūks* or slave generals of the Ghurids is also possible but less likely, since these only came to prominence in the decades after 1210, with the collapse of the Ghurid sultanate.

The history of the Ghurid *sultāns* is a remarkable one. Having marched on Ghaznī as lowly mountain chiefs in 1150, by 1205 the Ghurids reigned as *sultāns* whose territories expanded to include most of eastern Iran, while also incorporating through conquest most of north India, to Bengal in the east. In the decades after 1150 the Ghurid *sultāns* commissioned some of the finest monuments ever built in the Islamic world (their construction often underwritten by large influxes of Indian booty). Under their rule, the city of Herat became the center of an important inlaid metalwork industry, Indic elements appeared in stone-carving produced in the cities of Bust and Ghaznī, luxury ceramics were imported from Iran, and the Ghurid *sultāns* even adopted coin types that originated in the eastern Mediterranean (Flood 2009a: 89–107, 189–226). All this underlines the initial point that, if the Alchi paintings date from around 1200, the period when they were executed was one of unusual artistic mobility and receptivity in the Islamic sultanate that lay to the south-west of Ladakh.

Unfortunately, apart from architecture, we can identify few extant artifacts with the courtly milieu of the Ghurids. Comparison between certain details of the Alchi paintings and the sorts of generic luxury goods produced in their domains is, however, instructive. Among these are this cotton and silk textile with a repeating pattern of lions (Fig. 7), recalling the rampant lions depicted on the textiles worn by the male elite depicted in the Dukhang at Alchi (Figs. 5 and 5A).⁴ The lions on the textile also resemble some of the single animals depicted on a series of pearl-bordered glazed tiles excavated at Ghazni and datable to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (Scerrato 1962: 263–87). Certain details of the animals depicted on these tiles find resonances in the textiles depicted at Alchi and Mangyu (compare, for example, Figs. 8 and 9). The tiles are small—they rarely exceed 8.5 by 8.5 cm—and highly portable, reminding us of the likelihood that media other than textiles were available to act as sources of inspiration for the Ladakhi paintings.

Such parallels belong to the realm of shared iconographies that I mentioned at the outset, but more specific connections to modes of clothing and dress are suggested by the ways in which the Ghurids crafted their royal image. Despite their dramatic rise, the Ghurids came from a remote area generally considered quite undeveloped and unsophisticated in the wider Islamic world. A consequent concern with developing appropriate modes of self-representation during a period of dramatic change in their fortunes is indicated in the shifting titles to which they laid claim. Whereas their principal title around 1150 was the rather unimpressive *malik al-jibāl*, (chief of the mountains), a decade or so later they had adopted the title of *sulṭān*, and by 1200 were even calling themselves ‘The Second Alexander’ (*sikandar al-thānī*), by virtue of their conquest of north India (Flood 2009a: 94–96).

Alongside coinage and titlature, the adoption of specific sartorial norms and vestimentary codes was integral to the highly self-reflexive crafting of the Ghurid dynastic image. The definitive chronicle of the Ghurid sultanate contains an anecdote capable of shedding light on the choices made by contemporary Ladakhi elites in their self-representations, thereby providing a broader context for the adoption of Islamicate dress at Alchi and Mangyu. A story told by the historian Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī in his chronicle, the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, written in Delhi around 1260—a particularly important source, since the author’s mother had been a lady in waiting at the Ghurid court—

describes how the first of the Shansabanid (Ghurid) royal house to rule received investiture at the hands of no less a person than the fabled ‘Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 809). Caliphal investiture resolved a dispute with a rival tribal chief regarding who was fit to rule over Ghūr.⁵ According to the anecdote, Shansabanid success with the caliph was due to the help of a Jewish merchant who resided in this isolated region but was familiar with the customs of the wider world outside. This cosmopolitan merchant secretly educated the Ur-Ghurid in the etiquette appropriate to one seeking to appear as a figure of substance and authority before the Abbasid caliph. In short, this Jewish resident of a remote Afghan valley offered to share his knowledge about how figures of authority appeared in the wider world, how they looked, in order to offer the chief of Ghūr an image makeover.⁶ In return, the Jewish advisor requested a grant of land on which to permit a Jewish community to flourish in Ghūr.

Central to this investiture was a change of dress. In place of the rough, short garments common in the mountainous region of Ghūr, the Jewish advisor to the malik of Ghūr dressed him in a *qabā’* (robe), *kulā* (hat) and *mūza* (boots), three standard components of the “Turkic” dress that was commonly worn by elites in the eastern Islamic lands in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This anachronism indicates that we should understand the story as relating not to some mythical origins in the ninth century, but as allegorizing the contemporary transformations in their titles, coinage and inscriptions through which the Ghurids sought to join the family of kings in the twelfth. It is clear that the tale preserves kernels of truth—the Jewish cemetery documented at Jam, the symbolic center of Ghurid rule, for example, attests to the presence of a Jewish community, whose epitaphs suggest that they may have mediated a relation to the world of luxury goods that was essential to contemporary Ghurid self-fashioning (Flood 2009a: 92–93).

The story told by Jūzjānī indicates the way in which clothing and dress mediated between the humble origins of the Ghurids and their exalted aspirations in the 1160s and 1170s. More importantly, it suggests not only that dress was important to the self-representations of eastern Islamic elites around 1200, but that at this moment authority was projected by a specific mode of dress. These were the robes, hats and boots associated with the Turkic dynasties that had held sway over much of the central Islamic lands and Greater Iran after the Seljuqs (r. 1037–1194) had established their rule from Anatolia to Khurāsān. The ensemble is typified by the depiction of a seated

⁴ Walker 1995–96: 29. Although the textile is tentatively dated to the Ghaznavid period, the zoomorphic tiles from Ghazni to which it is compared actually date later, to the period of the Ghurid sultanate.

⁵ For the historical background to this dispute see Bosworth 1961.

⁶ Jūzjānī 1963, vol. 1: 324–27; Raverty 1970 [1881] 1: 311–16.

figure holding a bow in the frontispiece to volume 17 of a multi-volume copy of Abū al-Faraj al-ʿIṣfahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Book of Songs) produced in northern Iraq between 1217 and 1219 (Fig. 10). Inscriptions on the *ṭirāz* bands identify this as Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' (d. 1259), the atabeg or military chief of Mosul. Although he wears the standard accoutrements of Turkic dress, Badr al-Dīn was not an ethnic Turk: he was probably an Armenian convert to Islam, a former slave who had risen through the ranks to a position of authority denoted by the dress that he wears (Patton 1991). Similarly, the Ghurids were ethnic Persians, unlike the Ghaznavid *sultāns* whom they had overthrown, ethnic Turks whose sartorial tastes the Ghurids seem to have adopted.

