

THE AGE OF THE POLYCHROME KAFTAN:
SARTORIAL SYSTEMS OF CENTRAL EURASIA (400-900 CE)

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by

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This study investigates how diverse communities across Central Eurasia crafted a particular garment type, the kaftan, into a cosmopolitan fashion in the second half of the first millennium CE. Previous scholarship has treated the kaftan as a nomadic riding ensemble adopted by settled populations for practical reasons. However, I show that in the fifth century CE, communities across Central Eurasia began to consistently construct a novel garment type according to four hallmark design features: sleeves, a fitted bodice, attached skirting, and overlapping front panels that can form lapels. This flexible but distinctive combination of features encouraged communities to modify, customize, and adorn other aspects of the garment (for example, the fabric pairing and hem length) while maintaining its recognizability. Furthermore, these personalizations did not inhibit the hallmark convertible lapel, which allowed wearers to style and re-style their garment in numerous ways instantaneously. Although the communities that adopted the kaftan were exceptionally diverse – ranging from rigidly hierarchical empires to more socially-mobile city-states, and relatively democratic nomadic polities – all of them placed the kaftan at the center of their sartorial systems. As a result, regional systems began to overlap, some mildly brushing edges and others layering over one another. As an internationally recognized fashion, the kaftan became a critical tool for cross-cultural communication.

My analyses of surviving textiles, representations in wall painting and rock relief, and textual sources reveal how communities utilized the kaftan for communication. The three primary case studies are the banquet in Sogdiana (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), the hunt in Sasanian Iran, and the funeral in Alania (Russian Northern Caucasus). Each community's approach to making and wearing a kaftan illuminates how they responded to an increasingly cosmopolitan and polycentric political landscape of first millennium Central Eurasia. Some communities, such as the Sogdians, fully embraced the kaftan's mutable design, and used it to establish subtle social distinctions in the context of transcontinental economic ventures. Some approached it more cautiously, concealing luxurious details to allow surprise transformations during difficult negotiations: for example, the Alans, who steered trade and traffic through their territory. Still others pushed against the kaftan's advancement of social fluidity. The ruling Sasanian elite manipulated the kaftan by hindering its dialogic dimension which might undermine the empire's rigid socio-political structure.

Whether it produced conviviality, competition, or conflict, the kaftan delivered a cosmopolitan fashion for a cosmopolitan milieu. The kaftan equipped Central Eurasian denizens for a multitude of social, economic, and political endeavors, and allowed them to step in and out of sartorial systems for communicating on the local, regional, and international scale.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Betty Hensellek's research revolves around the material culture of Iran, Central Asia, and the Steppe. She earned a BA in Art History and BFA in Fine Arts from the University of Cincinnati (2011), and receive an MA with distinction from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (2013). While at Cornell, she was a DAAD study scholarship recipient and spent the 2014-2015 academic year at the Seminar für Orientalische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg in Germany. From September 2017 through August 2019, she was the Sylvan C. Coleman and Pam Coleman Memorial Fund Fellow in the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Meinen Eltern

Linda und Ulrich Hensellek

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Though expressing my gratitude for the help during my doctoral studies, my university advisors and mentors during my Master's and Bachelor's degrees cannot go unmentioned. As a first-generation college student, they supported and encouraged me in the earliest stages of this academic journey. In the first semester of my MA studies at the Institute of Fine Arts – New York University, Norbert Baer's provenance course, for which I researched Sasanian silver, triggered my concentration change from twentieth-century German painting to ancient West and Central Asian art. My MA advisor, Thelma Thomas, shared her tremendous knowledge of ancient textiles, dress, and fashion. She knew exactly how to send me on object chases; she indeed first led me to the dog-bird kaftan (Figure 4.1), the seed that grew into my MA thesis, and then this entire dissertation project. At the University of Cincinnati, Theresa Leininger-Miller mentored me through my Bachelor's degree in art history. She encouraged me to develop research projects, apply for travel grants, and pursue graduate school. She nurtured me every step of the way; I would not have made it onto this path without her.

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PREFACE

This dissertation works with a number of non-Latin script sources, terms, and names, the most abundant being Russian, Persian, and Chinese. All Russian is transliterated according to the American Library Association and Library of Congress, but without the diacritical circumflex over ts for т, iu for ю, and ia for я; the breve ī for й; and the dotted è for э. Authors' names originating in the Cyrillic script are given according to this system with any variation by publication given in parentheses in the bibliography. Iranian names conform as much as possible to those of *Encyclopedie Iranica*. The names of people are given in New Persian rather than Middle Persian (e.g. Šāpur, and not Šābuhr). Middle Persian terms follow transcriptions used in D. N. MacKenzie's *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*. Sogdian follows the source worked with, mainly V. A. Livshits' *Sogdiiskaia epigraphika Srednei Azii i Semirech'ia* and M. N. Bogoliobov and O. I. Smirnova's *Sogdiiskie dokumenty s gory Mug*. Chinese is transliterated according to the pinyin system. I do not Americanize personal names; I use the Chinese system of writing the family name first followed by the given name. If names in a bibliographic reference used the outdated Wade-Giles system, the pinyin form is indicated in parentheses. Chinese characters referenced in the text are written in the simplified script. I use the most common but temporally relevant name for sites, cities, and cultural regions in Central Asia, for example, Tokharistan instead of the ancient Greek Bactria, Panjikent instead of the Russian Pendzhikent. For places with two distinct, official names, mainly those in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China, I use the indigenous Uyghur name, but give the Mandarin name as well at first mention, for example, Ürümqi (Wulumuqi).

INTRODUCTION

FASHIONING CENTRAL EURASIA

Did fashion exist 1500 years ago in Central Eurasia?

Narratives of fashion's foundations begin in many places: some start with the relatively recent establishment of the designer as artist or ateliers. Other histories push back to the first ready-to-wear collections, the industrial revolution or even the eighteenth century's narrowing of social stratification and accessibility to goods. A few timelines consider Renaissance Europe's fast-paced changes in court style.¹ These starting points build on a core definition revolving around innovation on the maker's part, or the commissioner. They praise an ability to transform the wearer, whether bolstering, adjusting, or newly recasting their identity, and communicating that role with those around them.

These cited foundational moments of fashion histories are exclusive to the Western and modern world. Scholarship has long positioned a fast-paced, always-fresh Western fashion world in contrast with a slow or even unchanging world of non-Western traditional dress. This dichotomy is problematic and false. Fashion, at its core, revolves around innovation, transformation, and communication. Humans have experimented with ways to adorn their bodies for millennia, whether they layered clothes or jewelry onto the body or modified it with tattoos and piercings. Revolutions in the creative process and the transformation and communication it generated have merely slipped out of focus. Ethnographic dress classification systems of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have, in particular, encouraged art historians and

¹ See more detailed summaries of this historiography and the changing definition of fashion in Welters and Lillethun, *The Fashion Reader*, 3-4; Welters and Lillethun, *Fashion History*, 4-5; Arnold, *Fashion*.

archaeologists to bypass any detailed analyses and merely pin dress forms to ethnic identities. By breaking down out-dated typological approaches, extraordinarily complex, transcultural sartorial systems can emerge, and the center of the Eurasian landmass in the first millennium CE is no exception.

This study investigates how fashion connected— and at times also disconnected— diverse communities across Central Eurasia in the second half of the first millennium CE. It pieces together the sartorial systems revolving around the kaftan, a garment defined by long sleeves, a tailored bodice, an attached skirting, and most fundamentally, front panels that close one over the other and can turn out to form lapels [**Illustration 0.1**]. The kaftan’s combination of design features was novel in the fifth and early sixth century. By the seventh and eighth centuries, linguistically, religiously, and politically diverse communities across Central Eurasia all wore kaftans. Archaeologists have unearthed kaftan textile remains in burials in the North Caucasus, as well as 2400 miles away in the Taklimakan Desert [**e.g., Figure 4.1**]. They have excavated paintings of personages wearing kaftans in secular gathering rooms in cities along the Zeravshan River, and sacred cave temples in the Kucha Oasis [**e.g., Figures 1.1; 2.1**]. Artisans carved personages wearing the kaftan on monumental rock reliefs in the Zagros Mountains, and also hammered them into portable silver vessels [**e.g., Figures 3.1**]. From the Black Sea in the west to the Gobi Desert in the east, communities consistently combined these four key design features comprising the kaftan for nearly 500 years.

Study Framework

This investigation focuses on a region that I define as Central Eurasia.² This investigation focuses on a region that I define as Central Eurasia. Central Eurasia stretches from the Caucasus Mountains in the west to the Tarim and Turfan basins in the east, from the Great Steppe in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south. Archaeological and art historical scholarship has historically approached this landmass with an emphasis on one of four subregions— the northern Caucasus, Iran, western Central Asia (the Central Asian republics), or eastern Central Asia (western China and Mongolia). I pull these regions into dialogue precisely because communities across these regions all wore the kaftan.

My inquiry covers the period from circa 400 CE – the time of the first archaeologically- and scientifically-dated kaftans – to circa 900 CE, when the use of kaftans declines. I deliberately do not use Eurocentric periodizations. Though ‘Late Antique’ or ‘Medieval’ describes the contemporary Mediterranean and European worlds, neither appropriately correspond to the history of Central Eurasia. Recent English language scholarship argues for extending the geographical parameters of Late Antiquity, especially concerning the Iranian or early Islamic world, while Russian language scholarship has for decades specified this period as an ‘Early Middle Ages’ (*rannye srednevekov’ye*). However, in any choice of periodization that befits Europe, there is an implied relationship to European culture, and specifically, the Mediterranean world. Late Antiquity denotes the continuity of the Classical traditional and

² Eurasia is a portmanteau describing the full European and Asian continental landmass; however, since the nineteenth century, Eurasia has been conceptualized as a distinct region from both Europe and Asia. Today the term is also often used to describe the territory of the former Soviet Union. My definition of Central Eurasia straddles these two definitions: I use this term to describe the territory centrally located in the Europe-to-Asia landmass, but I do indeed draw a distinction from Europe and western Asia (the Middle East) to the west, and East, Southeast, and South Asia to the east. The major break from using Eurasia to describe the former Soviet Union is my inclusion of Iran in this territorial identification.

Medieval a transition between the so-called high points of the Classical and Renaissance periods.

Neither of these is appropriate regarding the chronology or the content of this study, especially considering that its main subject, the kaftan, is uniquely Central Eurasian.

This study firstly aims to reposition Central Eurasia as the center of a vibrant cosmopolitan world, addressing how and why kaftans enabled transcultural systems of communication. It pulls Central Eurasia out of a century-old narrative on the Silk Roads, which privileged the connection between Rome and China. This narrative, with terminals to the east and west, has relegated the intervening regions to passive recipients of the end points' visual culture. The traditional Silk Roads narrative is more straightforward than a perspective from within, but it is inaccurate. Central Eurasia in the first millennium CE did not have a single, two, or even five centers, but was a complex polycentric network of communities operating with diverse languages, religions, lifestyles, and socio-political structures. The communities inhabiting this territory ranged from strictly hierarchical empires, namely the Sasanian Empire, to more socially-mobile city-states, and relatively democratic nomadic communities. Despite their internal social structures, each community established, operated, or at the least participated in a variety of institutional frameworks, developed for transcultural communication. In this milieu, cross-cultural communication revolved around diplomatic and economic needs, as well as religious ones. Surviving textual documents attest to encounters and exchanges between cultures. Histories describe the journeys of diplomatic missions or how a leader received a foreign envoy at court. Ledgers document the products moving into or out of a region, for example, a Chinese merchant's lists found in the Northern Caucasus or records of the goods

received in the Sogdian Mt Mug documents.³ Moreover, narratives describe the life-changing journeys taken for religious education, most famously Xuanzang's trip from China through Central Asia to India.⁴ The archaeological record materializes the spaces in which such interactions took place. Reception halls defined not only palatial spaces but also family homes in this period. Communities speckled inns for travelers along remote stretches of road, and schools and temples likewise provided housing for their visitors. Even a few exceptionally preserved artworks visually illustrate the coming together of diverse people, the most famous example being the so-called Hall of Ambassadors at Afrasiab. Here a procession of envoys from communities across Eurasia is mapped across the walls of the gathering room.⁵

The tendency to bypass a perspective from within Central Eurasia stems from the geo-political history of the twentieth century. The establishment of the Soviet Union followed by the Second World War, and then the Cold War closed off the region to non-Soviet scholars for much of the twentieth century. Though Iran was highly accessible for three-quarters of the twentieth century, the Revolution in 1979 curbed and continues to thwart international scholarship on the region. This project and my scholarship by and large are indebted to post-Cold War cosmopolitanism and the digital age. Global travel and electronic communication and information sharing have allowed me to trek to the region to study objects and monuments in person, as well as have conversations with colleagues. Because I have been able to collect and piece together evidence from this expansive region, I can illuminate with material culture how communities across Central Eurasia established transcultural systems of communication—

³ See Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 347-369; *Sogdiiskie dokumenty* (vol. 3), trans. Bogoliubov and Smirnova.

⁴ See Huili, *Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, trans. Beal.

⁵ See Mode, *Sogdien und die Herrscher*; Compareti, *Samarkand the Center of the World*.

independent from Rome and China— that provided the foundation for the vibrant cosmopolitan stretch from the Caucasus through the Karakum to the Taklamakin. Recent studies have started to illuminate aspects of this cosmopolitanism; those considering visual culture’s crucial role have thus far begun to explore monumental architecture and portable such as coins. I investigate a novel component, fashion and dress, and how it enabled and facilitated communication across Central Eurasia.

This project helps to fill in a wide gap— especially in English language scholarship— in terms of its geographical, temporal, and cultural subject for the broad fields of fashion and design history, art history, archaeology, and anthropology. It supplies detailed case studies for building a more comprehensive history of dress and design, notably one beyond the confines of the traditionally taught Western and premodern world. For art history, it reasserts that fashion and dress are not merely a ‘decorative’ or ‘minor’ art, subordinate to painting and sculpture. Studying surviving textiles and their representations in tandem provide glimpses into the artistic creation and the impressions captured by artists, both of which are critical for understanding the past. This topic also offers a corrective for the primary approach taken towards the art and architecture of Central Eurasia, that is, crediting its artistic innovations to neighboring regions, namely the Mediterranean and China. The material culture explored highlights the region’s creative innovations and autonomy; this is vital because the greater region— already sparingly encountered in the history of art— has, for far too long, had its artistic achievements falsely attributed to others.

In archaeology, scholarship often compartmentalizes the material culture of this region into typological studies. Though focused on the kaftan, this study brings relevant material

assemblages into dialogue with one another, illustrating how these objects relied upon one another for meaning. Thus alongside analyzing surviving textiles or representations, I piece together the spaces where kaftans were worn, or where one encountered its image. The social dynamics discovered by exploring how garments were worn within particular spaces furthermore contributes to social anthropology. The data I have collected adds to the knowledge on the practices of drinking and feasting, hunting, and burial rites.

This study of the kaftan is not an isolated, esoteric, or obscure one. It inserts dress, a category of material culture that we, as humans, encounter every day into a broader and more relatable understanding of the human past. Most critical for the general twenty-first-century denizen is highlighting that the prosperity of this period was a direct result of diverse communities working together for a variety of economic, diplomatic, and social aims, despite differences in religious, ethnic, or political identities. We have concrete examples in world history illustrating what the successful working-together of nations, communities, and individuals looked like long before long-distance transportation facilitated planes and cars or the communicative technological advancements of telephone lines, email, and social media.

Secondly, my project aims to demonstrate that fashion and complex sartorial systems did exist in the premodern and non-Western world, and more broadly that the history of fashion and dress is a form of material culture to be taken seriously across disciplines.⁶ Fashion and dress are everywhere, among all societies, and encountered daily. However, fashion and dress continue to be an undervalued aspect of a society's material culture in academia; specialists routinely begin their presentations and written work with justifications for their scholarship and pleas for

⁶ The definition of fashion is slowly expanding the canon to include non-Western and premodern fashion systems, e.g., Welters and Lillethun, *Fashion History*; Niessen et al., *Re-Orienting Fashion*.

specialists of other fields to consider fashion and dress with the same academic rigor as other types of material culture.⁷

Fashion and dress are vital for understanding how the people across Central Eurasia communicated with one another. As anthropologist Mary Douglas has argued, we have ‘two bodies’ of experience: the physical individual body and the social communal body that is demanded by the culture in which one lives, the former being constrained by the latter. Whatever the social situation might be, it forces itself on the body both in how we dress and how we act. Thus social dress and behavior can contrarily also identify the social situation.⁸ Anthropologist Terrence Turner defined this social layer put onto the physical body, the ‘social skin’.⁹ By wearing a particular set of objects, one can be integrated into society, a process that continues throughout one’s life. Turner argues that the skin is a ‘symbolic stage’, on which all forms of dress can act. These objects that act are more than a mere reflection of the wearer’s identity, but a medium through which a wearer can socialize their identity in dynamic ways.¹⁰

For the past few decades, fashion and dress historians have systematically discussed fashion and dress as non-verbal communication and socializing of the body. Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne Bubloz Eicher describe dressing oneself as an act of speaking, but one that must pull its meaning from socialization and society.¹¹ Fred Davis stresses the dependency on the

⁷ E.g., Wilson, “Explaining it Away”; Lipovetsky, “Empire of Fashion.”

⁸ Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, 72.

⁹ Turner, “Social Skin,” 112.

¹⁰ Turner, “Social Skin,” 112, 135.

¹¹ Roach and Eicher, “Language of Personal Adornment,” 7; also see Barnard, *Fashion as Communication*.

situational context for being able to understand what dress is communicating. Factoring in who wears the dress, where, and for whom are all key to the understanding.¹²

This study pieces together the sartorial systems that diverse communities utilized for communication and socialization in the first millennium CE. A sartorial system evokes Roland Barthes' famous 1967 *Fashion System*; however, my methodologies push against those of Barthes' rigid structuralist system. Barthes works top-down, attempting to stretch a conceptual order over an unwieldy field of material culture by using semiotics to analyze and create an order for women's clothes in fashion magazines. I do not work with a pre-existing system or create a ready-made one. Fashion historian Bethan Bide has recently criticized that dress studies tend to wedge garments into neat typologies, by means of which conventional narratives associated with an era can be told.¹³ It is crucial to collect and analyze anomalies, disruptions, and contradictions to understand any lived experiences. By relying foremost on the visual evidence and working bottom-up, it is possible to piece together more accurate systems. My reconstruction of the kaftan's role in sartorial systems is based wholly on empirical data, surviving material culture which I have collected and analyzed. With the exception of a single Sogdian funerary couch presented as a comparison in chapter II [**Figure 2.10**], all objects discussed here have archaeological context, whether they formed part of a hoard, were collected on an amateur expedition or were scientifically excavated. These materials include surviving archaeological

¹² Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity*, 8-9.

¹³ Bethan Bide has recently discussed this in terms of dress in the 1940s, an era associated with austerity fashion. However, looking at a variety of sources of the period, notably that of the author's own grandmother's memories, tells a different story. Bide terms this direction "more-than-representational fashion histories," that is, "creating encounters, rather than telling a coherent narrative." Bide, "Signs of Wear," 471.

textiles and representations of kaftans in other media, ranging from rock reliefs to wall paintings and silver vessels.

Defining the Kaftan

The term kaftan as a name of a garment is arguably Persian, *khaftān* (کفتان), or Turkish, *qaftān* (Ottoman Turkish: قفتان) in origin. In the earliest sources— including the Medieval literature of Ferdowsī and Rūmī— the kaftan is described as an outer garment worn in military contexts but is perhaps most familiar as the name for the royal front-opening upper-body garments worn at the Ottoman court by the sixteenth century.¹⁴ In English, the borrowed sartorial term is written with either a ‘c’ or a ‘k’; to distinguish between the modern and historical garments.

I use caftan— also sometimes spelled cafetan following the French form— to describe the garment produced by the modern fashion industry [**Figure 0.1**]. In the twentieth and twenty-first century, the caftan designates a long-sleeved, long-skirted, loose-fitting women’s dress built on a T-shaped pattern. Often made from lightweight, breathable fabrics, the caftan regularly appears in resort and spring collections.¹⁵ From their emerging popularity in the 60s to today, these garments most often fill the pages of fashion editorials about vacation wear for an ‘exotic’ locale, sometimes with direct reference to traditional garments built on a similar T-shaped pattern from communities in western Asia and northern Africa.¹⁶

¹⁴ Yūsoffī, “Clothing”; Timothy Dawson suggests that the term kaftan may have even earlier roots, deriving from the Persian past participle for ‘divided’ *kaftun*. He connects this to the garment by way of an early Arabic explanation, which distinguishes between an over-the-head tunic (Arabic *qamīṣ*) and a garment with a frontal opening (Arabic *qabā'*). The change can be made from the former to the latter by tearing the front of the garment, thus dividing the garment, Dawson, “There and Back Again,” 204; see also Stillman, *Arab Dress*, 29-61, but especially 47 for discussion of the earliest use of *khaftān*.

¹⁵ In garment categorizations, fashion historians usually pair the caftan with other garments built on a T-shaped pattern: the tunic, which is around thigh length, and a tunic dress around knee length.

¹⁶ Asome, “How the Kaftan Conquered the City,” 2016; Helms, “How the Kaftan went Global.”

Following this modern anglicized usage of the term, caftan has since become a catch-all term for various ankle-length garments, often of solid wools, worn by men in northern African and western Asian communities [**Figure 0.2**]. Scholars have likewise cast caftan as a catch-all for many knee-length garments of woven polychrome silk, or silk and cotton blends worn by men and women in Central Asia [**Figure 0.3**]. In both geographical regions, variations of these garments do have local names. Specialist studies often apply these culturally specific names, but the garments are generically labeled ‘caftans’ in European languages, which persist even in museum labels.¹⁷

I use kaftan with a ‘k’ to designate historical garments, and I apply this term anachronistically to the first millennium CE garment under study. I chose ‘kaftan’ not only because past scholarship has utilized the term to describe this garment, but also because it has indigenous Iranian or Turkic etymological roots. Several words describing dress and textiles do indeed survive from first millennium CE Central Eurasia; however, the context in which ancient document authors used these words does not allow modern scholars to make secure differentiations between different garment types. The mention of a textile or garment appears most often in economic documents, either in a list or as an uncontextualized item, which one is giving or receiving. For example, a fragmentary Bactrian document describes a linen garment of some kind [shirt?] being given to an individual called Nawaz Khahrugan from Balkh.¹⁸

¹⁷ E.g., the web labels at The Metropolitan Museum of Art [**Figures 0.5, 0.6**]: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/85612> and <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/85431>; see, for example, Meller, *Silk and Cotton*, for a publication that emphasizes distinctions between garments, as well as utilizing indigenous naming for garments from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Central Asia.

¹⁸ See Letter ‘cd’, in *Bactrian Documents*, ed. and trans. Sims-Williams, vol. 3, 74-75.

In Middle Persian, a seemingly general word for outerwear, perhaps used similarly to the modern ‘coat’, is *kabāh* (kp’h).¹⁹ Arabic later borrows from the Middle Persian to make the word *qabā'*, a word today indicating a long-sleeved outer garment. In the ninth-century *Ketāb al-tāj* attributed to Pseudo-Jāhez, the author describes in Arabic the bygone outerwear of the Sasanians, listing and thus distinguishing between the *qabā'*, and the so-called *jubba*, *radā*, and an unnamed fur-covered garment, perhaps all derived from the Middle Persian.²⁰ However, the author mentions no further details that could pair these terms with garments represented in visual culture.

The Mt. Mug economic documents, dated ca. the eighth century, offer several Sogdian words for garments. Nevertheless, it is difficult to give these words precise definitions; in some cases, a word that appears to have an acute meaning in one text from one region is generally used in another. For example, in the Turfan expedition documents, *nywδn* is assumed by Geo Widengren to be an overgarment, most likely a ‘coat or mantle’ according to its use.²¹ In a letter from the Mt. Mug documents transcribed and translated by Vladimir Livshits, *nywδn* is used generically as clothing, listed alongside food, adornments, respect, and love, all of which the husband must provide to his wife in a marriage contract.²²

However, one Sogdian term stands out among these documents, which could be the Sogdian name for the kaftan: *w'rpn'k*. Published in the third volume of the Mt. Mug manuscripts

¹⁹ Widengren, “Remarks on Riding Costume,” 259; MacKenzie, *Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*, 47; other terms for clothing or a garment—though unclear if any of these are specific as opposed to general— are *jāmag*, *paymō*, *wastar* and *paymōzan*.

²⁰ Abka'i -Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 158.

²¹ Widengren, “Remarks on Riding Costume,” 274, fn. 5; Nicholas Sims-Williams also makes this distinction with *nywdn* (Syriac *nht'*) according to the text *MtI7.2 E5/127v*, but in other translations of the word, clothing or garment seems more appropriate (Sims-Williams, *Dictionary*, 117).

²² *Sogdiiskie dokumenty* (vol. 2), trans. Livshits, 23-24 (lines R line 9, V line 5).

on economic documents by Mikhail Bogoliubov and Ol'ga Smirnova, a letter dated to the first of November (and thus known as document 1. Nov) is addressed to Devashtich, a ruler of Sogdiana, known from various letters as the ‘prince of Panjikent’ or the ‘king of Samarkand’.²³ This letter discusses the distribution of bags, animal skins, and a garment called *w'rpn'k* recorded at specific times, and often given to specific people. Bogoliubov and Smirnova note that it is clear that *w'rpn'k* is a type of outer garment made from *pwst* (animal skin), and specifically *w'ry'k* (sheepskin or fleece).²⁴ The garment is mentioned 17 times in this particular document, and several times in the fragmentary lists of documents called B-6²⁵ and B-2.²⁶ Although Sogdian *w'rpn'k* could be the historically correct word for identifying the kaftan, I will continue to use the anachronistic term ‘kaftan’ for its recognizability, and pronounceability.

Surviving material culture distinguishes the kaftan from other contemporary outer garments by the consistent combination of four defining features [Illustration 0.1]:

- 1) sleeves
- 2) a fitted bodice
- 3) an attached skirting
- 4) front panels that close one over the other and have the ability to turn out and form lapels

²³ see Marshak, “Dēwāštič.”

²⁴ *Sogdiiskie dokumenty* (vol. 3), trans. Bogoliubov and Smirnova, 39; B. Gharib translates *w'rpn'k* as ‘fat or heavy’, likely a descriptive adjective that began to be used to describe this type of warm outer garment (Gharib, *Sogdian Dictionary*, entry 9858).

²⁵ B-6a (as *w'rpn'kw*), R: lines 3, 4, V: line 6 (*Sogdiiskie dokumenty* (vol. 3), trans. Bogoliubov and Smirnova, 41-42); B-66 V: line 1 (*Sogdiiskie dokumenty* (vol. 3), trans. Bogoliubov and Smirnova, 41-42).

²⁶ As *pn'kw*, line 2/3 and assumably referred to in lines 3 and 5 (*Sogdiiskie dokumenty* (vol. 3), trans. Bogoliubov and Smirnova, 41).

These four combined features identify a typology. This typology does not carry any singular meaning. Instead, it is a tool that I use to locate the garment and evaluate overlaps in and variations between how different communities produced and wore this garment. The sleeves on most kaftans are long, reaching to the wrist, and also narrow, fitted to the tapering shape of an arm. Some sleeves are shorter, for example, in the Kucha Oasis, and some have regionally or culturally specific design variations such as gathering in the shoulder, for example, in Sogdiana [Figure 2.1]. The bodice is fitted, especially for the men's kaftan. Surviving textiles show that the front and back panel pieces of the pattern were cut to shape or pieced patterns were used to tailor the garment; darting was not used. Women's kaftan bodices are less fitted. In some cases, for example, in Tokharistan, the kaftan has a drawstring waist allowing one to alter how close the bodice fitted to the body by cinching in a set of ribbons [Figure 2.9; Illustration 2.2].

The attached skirting on surviving textiles was always cut separately from the bodice, although a hemline at the waist is not always visible in representations or covered by the belt. The skirting flared from the hips, whether in a dramatic A-line silhouette or only slightly, keeping a continuous H-line silhouette with the shoulders [Illustration 2.1]. The skirting length varied, sometimes reaching to the knees, the mid-calf, or even the ankles. Across Central Eurasia, the wearer pulls the right front panel over the left panel, which is the opposite arrangement to the Chinese robe. The technical fashion term for the lapel is a convertible one-piece high standing collar, meaning that the wearer can style the collar/lapels open or closed. On a kaftan, when the wearer pulls the front panels open, the lapels are formed and create a V-shaped neckline. When worn closed, the panels lay across the neck, forming a jewel- (rounded) or square-shaped neckline.

Additionally, many kaftans are sewn of polychrome patterned fabric, whether the trim, body fabric, or both. The trim often lines some combination of the interior or exterior hemline, front opening, collar and lapel, and cuffs. A kaftan though, is still a kaftan without polychrome patterned fabric.

Terminology

Throughout the study, I use ‘dress’ as the most inclusive term for a collective ensemble of garments and adornments.²⁷ ‘Clothing’ implies dress made specifically of fabric and excludes adornments; it will, therefore, be rarely used.²⁸ Although the term ‘costume’ is common in studies on the dress of this period, for example, ‘the nomadic riding costume’, I avoid it, for in current dress studies it is outdated and deployed primarily in the context of theatrical performances or themed parties.²⁹ In place of costume, I use ‘ensemble’ when implying a specific group of dress articles worn together, for example, clothing, headgear, footwear, and adornments together. I will utilize the term ‘fashion’ to connote innovation, whether on the part of the maker creating a design or the wearer styling a garment in a novel way. I will also employ ‘fashion’ to indicate a transformation of and communication by the wearer through dress, that is, when the dress is actively performing in a sartorial system.

Unlike the neighboring Mediterranean or Chinese worlds, Central Eurasia does not have ample textual evidence for securely pairing distinctive Eurasian outer garments with specific terminology. Furthermore, there have not been sufficient definitive studies on the dress of ancient

²⁷ Following a definition by dress historians, Roach-Higgins and Eicher, dress is an especially inclusive term encompassing all kinds of bodily adornments and modifications (Roach-Higgins and Eicher, “Dress and Identity”).

²⁸ See Welters and Lillethun, *Fashion History*, 18-19.

²⁹ See Welters and Lillethun, *Fashion History*, 19-23.

Central Eurasia to create a standardized list of appropriate and understood terms. A lack of standard terminology has led to a variety of words used without explanation or synonymously, even if referred to varied garment types. The garment that I call the kaftan is labeled in literature as everything from a coat, robe, mantle, and jacket, to a *kandys*.³⁰

In this project, I use dress terminology with a high degree of specificity and avoid interchangeable synonyms. I am utilizing contemporary twenty-first-century garment and fashion terminology both for precision and accessibility.³¹ A standard name to indicate a garment type or part of a garment makes consultation in nearly any reliable dress or fashion dictionary possible.

Distinctions between garment types are not frivolous. For modern outerwear, a ‘trench coat’, ‘bomber jacket’, and ‘windbreaker’ all provide specifications that denote the garment’s fit, silhouette, pattern construction, and sometimes even material. Therefore, it is crucial to draw attention to the differences between the most prevalent outer garment types in first millennium CE Eurasia: coat, kaftan, robe, tunic, jacket, cloak, cape, mantle, and mantelet. Some of the differences are subtle; some are drastic: the first five types have sleeves, while the latter four do not, making coat and mantle noninterchangeable. Some denote the length of the hemline; for example, jackets can fall only until the mid-thigh. Some have variable characteristics; for example, the robe can have symmetrical or asymmetrical front panels. Below, I summarize the features of first millennium CE outer garments of Central Eurasia. They are also visually rendered as flats in **Illustration 0.2**.

³⁰ Ancient dress specialist Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood first expressed a need to correct this problem (Vogelsang-Eastwood, “Sasanian ‘Riding-Coats’,” 211).

³¹ I first consult Angus, Baudis, and Woodcock, *Fashion Dictionary*, and Koester and Bryant, *Fashion Terms and Styles*.

<i>coat</i>	A front-fastening garment with symmetrical front panels and sleeves (narrow or loose). The fit can be tailored or loose, and the length can range from the hips to the mid-calf.
<i>kaftan</i>	A front-fastening garment with asymmetrical front panels and narrow sleeves. The tailored fit has a defined waist, and the length can range from knee to the mid-calf or ankle.
<i>robe</i>	A front-fastening garment with symmetrical or asymmetrical front panels and sleeves (narrow or loose). The fit is loose but sometimes cinched with a belt around the waist. The length is from the knees to the floor.
<i>jacket</i>	A front-fastening garment with symmetrical or asymmetrical front panels and generally narrow sleeves. The tailored fit usually has a defined waist, and the length can range from the hips to mid-thigh.
<i>tunic</i>	An over-the-head garment with narrow sleeves. The fit is loose or tailored, the former typically made fitted by way of a belt. The length can range from the mid-thigh to the knees or even mid-calves.
<i>cloak</i>	A front-fastening garment without sleeves. The shoulders are structured, but thereafter the garment hangs loosely. The length ranges from the knees to the floor.
<i>cape</i>	Like the cloak but the length ranges from the hip to thigh.
<i>mantle</i>	A front-fastening garment without sleeves. It is more or less structureless hanging loosely around the body. The length ranges from the knee to the floor.
<i>mantelet</i>	Like the mantle but the length ranges from the hip to thigh.

Using precise terminology to identify a garment is critical in this study, and a key to descriptions is a discussion of a garment's construction, pattern, design, fit, and silhouette. *Garment construction* denotes how a seamster or seamstress—whom I refer to gender neutrally throughout this study as a maker—sews a garment together. They sew a garment together from several pieces, which are collectively called the *pattern*. The distinct way in which they put together these pieces of the pattern is called the *design*. Parts of the garment have specific names: such as those more common like sleeve, neckline, and skirting, while hemline (lower edge on a garment, especially coat, skirt or dress), armscye (the hole where the sleeve fits into the bodice), and godet (a triangular piece of fabric inserted at the seam to add volume) are less known. A fashion glossary provides definitions of fashion and dress terms used here.

The *fit* is how loose or tight the garment sits on the body, while the *silhouette* indicates the form of the garment in combination with the fit: does the garment distort or amplify the body's form? For example, an A-Line silhouette has a narrow upper body that tapers down to a full skirt (e.g., 1940s Dior); an H-Line removes the curves from the body (e.g., shift dress); and a V-Line denotes broad shoulders paired with a narrow waist, continuing down through the legs (e.g., a slim-fitted suit). An hourglass silhouette has two broad points that are narrow in the center: contemporary usage of the term typically associates this silhouette with a description of the exaggerated female body contour extending from the shoulder through the waist to the hips, but it can also describe the architectural shape of the clothing. In the first millennium CE, this silhouette best describes kaftans that show off broad shoulders and a thin waist with the kaftan's full skirting mirroring the shoulders.

I do not investigate weave structures here, but I place descriptions or clarifications in the footnotes if I mention the weaving terminology. I give all measurements in the metric system.

The Kaftan and a History of Ancient Eurasian Dress

To date, no study has focused on the kaftan within a transcultural context. Although the kaftan has been far from forgotten in wider framed studies, past scholarship addressing the kaftan stems from one of two general approaches that are not always mutually exclusive. The first is archaeological, in which the author contextualizes the kaftan within the larger archaeological assemblage. The second approach is art historical and places the kaftan within a history of dress. Most ancient dress studies, which include the kaftan, explore different types of dress in a defined culture or region, while only a handful have looked at the dress from a cross-cultural perspective.

In both of these approaches, scholars treat the kaftan as part of a nomadic riding ensemble, including trousers, leggings, boots, and the belt.³² These studies usually emphasize that nomadic horse riders of the first millennium BCE invented this layered ensemble that fits close to the body to serve practical needs: agility and ease of riding on horseback, and also warmth against the wind and cold temperatures on the Great Eurasian Steppe. In archaeological publications and some regional dress studies, these aspects often fold into a larger argument about the costume expressing an ethnic identity of the people of the region. It is also not uncommon for discussions of first millennium CE dress to quickly jump to nineteenth- and twentieth-century ethnographic comparisons as examples of how a region's ethnic identity has remained relatively unchanged for millennia. This evolution narrative also can begin from the other end of the timeline: authors commonly discuss garment ancestries spanning millennia in the introductions to exhibition catalogs showcasing nineteenth- and twentieth-century garments of this region, notably for the front-closing ikat outer robe of Central Asia generically called a *chapan, khalat* or *don*.³³

In the more extensive cross-cultural Eurasian dress studies, scholars cite the practicalities of a so-called nomadic riding costume as the primary motive for the kaftan's subsequent widespread use by populations across the continent in the second half of the first millennium CE. These works do not culturally contextualize garments, consider the diverse communities which wore them, or discuss the communities' relations to one another.