As these examples suggest, in addition to the widespread adoption of Turkic dress during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, depictions of figures of authority wearing such dress, (including the robe known as a *qabā'*) were found on a range of portable objects that circulated in the Islamic world (Fig. 11). In her study of this phenomenon, Priscilla Soucek concluded that the dispersal of such modes of dress reflects "a kind of implicit, if not explicit, linking of military power with the costumes and attributes of various Turkish speaking groups." As a result of this association between specific modes of dress and the exercise of authority by Turkic elites, the *qabā'* and other elements of Turkic dress were adopted by those who were not ethnic Turks but sought to project their authority effectively. Consequently, Soucek concludes, images of enthroned figures wearing the *qabā'* and/or boots "would have primarily conveyed a sense of power and only secondarily of Turkish ethnicity."⁷

This is certainly true of elite representations within the Islamic world during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, especially in the central Islamic lands (Iran and Iraq), Syria and Anatolia, where we hear of non-Muslim military elites imitating Turks in their dress and appearance. In fact, so potent was the association between Turkic dress and the effective exercise of authority that in the 1180s, at the time when Iraq was under the political control of the Seljuq Turks, even the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (r. 1180-1225) appeared wearing what contemporaries describe as Turkish dress, consisting of a gold-embroidered *qabā'* and a gilded cap trimmed with fur (Broadhurst 1952: 237).

If the impact of Turkic rule on the sartorial traditions of the eastern Islamic world is clear, the implications of this relationship between dress and the conventional exercise of authority for non-Muslim elites living *outside* the margins of these Turkic or Turkic-inflected

polities have never been systematically studied.⁸ There is, nonetheless, abundant visual evidence that some of these non-Muslim elites also adopted Turkic modes of dress, or at least self-representation during this period.

A fragmentary portrait page from a Gospel manuscript commissioned by Gagik-Abbas, the Armenian ruler of the border state of Kars around 1060 (Fig. 12), provides a particularly striking counterpart for the Alchi image of a century or so later (Der Nersessian 1984; Mathews and Daskalakis 1997). In it we see Gagik-Abbas enthroned along with his wife and daughter, who occupies the place of honor. The ruler is cross-legged and wears a v-necked *qabā'* with white undershirt, an ensemble that bears comparison to that worn by the ruler depicted in the drinking scene at Alchi (Figs. 5 and 5A).⁹ As in the Alchi painting, the robe worn by Gagik-Abbas is made from a textile (presumably a silk) with prominent roundels, here containing horned ibexes. The robe bears arm-bands, *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in the foliated Arabic Kufic script also favored at Alchi, a point to which I will return. In 1045, Gagik-Abbas assumed the Persian title *shāhanshāh* (king of kings), while in 1063 he was invested with a robe of honor (*khil'a*) by the Seljuq *sultān* Alp Arslan (r. 1063-1072), one of two occasions when he accepted robes from Muslim rulers, continuing a tradition of investing Armenian vassals long established by the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad.¹⁰ The extension of Islamicate protocols of investiture involving robing to those dwelling on the margins of the sultanate suggests one possible mechanism for the dispersal of the *qabā'* among Christian elites living on the frontiers of the Seljuq sultanate. Similarly, Ghaznavid and Ghurid *sultāns* bestowed gifts of clothing—including the *qabā'*—on both their own followers and north Indian rulers, indicating one likely route of transmission to the western Himalayas (Flood 2009a: 78–87).

It is therefore clear that non-Muslim elites on the frontiers of the Islamic world were being depicted wearing the *qabā'* as early as the 1060s, leaving open the possibility of an eleventh-century date for the Alchi paintings. In the robes worn by the figures in the Dukhang (Fig. 5), however, we seem to be dealing with a vertically opening robe worn over a white, probably cotton shirt, while in the Armenian

⁸ For a preliminary survey see Flood 2009a: 61–88.

⁹ The appearance of this robe in the Armenian frontispiece would appear to contradict the assertion that the standard type of "Turko-Islamic" robe was round-necked rather than v-necked so that the "Dukhang costume does not therefore represent the popular Turko-Islamic fashion of the day but is somewhat archaic" (Alafouzo 2014: 181).

¹⁰ Der Nersessian 1984: 91; Jones 2004; Jones 2007: 46–51.

⁷ Soucek 1992: 93–96. See also Soucek 1995: 224.

frontispiece (Fig. 12), the *qabā'* appears to fasten to the left across the body. In this, the Mangyu painting offers a closer comparison with the Armenian portrait, for in the Mangyu painting the *qabā'* also seems to fasten to the left (Fig. 6). If the similarities between the Armenian and Ladakhi paintings point to the existence of a transregional sartorial horizon on the northern margins of the Turkic lands, the implications of the differences in the robes worn by the royal figures at Alchi and Mangyu are equally significant. The term *qabā'* denoted a fitted calf-length garment further distinguished by ethnic and regional qualifications, which reflect not only variations in form (for example, front opening as opposed to overlapping construction) but also in the way in which the garment fastened across the body, the major distinction being between left and right fastening. The left-fastening *qabā'* was known as a Turkic *qabā'*, distinguished in the medieval Arabic sources from the *qabā'* that fastened across the breast to the right, which was known as the *qabā' tartarī*, the Tartar *qabā'*, and which seems to have been popularized only after the Mongol invasions of the 1250s. Most depictions of the diagonally-fastening form of *qabā'* found before 1250 show the robe fastening to the left, like that at Mangyu.¹¹

Both front-fastening and diagonally-closing variants of the *qabā'* are represented in the visual culture of the medieval Islamic world. In eleventh- or early twelfth-century wall-paintings from the Ghaznavid palace at Lashkari Bazaar in southern Afghanistan, for example, the *khaṣṣakiyya*, the elite guard surrounding the throne-room (Fig. 14), wear left-fastening *qabā'*s with wide lapels and *ṭirāz* bands similar to those worn by military and royal figures depicted in the recently excavated Qarakhanid murals in the citadel of Samarqand, datable to around 1200.¹²

The alternative type of front-opening *qabā'* (also with lapels) is worn by one of two figures depicted in the double frontispiece to a copy of the *Maqāmāt* (Assemblies) of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122) produced in 1237, probably in Baghdad (Fig. 15). While the figure on the left wearing loose-fitting robes and a turban has been tentatively identified with the Arab author of the text, the figure on the right has been identified as a representative of secular authority, perhaps an

amīr (Hillenbrand 2010). His long braids and Turkic dress, consisting of a variety of *qabā'* known as a *durrā'a*, a fitted coat fastened with loops (Levy 1935: 337), high fur cap (*sharbūsh*) and boots, typify an association between these elements of dress and the visual articulation of authority in the contemporary Islamic world. This association is underlined by the contrast between two distinct sartorial modes, which might be crudely described as Arab and Turkic. The distinction reflects a contemporary differentiation between the *ahl al-qalam*, the men of the pen, who wore Arab dress, and the *ahl al-sayf*, the men of the sword, who wore modes of Turkic dress.¹³