³² Henri Seyrig first described this dress ensemble in detail, exemplifying Palmyrene dress. Geo Widengren, building on the work of Seyrig, wrote the much-cited article on riding costume. See Seyrig, "Antiquités Syriennes"; Widengren, "Remarks on Riding Costume."

³³ e.g., Gibbon, "Many Lives of Ikat," 32; Wertime, "Silk & Leather," 2-3.

The following discussion of scholarship on the kaftan is not comprehensive but aims to arrange key works, on which this project builds, questions, or objects. I will forgo work on archaeologically contextualized kaftans because they are too numerous. These works are excavation reports or broader studies dedicated to the archaeology of a particular site, region, socio-political organization, or ethnic group in Central Eurasia. In most cases, authors address the kaftan descriptively to illuminate, for example, what the interred wore in the burial excavated, or what an artist may have depicted in a newly discovered wall painting. In these studies, the kaftan is only one descriptive aspect of much broader questions about funerary practices, social status, or identity. In a few cases, as a result of a significant amount of textile remains or representations of dress, archaeological studies have sections wholly dedicated to textile finds and their interpretation. I pull such examinations relevant to my case studies and their arguments into the discussion in the respective chapter. This historiography focuses on studies with dress as their main subject, the first section on the kaftan within regional dress studies, and the second on the kaftan within cross-cultural dress studies.

Most studies about the dress of first millennium Central Eurasia approach the topic through one of four defined regional or cultural frameworks: the northern Caucasus, greater Iran, western Central Asia (the Central Asian republics), and eastern Central Asia (western China). Because of the twentieth century's geopolitical history, scholarship on individual regions of Central Eurasia has been carried out by scholars of specific nationalities from or with access to a specific region, which has also subsequently determined the primary language of publication. Each of these four regions has received varying degrees of attention. The quantity,

methodologies, and trajectories of scholarship are thus heavily dependent on the surviving materials available and on a given scholar's relationship to these regions.

The Northern Caucasus

The northern Caucasus perhaps has the highest number of publications devoted to dress and textiles and boasts the most contextualized, developed, and object-focused interpretations. Scholarship by different authors also follows fairly regular chronological and geographical frameworks. Authors confine their studies to the mountainous and foothill areas north of the Great Caucasus range. Depending on a scholar's dating of the textiles, studies begin in the sixth or seventh century CE and span through the region's Christianization in the tenth century or until the start or end of the Mongol period. The leading scholars on the dress of this region, Tat'iana Ravdonikas, Anna Ierusalimskaia, Szevdana Dode, and Ol'ga Orfinskaia, are all trained as archaeologists.³⁴ Publications on the ancient dress of this region are almost exclusively by Russian/Soviet scholars in the Russian language. This exclusivity has kept the region relatively isolated from discussions of Eurasian dress outside the Russian-speaking world.

Scholars published the earliest studies dedicated to dress and the kaftan in the 1970s.³⁵ In 1972 Ravdonikas published an article that looked at kaftans from the Zmeiskii catacombs and compared the garment fragments to representations on tenth- to twelfth-century stone

³⁴ This list does not include dress historians such as Anna Mastykova who focus on the materials further north in the steppe of the Fore-Caucasus (*Predkavkaz'ia*).

³⁵ Earlier publications consider the textiles, primarily looking at weave structures and motifs. In 1929, N. P. Kondakov highlighted Alanic textiles in a book on Medieval art. He studied the textiles from Khasaut, found by Maksim M. Kovalevskii, which were then kept in the History Museum in Moscow. The textiles are situated in a long narrative of 'Byzantine and Oriental Textiles of the Medieval Period,' though it is primarily their motifs that Kondakov discussed (Kondakov, *Ocherki i zametki*, 337-344).

monuments, primarily Christian.³⁶ In 1990 Ravdonikas wrote a monograph on dress from the northwestern Caucasus exploring both textiles and representations in other media. In this publication she positions Alanic dress within a grand evolutionary narrative starting with the Scythians in the fifth century BCE and argues for continuities in dress through to the seventeenth century CE.³⁷

Ierusalimskaia is perhaps the most prolific scholar on Alanic textiles and dress, actively writing excavation reports, article-length single object studies, exhibition catalogs, and site monographs from the early 1960s through the present. She centers her studies around the State Hermitage Museum collections, where she is the curator of the Northern Caucasus.³⁸ Ierusalimskaia's research on textiles and dress revolves around an argument for the vital role of the northern Caucasus in trade along the silk roads. Her primary approach is to assign objects to production centers in China, Central Asia, Byzantium, and beyond.³⁹ She discusses nearly complete garments according to gender and age, but further interpretation turns to the silks' motifs and weave structure to allow for attributions and cross-cultural connections.⁴⁰

³⁶ Ravdonikas, "O nekotorykh tipakh Alanskoi odezhdy."

³⁷ Ravdonikas, *Ocherki po istorii odezhdy*.

³⁸ See **Appendix II** for the collection history of textiles from the Alanic northern Caucasus in the State Hermitage Museum.

³⁹ Textile attributions bolster her argument about the Caucasus' shifting crucial role on the first millennium CE Silk Roads stretching from the Mediterranean to China. She consistently argues that because of Sasanian taxes, trade caravans moving between Byzantium and China were routed through the Caucasus to avoid these charges. To cross through the mountain passes, travelers used silks as monetary tokens cut, divided, and distributed to Alanic community members. This argument is first discussed in Ierusalimskaia, "O Severokavkazskom shelkovom puti." In Ierusalimskaia's earliest work, she highlights the variety of silks from Moshchevaia Balka by exploring specific motifs and drawing comparisons to other textiles and objects from Western Europe and Egypt to China and Japan (e.g., Ierusalimskaia, "Noviia nakhodka"; Ierusalimskaia, "K voprosy o sviaziakh Sogda"; Ierusalimskaia, "K slozheniiu shkoly"). Her attributions of several silk types to Central Asia and Sogdiana are problematic and intertwined with the so-called Zandaniji problem (compare Ierusalimskaia, "K slozheniiu shkoly" and Dode, "Zandaniji Silks").

⁴⁰ E.g., Ierusalimskaia, "Nekotorye voprosy izucheniiia rannesrednevekovogo kostiuma"; Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*. The kaftan with dog-birds to be discussed in chapter four has received particular attention in her studies, see Ierusalimskaia, "Noviia nakhodka"; Ierusalimskaia, "Le cafetan aux simourghs"; Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 235-241.

Since the 1990s, Dode and Orfinskaia have contributed significantly to dress studies of the region, respectively focusing on the Alanic textiles in the collections in the Stavropol Museum and the Karachaev-Cherkesia Museum. Both Dode and Orfinskaia explore the reconstruction of individual garments and traced how garment construction and pattern-making evolved locally.

In both her 2001 book and her 2007 dissertation, Dode ultimately argues for cultural continuity, among the seventh- to fourteenth-century dress of men, women, and children. She views the northwestern and north-central Caucasus' dress ensembles as an ethnic identifier of the peoples who arrived in the region from Central Asia.⁴¹ Dode's ongoing studies on dress utilize both archaeological textile remains and dress representations, especially in rock reliefs.⁴²

Building on her archaeological work in the region, notably at Nizhnii Arkhyz, Ol'ga Orfinskaia's 2001 dissertation documents the eighth- to ninth-century textiles housed in the Karachaev-Cherkesia Museum. She presents studies of the garments' construction and design, as well as charts the technical analyses of fibers and weave structures. In her dissertation and other articles, she attempts to trace an evolution of garment design from the eighth through the thirteenth centuries. In her most recent articles, she argues that the cut of the tunic and kaftan come via Central Asia and that the inhabitants shifted their garment designs because of a material change from felted to woven textiles; they altered patterns to utilize the highest amount of patterned silk, so as not to waste any precious material.⁴³

⁴¹ Dode, *Srednevekovyi kostium*, 113-114.

⁴² e.g., Dode, *Kubachinskie rel'efy*; Dode, "Kostiumy personazhei Kiafarskoi grobnitsy."

⁴³ Orfinskaia, "Rekonstruktsii odezhdy"; Orfinskaia "Analiz kroia muzhskikh kaftanov." For the felt argument, see Orfinskaia and Arzhantseva, "The Cut of the Clothes," 94.

Despite all of this work, no study exists of solely the kaftan. Even though Ierusalimskaia has listed and discussed the men's kaftan traits in-depth, no work has critically investigated the consistent variations in the types of kaftans appearing in burials across the region.⁴⁴

Iran

Compared to the historiography of the dress of the northern Caucasus, that of greater Iran is somewhat unruly. Scholars have approached the subject from a variety of temporal and geographical frameworks. A few studies focus on the Sasanian empire, while most explore dress through multiple dynasties spanning over a millennium. Some remain firmly within the Iranian empire's geographical reach under question, while others jump quickly to Central Asia, the Steppe, or even Egypt for comparison.⁴⁵ Most works are article length and in English; I know no works in Persian on the subject.

Hermann Goetz' 'History of Persian Costume' within Arthur Upham Pope's 1938 magnum opus, *A Survey of Persian Art*, considers the dress from the Elamites through the Qajar Dynasty. His work notably reverses the prevailing diffusionist theory according to which the kaftan is a nomadic riding costume adopted by Iranians. Instead, he views the first millennium CE kaftan as a reintroduced, modified Iranian garment from the Achaemenid period.⁴⁶ He argues that it is then the Iranians who 'influenced' the dress of the peoples at and beyond the edge of the Sasanian Empire, explicitly mentioning the kaftans worn by the donors at Kizil.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ E.g., Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 213-219.

⁴⁵ Scholars occasionally discuss a group of kaftans found in burials in Antinoë and dated to the Sasanian occupation of Egypt as part of the corpus of the so-called Sasanian riding costume. See Fluck and Vogelsang-Eastwood, *Riding Costume in Egypt*.

⁴⁶ Goetz, "History of Persian Costume," 2231.

⁴⁷ Goetz, "History of Persian Costume," 2233.

Less than twenty years later Geo Widengren, building on conclusions made by Henri Seyrig in a study of Palmyrene dress,⁴⁸ wrote a pioneering article that defined the so-called Persian riding costume. This article more or less initiated the usage of the term of ‘riding costume’ in the context of Iran, or ‘nomadic riding costume’ for the garments beyond the borders of Iran that included a trouser and form-fitting upper body garment; the article thus forged a strong association between this dress type and an idealized lifestyle of nomadic horsemen.⁴⁹ As a philologist, Widengren focuses on borrowed and reconstructed garment terminology in Old and Middle Persian, among other known contemporary languages such as Sogdian, and living languages such as Ossetian. He traces an evolution based on a presence of sleeved outerwear, trousers, boots, and the belt from early first millennium BCE nomadic prototypes through to the Sasanian empire, when he brings in a significant amount of comparanda from Central Asia, without any attention to the design details of dress in the images he selected.

Post-Widengren studies on pre-Islamic Iranian dress all utilize his terminology. Some scholars utilize ‘riding costume’ as a binary contrast with the draped Persian robe for Achaemenid dress (often labeled the ‘Median riding costume’). Others stress the nomadic origins of the Arsacid Dynasty, and still, others discuss the subtle variations in the Sasanian dress ensembles, including trousers.⁵⁰

Only two studies stand out, questioning the emergence of the kaftan with lapels as a garment entirely different from the other types of garments represented on Sasanian monuments. Both authors, Elsie Holmes Peck and Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, address the kaftan and its

⁴⁸ Seyrig, “Antiquités Syriennes.”

⁴⁹ Widengren, “Remarks on Riding Costume,” 275-276.

⁵⁰ E.g., Goldman, “Later Pre-Islamic Riding Costume”; Curtis, “Parthian Culture and Costume”; Bittner, *Tracht und Bewaffnung*; Thompson, “Iranian Dress.”

emergence concerning the large-scale figures represented in the boar hunt relief at Tāq-e Bostān (the subject of Chapter III). Peck was the first scholar to point out the uniqueness of the kaftan among other Sasanian garment types in her Master's thesis and a subsequent article on the dress depicted in the rock reliefs. Peck compares the kaftan with the dress represented in the early dynastic sculpture of the Kushans, who were the neighbors and vassals of the Sasanians until the late fourth century CE. She designates the kaftan as a foreign sartorial adoption that reflects the era's prosperous political and economic climate. She argues that this climate allowed fresh dress trends to permeate into the imperial court.⁵¹

In a more recent study on Sasanian dress, Vogelsang-Eastwood analyzes the garments worn in imperial Sasanian reliefs, centering the essay on three types of outer garments— the tunic, cloak, and coat/kaftan— and the technical distinctions between their sub-variations. Vogelsang-Eastwood, like Peck, draws attention to this sudden emergence of the tailored kaftan in the late Sasanian Empire. She describes the kaftan as “an apparently northeastern Central Asia style,” but inconclusively suggests that the kaftan either reflected the Hephthalite’s brief rule in northeastern Iran or was simply a style development.⁵²

Western Central Asia

Russian-language scholarship makes up most of the work undertaken on the dress of western Central Asia, that is, the territories of the Central Asian republics, which were once part of the former Soviet Union. This scholarship is often more rigidly framed by culture, region, or the material of the objects under study, such as Nina Lobachëva’s study of Central Asian dress as

⁵¹ Peck “Representation of Costumes,” 121-122.

⁵² Vogelsang-Eastwood, “Sasanian ‘Riding-Coats’,” 223-224.

represented in early medieval wall paintings,⁵³ or Guzel Maitdinova's study of dress in early medieval Tokharistan.⁵⁴ Like scholarship on the northern Caucasus (and unlike the work on greater Iran), works on Central Asia usually address the region in its own right, and are careful when drawing in any examples from a neighboring region. A few works have framed ancient dress of the region as part of a modern nation-state's dress history, such as albums concerning the history of Tajik or Uzbek dress.⁵⁵ Formally, these appear similar to the American and European exhibition catalogs about nineteenth- and twentieth-century Central Asian dress mentioned at the beginning of this section; however, those from within Central Asia are different in trajectory, aiming to provide evidence for the deep heritage of a people's eponymous nation-state, e.g., Uzbek heritage in Uzbekistan or Tajik heritage in Tajikistan.

In Russian-language scholarship, explanations of the kaftan's design likewise follow a steppe-to-state evolutionary theory but are, in general, more strongly committed to defining ethnic variations. For example, Guzel Maitdinova connects the right-lapel found on kaftans of Tokharistan with the Hephthalites, while she pins the double-lapel to a Turkic identity.⁵⁶ Some authors have furthermore tied particular patterns found on polychrome kaftans to specific polities and ethnic groups.

V. L. Sychev has specifically investigated front-opening outer garments of Central Asia, which he calls a 'classification problem'. Focusing on the dress of the first millennium CE, he

⁵³ Lobachëva, "Srednevekovyi kostium."

⁵⁴ Maitdinova, *Kostium rannesrednevekovogo Tokharistana*.

⁵⁵ E.g., Ershov, Shirokova, Gremiachinskaia and Zhaba, *Al'bom odezhdy Tadzhikov*.

⁵⁶ Maitdinova, *Kostium rannesrednevekovogo Tokharistana*, 135–143. More recently, agreeing with this view is Jangar Il'yasov (Il'yasov, "Hephthalite Terracotta," 190). Sergei Iatsenko writes critically of this direct correlation (Iatsenko, *Kostium drevnej Evrazii*, 277, 660), but persists in labeling the single-lapel kaftan as Hephthalite and the double-lapel Turkic (Iatsenko, "Late Sogdian Costume"; Iatsenko, "Early Turks.")

divides garments into three typologies that correspond to geographical regions. He argues this relation is the result of the people's cultural and economic history; communities created their dress based on practicing agriculture, pastoralism, or hunting and gathering. He argues that the traditional dress of the modern era still reflects these three lifestyles. Sychev does indeed address the lapels of the first millennium CE kaftan, calling them a hallmark of Central Asian garments, which the Chinese use for a short time (referencing western China and the Tang Dynasty).⁵⁷ He observes that in Central Asia, people often wear the kaftan lapels pulled open, while in neighboring China, they are usually closed.⁵⁸

The English-language dissertation by Fiona Kidd is an outlier in a sea of Russian scholarship. Her work explores the dress represented on the terracotta figurines of the greater Afrasiab region of Sogdiana from the late first millennium BCE to the first millennium CE. Kidd's approach is relatively typological, but her methodology in working with representations and considering labels is particularly valuable. She considers the problems of attributing stylized representations of people to particular ethnic groups; the possibility that details of the dress are stylized or omitted when working on a small scale; the complications of reconstructions; and potential traditionalism in dress choices on representations, especially deities.⁵⁹

Eastern Central Asia

The scholarship on the dress of eastern Central Asia, centered around the present-day Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of western China, has two distinctive periods. The European

⁵⁷ Sychev, "Iz plechevoi odezhdy narodov," 42-43.

⁵⁸ Sychev, "Iz plechevoi odezhdy narodov," 42.

⁵⁹ Kidd, "Costume of the Samarkand Region"; Kidd, "Samarkand Region."

expeditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century during the final years of the Qing Dynasty produced the first wave. The archaeological institutions of the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China produced the second wave. The early work is primarily in German and English, and the materials referenced for studies concern objects housed in European collections. Later studies are primarily in Chinese and concern objects housed in Chinese collections.

Albert von Le Coq's 1925 *Bilderatlas zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Mittel-Asiens* is one of the earliest works with a section dedicated to dress. He pinpoints the kaftan as an iconic garment of the region. Von Le Coq makes the suggestion, which Goetz builds on, that the kaftan in eastern Central Asia was influenced by that of Sasanian Iran: a reversal of the steppe-to-state theory.⁶⁰

Alongside wall paintings, early twentieth-century archaeologists discovered some textiles, which were subsequently cataloged and studied by Vivi Sylwan. Her 1941 and 1949 publications, primarily technical, focused on the finds from the expeditions led by Aurel Stein, Sven Hedin, and Folke Bergman.⁶¹

A few significant excavations with full garment finds occurred in the mid-twentieth century, such as the 1959 season at Niyä. However, consistent work did not pick up until the late 1960s and 1970s with Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution, which set artifact quotas for archaeologists.⁶² Excavation reports, including any textile finds, were regularly and systematically published in the Chinese archaeology journal, *Kaogu* (考古).

⁶⁰ Goetz, "History of Persian Costume," 2231-2233; von Le Coq, *Bilderatlas zur Kunst*, 9-10.

⁶¹ Sylwan and Montell, *Woollen Textiles*; Sylwan, *Investigation of Silk*.

⁶² Xinjiang weiwuer zizhiqiu bowuguan kaogudui, "Xinjiang minfeng," 119-122, 126, pl. 3-5. For further information specifically on archaeology in Xinjiang in this period, see Hansen, *Silk Road*, 153-154.