Whether front- or left-opening, the *qabā'*s worn by those depicted at Alchi and Mangyu (Figs. 5 and 6) all lack the wide lapels commonly associated with the *qabā'*. In this, the Alchi robes stand apart from those worn by earlier Tibetan and contemporary Christian and Islamic elites.¹⁴ The absence of lapels on the robes worn by the donor or royal figures at Alchi and Mangyu suggests the existence of regional variants of the *qabā'*; the fact that both round-collared and wide-lapel *qabā'*s have been documented in Mongol-era burials in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia further supports this suggestion.¹⁵ Given the suggested Kashmiri role in the execution of the paintings at both Alchi and Mangyu, and the possibility that some of the textiles depicted in the Sumtsek were of Kashmiri origin,¹⁶ one possibility is that we are looking at evidence for the existence of a variant of the *qabā'*, which was favored at the court of Kashmir. We are, for example, told in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* that King Harsha of Kashmir (r. 1089–1111) introduced changes in fashion and personal adornment, including a type of attire that was “fit for a king.” We have few details of this attire, but in view of Harsha's other *Turushka* leanings (including a fondness for Turkic concubines and soldiery), Aurel Stein noted the likelihood that this was a style of dress associated with the Islamic sultanates to the west (Stein 1989 [1900] 1: 339, Book 7: 922–24). Since the Ladakhi rulers had close ties with Kashmir, ties that extended to the use of Kashmiri artists in the production of their self-representations, the paintings from Ladakh may indicate

¹¹ Levy 1935; Serjeant 1972: 18, 23, 80, 91, 117, 99–100; Stillman 1986: 733, 739. For examples of right-fastening Mongolian *qabā'*s see Gierlichs *et al.* 2010: 62–63; Kessler 1993: 160, fig. 104. For a very rare example of a right-fastening silk *qabā'* with animal roundels tentatively dated to the Seljuq period (11th–12th century) and attributed to Iran or Central Asia see Christie's, Sale 7959, *Art of the Indian and Islamic Worlds*, London, 7 April 2011, Lot 50.

¹² Schlumberger and Sourdél-Thomine 1978: 61–64, pls. 121–123; Gibson 2012; Karev 2003: fig. 17, 1717–1720.

¹³ This was the case at the Mamluk court of Egypt into the fourteenth century, and in contemporary Delhi, where we are told that the qadis and the *'ulamā'* (the religious classes) wore Arab garments, while the *sultān*, *amīrs* and khans wore *qabā'*s fastening across the body, their sleeves and shoulders embroidered with brocade, following a fashion popularized by the Mongols: Spies 1936: 70, Arabic text p. 93; Soucek 1992: 97–98.

¹⁴ With the possible exception of one or two of the riders depicted on the *dhotī* of the Avalokiteśvara icon in the Sumtsek (Goepfer and Poncar 1996: 53).

¹⁵ Dang 2003: 199–216. See also note 9 above.

¹⁶ Goepfer 1991–92; Goepfer 2003; Luczanits 1998: 152–53.

the adoption of similar modes of dress in the court of the rajas of Kashmir (Flood 2009a: 65–72).

By contrast, the front-opening robe worn by Sudhana as depicted in the eleventh-century paintings of the Tibetan Buddhist monastery at Tabo in Himachal Pradesh is provided with wide lapels (Klimburg-Salter 1997: 124–25, fig. 121). This robe shows no obvious Islamicate elements, perpetuating instead a type of wide-lapelled front-opening robe whose use in the Himalayas is documented as early as the seventh century. Such a coat or robe is, for example, worn by a donor with a Sanskrit name seen venerating a stupa in a petroglyph of approximately seventh-century date from Thalpan-Ziyarat in northern Pakistan (Fig. 13) (Jettmar 1992: photograph 31, plate 28). This type of dress was evidently quite common in the western Himalayas and Central Asia: similar coats are worn by the donors depicted in the well-known seventh-century wall-paintings from Qizil in Chinese Turkestan, which are left-fastening with single collar flaps, while Tibetans depicted at Dunhuang in the eighth and ninth centuries wear analogous robes with wide lapels in both their front-opening and left-fastening variants (Karmay 1977; Sims 2002: no. 47, 128–29).

The occurrence of prominent animal roundels often framed by pearl borders on the *qabā*'s worn by medieval elites from the Caucasus to Central Asia reminds us of the long resonances of textile genres first popularized in the transregional empire of the Sasanians (224–651 CE). These roundels appeared on Sasanian silks, were adopted on textiles produced in Central Asia and China (including those worn by Tibetans) and perpetuated on Islamic textiles into the eleventh and twelfth centuries; examples appear among the textiles painted on the ceiling of the Sumtsek at Alchi.¹⁷ It is, therefore, conceivable that the popularity of the *qabā*' in Central Asia and the Himalayas preserves aspects of dress and self-representation popularized by transregional Eurasian connections forged during the period of Sasanian hegemony. This would explain the striking similarities between the tailored coat worn by the Kushan emperor Kanishka (d. 151) in the well-known stone sculpture from Mathura and that worn by a figure identified as the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd II (r. 743–744) in a stucco sculpture mounted on the façade of the early Islamic palace of Khirbat al-Mafjar in Palestine.

In the post-Sasanian world, however, the *qabā*' and its accoutrements seem to have had more specific associations with Central Asia and Sogdiana, and with Turkic sartorial traditions in these regions.¹⁸

¹⁷ Karmay 1977: fig. 1, 63–67; Goepper 1991–92: 62–66; Goepper 1995: 108–113, figs. 20–25; Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 104–109; Compareti 2003.

¹⁸ A member of a delegation of Turks depicted in the wall-paintings of Afrasiyab

This suggests that the sartorial ecumene defined by adoption of the “Turkic” ensemble of *qabā*' (with or without associated *ṭirāz* arm bands), boots and cap can be divided into two distinct moments and regions (Soucek 1992: 75). The first, datable roughly between the seventh or eighth centuries (if not earlier) and the eleventh and is concentrated in west Central Asia and Afghanistan, culminating in the modes of dress favored by the Ghaznavid *sulṭāns* and their retinue (Yatsenko 2003; Fig. 14).¹⁹ The second moment can be associated with the establishment of another transregional empire and its aftermath, the sultanate forged by the Seljuq Turks in the eleventh century when they moved westwards, bringing much of Iran, Iraq, Anatolia and Syria under their control. The ascendancy of the Seljuqs (and their Ghaznavid rivals in the east) popularized the spread of Turkic dress as both sartorial practice and representational form, making it de rigueur for figures of authority. Somewhat paradoxically, the phenomenon reached its apogee in northern Iraq, Syria and Anatolia in the decades before and after the collapse of the Great Seljuq empire in 1194. However, the evidence from Armenia and Georgia presented here indicates that elements of Turkic dress were already being adopted by non-Turkic and non-Muslim elites on the northern Seljuq periphery as early as the second half of the eleventh century.

The proliferation of the *qabā*' (both in its front-opening and left-fastening variants) in the Islamic world between roughly 1050 and 1250 therefore seems to represent the reinvestment and popularization of a type of robe that had earlier roots in the sartorial traditions of Central Asia. This was adopted by the Turkic and Tibetan elites as early as the eighth or ninth centuries, but only came into widespread use with the ascendancy of the Seljuqs and other Turkic groups in the central Islamic lands, which popularized its use among Muslim and non-Muslim elites who were not ethnic Turks. It is this complex temporality and layered, palimpsestic history of the modes of dress worn by the royal males at Alchi that lends them their elusive quality, the sense of being both indexes of a specific cultural orientation (or occidentation) and marked by filiations that range widely in both space and time.

in the seventh century wears a left-closing *qabā*' with prominent lapels (Azarpay 1981: fig. 52, 120). On the earlier history of this kind of robe and its Sasanian connections see Knauer (2004) and Vogelsang-Eastwood (2004).