Scholars often include the dress uncovered in eastern Central Asia in broader studies on Chinese dress, but always labeled as ‘Central Asian’ or ‘Sogdian’, a term often used generically to stand in for Central Asian, as a contrast to Chinese.⁶³ The kaftan or any trouser and upper body garment ensemble are usually credited to the Tang Dynasty’s political and economic openness to the west and viewed as an abrupt contrast to ‘traditional’ Chinese costume. As for all regions, scholars trace an origin to nomadic riding costume. In the context of Chinese scholarship considering eastern Central Asia, a relationship is traced explicitly to the Xiongnu and Xianbei cultures.

Recently, several Chinese-language publications have focused on the surviving garments and textile fragments uncovered in excavations in western China, namely the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Notable studies are Bao Mingxin’s 2007 book on clothing and adornment reconstructions, and a collection of papers that the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Museum edited on the dress of the region in 2010.⁶⁴ Most studies are technical, focusing on fiber identification and weave structure analysis, and with less emphasis on garment construction.⁶⁵

Alongside Chinese-language publications, the dress finds from Xinjiang have recently gained worldwide recognition after exhibitions in America and Germany featuring several garments from the region.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Elizabeth Wayland Barber’s accessible monograph for non-specialists in 2000, *The Mummies of Ürümqi*, explains a number of the technical

⁶³ E.g., Shen, *Zhongguo Gudai fushi yanjiu*; Zhou, *Zhongguo gudai fushi shi*; Mei, *Gudai fushi*; Gao, *Chinese Dress and Adornment*; Gao, *Zhongguo fushi ming wu kao*; Xun and Gao, *5000 Years of Chinese Costumes*.

⁶⁴ Bao, *Xiyu yi fu*; Xinjiang Weiwu’er Zizhiqiu bo wu guan, *Gu dai xiyu*.

⁶⁵ e.g. Zhao and Qi, *Jin shang hu feng*.

⁶⁶ Mair, *Secrets of the Silk Road*; Wieczorek and Lind, *Ursprünge der Seidenstrasse*.

peculiarities of the textiles, while attempting to understand more broadly who exactly produced and used these textiles.

The Kaftan in Trans-Eurasian Dress Studies

The earliest trans-regional studies that include the kaftan are world and non-Western dress surveys. These early surveys fasten nineteenth- and twentieth-century garments to ancient garments of the same region. For example, Max Tilke's 1923 study on the evolution (*Entwicklungsgeschichte*) of dress in Asia incorporates the first millennium CE kaftan. Tilke includes the representations of the kaftan in wall paintings from the caves at Kizil brought back to Berlin in the first decade of the twentieth century by Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Le Coq. Here the kaftan's lapels are delightfully discussed as the earliest form of a double-breasted suit (*der Zweireiher*).⁶⁷ The kaftan appears again in Tilke's posthumous 1945 publication on past and present world dress, *Kostümschnitte und Gewandformen*. In this monograph, he presents the kaftan, according to wall paintings from the Kizil and Bezeklik caves, alongside painting details of dress ranging from the thirteenth to the twentieth century to support an argument for dress continuities across Asia [Figure 0.6].⁶⁸ Encyclopedia entries create a similar millennia-spanning heritage. For example, even in the most up-to-date and comprehensive compilation, the Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress, an essay on the kaftan starts with the ancient 'horse riders' – whom the author contrasts with 'settled farmers' – and closes with later iterations which have inspired modern fashion designers.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Tilke, *Studien zu der Entwicklungsgeschichte*, 66.

⁶⁸ Tilke, *Kostümschnitte und Gewandformen*, 37, pl. 78.

⁶⁹ Jirousek, "Kaftan and Its Origins," 134, 138.

Russian art historian Sergei Iatsenko's 2006 dissertation-turned-book, *Costume of Ancient Eurasia: The Iranian-Speaking People*, is notably one of two monographs dedicated entirely to the dress of Central Eurasia in the first millennium CE. His study, though limited to the peoples who spoke Iranian languages, covers much of Central Eurasia from the first millennium BCE until the Arab conquests in the first millennium CE, drawing together an unprecedented body of material. Iatsenko organizes the book in sections according to the Achaemenid, Arsacid, and Sasanian dynastic periods in Iran, with sub-chapters rigidly divided by a mix of thirteen political, geographical or ethnic identifiers. Each of these sections works through standardized headings with descriptions of headgear, upper body garments, lower body garments, and shoes, followed by general comments on elements such as color and aesthetics. There is little explanation for the widely variable contexts of the surviving textile or the visual representations of the dress.⁷⁰ A final chapter pulls this material together by way of cross-cultural encounters on the silk road and costume evolution. The author discusses the kaftan in his book under individual culture iterations, and the garment also appears in more narrow articles on the same cultures.⁷¹ Rather than tracing a deep lineage, Iatsenko pays close attention to details in the dress and, at times, connects certain details with specific ethnic identities, for example, referring to a kaftan with a single lapel as Hephthalite, and a double lapel as Turkic.⁷² Iatsenko oscillates between interpreting dress details as ethnic markers and refuting such an approach.⁷³

⁷⁰ A few scholars have openly questioned the usefulness of still following such an approach. For example, Elfriede Knauer sees a strong resemblance between nomadic groups and writes that different ethnic groups shared this riding costume regardless of their ethnic affiliation. She writes that Iatsenko's suggestion about the Yuezhi and Kushans influencing other groups in a 2001 article is 'hardly a convincing assumption.' See, Knauer, "Quisquiliae Sinicae," 407; Iatsenko, "Costume of the Yuech-Chihs/Kushans."

⁷¹ e.g., Iatsenko, "Late Sogdian Costume"; Iatsenko, "Some Observations".

⁷² e.g. Iatsenko, *Kostium drevnei Evrazii*, 277, 660; Iatsenko, "Late Sogdian Costume"; Iatsenko, "Some Observations," 73.

⁷³ Iatsenko, "Early Turks"; Iatsenko, *Kostium drevnei Evrazii*, 260-261, 277-278.

The second book-length publication on the dress of Central Eurasia is Japanese scholar Sadako Katō's 2002 *Study of Ancient Costumes in Central Eurasia*.⁷⁴ Like Iatsenko's monograph, the study is geographically and temporally expansive. It covers the same temporal framework from the first millennium BCE through the first millennium CE, but shifts from a structure around the dynasties of Iran (in fact, it excludes Iran), to chapters built around geographically and temporally specific textile assemblages, for example, the Iron Age burials at Pazyryk or the Xiongnu Noin-Ula burials. The chapters explore the surviving textiles from garments to headgear and footwear. The author emphasizes the pattern reconstruction of garments, many of which she has herself reconstructed. Katō's thesis is broad and general: tailored garments— including the first millennium CE kaftan— were customized for nomadic lifestyles, and that tailored garments emerged in this region.

Elfriede Knauer has written a great deal specifically on the kaftan under the heading of a sleeved outer garment.⁷⁵ Her studies span over several decades, exploring a vast corpus of dress utilizing both textiles and representations in other media. Her studies— like my own— pinpoint a garment typology and trace where people wore it, both through time and across space; she rarely frames her dress studies by cultural, geographical, or political borders. Although her studies provide incredibly detailed descriptions of individual garments and monuments, they often supply little cultural context. The kaftan, and variations of the coat more generally, are imagined to have diffused effortlessly across cultural, social, religious, and political borders. Her final argument typically describes the jacket or kaftan, paired with trousers, as ‘the hallmark of the

⁷⁴ Thank you to Peggy Chao for helping me to read through this book in Japanese.

⁷⁵ Knauer, “Toward a History of the Sleeved Coat.”; Knauer, “Ex oriente vestimenta”; Knauer, “Vêtement des Nomades Eurasiatiques”; Knauer, “Quest for the Origin”; Knauer, “Quisquiliae sinicae.”

steppe tribes.⁷⁶ In a particularly sweeping article, Knauer maps the modern sleeved coat's history through Europe, Iran, the Steppe, and eastern Central Asia. In this article she suggests that the modern garment garnered influential details from both Europe and Asia.⁷⁷

Chapter Outline

Chapter I offers a corrective for the evolutionary nomadic riding costume model. By mapping examples before the fifth century CE, I demonstrate that a definite shift in outerwear preference occurred across Central Eurasia, but that the kaftan's unique combination of design features—sleeves, a fitted bodice, attached skirting, and overlapping front panels that can form lapels—is not traceable to a single ur-garment, ur-region or ur-people. As previous scholarship has pointed out, the kaftan built on elements found on outer garments known from the first millennium BCE; however, the kaftan did not evolve in a unilinear way, nor did it jump from a nomadic garment to one suddenly adopted by sedentary populations. Instead, several sartorial roots begin to tangle in multiple places over time. Key construction and design features were developed and selectively retained or adapted to the needs of changing communities. The widespread use of a garment with a shared set of design features suggests a common motivation for its use across a vast territory. I argue that this motivation was based on the need for communication across the increasingly decentralized political landscape of Central Eurasia by the fifth century CE.

Chapters II, III, and IV offer studies that explore how communities wore the kaftan. Discrete social occasions thematically organize these three chapters: the banquet, hunt, and funeral. Each chapter begins with an investigation into a particular textile corpus or

⁷⁶ Knauer, “Quisquiliae sinicae,” 405.

⁷⁷ Knauer, “Ex oriente vestimenta.”

representations of the kaftan within a particular culture, time, and place. I first analyze the kaftan or representation of the kaftan within its own contextualized cultural milieu; after that, I turn to comparanda. First, if possible, I explore comparanda within the same culture to check for replication. In cases like the banquet, the comparanda are considerable; for the hunt, the comparanda are more limited. I do not intend for the comparative materials to be exhaustive. I selected examples to highlight overlapping practices between cultural communities, and, on the contrary, consider unique ones. By covering a relatively expansive framework stretching 500 years in time and 5000 kilometers in space, it is possible to piece together the sartorial systems intertwining communities across Central Eurasia.

In Chapter II, I explore how communities wore the kaftan for a banquet. The study builds on wall paintings from private homes in the Sogdian city of Panjikent [Map 0.1]. Images of seated banqueters line the walls of the room just above a built-in bench. The painted guests all wear a kaftan. The kaftans most visibly exhibit personalizations in the fabric color and pattern choice; how one styles the kaftan also varies. The variation chosen for one's lapels reinforces other sartorial indicators of social hierarchy, including seating arrangement, a practice not unlike that occurring in neighboring Tokharistan (Uzbekistan and Afghanistan) and in western China.

Chapter III examines the role of the kaftan at the hunt. This chapter focuses on two rock reliefs in a large barrel-vaulted ayvān known as Tāq-e Bostān in present-day Kermanshah, Iran [Map 0.1]. The reliefs, illustrating a boar and deer hunt, are near the remains of a contemporary hunting park. Unlike at a banquet, where everyone wore a kaftan, and visually projected subtle social distinctions through the styling of the garment, only select individuals wore a kaftan at the Imperial Iranian hunt. The Sasanians appear to have utilized the kaftan's unique design to

indicate the lead hunter, a transferable position. The chapter addresses which type of individuals these reliefs might represent based on late Sasanian Iran's socio-political structure.

Chapter IV investigates the funeral context. The textile remains of kaftans from two Alanic cemeteries, Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz, in the northern Caucasus, serve as the foundation [**Map 0.1**]. The Alanic community dress all of their men in a kaftan for burial. Though the kaftan's fabric choice and trim placement differed substantially between members with four clear social groupings, all community members could style their kaftans in the same manner. At the burial, the community styled each member's kaftan in the same way, a time when the kaftan ceased to communicate dynamically.

The conclusion brings the results of the case studies together to argue that the kaftan's versatile design provided the denizens of diverse Eurasian communities with sartorial languages that could articulate mutable social distinctions across cultures and for various social occasions. In some cases, the system overlapped cultural communities and occasions, providing a shared understanding of what the kaftan could do. In other cases, the kaftan was unique or intentionally manipulated to use the garment in a way that differed from the other uses by other communities. These sartorial systems operated under various aspirations, sometimes utilizing the garment for power play, and other times in pursuit of more reliable communication across an increasingly cosmopolitan Central Eurasia.

CHAPTER I

THE EMERGENCE OF THE KAFTAN

Four youthful men stand in a row [Figure 1.1]. On stiff outstretched legs, each moves his hands expressively while turning his eyesight to his right. Despite their near unison posture, the men's kaftans exhibit a unique colorway. Each kaftan is composed of a main body fabric with two contrasting trims. Tall boots reach up to the hemline of the kaftan's skirting with only a sliver of the trouser's fabric visible behind each knee. The first standing man on the viewer's left is clad monochromatically in a cream kaftan trimmed with a black and a blue and white pearl-roundel patterned fabric. The following man wears a cobalt kaftan with all-over white roundel patterning over bold red boots. The third man sports a mint hued kaftan, and the fourth wears a cobalt kaftan patterned in crossed with red boots, like the second figure. All of the men wear their kaftan belted, and from the circular-segmented belt hangs to their left, not only a small dagger but also a large sword. Kneeling to the far left of the quartet and balancing a tray in his hands is a smaller figure in a solid blue kaftan with a single solid white trim.

This fresco panel belongs to a larger group of sixteen figures. Like the panel described here, three further panels similarly depict a set of four kaftan-clad men with shared physiognomy who face in the same direction. Though no two of the sixteen total figures wear exactly the kaftan, they all style the kaftan in the same manner with one lapel turned out.

The four fresco panels once lined the walls of two parallel passages in a cave. The passages connected the fore- and hinter-chambers of a Buddhist temple identified as Cave 8— but better known as the ‘Cave of Sixteen Sword-Bearers— at Kizil. Kizil is a Buddhist cave complex

about 70 kilometers northwest of Kucha, an oasis city on the northern rim of the Tarim Basin. The paintings were brought to the Museum für asiatische Kunst in Berlin by Albert Grünwedel and Albert von le Coq after the Third German Expedition to Eastern Central Asia from December 1905 to April 1907. Scholars and scientists still debate the dating of this particular painting, and many others at the complex. Art historical criteria placed the paintings in the second half of the first millennium CE for much of the twentieth century.¹ Recent carbon 14 samples now place the paintings no later than early sixth century. Accordingly, the painting with sixteen sword-bearers fits securely as one of the earliest representations of the kaftan.²

As outlined in the introduction, past scholarship has almost exclusively treated the kaftan as a nomadic riding garment originating in the Bronze and Iron Age Steppe. The narrative goes that settled populations adopted this so-called riding ensemble for reasons of function or those of fashion. Scholars pin the spread of the kaftan to migrations, invasions, and conquests, without regard for why people of diverse social, political, or religious affiliations would throw out their dress to replace it with that of the migrants, invaders, or conquerors.

This first chapter provides a corrective for the evolutionary narrative of the kaftan. By scrutinizing dress construction elements before the fifth century CE, I demonstrate that the kaftan was indeed a new garment for many communities based on its unique combination of design

¹ The earliest scholarship described the sword-bearers as exquisite examples of the ‘Western school’ or ‘Indo-Iranian’ painting style— in contrast to the so-called Indian and Chinese style— predominant in the Kucha region dating to the first half of the seventh century. See Härtel and Yaldiz, *Along the Ancient Silk Routes*, 47–48; von le Coq, *Die buddhistische Spätantike*; von le Coq, *Buried Treasures*, 28–30.

² The Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz with the Rathgen Forschungslabor and Leibniz Labor für Altersbestimmung und Isotopenforschung in Kiel in 2000 undertook the first C14 dating sets that included samples from the Cave of Sixteen Sword-Bearers. They gathered samples from the straw used to stiffen the clay of the frescos. The date range is 430 to 557 CE (Yaldiz, “Evaluation of the Chronology,” 1036, 1038). However, a team at the Center of Chronological Research at Nagoya University in Japan produced a significantly earlier date of 128–216 CE (Nakagawara et al., “Berurin Ajia Bijutsukan”). The Nagoya University team acknowledges that this extremely early date could be the result of reused bricks, and they need to undertake more tests.

features: sleeves, a fitted bodice, attached skirting, and front panels that can fold out to form lapels. The kaftan, as previous scholarship has readily pointed out, built on selected elements found on outer garments known from the first millennium BCE; however, the kaftan did not evolve from one garment type, nor did it jump from nomadic to sedentary use. Instead, several sartorial roots began to tangle in different places over time.

In this chapter, I explain how the kaftan's key design features relate to earlier outer garments of Central Eurasia. The study begins by looking at long sleeves and a front-fastening closure among the greater region's earliest surviving garments. Next, the study explores garments of this kind, which additionally have overlapping front panels. This section introduces the surplice-neckline robe and jacket, both of which are prominent in diverse cultures across Eurasia for millennia. Here I illustrate how the lapeled front panels of a kaftan diverge from the pattern design used to make surplice-neckline garments. The study then turns to explore when communities began to attach skirting with a distinguishable waistline, to the fitted bodice of an outer garment. Lastly, the chapter considers the earliest appearances of the kaftan across multiple regions of Central Asia around the fifth century.

Long Sleeved and Front-Fastening: The Oldest Preserved Outer Garments

In Central Eurasia, a sleeved outer garment with a frontal opening first appears in the archaeological record in the late second millennium BCE.³ Earlier surviving outer garments dated to the early second millennium BCE are mantles made of a square- or rectangular-shaped

³ Older sleeved garments come from late fourth and third millennium BCE Egypt. The oldest intact garment is an over-the-head sleeved linen tunic, today known as the Tarkhan tunic, kept in the Petrie Museum of the University of London. See Hall, "Garments in the Petrie Museum."

wool woven cloth. Men and women wrapped then around the body, securing the drape of the cloth with pins.⁴

The earliest long-sleeved outer garments dated to the late second millennium BCE are coats with straight side seams. The coats hang unfitted with a seam running in a straight line from the underarm to the hemline, creating an H-line silhouette. The pattern pieces forming the front and back of the coat are oversized. When laid flat, the front panels meet in the center; however, when worn on the human body, the panels pull one over top of the other and, according to the garment's styling in burials, a belt held the panels in place. Makers did not begin experimenting with more complex pattern designs until the middle of the first millennium BCE. The shift to more complicated pattern-piecing included vents, gores, and godets, all of which allowed one to utilize smaller pieces of fabric or pelt.