¹⁹ An interesting tale told by the scholar al-Bīrūnī, writing in Ghaznī before 1048, tells how the first of the Shahi rulers of Kabul rose to prominence in the seventh or eighth century by means of a trick, whereby he hid himself in a sacred cave, from which he emerged in royal fashion, wearing Turkic dress (*ziyy al-atrāk*), consisting of a *qabā*' and *qalansuwa* (a type of conical hat): al-Bīrūnī 1958: 348; Sachau 1989 [1910] 2: 10.

Further elements worth considering are the arm-bands that appear on the dress of prominent male figures in the paintings in the Dukhang at Alchi and at Mangyu. These *ṭirāz* bands, narrow bands often embroidered or woven with ornament or inscriptions, had an earlier Central Asian history, but they were among the sartorial forms popularized by the Turks in the Islamic world from the eleventh century onwards. Their common appearance on the distinct Arab and Turkic forms of dress worn by both central figures in the *Maqāmāt* frontispiece (Fig. 15) serves as a reminder that the individual elements of contemporary “Turkic” dress—*qabāʾ*, *sharbūsh* or fur hat, boots and *ṭirāz* bands—were recombinant, capable of being adopted in toto, or as individual elements within a more eclectic and hybrid sartorial ensemble. Unlike other elements of “Turkic” dress such as the *qabāʾ*, whose popularity was generally confined to the eastern Islamic lands, *ṭirāz* arm-bands are found in depictions of the loose-flowing untailored robes favored in Arab lands as far west as the Mediterranean. Their popularity is, however, limited to the period between the eleventh and thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries, the period of Turkic ascendancy and its immediate aftermath.

Like the *qabāʾ*, with which they were often associated, the popularity of inscribed arm-bands transcended any fixed ethnic or religious associations: by the twelfth century, their appearance in depictions of regional elites as far west as Norman Sicily and as far east as Alchi suggests that they indexed a generalized political authority, perhaps by virtue of their original association with those who exercised it. By that date, *ṭirāz* bands were commonly depicted on the *qabāʾ*s worn by courtly figures found on ceramics, manuscripts, metalwork and other portable objects that circulated well beyond the boundaries of the *dār al-Islām* (Fig. 11) (Rice 1969: 262–277). Tellingly, despite the occasional appearance of sleeve ornaments, inscribed bands are found neither on the front-opening robes worn by Tibetans in earlier depictions nor on the similar robes depicted in the Tabo paintings. If the mid-eleventh-century date suggested for the Tabo paintings is accepted, the absence of Islamicate elements makes perfect sense, not only because of the monastery’s more easterly location, but also because it was only from around this date that modes of dress then associated with the Turks, including inscribed arm-bands, proliferated in the Islamic world to the west.

At Alchi and Mangyu (Figs. 5 and 6), *ṭirāz* bands are confined to the robes worn by those who can be identified as royal figures, suggesting that they were a meaningful element in the articulation of authority and not merely a generic device. Moreover, that the Islamic world provided the immediate models is confirmed by the presence of pseudo-Arabic inscriptions on the arm bands of several prince-

ly or royal figures in the Dukhang (Fig. 16). These all use angular Kufic (or Kufesque) script, a script that until the twelfth century was used almost exclusively for Arabic public texts.²⁰ These “texts” all assume a specific form, consisting of repetitious modules formed by two uprights (hastae) joined by a horizontal line; similar inscriptions are visible on the arm-band on the left sleeve of the princely figure depicted at Mangyu (Fig. 6). The form of these pseudo-inscriptions connects them directly to the use of similar pseudo-scripts both in the art of the contemporary Islamic world and that produced on its periphery. As Richard Ettinghausen long ago demonstrated, in the eleventh and especially the twelfth century, the period when the Ladakhi wall-paintings were probably executed, this was in fact the most common form of pseudo-inscription found in architecture and the portable arts from the Mediterranean to Central Asia. Its popularity may reflect a derivation from the central characters of the Arabic word *Allāh*, even if it had been so abstracted by this date that its origins were no longer apparent (Ettinghausen 1984).²¹

Pseudo-Arabic inscriptions of similar form are found on numerous portable objects produced in the neighboring sultanates of Afghanistan, occurring for example as border ornament on twelfth-century Ghurid tiles found in Ghaznī (Fig. 17) and in the ornament of some Ghurid monuments, close in time and space to the Ladakhi wall-paintings.²² This, combined with the earlier presence of Arabic inscriptions in Ladakh,²³ suggests that the appearance of pseudo-script at Alchi should not be taken as an indication that Arabic text was garbled by those unable to read it; on the contrary, even the appearance of this kind of pseudo-script serves to link the depicted dress of Ladakhi elites to the cultural forms and practices current in the Central Islamic lands.

That such modes of dress and epigraphic textiles (or at least their representations) were available and acceptable to Buddhist patrons in Ladakh around 1200 is hardly surprising, given the extent of their

²⁰ In addition to the examples illustrated here, see Poncar DK JP ER D 058 unpublished photographic archive of Alchi. As far as I am aware, Christiane Papa-Kalantari is the first scholar to comment on the presence of these Kufic letters: Papa-Kalantari 2007: 182. See also, Flood 2009a: 69–71.

²¹ In a forthcoming study I discuss the likely reasons for the popularity of this form of pseudo-inscription (Flood, forthcoming).

²² Scerrato 1962: 264, figs. 20–21; Flood 2001: 152–53, fig. 40. See also the pseudo-inscriptions framing roundels on an Afghan wooden box of this period, the decoration of which clearly emulates contemporary textiles: von Folsach 2003: 79, figs. 2–3.

²³ Vohra 1995: 419–29. I am grateful to Marjo Alafouzo for drawing my attention to this article.

diffusion not only within the Islamic world, but also among non-Muslim elites living on its periphery. As the frontispiece featuring Gagik Abbas (Fig. 12) suggests, it is especially instructive to compare the self-representations of Buddhist elites in Ladakh with those produced contemporaneously in the Christian kingdoms of Armenia and the Caucasus, another mountainous region that lay beyond the northern frontiers of the *dār al-Islām*. Situated between Byzantium and the Islamic polities of Anatolia and Iran, in their self-representations, the Christian elites of the Caucasus drew upon the sartorial choices of both in ways that suggest a sophisticated understanding of the nuances of contemporary vestimentary codes. As in Ladakh, one might even suggest that the interstitial geographical and autonomous or semi-autonomous political status of these “peripheral” kingdoms provided their elites with a wider range of cultural choices and sartorial possibilities than was available to their contemporaries in larger more culturally hegemonic centers.²⁴

A few examples from Georgia will suffice to make the point. All come from what is often seen as a golden period in the region’s history, when it was united under the rule of the Bagrationid royal house in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. While the Bagrationid rulers of Georgia were often depicted wearing Byzantine royal dress, their self-representations also drew upon Turko-Persianate modes of dress current in the Islamic polities that lay to the south. A richly-embroidered front-opening *qabā’* is, for example, worn by the Georgian king Demetre I (r. 1125–55) in a poorly preserved painting executed around 1140 on the walls of the church at Macxvariši in Svaneti, in the upper Caucasus (Fig. 18).²⁵ Here the pearl-bordered *ṭirāz* bands bear inscriptions in especially elaborate foliated Kufic Arabic script, a feature that occurs on other *ṭirāz* bands worn by the Bagrationid kings and their vassals in other wall-paintings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As was the case with other Bagrationid rulers, Demetre I had Arab secretaries and struck coins in Arabic on which the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad was acknowledged, an unusual gesture that signaled a move away from Byzantine models at a moment when the Bagrationid dynasty was asserting its independence, and has been read as proclaiming “Georgia’s new strength in what was the diplomatic language of the Caucasus and Near East.”²⁶ The

sartorial articulation of that language evidently lay in the adoption of modes of Islamicate dress popularized in the neighboring Turkic polities.