The earliest preserved sleeved outer garments of Central Eurasia come from cemeteries in the Tarim and Turfan basins. At Qaradöwä (Chinese: Wupu), located along the northeastern rim of the Turfan Basin and dated to the first half of the first millennium BCE, communities buried their deceased fully clothed in woolen garments, leather boots, and oversized fur coats [**Map 1.1**; **Figures 1.2].⁵** Both men and women wore coats of goat and sheep pelt.⁶ The maker lined up

⁴ The earliest Bronze Age mantles come from cemeteries in the eastern edges of the Tarim Basin around ancient Kroraïna in the Lop Nur region. Major sites with surviving textiles include Small River Cemetery Number 5 (Chinese: Xiaohe Mudi), Qäwrighul (Chinese: Gumugou), and Töwän (Chinese: Tieban He). See e.g., Mair, “Complete Excavation of Ördek’s Necropolis,” 292–296; Wang, “Desiccated Corpses of Lopnur.”

⁵ The dating of materials from this cemetery are wide-ranging from c. 1200 to c. 500 BCE. The most recent studies of the organic material from Qaradöwä place the site dating between the eighth and sixth centuries BCE based on leather coat samples with C14 results of 788–537 BCE with 95.4% probability, Schröder, “Ancient DNA Identification,” 1723–1724. Archaeologists have unearthed wool robes at Qaradöwä, but it is unclear if some individuals wore them in place of a pelted coat or under fur coats. Photographs of these robes are found in a few publications, but not described (e.g., Wang, “Ancient Corpses at Wupu,” 59, 64).

⁶ Archaeologists uncovered similar fur coats in the rescue excavations of the Yanghai cemetery, also located in the Turfan Basin. Leather coats and other garments like those from Qaradöwä come from the earliest graves, ranging from the late second millennium to the mid-first millennium. See *Academia Turfanica*, “Excavation on the Yanghai Cemetery,” fig. 6.

blocks of the hide on right angles, positioning the fur inwards, against the body. The maker sewed the front and back panels together with a long straight seam running down each side. The garments do not have a defined waist and hang well below the torso reaching the knee, a few even to the ankle. The front body panels are symmetrical, though stop a few centimeters short from touching each other when laid flat. A few coats have wooden buttons; however, the community usually styled the coat panels pulled over one another, according to excavated burials. The coat sleeves are long and narrow, attached to the bodice of the garment with a single straight vertical seam, like a 'T'.⁷

Contemporary to Qaradöwä on the southern rim of the Tarim Basin, archaeologists found well-preserved wool garments on both men and women at the cemetery of Zagunluk (Chinese: Zahongluke) near Chärcän (Chinese: Qiemo) [Map 1.1].⁸ One well-documented and unlooted tomb held a man and three women; the man wore a cream-hued short coat layered over a long knee-length burgundy robe, while the women wore long calve-length burgundy robes.⁹ Makers composed the burgundy robes—worn by the man and women—from four oversized quadrilateral fabric pieces: two long rectangles make the body, and two square pieces the sleeves. They folded the body pieces with the crease falling over the shoulder. The makers partially sewed these two pieces together: the joined section forming the back of the garment and the unjoined section

⁷ See excavation photos in Wang, “Ancient Corpses at Wupu,” 56-57; Mallory and Mair, *Tarim Mummies*, 217-218.

⁸ The first C14 dates taken at the time of excavation in 1985 place the tomb date around 1000 BCE (Kamberi, “Three Thousand Year Old,” 7). Newer C14 dates fall between 800-530 BCE (Mallory and Mair, *Tarim Mummies*, 217). However, Jeanette Werning discusses the graves with later wide-ranging dates, which stretch from around the eighth century BCE to the first century BCE, and with new evidence possibly to the third century CE (Wieczorek and Lind, *Ursprünge der Seidenstrasse*, 183, 187).

⁹ The man’s maroon robe is worn as a base layer and usually referred to in publications as his shirt; however, it is not an over-the-head garment, but a front-fastening coat or robe. The maker used wool fabric to construct the garment—like most woven garments excavated here—and sized it directly on the loom, meaning that sewing was only necessary along seam lines (Good, “Bronze Age Cloth,” 662-663).

forming the left and right front panels. They folded the square fabric pieces evenly to form a set of long narrow sleeves, which, like the Qaradöwä garments, attached with a hard 90-degree angle to the body, giving the garment a stark 'T' shape. The women's robes have vents at the underarms, that is, the side seam stops short of the armscye, allowing air to circulate when the arms are in motion.¹⁰ The makers then embellished the garments' structural seams and hemline with contrasting-colored piping.¹¹

The man's cream outer coat's pattern is different from that of the robe. The maker constructed the coat from five pieces of cloth; they joined a large rectangular back panel to two narrow rectangular pieces making the front panels at the shoulders, and they folded two more pieces for the sleeves. The coat's side seams are straight, albeit flaring out slightly around waist. The maker attached the sleeves with straight vertical seams. A tie closure lays just under the collar bone, allowing the wearer to fasten together the front panels. Because the sleeves only fall to the elbow, the narrow sleeves of the burgundy tunic underneath would have peeked out, providing high contrast to the coat's light cream.

At the bottom of the tomb floor, in between layers of mats and hides, was also a thick chocolate-colored coat [**Figure 1.3**.]¹² The maker constructed this coat, like the others in the tombs, with oversized rectangular pattern pieces and straight seams, allowing the front panels to be pulled one over the other, despite meeting in the center when laid flat. The sleeves on this coat are unusually long and narrow, tapering at the cuff.

¹⁰ The material and weave of the women's robes are also different. The weave is twill and there is a sheen to the wool, which Irene Good had suggested is a blend of mohair (goat's wool) or a wild silk (Barber, *The Mummies of Ürümqi*, 48).

¹¹ Good, "Bronze Age Cloth," 663.

¹² Kamberi, "Three Thousand Year Old," 5. See also in this article illustrations of the discrete tomb layers.

Several other outer garments come from the Zagunluk cemetery, which archaeologists dated to the first half of the first millennium BCE; for example, a striped wool coat following the site's standard 'T' shape [**Figure 1.4**]. Someone added a long cream patch under the length of each bracelet sleeve, possibly indicating a size alteration. The coat's narrow standing collar is unique for this milieu.

Archaeologists excavated well-preserved clothed mummified bodies at the cemeteries of Subeshi (Chinese: Subeixi), located near the eponymous village east of Turfan and dated between the fifth and third centuries BCE [**Figure 1.5; Map 1.1**]. Men and women wear long coats similar in terms of material—made of pelts or woven wool—to those discovered at nearby Qaradöwä, but utilize new patterns, notably adding gores, which increase the volume of the coat.¹³ The coats use sheep or goat fleece—and sometimes a combination of the two—with the hairy side turned in towards the body. Although men and women both wear fur coats, the community designated a gender difference with the garment's cut. Women's coats are long with the hemline reaching to the calves, but not quite the ankles. Men's coats are shorter, reaching only to the knees. These lengths complement the gendered clothing worn under the coat: women wear short leather ankle boots with a skirt reaching the ankles over trousers, while on the other hand, the men wear leather leggings with knee-high leather boots reaching up to the hem of their coats.

The construction of the coat's sleeves also varies depending on the gender designation. Men's coat sleeves are long and wide; the pattern piecing is irregular and controlled by the size

¹³ There are several mummies without large pelt coats; this differentiation is pinned on the season of burial. Lü, "Mummies of Subeshi," 106.

variation of multiple animal pelts.¹⁴ On the other hand, women's coat sleeves are long and narrow. Some are so narrow that it would be impossible for the wearer to pull her hand through the open; however, women did not wear their coat with their arms through the long sleeves but rather draped over the shoulders with the sleeves left hanging pendant.¹⁵

The community at Subeshi interred some individuals in only a lighter woven wool coat [Figure 1.6]. The maker constructed the garment with four rectangular panels for the body: two joined together to create the back, and two unjoined pieces form the front panels. The maker wedged four large triangular godets, two on each side, into the side seams. The godets run from the hemline to the armseye, expanding the width of the garment. The maker also added a small rectangular piece of fabric around the neck to create a standing collar. The sleeves, on which the maker also added a godet, taper to the cuff. Small braided piping of the same cream-colored wool as the garment adorns the front opening, armseye, and the collar.¹⁶

Organic dress items also survive to an exceptional degree from fifth- to second-century BCE kurgan burials in the Altai mountains and Ukok plateau in the present-day Russian Federation and Mongolia. In contrast to preservation with a hot, dry, and saline environment in the Tarim and Turfan basins, permafrost preserved the garments in the Altai.¹⁷ Altai communities dressed their tomb occupants and packed extra sets of clothing in the burial chambers. The

¹⁴ Archaeologists also excavated long fur coats on both men and women at a contemporary site, Joumboulak Koum. They follow the same gendered patterns of a long women's coats and shorter men's coats. See Debaine-Francfort and Idriss, *Keriya, Mémoires d'un Fleuve*.

¹⁵ Lü, "Mummies of Subeshi," 107.

¹⁶ Archaeologists excavated another coat using the same construction pattern from Grave 10. See Lü and Zheng, "Xinjiang shan shan xian su bei xi," 56, fig. 21; also, see Lü and Zheng, "The Subeixi Site."

¹⁷ The Pazyryk Culture covered kurgan mounds with stone, under which they dug the burial chambers into the earth. In Antiquity, looters broke into the kurgan, which allowed for water to seep into the grave, freeze,—and because the rock covering kept this patch of earth from thawing each summer—preserve the organic materials.

makers wove undergarments but utilized thick animal pelts or felted wool for outer garments.¹⁸ They constructed some coats with straight seams, similar to the pelt coats excavated in the Tarim and Turfan basins; however, the Altai coats are distinctively shorter, reaching only to the mid-thigh, and they typically have gores or vents on the sides. Other coats show experimentation with intricate pattern piecing to create novel garment designs with distinctive silhouettes.

A typical Altai coat has straight side seams, which retains a boxy fit on the body. Archaeologists excavated a double-layer felted wool version from kurgan 3 in the horse burial chamber at Pazyryk [Map 1.1].¹⁹ A large, nearly square back panel is attached to two front panels; the garment's width flares slightly around the hemline, measuring about 20 cm wider than the shoulders. The front panels overlap one another by a few centimeters. The maker attached long, tapered 70 cm sleeves on a vertical straight seam. They sewed a small gusset under the arm to add flexibility and alleviate stress to the seams on this heavily stretched part of the garment. The maker inserted two vents into the full back panel. A braided trim reinforces the vents, the hemline, front panel opening, and cuffs, while two bulky frogs—decorative fastenings with a loop and knot side—of braided spun yarn allow the wearer to secure the front of the garment. Archaeologists excavated a similarly designed coat of sheep's fleece and marmot fur from kurgan 1 at Verkh-Kal' dzhin 2 [Figure 1.7; Map 1.1]. The sheep fleece faces inward while marmot fur doubles the warmth and embellishes the exterior. Additional wool strings at the cuffs tighten and close off the sleeve as a mitten, a detail that reoccurs on coats of the region.

¹⁸ Russian scholarship often more labels explicitly this type of coat a *shuba*, a term indicating a bulky coat of animal fur or fleece (similar to the now obsolete coat term ‘chubby’).

¹⁹ Rudenko, *Frozen Tombs of Siberia*, 186.

Nineteenth-century archaeologists excavated a fur coat using a more complex pattern that resulted in a contrasting fit and silhouette from the large kurgan of cemetery 2 at Katanda [Figure 1.8; Map 1.1].²⁰ Fur animal pelts—ermine on the exterior and sable on the interior—compose the jacket. The two back panels are rectangular-shaped, while the front panels are triangular. Thus, when the wearer pulls the front panels together, the garment fits snugly against the shoulders and chest but falls loosely over the hips and thighs. The long sleeves taper to a mere 14.5 cm opening, which likely acted as built-in mittens for the hands. The coat has additional embellishments: dyed fur on the exterior generates a red and green scale-like pattern, which the maker further adorned with gilded leather and wooden buttons. Square pyramidal buttons line the hemlines, front panel edges, and a back shoulder strip, while leather squares decorated the cuffs.²¹

A unique coat design in the Altai is that with a 'tail'. This tail is a broad, long flap of fur attached to the back panel of the coat, covering the wearer's rear and hanging in its entirety to the knees or ankles. The maker of a sheep fleece coat from kurgan 3 at Verkh-Kal' dzhin 2 added a tail extension, making it an incredible 170 centimeters long [Figure 1.9]. The panel construction of this coat are likewise particular: the neckline and hemline curve to trace and lay against the contours of the body. The maker fitted a gore between the front and back panels on either side, and significantly, the coat has set-in sleeves (as opposed to preceded straight vertical seam). The sleeve's upper edge has a high rounded cape that the maker inserted into a fitted armhole on

²⁰ The archaeologists did not find this garment on the deceased but rolled up under the beams of the burial pit (Zakharov, "Antiquities of Katanda," 44).

²¹ Early reports note that gold plates originally covered the buttons (Zakharov, "Antiquities of Katanda," 44-45).

the body panels. When joined, the coat hangs naturally along the contours of the shoulders.²²

There are no visible closures on the front of the coat, but the panels do overlap: the left panel reaches over to cover the right. Sheepskin composes the garment itself while black sable fur decorates the cuffs, front hems, and shoulders. Blue-dyed horse hair tassels further embellish the hemline, and tufts of long red-dyed and short blue-dyed horsehair decorate the back. The wrists, like those on the sheep and marmot coat from the same Verkh-Kal' dzhin 2 burial mounds, have cording sewn into the cuffs, allowing the wearer to transform the sleeves into mittens.

Makers fashioned another type of coat on a semicircle design [**Figure 1.10**].

Archaeologists excavated a coat from kurgan 2 at Pazyryk with pattern pieces shaped into a hillock-form. Two sides symmetrically climb to an apex, which fits over the shoulders of the wearers and forms a standing collar at its highest central point around the neck. The long, subtly convex hemline wraps around the bottom and thighs. The maker attached the sleeves awkwardly: they cut a hole into the garment body and stitched long tubular sleeves on from the exterior.²³ This coat has a tail, a smaller hillock-shaped piece of pelt attached to the back center of the coat. Plain fur lines the interior in contrast to an extraordinarily decorated exterior. Thin lines of sinew stitching create patterning across the garment. Symmetrically and geometrically positioned

²² Polos'mak, and Barkova, *Kostium i tekstil'*, 56-57. See also the marmot and sheep fleece coat with a tail excavated from Olon-Kurin-Gol (Molodin, Parzinger and Ceveendorž, "Kriegergrab von Olon-Kurin-Gol," 152), and also a short jacket-like variant from Katanda. The short tailed jacket from Katanda follows the straight seam pattern of Altai coats, albeit narrower across the chest. A 64 cm tail hangs from the center of the jacket's back panel. The sleeves are long and taper, but not to the degree of the other Katanda coat [**Figure 1.8**]. The jacket has a sable fur interior with an exterior of silk. Saw-tooth edged leather, and small gold plaques trim the front panels, hem, tail, cuffs, and shoulder line. Archaeologist Natalia Polos'mak calls this jacket 'absolutely not functional' (Polos'mak and Barkova, *Kostium i tekstil'*, 59).

²³ Reconstructions by Polos'mak do not show women placing their arms through the sleeves.

appliquéd leather bands amplify the garment's overall ornamentation, and black pony hair furthermore trims the hemline.²⁴

In summary, the earliest preserved outerwear with long sleeves and a front fastening closure in Central Eurasia have continuities in the material choice: animal pelts, or woven or felted wool. These surviving garments do indeed come from regions with harsh winter climates, and thus the choice to use an insulating animal pelt is obvious. Woven wool is warm, but not comparable to pelts, which have a layer of wind-blocking hide and insulating fur. A pelt or felted outer garment accompanies all preserved kurgan occupants in the Altai. Woven wools might have been for warmer temperatures, worn in multiples layers alongside a pelt garment, or explicitly selected for the burial.

Variations in the earliest construction details appear to be foremost practical, fitting a particular need. The most basic coat construction begins with square or rectangular-shaped panels. The straight side seam connecting the front and back panels is not only easy to sew, but it also gives the garment a loose fit and supports multiple layers underneath. The extra width furthermore allows the wearer to pull the front panels over the other: the further they cross the panels, the less cold air can enter.

Functional details pop up across the greater region: tapered sleeves and built-in mittens, tails that cover and protect the rear, and gores and godets that enable more agile movement. Though some coat details certainly facilitated riding, others do not. The long coats from Qaradöwä, which do not have vents, mean that fast movement or riding on horseback would have been difficult or even impossible.

²⁴ Rudenko says pony, otter, and another unidentified animal (Rudenko, *Frozen Tombs of Siberia*, 91). Polos'mak and Barkova simply writes pony fur and possibly beaver (Polos'mak and Barkova, *Kostium i tekstil'*, 44).

By the mid-first millennium BCE, more experimentation with patternmaking emerges. Makers tested new fits and silhouettes, such as with the semicircular tailed coat, and also were bolder with layered decorative elements, e.g., hair tufts, piping, and stitching detail. These elements might illuminate the social practices or aesthetic preferences of different community members.

Lastly, some communities used certain design features on garments to signal one's gender identity. Garments found on men and women in the Tarim and Turfan basins are often similar in terms of material and pattern. However, in some cases, for example, at Subeshi, men wear a shorter thigh- to knee-length coat, while women wear a longer calve- to ankle-length version. A top-handled ceramic pot painted with two figures from Tianshan Beilu in central Qumul also suggests gendered ways of wearing a similar garment type. The garment that each stylized figure wears reaches the knees; however, the figure with broad shoulders wears the coat cinched at the waist, while the figure with narrow shoulders wears the coat loose over the body.²⁵

The Overlapping Front Panels: A Surplice Neckline or Convertible Lapels?

While communities across Central Eurasia constructed the earliest surviving sleeved coats with long straight seams that allowed the wearer to pull the front panels over one another, neighboring communities in China had in the Bronze Age already began designing an outer garment with

²⁵ Zhu Tao has interpreted the figures as a woman and a man based on their shoulder breadth. The ceramic vessel is from grave 214, Tianshan Beilu-Street, Qumul, and dates to the early second millennium BCE. See Wieczorek and Lind, *Ursprünge der Seidenstrasse*, 136.

intentional overlapping front panels using a surplice neckline [**Illustration 1.1**.²⁶ This terminology indicates that the two front panels of the garment are triangular-shaped, and wrapped one over the other to create a V-shaped neckline. Fashion historians and designers also commonly describe this construction as a cross-over or wrap garment; the most well-known modern surplice-neckline garment for comparison is Diane von Furstenberg's iconic wrap dress or the ubiquitous bathrobe.