As noted above, the *ṭirāz* bands that proliferated on contemporary Islamic dress were recombinant: they could be incorporated into modes of dress with no Turkic associations. In later Bagrationid royal images, they appear on clothing of Byzantine type. Arm-bands inscribed with faded texts executed in elaborate plaited Kufic script appear, for example, on the Byzantine-style robes worn by the Georgian Queen Tamar and her father Giorgi III in a wall-painting datable to before 1186 in the rock-cut church of the Virgin at Vardzia in southern Georgia (*ibid.*: 99–114). Conversely, the adjacent portrait of Rat’i Surameli, the *eristav* (duke) of the surrounding Javakheti and Kartli regions shows him wearing a front-opening *qabā’* again with *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in Arabic or pseudo-Arabic using Kufic script. More significantly, he wears the *sharbūsh*, the fur-trimmed hat with a triangular peak (Fig. 19). The *sharbūsh* is also worn by a series of eleventh-century donors of uncertain identities, but almost certainly representing local donors and nobles in the Church of the Archangels at Zemo-Krikhi in the mountainous region of Racha in north-west Georgia, who wear both front-opening and left-closing variants of the *qabā’*, all richly embroidered and bearing *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in elaborate Kufic script (Fig. 20).²⁷ In contemporary Iraq and Syria, the *sharbūsh* was worn by atabegs, *amirs* and military commanders, those of rank and position within the hierarchy of the state but ultimately owing their allegiance to a higher authority (Dozy 1845: 220–224). This is exactly the case here, suggesting once again not only continuities in the use of certain sartorial forms but in their specific associations with political (and perhaps military) authority; it is perhaps not coincidental that the use of the title *atabeg*, a Turkic title introduced by the Seljuqs and adopted by their contemporaries and successors (including those who were not ethnic Turks), is documented among the Christian elites of medieval Georgia.²⁸ At Zemo-Krikhi the local elites also sport the braided locks often associated with Turkic military elites in the Islamic lands to the south, and whose appearance in the drinking scene in the Dukhang at Alchi (Fig. 5) has been taken as evidence for the Turkic ethnicity of the male royal figure (Alafouzo 2014: 179–181).

At Alchi this recognition of an association between certain adopted Islamic sartorial forms and rank is also suggested by the restric-

²⁴ On this point see Ball 2005: 60.

²⁵ Eastmond 1998: 73–83. See also Knauer (2004), 11–12.

²⁶ *Ibid.*: 72. Discussing the appearance of the fur-trimmed *qabā’* in Bagrationid royal portraits, Eastmond notes that the abandonment of “the aura of power” associated with Byzantine-style robes suggests that these “new robes must have had great significance” (*ibid.*: 49; see also 194–95).

²⁷ For a brief discussion of these extraordinary paintings, mostly destroyed in the 1991 earthquake, see Constantinides 2007: 180–93.

²⁸ As noted by Soucek 1992: 93. See Cahen 2015.

tion of inscribed *ṭirāz* bands to the most important male figures in the royal scenes. Moreover, the form of the Kufic inscriptions or pseudo-inscriptions found on the *ṭirāz* bands worn by medieval elites depicted in Georgia and Ladakh are closely related.²⁹ For example, an embroidered front-opening *qabā'* worn by the eleventh or twelfth-century donor portrayed in the Church of the Savior at Hadaishi in Svaneti in the upper Caucasus bears repeated modules of pseudo-Arabic consisting of two uprights (hastae) joined by a horizontal line (Fig. 21); this bears a trefoil flourish absent from the simpler modular form of pseudo-Kufic inscriptions on the robes of the royal figures in Alchi (Fig. 16), but the familial relationship between the two is clear (Kenia 2010: 142–143). That Arabicizing pseudo-inscriptions of similar form should appear on the arm bands worn by the Buddhist elites of Ladakh and the Christian elites of the Caucasus is hardly surprising given that this is the most common form of pseudo-inscription during the tenth through thirteenth centuries, variants appearing frequently even on objects produced in the central Islamic lands (Fig. 17).

The nearly simultaneous appearance in both the Caucasus and western Himalayas of modes of dress associated with the ascendancy of ethnic Turks in the contemporary Islamic world underlines the fact that, far from being anomalous, the appearance of Islamicate sartorial forms and vestimentary codes in the Alchi paintings offers evidence for a transregional ecumene of dress. It is conceivable that this existed only in representation, that these are idealized images bearing little relation to the actual dress practices of the depicted elites, but this seems unlikely. What is clear is that the reception of Islamicate dress in both regions was selective and partial. In the Caucasus, for example, Islamicate modes of headwear are confined to depictions of local feudal potentates wearing the *sharbūsh*, the peaked fur hat popular among military elites in the Islamic world. By contrast, Ladakhi elites are never depicted wearing the *sharbūsh* or other forms of Islamicate head-dress.³⁰

The comparative approach adopted here suggests that the Islamicate elements in medieval Ladakhi paintings should be seen not as oddities within the tradition of Tibetan or Himayalan art, but as

the reflection of a moment when Islamicate modes of dress and self-representation flourished among elites living on the periphery of the Islamic lands. All of these examples have their own local rooted contexts, and variants whose nuances await future detailed micro-studies, as do the implications of regional variants in specific forms of dress, such as the *qabā'*. What they have in common, however, is the evidence that they offer for a macro phenomenon characterized by elites across a wide range of territory from Anatolia and the Caucasus through Iran and Afghanistan to western Tibet drawing upon a shared horizon of vestimentary codes and practices in their self-representations in the centuries before the Mongol conquest. The horizontal or lateral spread of specific modes of dress – the *qabā'*, *ṭirāz* bands, fur trimmed hats and robes, and boots – can be related to their original association with those who were ethnic Turks. However, the sartorial practices and vestimentary codes popularized by virtue of Turkic military and political ascendancy in the eastern Islamic lands came to acquire more generalized associations with the articulation and projection of authority during the late eleventh to the thirteenth or even early fourteenth centuries. If the wall-paintings from the Caucasus represent the westernmost spread of a “Turkic” vestimentary ecumene among those living on the northern margins of the contemporary Islamic world, perhaps the dress depicted in the Dukhang paintings at Alchi defines its easternmost limit.

The widespread dispersal of “Turkic” modes of dress and self-representation during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and their adoption even by non-Muslim elites living outside the northern fringes of the *dār al-Islām* blurred the boundaries between the codified depiction of ethnicity and the effective articulation of authority. In doing so, it complicates a relation between dress and ethnicity that has often been assumed in modern scholarship on the Alchi paintings, which has consistently identified the male figure in the royal scene of the Dukhang (Fig. 5) as an ethnic Turk or “Turko-Iranian”, based on his dress and appearance.³¹ This may well be the case, but with contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim elites dressing *à la turque*, ethnicity cannot be assumed on the basis of dress alone.