A surplice-neckline outer garment is similar to the kaftan in that it has an asymmetrical front closure with overlapping front panels. However, the kaftan's front panel patterns are cut from a generally rectangular shape, not triangular, like a surplice-neckline garment. The rectangular shape of the kaftan's front panels allows the neckline to be convertible: closed around the neckline, or pulled open to form lapels. Thus the kaftan is more versatile in terms of styling; the wearer can style in at least two distinctive ways: with the front panels closed around the neck to form a jewel or square neckline, or with the neckline loosened, and the panels pulled down to form lapels resulting in a V-neckline. A surplice-neckline garment can not form lapels, because the maker cuts the front panels according to a triangular-shaped pattern, in which a diagonal line passes down and across the chest. The front panels of a kaftan are woven, cut, and constructed along the horizontal and vertical lines of the warp and weft of the fabric, while for a surplice robe or jacket, a front panel would need at least one cut on the bias of the fabric.

Past scholarship has overlooked this defining distinction between these basic garment designs. This section examines the history of surplice-neckline garments to highlight that

²⁶ This garment detail is already visible in the archaeological record in the Bronze Age. For example, a sculptor carves a robe's neckline details into a jade figurine excavated from the tomb of Lady Hao at Yinxi in Anyang, Henan Province dated to ca. 1250 BCE. The robe depicted on the figurine is long, covered in interlocking geometric patterns, and belted with a transparent V-shaped neckline incised into the stone. See Krah, "Early Bronze Age Dress," 59.

although they achieve a similar fit and silhouette as the kaftan, they have fundamentally different patterns.

A surplice neckline is a hallmark of Chinese robes. The Chinese language describes this neckline on a long robe as a *shenyi* (深衣). However, the *shenyi* is far from unchanging for millennia; details of the neckline construction shift even within a dynastic milieu. For example, during the Han Dynasty, the bias cut of the left front panel of the robe might only extend halfway across the chest, as seen in a robe excavated from the tomb at Mawangdui (馬王堆) in Changsha [Figure 1.11].²⁷ In contrast, other robes have an unbroken diagonal neckline with a closure on the garment side, or the front panels might even be exaggerated and wrapped around the body, whether once or multiple times.²⁸

In the late first millennium BCE, shorter robes emerge in the archaeological record of the Xiongnu community who live to the north of China. Archaeologists excavated two well-preserved long, loose wool and silk robes with symmetrical front panels from kurgan 6 at Noin-Ula [Figure 1.12; Map 1.1].²⁹ The garment design utilizes numerous, inconsistently placed godets in the sleeves and body. According to representations depicted on a wool embroidery from kurgan 31 at the same cemetery, wearers styled such robes with the front panels pulled one over the other just enough to overlap at the natural waist, and secured this styling with a thin belt

²⁷ The female tomb occupant, Xinzhu, took this long robe of gauze silk, among others, to the afterlife in 168 BCE.

²⁸ This most intricate robe is referred to as a *xuren goubian* or ‘spiral garment’. For reconstructions and explanations of the Warring States and early Han spiral robes, see Zhou and Gao, *5000 Years of Chinese Costumes*, 25-27, 38-42.

²⁹ The display and photography of this robe give various inaccurate impressions. Its earliest publication plate photographs by Sergei Rudenko appear as a kaftan or a wrapped robe with one panel overlapping the other (Rudenko, *Kul'tura khunnov*); this seems intentional to cover the damaged area of the wearer’s front bottom right panel. The turning out of one panel and the sleeve to expose a contrasting lining, both in this photograph and on current display at the Hermitage, make it appear that the coat has a contrasting trim.

[Figure 1.13, left personage]. This styling of the coat visually formed a surplice neckline, but unlike the case of the Chinese robe, the neckline was not cut into the garment.

Alongside the long calf-length robe, the Xiongnu community also wore actual surplice-neckline garments **[Figure 1.14]**. The left front panel is rectangular with a triangular piece of fabric added to extend this panel over the right panel. A standing collar lays firmly against the neck; the wearer could secure the collar with preserved tie closures.³⁰ The previously mentioned embroidery also depicts this type of garment: the personage on the right wears a surplice-neckline jacket garment indicated by the corners of the garment's front panels pulled entirely to the opposite sides of the body with a contrasting decorative trim **[Figure 1.13]**.

Shorter, fitted robes and jackets with a surplice neckline continued to be worn in this region, as well as by northern Chinese dynasties and eastern kingdoms in the first millennium CE. Scholars refer to these robes paired with trousers as *ku zhe* (裤褶; literally meaning ‘trousers’) or ‘Xianbei-style’ dress; a term often used to indicate a contrast to the Chinese robe.³¹ However, these jackets still do not have the distinctive overlapping panels that can form lapels.

Across the steppe, numerous communities wore a short hip-length surplice-neckline jacket in the first millennium BCE. Though few organic materials survive across this region, the small metal plaques decorating some garments survive in unlooted graves allowing for garment

³⁰ Further fragments of coats with fur detailing and woven pattern fabrics have been excavated from kurgans 20 and 22. See these fragments recently published in Polos'mak and Bogdanov, *Noin-Ulinskaia kolleksiia*, 114-117, 132-133.

³¹ Current scholarship focuses heavily on arguments that mark these garments as ethnic identifiers, often belonging to and representing northern minorities or Central Asian peoples (e.g., Knauer, *The Camel's Load in Life and Death*, 109-110; for an extreme argument of ‘Greek-Macedonian’, see Wagner, “Ornamental Trousers,” 1070). However, as Kate Lingley has eloquently argued, this sartorial ensemble became a facet of everyday dress in China. She argues that it certainly did not have an ethnic identity attached to it by the later seventh century (Lingley, “Naturalizing the Exotic,” 57).

reconstruction. More numerous are figural representations on other objects, especially gold accoutrements and adornments.³²

The jacket's triangular-shaped front panels cause the jacket to droop—sometimes to the knees—at the front center of the garment, while the back is higher, around the thigh-length. This variation in length means that vents or gores are not necessary to make the garment functional for activities requiring agility, such as riding. The jacket's design also provides a generous amount of adjustable fabric when pulling the front panels one over the other. These garment features are visible in figural representations on the Scythian material culture of the Pontic Steppe: for example, the fine details of the gold comb from Solokha [Figure 1.15; Map 1.1], and also as a silhouetted rendering on small clothing plaques [Figure 1.16].

According to the placement of clothing plaques in burials, makers intended those community members to wear their jackets in one particular way. Gold plaques, trimming the edges of the jacket, trace only the entire length of the right front panel; for example, the plaque placement of the undisturbed tomb of the so-called Golden man at Issyk [Figure 1.17; Map 1.1].³³ The maker placed the left panel's plaques only until the point where the right panel begins to overlap the left.³⁴

By the late first millennium BCE, communities also wore a similar short surplice-neckline jacket in Iran and Central Asia. Though unlike the jacket's ubiquity as the male outerwear of the mid-first millennium BCE steppe, people wore a surplice-neckline jacket in Iran

³² Archaeologists dated several textile fragments from Crimea from the fourth century BCE to the first century CE, for example, wool fragment from kurgan 6 of the Seven Brothers Kurgans, tapestry woven wools from Kerch, and an embroidery wool fragment with riders from Pavlovskii Kurgan. See Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles*, 206-207, figs. 7.11-13.

³³ See also the excavation photographs in Akishev, *Kurgan Issyk*.

³⁴ On the reconstruction of this dress—including the reconstruction on display in the Kazakh National Museum in Nur-Sultan (Astana)—see Akishev, *Kurgan Issyk*, 43-52. Art historians and archaeologists, however, interpret plaque placement in different ways, creating differing reconstructions. Also see the work on dress reconstruction with plaques from Ukrainian kurgans by L. I. Klochko (Kločko, “Skythische Tracht”).

and Central Asia alongside other outerwear types, including a tunic, clasp coat (a coat secured with a single clasp on the chest), and a coat with extremely long sleeves (the so-called *kandys*).³⁵

The surplice-neckline jacket worn across Arsacid-era Iran is generally shorter than that worn on the steppe. The jacket hangs to the hips, evenly around the body, and exposes the top of the leggings. The well-known, larger-than-life bronze statue from Shami in Khuzestan Province wears a jacket with a broad, deep V-neckline created by the triangular front panels [**Figure 1.18; Map 1.1**.]³⁶ The hemline of each panel reaches across to the opposite side of the body. Unlike the front panels of the jacket worn on the Pontic Steppe, which the Scythians only loosely draped, this jacket's panels are wrapped securely across the body. The sculptor further defined the neckline with a wide, smooth trim along with the front panels. Artists of small artworks also emphasized the surplice neckline with decorative trim, for example, a group of carved shell plaques from Izeh [**Figure 1.19; Map 1.1**].

Communities wore a similar jacket in contemporary Central Asia. At the first-century CE burials at Tillya Tepe, perhaps belonging to the Saka, or perhaps the Kushans, a man sported a surplice-neckline jacket, as indicated by the clear line of thick square-shaped gold plaques, sweeping from the right shoulder to the left side of the waist [**Figure 1.20; Map 1.1**.]³⁷ The jacket type contrasted another longer coat closed with a large clasp at the center of the chest, and

³⁵ See Curtis, “Parthian Culture and Costume”; Pilipko, “O Kostiume Parfian i Parnov.” The sleeves of the so-called *kandys* are distinctively long, sometimes hanging over the hands or alternatively piled up around the wrist. See Goldman, “Later Pre-Islamic Riding Costume”; Curtis, “Parthian Costume and Headdress.”

³⁶ About the Shami statue and the later statue of Šāpur I, Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood writes that rectangular pieces of fabric sewn together, which overlap in the front, would have composed this type of garment; however comparing the width at the shoulder and the hemline makes this suggestion impossible. Vogelsang-Eastwood, “Sasanian ‘Riding-Coats’,” 219.

³⁷ See Schiltz, “Tillya Tepe,” 254-255, 265. excavator Victor Sariandi reconstructed the surplice-neckline garment as a short jacket, but Sergei Iatsenko has argued for a long robe. These reconstructions can be problematic because with no organic material remaining, it is difficult to determine which plaques, clasps, or other gold adornments belong to which layer of garments. What is clear is that a garment, whether long or short, did have a surplice neckline (Iatsenko, “Costume of the Yuech-Chihs,” 81-83).

an ankle-length dress worn by the women in the burials.³⁸ Artists depicted the distinctive neckline of the surplice-neckline jacket on multiple objects from the tombs at Tillya Tepe

[Figure 1.21].

At the Buddhist site of Butkara in the Swat Valley, some donors wear a short surplice-neckline jacket alongside donors dressed in more prevalent draped garments [Figure 1.22; Map 1.1].³⁹ Some jackets are reminiscent of the Shami sculpture's short jacket with a deep V-neckline and solid trim, while others are evocative of the more flashy Tillya Tepe tomb IV jacket with individual plaques carved along the jacket's borders.

Further north in Sogdiana, artists rendered a variety of outer garments, including a short jacket, on a large corpus of terracotta figurines dating between the second century BCE and the fourth century CE.⁴⁰ Fiona Kidd identifies the short jacket as a reoccurring outerwear type depicted on the small ceramic figurines from Afrasiab, which are distinct from other garment types, including a long coat and an extra long-armed coat [Figure 1.23; Map 1.1].⁴¹ The artist depicts the front panels slightly overlapping on the jacket, but ultimately fall vertically down the center of the body, and are not wrapped across the body like those typically represented in Iran or

³⁸ See drawings of the dress layers in each grave by Sergei Iatsenko and E. Kurkina (Iatsenko, "Costume of the Yuech-Chihs").

³⁹ Authors usually label this dress as some mix of 'Parthian donor' and 'Sakan costume'. For example, Chantal Fabrégues identifies these donors and their clothing as 'Parthian', while V. N. Pilipko calls the Butkaran examples specifically Sakan (Fabrégues, "Indo-Parthian Beginnings"; Pilipko, "O Kostiume Parfian i Parnov").

⁴⁰ Fiona Kidd, building on V. A. Meshkeris' work, wrote her doctoral dissertation on the terracotta figurines of the Samarkand region, and she is currently working the section dedicated to the pre-fifth century figurines into a monograph. In her doctoral work, she focuses primarily on figurines from the sites of Afrasiab, Tal-i Barzu, and Kafyr-Kala (Kidd, "Samarkand Region of Sogdiana"). A *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* article summarized her project conclusions (Kidd, "Costume of the Samarkand Region," 36).

⁴¹ Kidd uses the word 'upper body garment' and 'coat', distinguishing between a short or long variant (her numbering D02). She points out that the front panels always fasten, overlapping one another (Kidd, "Costume of the Samarkand Region," 39, fig. 5, 6). The figures often wear the long coat draped over the shoulders with the sleeves hanging empty to the sides, and these most often appear to be women: see terracotta figurines (Pugachenkova and Rempel', *Výdaiozhchesia pamiatniki*, 44-45; Kidd, "Costume of the Samarkand Region of Sogdiana," 40-41), sculptures decorating the palace of Khalchaian in Uzbekistan (Pugachenkova, *Skul'ptura Khalchaiana*), and also the clasp coat worn by donors—men here—depicted in Buddhist monasteries at Peshawar and Shotorak (Pilipko, "Costume of the Parthians," figs. 10-7, 13-3).

southern Central Asia. However, the regions do share an emphasis on the ornamental trim: on the clay figurine from Afrasiab, an artist stamped a circle pattern along the front panel edges and hemline. Artists illustrate such jackets with varying hemlines, and variation in how far the front panels are pulled over one another, in Khorezmia and Bactria/Tokharistan [Figure 1.24].⁴²

Communities continue to wear a short surplice-neckline jacket in Sasanian Iran, as represented on the monumental 6.7 m high stone statue of the King of Kings Šāpur I in a cave near Bišapur [Figure 1.25; Map 1.1].⁴³ The king wears his jacket with the two triangular-shaped panels pulled tightly around his waist, securing them with a belt. The Sasanian version has a narrower neckline with wider shoulder seams than that of the Arsacid era. On the Shami sculpture, the artist imitates a smooth fabric with smooth parallel lines bunched in realistic regions of pull and stress; on the Šāpur sculpture, the artist creates curious ripples over the entire garment, which Vogelsang-Eastwood suggests might represent a pelt, possibly sheep fleece.⁴⁴

In summary, the archaeological record of first millennium BCE and early first millennium CE Central Eurasia does not include the kaftan's iconic asymmetrical front panel closure with lapels. Makers across the region cut surplice-neckline jackets with distinct

⁴² From Khorezmia, see, for example, figurines from Janbas-Kala (Tolstov, *Ancient Khorezm*, 72) or the wall paintings from Akchakhan-Kala (Kidd and Brite, "Colour in Context," 38). For Bactria, see, for example, the wall painting from temple DT-9, Dalverzin Tepe (Pugachenkova, *Dal'verzintepe*), and the plaque, perhaps once composing a belt, from Takht-i Sangin (Kaniuth, Il'yasov, and Gruber, "Decorated Ivory Belt," 362-364). In both the late Arsacid west and the Kushan east, figural representations wore a longer surplice-neckline garment as well. At Dura Europos and Hatra, representations show a garment reaching to the knees. In contrast, at Taxila and Mathura, the garment falls to a similar length or even longer to the ankles. For the western Arsacid dress, see Pilipko, "Costume of the Parthians," figs. 11-5, 12-5; Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, figs. 143, 145. For Kushan dress, see Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, figs. 3, 23, 48, 55.

⁴³ Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood is the first to draw attention to and distinguish between a tunic, cloak, and coat/kaftan in Sasanian era figural representations, specifically on rock reliefs (Vogelsang-Eastwood, "Sasanian 'Riding-Coats,'" 211). Although this jacket is an often-cited Sasanian example, it is one of few. Vogelsang-Eastwood draws a comparison between the Šāpur jacket and a sardonyx seal at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The single, central figure dresses in a jacket with a surplice neckline, clearly indicated by the diagonal incisions made across the chest. However, the hemline of this jacket is much longer, falling just above the knees. The wavy lines on the skirting edge furthermore indicate fullness, thus stepping away from the design and overall silhouette afforded by the short jacket. See also Garosi, *The Colossal Statue of Shapur*.

⁴⁴ Vogelsang-Eastwood, "Sasanian 'Riding-Coats,'" 219.

triangular-shaped front panel pattern pieces with no evidence or possibility for a lapel.

Communities also preferred shorter garments without an attached skirting, as the hemline often only fell to the hips or thighs. The shorter length, which eliminated the need for vents or a more complex pattern with the gore and godet or flared skirting, was well suited for activities with much movement, and many representations do indeed show wearers in active situations. The ability to alter the closure with a belt, whether pulling the belt tighter for warmth or loosening it to cool down or stepping indoors, also makes the outerwear ideal for physical activity.

In this era, the short jacket is almost exclusively associated with men across Central Eurasia. In the fifth to fourth century BCE steppe cultures, men regularly wore a pelt or fur jacket based on the textures rendered on representations, while communities dressed their elites in ostentatious gold-plaque trimmed jackets for kurgans burials. In Arsacid and early Sasanian Iran, and Central Asia, men wore the jacket alongside other outer garments. The jacket's prevalence in imagery ranging from royal portraiture to battle and hunting scenes to religious imagery suggests it was used and associated with a wide range of people and activities.

The Attached Skirting: Robe-like Kaftans and Kaftan-Like Robes

Outer garments with a skirting appear in the early first millennium CE. Makers attached the skirting to the garment bodice at the natural waistline or the hips, and the hemline usually hung between the knees and ankles. The skirting flared, meaning that the pattern required more material towards the hemline, adding volume or shape. The maker achieved the flare—whether slight or dramatic—by joining multiple panels together, or inserting gores or godets into a straight seam.

A distinct attached skirting on outer garments first appears on coats with a chest or neck clasp in the early first millennium CE. Artists render skirting on Kushan dynastic portraiture, especially by the reign of Kanishka I.⁴⁵ On a stone sculpture from Mathura, a sculptor renders Kanishka's coat with a fitted bodice, but from the waist, the skirting flares dramatically, reading almost three times the width of the waist [**Figure 1.26; Map 1.1**]. Sets of parallel lines carved around the waist and down the skirting indicate gathered fabric, giving the skirt volume. Beading adorns the edges of the front panels, Kanishka wears the skirting panels flipped open, exposing an inner lining. Kanishka's portrait on his coinage— as on the coins of his predecessors and successors— shows him wearing a skirted coat, stylized as an equilateral triangle place between a circular head, and two thin arms and legs.⁴⁶ Artists sculpted similar sartorial details on princely in-the-round and relief sculpture at the Surkh Kotal temple complex, and sculptures of donors show a similar skirted coat alongside a fashionable tunic at the Buddhist centers of Hadda and Shotorak.⁴⁷

The early Sasanians also wear a skirted clasp coat [**Figure 1.27**]. The clasp coat with long sleeves and a single point of closure across the neck differs in cut and silhouette from earlier Arsacid-era clasp coats. On these earlier coats, the side seams are long and straight, but on Sasanian-period rock reliefs, the coat curves around the hip or even dramatically flares with accentuated line work twisted and turning to illustrate the folds of fabric on royal figures.