Beyond the specificity of ethnicity and its representation, and even beyond the question of regional artistic traditions, medieval elites from the Caucasus to western Tibet (and beyond) made choices in their self-representations, exercising their agency in ways that often undermined any simplistic relationship between dress and ethnic or religious identity. The adoption of “Turkic” modes of dress should be considered a form of auto-interpellation, a desire to make the

²⁹ Dr. Irina Koshoridze of the Georgian National Museum and I are currently studying the Arabic and pseudo-Arabic inscriptions on Islamic and Islamicate textiles preserved or depicted in the medieval churches of Georgia.

³⁰ Although, as Melikian-Chirvani has pointed out, depending on how one reads the scene, one of the figures standing behind the royal figures in the Dukhang may be wearing the two-horned hat popularized in the Islamic lands under Turkic rule and worn by both enthroned figures and their attendants on portable objects produced in Afghanistan in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 112.

³¹ Pal and Fournier 1982: 17, 28–29; Sims 2002: 24; Alafouzo 2014: esp. 179–83.

elite body legible within broader, established, and transregional conventions of articulating authority; the adoption of the *qabā'* by the *sultāns* of Ghūr, likely contemporaries of the rulers depicted at Alchi and Mangyu, is a case in point. Unlike the vogue for turquerie in early modern Europe, this was not indicative of a penchant for exoticism, but of a much more prosaic desire to manipulate the royal and sub-royal image, projecting authority in the most effective manner. Whether in Ladakh or the Caucasus, the adoption of "Turkic" modes of dress was less a matter of ethnicity or religion than a reflection of localized endeavors to enhance status and authority by adopting more universal norms of self-representation. This was a product of the historical circumstances of the mid-eleventh to mid-thirteenth centuries, but the general principle finds numerous parallels in other times and places: a century or two later, the Hindu rajas of Vijayanagara in the Deccan region of south India were, for example, to adopt Islamicate modes of dress and self-representation (including the *qabā'*) for much the same reasons (Wagoner 1996; Flood 2009: 61–88). The phenomenon complicates or confounds the analytical and taxonomic categories within which we work, while reminding us that agency was not invented along with the modern subject.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALAFOUZO, Marjo. 2014. The iconography and the historical context of the drinking scene in the Dukhang at Alchi, Ladakh. In: Lo Bue, Erberto and John Bray (eds) *Art and Architecture in Ladakh: Cross-cultural Transmissions in the Himalayas and Karakoram*. Leiden: Brill, 167–90.
- AZARPAY, Guitty. 1981. *Sogdian Painting: The Pictorial Epic in Oriental Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- BAKHTADZE [BAXTAJE], Nodar *et al.* 2013. *Ceramics in Medieval Georgia*. Tbilisi: Bakur Sulakauri Publishing.
- BALL, Jennifer L. 2005. *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth- to Twelfth-Century Painting*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- BECHERINI, Marta. 2010. The Dancers of the Sumtsek Temple, Alchi: Myriad Inspirations in Medieval Ladakh. MA qualifying paper, Columbia University, New York.
- AL-BĪRŪNĪ, Abū al-Rayḥān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. 1958. *Kitāb fi taḥqīq-i-mā li'l-Hind*. Hyderabad: Osmania Oriental Publications Bureau.
- BOSWORTH, Clifford Edmund. 1961. The early Islamic history of Ghūr. In: *Central Asiatic Journal*, 6/2: 116–33 (reprinted in BOSWORTH, Clifford Edmund. 1977. *The Medieval History of Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*. Aldershot: Variorum, Essay IX).
- BROADHURST, Ronald J. C. 1952. *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- CAHEN, Claude. 2015. Atabak. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by Bearman, Peri J. *et al.* Brill Online, 2015. New York University (NYU). 3 August 2015; http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2358/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/atabak-SIM_0831.
- CHANDRA, Moti. 1960. Indian costumes and textiles from the eighth to the twelfth century. In: *Journal of Indian Textile History*, 5: 1–41.
- COMPARETI, Matteo. 2003. The role of the Sogdian colonies in the diffusion of the pearl roundels pattern. In: *Ērān ud Anērān, Webfestschrift Marshak 2003*; <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/compareti.html> (accessed July 27, 2015).
- CONSTANTINIDES, Efthalia. 2007. The frescoes of the church of the holy archangels of Zemo-Krikhi, Rača (Georgia) and contemporary monuments of Mani in southern Greece. In: Constantinides, Efthalia, *Images from the Byzantine Periphery: Studies in Iconography and Style*. Leiden: Alexandros Press, 180–93.
- DANG, Baohai. 2003. The plait-line robe, a costume of ancient Mongolia. In: *Central Asiatic Journal*, 47/2: 198–216.
- DENWOOD, Phillip. 2014. The dating of the Sumtsek temple at Alchi. In: Lo Bue, Erberto and John Bray (eds) *Art and Architecture in Ladakh: Cross-cultural Transmissions in the Himalayas and Karakoram*. Leiden: Brill, 159–66.
- DER NERSESSIAN, Sirarpie. 1984. L'évangile du roi Gagik de Kars: Jérusalem no. 2556. In: *Revue des études arméniennes*, 18: 85–107.
- DOZY, Reinhart Pieter Anne. 1845. *Dictionnaire détaillé des noms des vêtements chez les Arabes*. Amsterdam: Jean Müller.
- EASTMOND, Anthony. 1998. *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*. University Park, Pa.: The Penn State University Press.
- ETTINGHAUSEN, Richard. 1984. Kufesque in Byzantine Greece, the Latin west and the Muslim world. In: Rosen-Ayalon, Myriam (ed.) *Islamic Art and Archaeology: Collected Papers of Richard Ettinghausen*. Berlin: Mann, 752–771.
- FLOOD, Finbarr B. 1991. Mobility and mutation: some Iranian hunting themes in the murals of Alchi, Western Himalayas. In: *South Asian Studies*, 7: 21–35.
- . 2001. Ghūrid architecture in the Indus Valley: the tomb of Shaykh Sādan Shahīd. In: *Ars Orientalis*, 31: 129–166.
- . 2005 [essay submitted 1991]. A royal drinking scene from Alchi: Iranian iconography in the Western Himalayas. In: Hillenbrand, Robert (ed.) *Image and Meaning in Islamic Art*. London: Altajir Trust, 73–97.
- . 2009a. *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2009b. Masons and mobility: Indic elements in twelfth-century Afghan stone-carving. In: Filigenzi, Anna and Roberta Giunta (eds.) *Fifty*