⁴⁵ Scholars agree on the relative dating of the Kushan Dynasty but not the absolute dating because of conflicting textual sources. Even Kanishka I's accession is hotly debated as either 78 or 142 CE. See a summary of the inscriptional sources and their scholarly arguments in Harmatta et al., *History of Civilizations*, 240-246.

⁴⁶ Rosenfeld writes that the dress of the Mathura statue is of a kind not replicated in his coins or by his successors. He compares this particular garment with that of a Bodhisattva from Sarnath, which I do not understand. The coin images appear to be stylized representations of the coat. Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, 144.

⁴⁷ These figures wearing a skirted coat are usually labeled ‘Parthian’ or ‘Indo-Scythian’ to create a contrast with individuals wearing a tunic. See Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, figs. 93, 94, (Hadda), 98a, 108, 111 (Shotorak), 119, 120, 121 (Surkh Kotal).

Archaeologists have excavated many skirted robes from graves in the Tarim and Turfan basins. In the 2010 *Secrets of the Silk Road* exhibition catalog, Elizabeth Wayland Barber calls attention to the shift from earlier straight-sided coats to newly emerging robes with a tailored bodice and defined waist.⁴⁸ The makers do not cut the front panels of the robes symmetrically, like the skirted coats to the west in the Kushan and Sasanian empires, but have overlapping front panels with designated 'top' and 'bottom' panels, like the Chinese robe. Thus several robes excavated from the region do combine a defined waist, attached skirting, and overlapping front panels that form a surplice neckline.

On the south rim of the Tarim Basin, a community dressed the deceased in robes of various designs in the third- and fourth-century cemetery of Niyä (Chinese: Minfeng) [Map 1.1]. In a couple's burial, both the man and woman wear robes [Figure 1.28]. The man, positioned on the left, wears an outermost silk robe hanging almost to his knees. The robe has a fitted bodice and flared skirting, which the maker created by shaping pattern pieces from long cuts of fabric. They placed two vents in the back of the skirting and trimmed the front panels – which wrap around the neck, creating a shawl collar – and cuffs in the same fabric as the body of the garment. The maker adds a red and green checkered stripe to the hemline, arms, cuffs, and frontal panels. Interestingly, this man's second inner cream robe does have an attached skirting [Figure 1.29].⁴⁹

Another well-published robe of allover woven polychrome patterning comes from the contemporary site of Yingpan located in the northeastern Tarim Basin [Figure 1.30].⁵⁰ Like the

⁴⁸ Barber, "Early Textiles," 78.

⁴⁹ See catalogue entries 19a (female) and 19b (male) in Zhao and Yu, *Legacy of the Desert King*.

⁵⁰ Yingpan is located west of the Kingdom of Kroraïna (Shanshan), to which Niyä and Loulan belong. Most scholars date this grave to the Chinese Wei and Jin periods, the second to the fifth centuries CE (Li, "Textiles of the Second to Fifth Century," 243). A few scholars date it later but based namely on formally comparing motifs, e.g., Sheng, "Textiles from the Silk Road," 40.

man's outer robe from Niyä grave 3, a maker cut the bodice and skirting together from a long piece of fabric.⁵¹ They inserted gores into each side for volume and cut vents up to the hip for movement. The front panels lay across the center of the body, but not entirely to the side, as Niyä robe. The maker laid the fabric composing the front panels in two different directions, apparently utilizing the available fabric for an allover design, but at the cost of not aligning the patterns.⁵² Several publications mention a 'lapel' on the robe, but this is a false use of terminology; the Yingpan robe exemplifies the surplice neckline.

Women also wear robes, but the skirting is typically longer, reaching to the mid-calves or ankles. For example, the female occupant accompanying the man with the checkered outer robe in Niyä grave 3 wore a polychrome robe with excessively long arms reaching the calves [**Figure 1.28**.⁵³ The maker contrasts the robe's body with a thick trim of the same blue and orange color scheme along the edge of the front opening, cuffs, and hemline. The community dress the women buried in Niyä grave 5 and grave 6 in multiple layers of solid colored robes with an inner dress, pants, and skirt.⁵⁴

Archaeologists excavated a silken child's robe with distinctive voluminous trumpet sleeves dated to the early first millennium CE at Loulan-Gu Cheng [**Figure 1.31; Map 1.1**]. The maker tailors the garment through cut-to-size pattern piecing: the bodice panels curve inward towards a narrow waist and an attached skirting flares abruptly by way of triangular-shaped

⁵¹ Although the material, weave, and pattern construction vary from those used at Niyä. Barber and many others want to place this garment's production further west. Scholars base this primarily on the western patterns, especially the naked putti, but Barber grounds her suggestion in the long history of double-weaves from the Mediterranean. Barber, "More Light on the Xinjiang Textiles," 38.

⁵² Li, "Textiles of the Second to Fifth Century," 247; Li, "Yingpan 95BYYM15," 91, fig. 10.

⁵³ Zhao and Yu, *Legacy of the Desert King*.

⁵⁴ Wang, "Mummies of Niyä," 134.

pattern piecing—without additional godets. The front left panel pulled across the body, and the child could secure it with a built-in thick waist plus two ties along the skirting. The garment's tailoring and the placement of the color blocks create a sharp hourglass silhouette.⁵⁵

Though most robes of this milieu use a surplice neckline, some have one or two rectangular-shaped front panels that pull together all elements composing a kaftan. In the previously mentioned couple's burial at Niyä, the woman wore a light blue silk kaftan/robe under her outermost patterned robe [**Figure 1.32**]. The maker joined the bodice to a flared skirting; the front panels are rectangular, the left overlapping the right. The maker added ties for closure at the neck and waist seam and a standing white collar. The kaftan/robe has long tapering arms with thick white cuffs that complement the collar and trim lining the edge of the bodice panel.

Another robe/kaftan from Loulan-Gu Cheng Cemetery has a front right panel that almost entirely lays over the right [**Figure 1.33**]. Rather than a surplice neckline, the top panel has a rounded jewel neckline that reaches almost to the back of the neck and then cuts off. The robe/kaftan has long sleeves and a fitted bodice. The skirting is not attached, but flares significantly and has vents, one cut into each side. Significant wear to the fabric in this area suggests that one worn it with a belt around the waist. After a maker sewed the garment, an artist painted small Buddhist vignettes on the white silk.⁵⁶

A miniature kaftan found with the occupant buried at Yingpan most interestingly combines a surplice neckline with a rectangular front panel that can form a lapel [**Figure 1.34**].

⁵⁵ Another contemporary garment from the Loulan-Gu Cheng cemetery also has trim, arms, and closures in bold color blocks. Though missing the entire lower portion, this garment differs in construction from the trumpet-sleeve robe. The arms are long and attached on a 'T' like earlier garments. However, it is unclear if the garment may have had a similar skirting. See cat. 134 in Wieczorek and Lind, *Ursprünge der Seidenstrasse*.

⁵⁶ Most of these images are small floral compositions, but, positioned in the center of the chest on the front right panel, a Buddha stands on a lotus. See Wieczorek and Lind, *Ursprünge der Seidenstrasse*, 236.

The maker paired this bodice with an attached skirting, which flared out with the help of godets inserted on either side.

In summary, makers in the Sasanian and Kushan empires developed a long, attached skirting on coats. However, a combination of the skirting with overlapping front panels appears sporadically within the second to fourth centuries in the Tarim and Turfan basins. This experimentation is furthermore made clear with the shifting placement of the side closures: sometimes to the left and sometimes to the right, sometimes just off from center and sometimes entirely on the side. Garments with a surplice neckline are most prevalent, but anomalous garments with front panels that can technically turn down to form lapels emerge in this milieu. However, it is unclear if any of the wearers styled these garments with a lapel pulled open. The wearer of the painted robe/kaftan [**Figure 1.33**] did not likely not wear the panel pulled open, as the tab fitted along the right panel's neckline would hang awkwardly. The woman from Niyä too may not have worn her blue robe/kaftan because the high standing collar would keep it from resting flat [**Figure 1.32**]. However, a Yingpan inhabitant could have styled the miniature kaftan with at least one lapel pulled open [**Figure 1.34**].

The Earliest Kaftans

Some of the robes excavated from third- and fourth-century cemeteries in the Tarim and Turfan basins are quasi-kaftans, composed of most of the garment's hallmark features. The only detail that is not consistently and intentionally present is the convertible lapel on the front panels. Artists painted one of the earliest representations of a kaftan, including the signature lapel, at Kizil, discussed at the beginning of this chapter [**Figure 1.1**]. Scientists dated the panels with

sixteen sword-bearers using carbon 14— although not without some debate— between 430 and 557 CE. This dating— the latest date set using this scientific method— brings the fifth-century Tarim Basin to the foreground as a critical moment for some of the earliest constructed and intentionally worn kaftans.⁵⁷

However, the wall paintings from Kizil are not an isolated example; they are merely the ones now housed in a highly accessible collection with resources and tools readily available for undertaking collaborative research. Further west from the Tarim Basin in western Central Asia, several representations of the kaftan on wall paintings also date roughly to the fifth century. Archaeologists excavated a set of wall paintings depicting men wearing kaftans at Dilberjin (Dil'berdzhin) in northern Afghanistan, around 50 kilometers northwest of Balkh [**Figures 1.35a, 1.35b; Map 1.1**]. The wall paintings once lined the walls of a large room— 5,8 x 8,5 m— located along the inner edge of the walled city, and near a temple.⁵⁸ Positioned above a built-in bench lining the room, a painting fragment from the northern wall depicts a row of twelve men in knee-high boots and trousers. At least six of these men wear a kaftan [Figures 1.35a, 1.35b]. In 1979 archaeologist Irina Kruglikova dated the paintings based on their archaeological context to the fourth or fifth century CE.⁵⁹ In 1985 Boris Litvinskii and Viktor Solov'ëv suggested a fifth- or sixth-century dating based on its similarities to other wall paintings, including that of the sixteen

⁵⁷ See footnote 2 in this chapter.

⁵⁸ See map in Kruglikova, “Nastennye rospisi,” 121. For a discussion of the adjacent temple, see Kruglikova, *Dil'berdzhin*.

⁵⁹ Kruglikova describes these paintings as part of a second painting layer (covered by a third), which belongs to a fifth phase of construction at the site. Kruglikova, “Nastennye rospisi,” 122, 143.

sword-bearers at Kizil.⁶⁰ Based on the painted inscriptions in the plaques by the Dilberjin figure's heads, some scholars concur with a fifth-century dating, while others would prefer to date it to the fourth or even third century CE.⁶¹

In the painting of the twelve men wearing knee-length garments, six men sport a front-fastening garment, while the other six dress themselves in an over-the-head garment. Based on the two fully preserved figures on the far right, this front-fastening garment is a kaftan complete with an out-turned lapel on the wearer's right front panel [**Figure 1.35a**]. Artists at Dilberjin furthermore depicted men wearing kaftans with an out-turned lapel on fragmentary wall paintings from neighboring rooms and buildings.⁶² These kaftans are comparable with those from Kizil not only in fit, silhouette, and trim placement, but also through pairing with a belt, trousers, knee-high boots, and an under tunic visible at the neckline.

Archaeologists excavated a ceramic vessel filled with Buddhist manuscripts from one of two stupas at Gyaur-Kala in Sasanian-period Merv, in present-day Turkmenistan [**Figure 1.36a**]. An artist painted the two-handled vessel with a feast on one side, a hunt on the opposite, and

⁶⁰ Litvinskii and Solov'ëv, *Srednevekovia kul'tura Tokharistana*, 139. Deborah Klimburg-Salter also uses this later fifth to sixth century dating (Klimburg-Salter, *Kingdom of Bāmiyān*, 37). Before the C14 dating, Russian scholars had already suggested an earlier art historical dating of the sixth century for the wall paintings of sixteen sword-bearers at Kizil (Marshak and Krikis, "Chilekskie chashi," 78, fn. 46). Western scholars, until basing their decision on the C14 dates, typically placed it in the seventh century.

⁶¹ Vorob'eva-Desyatovskaia dates present Brahmi inscriptions to the fifth century ("Nadpis' Brakhmi iz Dil'berdzhina," ed. and trans. Vorob'ëva-Desiatovskaia, vol. 1, 170–71), while Livshits dates the Bactrian inscriptions earlier to the third to fourth century ("Nadpisi iz Dil'berdzhina," ed. and trans. Livshits, vol 1, 163–69). The most recent 2006 catalogue by Francine Tissot, which pulls together the National Museum of Afghanistan's collection as of 1985, generally dates the site of Dil'berjin from the second century BCE to the third century CE (Tissot, *National Museum of Afghanistan*, 73).

⁶² For example, in room 16-2, also lined with a sufa, a wall painting fragment has multiple registers separated with pearl strands. On the lower register, several donors face one another holding drinking vessels with a fire altar in the center. The participants are both men and women. To the right stands another kaftan-clad man, nearly double the size of the others. A colossal figure is seated in the register above, perhaps a god or goddess, a composition similar to later Sogdian paintings. Archaeologists found other small fragments with figures wearing a kaftan in rooms 16-3 and 16-4. In 16-5 on the south wall are two more registers of seated banqueters in kaftans. See Kruglikova, "Nastennye rospisi."

mourning scenes under each handle. Only in the hunting scene does a personage, an archer, wear a kaftan. Curiously, however, he has it only half pulled on [**Figure 1.36b**]. The archer pulled the left side of the kaftan on over the arm and shoulder, while the right arm of the garment flutters in the wind, perhaps providing more freedom of movement for the arm to pull the arrow. The left side of the kaftan has an out-turned lapel with a sky blue lining that contrasts with the white fabric of the garment body. Scholars first dated the vessel's archaeological context in stupa 2 to the third to fourth century CE, but have more recently argued for a late fifth- or sixth-century date.⁶³

Images on coins and seals illuminate which sartorial details communities found most significant. Small objects require artists to select critical features to fit into small tight spaces. Kushan mints are the first to place a front-fastening outer garment, the clasp coat, on both bust and full-body portraits of dynasts.⁶⁴ Kushan kings wear long clasp coats— but never a kaftan with the hallmark lapels— from the first through the fourth centuries. The Kidarites then carry on this tradition of sporting a clasp coat on their mints in the fourth and fifth centuries. Not until the second half of the fifth century do the Alkhan dynasts begin depicting themselves in a garment that could be a kaftan [**Figure 1.37**]. On this drachm, Zabocco wears a garment with a triangular-shaped imprint stretching across his upper body, framed by a pearl-beaded necklace at the neckline and a belt around the waist. The triangular imprint could potentially be two lapels pulled open; a second smaller triangular imprint perhaps indicates an inner lining, not unlike

⁶³ The first early third- to fourth-century dating is based on M. E. Masson's excavations at Giaur-Kala (Koshelenko, *Kul'tura Parfii*, 96-97). For a summary of scholars with later dating, see Compareti, "The Painted Vase of Merv."

⁶⁴ See images in the recent catalog by Jongeward and Cribb (Jongeward and Cribb, *Kushan, Kushano-Sasanian, and Kidarite Coins*), but note that they describe the coat as a 'kaftan', despite it lacking the hallmark lapels e.g., the description of Huvishka coin 733, 253, or coin 744, 254.

those depicted on the kaftans at Kizil and Dilberjin. More defined lapels appear subsequently on Hephthalite coins in the first half of the sixth century [Figure 1.38].⁶⁵

According to material evidence, the kaftan emerges in the archeological record in the second half of the fifth century CE in various geographical locations across Central Asia. Scholars have suggested that the Kushans—based on a misunderstanding of the garment details—or the so-called wave of Hunnic invasions in Central Asia, i.e., the Chionites, Kidarites, and Hephthalites disseminated ‘nomadic riding costume’, i.e., the kaftan, across Eurasia. Scholars tend to generalize these ‘invasions’. Depending on the narrative, Hunnic populations forced the settled populations to adopt their dress, or the local communities willingly embraced it as a new fashion.⁶⁶ Some scholars have pointed out this shift in the dress worn in specific regions, notably in the historical region of Tokharistan. Here they have connected new fashions with the Hephthalites who moved into this region in the fifth and sixth centuries and pinned the garment to an expression of ethnic identity.⁶⁷ Other scholars have discussed the kaftan in neighboring regions as a fashionable remnant of Hephthalite—or generally ‘Hunnic’—dress.⁶⁸ Why would diverse community members of diverse polities merely adopt the sartorial tastes of foreign

⁶⁵ The kaftan’s lapel or lapels become a hallmark detail rendered on coinage of the region. See the coins, for example, of the Nezaks and Turks in Alram et al., “Das Antlitz des Fremden.”

⁶⁶ See a recent version of this generalization in Valerie Hansen’s survey of the Silk Road, where she writes that though the Sogdians “continued to speak their own language [, they] modified their clothing and hairstyles to conform with the demands of their new, nomadic conquerors—the Huns, Kidarites, Hephthalites, and Turks, who gained control of Samarkand...” (Hansen, *Silk Road*, 201). Elfriede Knauer consistently argued for a vague process of adopting materials of other cultures, writing, “[o]nce [an object is] recognized as useful and status—be they weapons, tool, garments, habits or vocabulary—they tend to be passed on and accepted in appropriate environments. It was eminently mobile mounted tribes of the Eurasian steppe-belt that furthered and precipitated their dissemination” (Knauer, “Quisquiliae Sinicae,” 411).

⁶⁷ Al’baum, “Raskopki Balalyk-Tepe,” 88–89; Maitdinova, *Kostium rannesrednevekovogo Tokharistana*, 135–143; Il’yasov, “Hephthalite Terracotta,” 190.

⁶⁸ Iatsenko, *Kostium drevnei Evrazii*, 277–278; Kurbanov, “Hephthalites,” 80–84; Vogelsang-Eastwood, “Sasanian ‘Riding-Coats’,” 223–224; Peck, “Representation of Costumes,” 123.

invaders? Why did this particular garment, the kaftan, become the sartorial staple for various occasions for diverse communities spread across Central Eurasia?