- Years of Research in the Heart of Eurasia*. Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa et l'Oriente, 137–60.
- FLOOD, Finbarr B. 2012. Gilding, inlay and the mobility of metallurgy: a case of fraud in medieval Kashmir. In: Porter, Venetia and Mariam Rosser-Owen (eds) *Metalwork and Material Culture in the Islamic World: Art, Craft and Text. Essays Presented to James W. Allan*. London: I.B. Tauris, 131–42.
- . Forthcoming. *Islam and Image: Polemics, Theology and Modernity*. London: Reaktion.
- VON FOLSACH, Kjeld. 2003. A number of pigmented wooden objects from the eastern Islamic world. In: *Journal of the David Collection*, 1: 72–96.
- GIBSON, Melanie. 2012. A symbolic *khassakiya*: representations of the palace guard in murals and stucco sculpture. In: Graves, Margaret S. (ed.) *Islamic Art, Architecture and Material Culture: New Perspectives* (Oxford: BAR International Series 2436, 81–91.
- GIERLICH, Joachim et al. (eds). 2010. *Focus on 50: Unseen Treasures From the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar*. Doha, Qatar: Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation; published in association with Qatar Museums Authority.
- GOEPPER, Roger. 1990. Clues for a dating of the Three-storeyed Temple (Sumtsek) in Alchi, Ladakh. In: *Asiatische Studien (Études Asiatiques)*, 44/2: 159–75.
- . 1991–92. Early Kashmiri textiles? Painted ceilings in Alchi. In: *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, 56: 47–74.
- . 1995. Dressing the temple: textile representations in the frescoes at Alchi. In: *Asian Art: The Second Hali Annual*. London: Hali, 98–117.
- . 2003. More evidence for dating the Sumtsek in Alchi and its relations with Kashmir. In: Kreide-Damani, Ingrid (ed.) *Dating Tibetan Art: Essays on the Possibilities and Impossibilities of Chronology from the Lempertz Symposium, Cologne*. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 15–24.
- GOEPPER, Roger and Jaroslav PONCAR. 1996. *Alchi: Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary*. London: Serindia Publications.
- VAN HAM, Peter et al. 2011. *Heavenly Himalayas: The Murals of Mangyu and Other Discoveries in Ladakh*. New York: Prestel.
- HILLENBRAND, Robert. 2010. The Schefer Harīri: a study in Islamic frontispiece design. In: Contadini, Anna (ed.) *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts*. Leiden: Brill, 117–34.
- ISHIGURO, J. 1977. Wall-paintings of Alchi Monastery in Ladakh. In: *Nagoya Daigaku Bungakubu Kenkyū Ronshū*, 24: 9–14.
- JETTMAR, Karl. 1992. *Cultural Heritage of the Northern Regions of Pakistan: An Introduction*. Karachi: Department of Archaeology & Museums, Government of Pakistan.
- JONES, Lynn. 2004. 'Abbasid suzerainty in the medieval Caucasus: appropriation and adaptation of iconography and ideology. In: *Gesta*, 43/2: 143–50.
- . 2007. *Between Byzantium and Islam: Aght`amar and the Visual Construction of Medieval Armenian Rulership*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- JŪZJĀNĪ, Minhāj al-Dīn Abu 'Umar al-Uthmān. 1963–64 [1342–43s]. *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥusayni Ḥabībī, 2 volumes. Kābul: Anjuman-i Tārikh-i Afghānistān.
- KAREV, Yuri. 2003. Un cycle de peintures murales d'époque qarākhānide (XII^e–XIII^e siècles) à la citadelle de Samarkand: le souverain et le peintre. In: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 147/4: 1685–1731.
- KARMAY, Heather. 1977. Tibetan costume, seventh to eleventh centuries. In: MacDonald, Ariane and Yoshiro Imaeda (eds) *Essais sur l'art du Tibet*. Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 65–81.
- KENIA, Mariné. 2010. *Upper Svaneti: Medieval Mural Painting*. Tbilisi: G. Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation.
- KESSLER, Adam T. (ed.). 1993. *Empires Beyond the Great Wall: The Heritage of Genghis Khan*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- KLIMBURG-SALTER, Deborah E. 1987. Reformation and renaissance: a study of Indo-Tibetan monasteries in the eleventh century. In: Gnoli, Gherardo and Lionello Lanciotti (eds) *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, Volume 2. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il medio ed Estremo Oriente, 683–702.
- . 1997. *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalayas*. Milan: Skira.
- . 1998. Is there an Inner Asian International Style 12th to 14th Centuries? Definition of the problem and present state of research. In: Klimburg-Salter, Deborah E. and Eva Allinger (eds) *The Inner Asian International Style 12th–14th Centuries*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1–13.
- KNAUER, Elfriede R. 2004. A quest for the origin of the Persian riding coats: Sleeved garments with underarm openings. In: Fluck, Cäcilia and Vogelsang-Eastwood, Gillian (eds) *Riding Costume in Egypt: Origin and Appearance*, Studies in Textile and Costume History 3. Leiden: Brill, 2–28.
- LEVY, Reuben. 1935. Notes on costume from Arabic sources. In: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland (New Series)*, 67/2: 319–38.
- LUCZANITS, Christian. 1998. On an unusual painting style in Ladakh. In: Klimburg-Salter, Deborah E. and Eva Allinger (eds) *The Inner Asian International Style 12th–14th Centuries*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 151–69.
- . 2005. The early Buddhist heritage of Ladakh reconsidered. In: Bray, John (ed.) *Ladakhi Histories: Local and Regional Perspectives*. Boston: Brill Ltd., 69–96.

- MATHEWS, Thomas F. and Annie-Christine DASKALAKIS. 1997. The portrait of Princess Marem of Kars, Jerusalem 2556, fol. 135b. In: Mahé, Jean-Pierre and Robert W. Thomson (eds) *From Byzantium to Iran: Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 475–84.
- MELIKIAN-CHIRVANI, Assadullah Souren. 2010. Iran to Tibet. In: Akasoy, Anna (ed.) *Islam and Tibet: Interactions Along the Musk Routes*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 89–115.
- PAL, Pratapaditya and Lionel FOURNIER. 1982. *A Buddhist Paradise. The Murals of Alchi Western Himalayas*. Basel: Ravi Kumar.
- PAPA-KALANTARI, Christiane. 2007. The art of the court: some remarks on the historical stratigraphy of Eastern Iranian elements in early Buddhist painting of Alchi, Ladakh. In: Klimburg-Salter, Deborah, Kurt Tropper and Christian Jahoda (eds) *Text, Image and Song in Transdisciplinary Dialogue. Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford 2003*. Leiden: Brill, 167–228.
- PATTON, Douglas. 1991. *Badr al-Din Lu'lu': Atabeg of Mosul, 1211-1259*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- RAVERTY, Henry George. 1970 [1881]. *Ṭabaḳāt-i-Nāširi: A General History of the Muḥammedan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindūstān*, 2 volumes. New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation.
- RICE, Tamara Talbot. 1969. Some reflections on the subject of arm bands. In: Aslanapa, Oktay and Rudolf Naumann (eds) *Forschungen zur Kunst Asiens. In Memoriam Kurt Erdmann*. Istanbul: Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi, 262–77.
- SACHAU, Edward C. 1989 [1910]. *Al-Beruni's India*, 2 volumes. Delhi: Low Price Publications.
- SCERRATO, Umberto. 1962. Glazed tiles with moulded decoration from Ghazni. In: *East and West*, 13/4: 263–87.
- SCHLUMBERGER, Daniel and Janine SOURDEL-THOMINE. 1978. *Lashkari Bazar: une résidence royale ghaznévide et ghoride*, Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan, 18. Paris: De Boccard.
- SEAGRAVES, Julie M. 2001. An interview with Lionel Fournier. In: *Orientalism*, 32/1: 68–75.
- SERJEANT, Robert Bertram. 1972. *Islamic Textiles: Material for a History up to the Mongol Conquest*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban.
- SIMS, Eleanor. 2002. *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and its Sources*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- SNELGROVE, David L. and Tadeusz SKORUPSKI. 1977. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*. Volume 1: *Central Ladakh*. Boulder, Col.: Prajña Press.
- SOUCEK, Priscilla. 1992. Ethnicity in the Islamic figural tradition: the case of the 'Turk'. In: *Tārīḥ*, (2/1992): 73–103.
- . 1995. Ethnic depictions in Warqah ve Gulshah. In: *9th International Congress of Turkish Art, 23-27 September 1991*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 223–33.
- SPIES, Otto. 1936. *An Arab Account of India in the 14th Century: Being a Translation of the Chapters on India from al-Qalqashandī's Ṣubḥ ul-A'ṣhā*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- STEIN, Marc Aurel. 1989 [1900]. *Kalhana's Rājatarangīnī: A Chronicle of the Kings of Kaśmīr*, 3 volumes. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- STILLMAN, Yedida K. 1986. Libās. 1. In the central and eastern Islamic lands. In: Bosworth, Clifford Edmund et al. (eds) *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, vol. 5. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 732–42.
- VOGELSANG-EASTWOOD, Gillian. 2004. Sasanian 'Riding-Coats': The Iranian evidence. In: Fluck, Cäcilia and Vogelsang-Eastwood, Gillian (eds) *Riding Costume in Egypt: Origin and Appearance*, Studies in Textile and Costume History 3. Leiden: Brill, 209–229.
- VOHRA, Rohit. 1995. Arabic inscriptions of the late first millennium A.D. from Tangtse in Ladakh. In: Osmaston, Henry and Philip Denwood (eds) *Recent Research on Ladakh 4 & 5. Proceedings of the Fourth and Fifth International Colloquia on Ladakh. Bristol 1989 & London 1992*. London: SOAS, 419–29.
- YATSENKO, Sergey A. 2003. The late Sogdian costume (the 5th-8th cc. AD). In: *Ērān ud Anērān, Webfestschrift Marshak 2003*; <http://www.transoxiana.org/Eran/Articles/yatsenko.html> (accessed July 27, 2015).
- WAGONER, Phillip B. 1996. 'Sultan among Hindu Kings': dress, titles, and the Islamicisation of Hindu culture at Vijayanagara. In: *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55/4: 851–80.
- WALKER, Daniel. 1995–96. Fragment with lions. In: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 53/3: 29; <https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/31.106.64> accessed July 28th, 2015).



Fig. 1: Dancers depicted on the ceiling of the Sumtsek, Alchi (after Goepper & Poncar, *Alchi: Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary*, 1996).



Fig. 2: Dancer depicted on a luster bowl, Fatimid Egypt, 11th–12th century (Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase, F.1946.30).



Fig. 3: Dancer depicted on the ceiling of the Capella Palatina, the Palatine chapel of the Norman rulers of Palermo, ca. 1140 (after J. Grube & J. Johns, *The Painted Ceilings of the Capella Palatina*, 2005).



Fig. 4: Sleeve-dancer depicted on a glazed sgraffito bowl, Georgia, 12th or 13th century (after Bakhadze et al., *Ceramics in Medieval Georgia*, 2010).



Fig. 5: Royal drinking scene in the Dukhang at Alchi (courtesy of Jaroslav Poncar, 1983).



Fig. 5A: Detail of Fig. 5
(courtesy of Jaroslav Poncar, 1983, WHAV JP83 8,420).



Fig. 6: Royal drinking scene, Mangyu,
Ladakh, 11th or 12th century (after van Ham,
Heavenly Himalayas, 2011).

Fig. 7: Printed and painted cotton textile, eastern Iran or Afghanistan, probably 11th or 12th century (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of George D. Pratt, 1931 (31.106.64).



Fig. 8: Glazed and molded tile, Ghazni, 12th or 13th century, ca. 10 x 10 cm (courtesy of Letizia Signorini).



Fig. 9: Detail of paintings on the ceiling of the Sumtsek, Alchi (after Goepper & Poncar, *Alchi: Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary*, 1996).





Fig. 10: Enthroned figure, probably Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', atabeg of Mosul, wearing Turkic dress, frontispiece to volume 17 of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, northern Iraq, 1217-1219 (after Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 1977).



Fig. 11: Mina'i bowl depicting an enthroned figure wearing a *qabā'* with *ṭirāz* bands, Kashan, late 12th or early 13th century, diameter 18cm (Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Inv. 935).



Fig. 12: Royal enthronement scene from the frontispiece of a Gospel commissioned by Gagik Abbas, ruler of Kars ca. 1050 (Armenian Patriarchate, Jerusalem, No. 2556, fol. 35v).



Fig. 13: Veneration of a stūpa, petroglyph, Thalpan-Ziyarat, northern Pakistan, ca. 7th cent. (after Jettmar, *Cultural Heritage of the Northern Regions of Pakistan*, 1992).

Fig. 14: Turkic *ghulāms* of the Ghaznavid *sultān*, drawings after frescoes in the throne-room of the palace at Lashkari Bazaar, Afghanistan, 11th century (after Schlumberger & Sourdél-Thomine, *Lashkari Bazar*, 1978).





Fig. 15: Double frontispiece to a copy of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī, Iraq (probably Baghdad), 1237, depicting on the left a figure in Arab dress and, on the right, a figure wearing Turkic military attire (Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 5847, fols. 1v-2r).

Fig. 16: Detail of a royal rider wearing a *qabā'* with *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in pseudo-Kufic, Dukhang, Alchi (courtesy of Jaroslav Poncar, 1983).



Fig. 17: A late 12th- or early 13th-century tile from Ghaznī with a pseudo-epigraphic border (after Scerrato, "Glazed tiles," 1962) compared to the pseudo-Arabic inscription in Kufic script on the arm-bands of the royal figure depicted in Fig. 16.





Fig. 18: Detail of a portrait of king Demetre I wearing a front-opening *qabā'* embroidered with Arabic *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in Kufic script, first half of the 12th century, Macxvariši, Svaneti, northern Georgia (author's photograph).



Fig. 19: Rat'i Surameli, duke of Javakheti and Kartli wearing a *sharbūsh* and front-opening *qabā'* with *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in Arabic or pseudo-Arabic using Kufic script, slightly before 1186, Vardzia, southern Georgia (photograph courtesy of G. Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, Tbilisi, Inv. No. 5246-262).

Fig. 20: Detail of donor figure wearing a *sharbūsh* and left-fastening *qabā'* with embroidered Arabic *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in Kufic, Church of the Archangels, Zemo-Krikhi, Racha, northern Georgia (photograph courtesy of G. Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, Tbilisi, Inv. No. 03086-75).



Fig. 21: Detail of donor figure wearing a front-opening *qabā'* with *ṭirāz* bands embroidered with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions in Kufic script, 11th or 12th century, Church of the Saviour, Hadaishi, Svaneti, northern Georgia (author's photograph).