Though the fifth and sixth centuries were indeed turbulent with the mass movements of people, especially compared with the earlier fourth century, these migrations and territory shifts also sparked a search for new modes of mass communication. As the fifth century turned to the sixth, the Sasanian Empire, with its capital hundreds of kilometers away in Ctesiphon, no longer held sway over large swathes of Central Asia; autonomous city-states burgeoned and thrived across eastern and western Central Asia; nomadic communities established their presence, building strong relationships with their neighbors. Central Eurasia was becoming increasingly polycentric. Communities established and maintained a variety of institutional frameworks to facilitate transcultural communication. In the following three chapters, I explore how and why culturally diverse communities utilized the kaftan as a non-verbal language. I approach the contexts and varying motives for expressing oneself with the kaftan through the social occasions of a banquet, hunt, and a funeral.

CHAPTER II

THE KAFTAN AND THE BANQUET

A row of men settles into the evening's festivities with elegance and poise [**Figures 2.1, 2.2**].

Engaged in conversation, each attendee sits upright and cross-legged atop a plush cushion.

Most of the men masterfully balance a shallow drinking bowl with two fingers, while one holds a sturdy tankard; one attendee raises his bowl for a toast. Some of the men also hold bejeweled flywhisks to keep themselves comfortable during the evening's festivities. To the left of the attendees, a attendant turns to offer additional refreshments and, farther on, a smaller figure in white rests upon a cane, apparently overseeing the festivity [**Figure 2.1c**]. Most striking are the attendees' vivid kaftans.

These banqueters, life-size at about 95 cm high seated, were part of a larger composition that adorned the walls of a house excavated in the Sogdian city of Panjikent (Pendzhikent), in what today is Tajikistan [**Map 0.1**.¹ This room (number 10 in sector XVI; hereafter XVI: 10) belonged to a large residence that its excavators dated to the first half of the eighth century CE [**Map 2.1**.² The surviving painting sections come from the southeast corner of the room [**Map 2.2**]. The largest and best-preserved three-piece section of the painting (*c.* 3.5 m long) includes five banqueters and one attendant [**Figure 2.1a**.³ Another section preserves the lower torso and arms of a sixth life-sized banqueter, and another the

¹ This site has numerous spellings based on transliterations from Sogdian, Tajik, and Russian: Pendzhikent and Piandzhikent are the most common variations from the Russian.

² The dating is based on the house's stratigraphy as well as coins found within the space (Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 20, 24-25, 56-57; Kulakova, "Art of Sogdiana," 183).

³ One attendant is complete, while a knee and hanging pearl roundel-patterned serviette appear to belong to a second attendant [**Figure 2.2 personage 2**].

figure with a cane [**Figures 2.1b, 2.1c**.⁴ Aleksandr M. Belenitskii, the Russian historian of Sogdian art and director of the Panjikent archaeological expedition from 1954 to 1977, noted that at the time of the room's excavation in 1961 paint traces indicated that banqueters once adorned all four walls of the room [**Figure 2.3**.⁵

This chapter investigates the role of the kaftan in images of banqueting in gathering spaces in Sogdiana, and how visitors to those spaces might have encountered and experienced such imagery during banqueting events. Surveys of Sogdian art often include details of banqueters. Discussions usually label the banquet as representative of quotidian imagery;⁶ consider the collective occupational identity of banqueters;⁷ or include Sogdian representations of the banquet alongside that of the hunt in studies mapping the long tradition of *razm u bazm*, that is fighting and the feast, in the visual culture of greater Iran.⁸ Scholarship specifically exploring Sogdian dress and textiles have included the banqueters in chronological categorizations of textile patterns and drawn ethnographic parallels to twentieth-century Central Asian costumes;⁹ however, prior investigations have not discussed

⁴ The fragment with another banqueter does include the arm cuff of a seventh preserved banqueter attendee [**Figure 2.2 personages 9, 10**]. Thank you to Larisa Kulakova at the State Hermitage who first directed me to the figures depicted in these two sections, and who also kindly gave me the opportunity to study them in person at the State Hermitage's Staraya Derevnia Restoration and Storage Facilities.

⁵ Belenitskii, *Monumental'noe iskusstvo Pendzhikenta*, 29.

⁶ For example, see Belenitskii, *Kunst der Sogden*, 208; Azarpay, *Sogdian Painting*, 117-118; and Marshak and Belenitskii, "Paintings of Sogdiana," 63-64.

⁷ Merchants for XXIV:10 based on a black wallet hanging from the banqueters' belts rather than a long sword (Belenitskii and Marshak, "L'art de Piandjikent," 18; Belenitskii, *Mittelasiens: Kunst der Sogden*, 110-111), a celebration at the home of a granary owner for XXV:28 based on the harvest scene connected to the banquet in the register above (Marshak and Raspopova, "Wall Paintings," 157, 172), and artists for XXIV:1 based on the tool cases attached to their belts (Marshak, *Legends, Tales, and Fables*, 20-21). However, the merchants also wear these tool cases; the identification has since been questioned, for example, by Larisa Kulakova (Kulakova, "Art of Sogdiana," 184).

⁸ See e.g. Sims, *Peerless Images*.

⁹ For example, see Belenitskii, *Kunst der Sogden*, 111; Marshak, "So-called Zandanī Silks," figs. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33; and Raspopova, "Textiles Represented in Sogdian Murals," figs. 36, 42, 43, 44, 45; Marshak, "Pre-Islamic Painting," 121. For discussions of dress, see Lobachëva, "Srednevekovyi kostium rannesrednevekovoi epokhi," 20-21.

the wall paintings with banqueters in relation to the architectural spaces they adorned, nor to banqueting practices.

Researchers can glean hints about the significance of banqueting within the Sogdian culture from diverse sources. Archaeologists uncovered several Sogdian documents about foodstuff deliveries at Mt. Mug, including one written by a wine distributor listing how many *kapicha* (a Sogdian measurement) of wine he dispensed on specific days, including the wine for an evening banquet that took place on the 28th day of the second month of the Sogdian calendar.¹⁰ Chinese sources comment on the variety and potency of the wines produced in both Central Asia and Iran.¹¹ A rich array of drinking and serving vessels of precious metals, typically of gilded silver, such as those seen in this and in other Sogdian paintings, have been discovered across Eurasia.¹² Most telling are the wall paintings depicting banquets that adorn the walls of gathering rooms in Panjikent homes.

In this chapter, I argue that the Sogdians and neighboring Central Eurasian communities utilized the kaftan to express a range of subtle and mutable social distinctions at the banquet. Before turning to an analysis of painting XVI:10, I first introduce gathering rooms within the private houses of Panjikent's residential area and explain how several architectural features can help to make sense of Sogdian banqueting practices. I then analyze the representation of banqueters in XVI:10, focusing on dress details to reconstruct the sartorial code that individuals encountering this image could have recognized. In the second half of the chapter, I travel to Tokharistan and western China to explore what kaftan-wearing practices may have been mutually intelligible across cultural borders.

¹⁰ *Sogdiiskie dokumenty*, trans. Bogoliubov and Smirnova, 29-31 (document B 2).

¹¹ Schafer, *Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, 144-146.

¹² e.g., Marshak, *Silberschätze des Orients*.

Sogdian Panjikent

Floor plans of excavated houses and their rooms' architectural features can provide insight into Sogdian banqueting practices. Within the residential area of Panjikent, family homes were often structurally entangled with the home of another. Two houses sometimes shared a wall or distinct entrances to two separate familial spaces divided a single dwelling.¹³ In her 1990 study on the residential homes of Panjikent, archaeologist Valentina Raspopova describes the houses at Panjikent as unique in their floor plans.¹⁴ However, there is a degree of consistency in directing traffic flow according to the placement of entry points, corridors, and gathering spaces. Architects built homes around a main corridor, 1.5 to over 3 m wide, or a series of corridors, either of which starts at the house's street entrance or a courtyard for huge houses. Architects placed most gathering rooms with their entryway directly off a main ground floor corridor. This placement allowed guests to enter from the street and reach the gathering room without trespassing through another room, especially more private familial spaces, many of which were on the second floor.¹⁵

The chief architectural component demarcating rooms for gathering people at Panjikent and in greater Sogdiana was the *sufa*. This built-in bench of clay, usually around 40 cm high and around a meter deep, traced the perimeter of a quadrilateral room with a protrusion before the deity wall or a niche [Figure 2.3; Map 2.2].¹⁶ The most common type of room for gatherings is termed by Russian archaeologists a reception hall (Russian *paradnii*

¹³ Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 14.

¹⁴ Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 143, fig. 78.

¹⁵ Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 143. Home layouts with a corridor that keeps guests from walking through other rooms of the house, or having a separate entrance near the gathering room are found among other societies with a robust feasting and drinking culture, for example, fifth to fourth century BCE Greek homes, which often incorporated an *andron* along a corner of a house, see Dunbabin, *Roman Banquet*, 36-37.

¹⁶ The depth varied more, usually about 1 m, but in some cases nearly 2.5 m, which could have allowed for two rows of seated individuals, but more likely simply added extra space for stretching out. For example in XVI:10 the *sufa* is around 1 m deep, while in XXV:28 the *sufa* is much deeper at almost 2.5 m on the north and south walls.

zal) and characteristically has a square-shaped plan, sometimes with wooden columns demarcating the corners and supporting a wooden raftered ceiling; high walls, which accommodated multiple registers of wall paintings; and a protrusion in the *sufa* opposite the doorway.¹⁷ If entertained in this type of room, a guest would first see the patron deity typically painted on the wall across from the entrance (called the cult or deity wall in Russian literature), under which the *sufa* protruded. After fully entering the space, a guest could assess the walls to the left and the right, adorned with multiple registers of paintings.¹⁸

A second less-common type of gathering room is typologized by Russian archaeologists as a ‘shrine’ or a ‘home sanctuary’ (Russian *kapella* or *domashnoe sviatilishche*). Though the two types of rooms share features of a built-in bench and an open central floor plan, the ‘shrine’ has some unique features including an entrance through a vestibule, a lower ceiling, a rectangular plan, and a niche on a podium rather than a painted deity wall.¹⁹ Unlike in the reception room, one needed to navigate around the protruding podium. This layout forces one to evaluate the room in its entirety upon entry. Rather than moving one’s sight from the center out along the sides as in the reception hall, in the so-called shrine, one would follow the walls circularly. Scholars have attributed profane and secular uses to the shrine; however, in either reading and like the reception hall, these rooms crucially brought individuals together.²⁰

¹⁷ Kulakova, “Art of Sogdiana,” 90.

¹⁸ Past scholarship has discussed these rooms, according to their themes of paintings, primarily in terms of religious veneration, heroism and the “pleasures and practical wisdom of everyday life” (Marshak, *Legends, Tales, and Fables*, 18-22 [quotation from 22]).

¹⁹ The ‘chapel’ is common in Bukhara (Sogd), Ustrushana, Khorezm, regions near the Syr Darya and Bactria, but there are only a few chapels found at Pandjikent making up only 1.5% (13 possible examples) of the total rooms which number over 800 (Lur’e, “Eshche raz o ‘Kapellakh’ Pendzhikenta,” 89, 97).

²⁰ For example, most recently Pavel Lur’e (Lurje) has readdressed an ethnographic-archaeological interpretation (based on Tajik home layouts in the mountains) of so-called chapels by suggesting that these rooms were for sleeping and warmth (Lur’e, “Eshche raz o ‘Kapellakh’ Pendzhikenta,” 97). Another room of gathering is thought to be for a theater. Here the *sufa* makes an exceptionally large protrusion along the southern wall, and the walls are also left free of wall paintings (Semenov, *Studien zur sogdischen Kultur*, 70-76).

Except for courts and colonnaded halls, bench-lined gathering rooms were the largest enclosed spaces in residential houses, most measuring between 30 and 70 m square.²¹ Whether a ‘reception hall’ with its painted deity or a ‘shrine’ with its niche, in designating the seating arrangement, it is likely that one did not sit on the podium in front of the deity, or the niche; this left at least three long benches available for seating in both room types. Granting each guest approximately 75 cm of personal space based on an average height between 165 cm and 180 cm, the average seating occupancy for most gathering rooms ranges from 10 to 30 guests; XVI:10 could accommodate around 20 guests.²²

Small homes had only a single room for gatherings on the ground floor, but many houses had two, and some still more, like that to which XVI:10 belongs [Map 2.1].²³ Homeowners adorned these gathering spaces with a variety of wall paintings in terms of composition and content. In some reception halls, the multi-register wall paintings begin with a small half meter high base register depicting short panels of fables and tales under taller painting registers [Figure 2.4].²⁴ Narratives and epics in the above registers wrap around the room at eye level and higher.²⁵

In contrast, rooms with painted banqueters—reception halls, ‘shrines’, and small temple halls—do not have these small didactic fable registers [Figures 2.1, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8]. Instead, the figures of banqueters—many life-sized—were painted directly above a narrow geometric or vegetal frieze; thus these banqueting figures were positioned directly behind the

²¹ Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 50-68. The largest rooms categorized by Raspopova as a courts (*dvor*) are up to around 300m², e.g., XVI:75 is 280 m² (Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 57). The colonnaded (*mnogokolonnyi zal*) rooms are between 150 and 200 m², e.g., XXI:7 is 177m² (Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 59).

²² This number is comparable to other cultural regions, for which we know more about banqueting practices. For example the Greek symposium did not typically permit more than thirty people (O’Connor, *Never-Ending Feast*, 102).

²³ Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 28-49.

²⁴ Marshak, *Legends, Tales, and Fables*, figs. 12, 31–51.

²⁵ For further discussion on wall painting schemes in reception halls, see Mode and Mode, “Das Erzählbild.”

actual guests who took their seats on the *sufa* [Figure 2.3; Map 2.3].²⁶ In some rooms the paintings of banqueters were paired with scenes of celebration or narration in higher registers or with images of deities on the wall opposite the doorway, while in others, such as XVI: 10, they were not.²⁷

These two distinct wall painting compositions, with their specific subject matter on the base register—fables and banqueters, suggest a respectively inclusive and exclusive audience and thus two distinct methods of interaction between the viewer and the wall paintings. Gathering rooms with a small didactic base register appear to be a space welcoming a broad audience. The paintings—whether a concise fable on the lowest register or a prolonged epic spreading across multiple walls on the upper registers—are narrative and invite a diverse audience to stimulating conversation and general entertainment. In contrast, homeowners who commissioned an artist to adorn the lowest register with banqueters appear to have illustrated the room's idealized occupants: men of an elevated social position.²⁸ The known Sogdian painting corpus confirms only men's attendance at such banquets, suggesting that rooms adorned with male banqueters were an exclusively male space. The paintings' placement, size, and subject encourage the actual diners to find themselves among the idealized banqueters pictured on the room's walls.

²⁶ The banquet also appears within narratives, for example, in VI:1 Panjikent. In this painting, among climatic moments of the battle, is a gripping scene of a young warrior delivering news to a king, which causes him to spill the contents of his drinking bowl at a banquet (see Marshak, *Legends, Tales, and Fables*, 147, figs. 97-98). However, the narrative banqueters do not wear kaftans, but epaulette tunics, a garment specifically found on protagonists in Sogdian epics. Though the kings are notable in terms of their crowns and a beard—perhaps an archaic style for such a setting, as those from an earlier seventh-century chapel also wear beards—the other attendees have cleanly shaven faces and wear caps like the banqueters represented on other wall paintings. See Hensellek, "Dressing the Sogdian Hero," unpublished.

²⁷ One such celebration appears to be for a fall harvest, which the artist depicts in the second painting register in XXV:28 [Figure 2.8]. See Marshak and Raspopova, "Wall Paintings from a House," 157.

²⁸ For an in-depth study on how the formal banquet would have been ideal for the elite Sogdian mercantile class, see Hensellek, "Banqueting, Dress, and the Idealized Sogdian Merchant."

The Formal Banquet

On the wall painting from Panjikent XVI: 10 [**Figures 2.1, 2.2**], an artist depicted each man at the banquet according to a standard seated posture, physique, and dress. Each banqueter sits cross-legged and upright; each shows off his broad shoulders, and a wasp-thin waist with the cut of his kaftan accentuating these proportions; the early eighth-century fashion of a gathered upper sleeve and wide skirting further exaggerates each man's hourglass silhouette.

The banqueters are of a generally uniform size, in contrast to attendants [**Figures 2.1, 2.2 personage 3**] and the figure with a cane [**Figures 2.1c, 2.2 personage 1**], who are comparatively diminutive. The attendees sit in an evenly spaced row with their bodies entirely frontal. The banqueters sit in conversation pair, indicated by the direction of their hands and inclination of a surviving head and another's chin. The attendant, about 10 cm shorter than the banqueters, also sits cross-legged, but his torso is turned to the right, his outstretched arms offering refreshments from a dish that rests on a roundel-patterned serviette. The figure with a cane on the niche wall is likewise shorter, but also stockier, a contrast to the idealized hourglass silhouette of the banqueters.

A formal decorum appears to dictate behavior and appearance at this banquet. Proper behavior seems to prescribe that guests sit upright and cross-legged atop individual cushions, drink from a gilded vessel, and speak with their neighbor. The standard attire is a two-toned kaftan—one fabric selected for the body and another for contrasting trim. The au courant kaftan of eighth-century Sogdiana had long sleeves with excess fabric gathered on the upper arm [**Illustrations 2.1, 2.2**]. The front right panel overlaps the left by about 10 cm to 15 cm; a full A-line skirting falls below the knees covering the top of high-shaft soft leather boots. A belt includes a suspended dagger, a cloth pouch, a leather wallet, and another small tool case, perhaps a small knife. Headwear and hairstyle may have been significant, but it is difficult to

conclude with only one banqueter's head preserved.²⁹ A hand-held accessory such as a flywhisk or fan would have provided comfort and perhaps some style or status element. The form and size of the drinking vessels varied; their shapes likely depended on the type of beverage rather than the drinker's status.

Amidst this uniformity, only the variety in kaftan color and the textile pattern is initially striking—each attendee's is unique. The artist decorated most fabrics with monochromatic large vegetal roundels—red-on-maroon, mustard-on-gold, light blue-on-white, black-on-olive; an exception is one of banqueter's boldly contrasting cobalt-on-white fabric. For the trim, the artist paired these fabrics with more colorful or tightly patterned textiles: polychrome pearl roundels, interlocking squares, and small crosses. The attendant wears a plain yellow kaftan, although a geometric-patterned fabric still embellishes the edges, and his pearl roundels cover his serviette. The figure with the cane wears a light blue-on-white kaftan with a pearl roundel trim.

The artist places further more subtle distinctions in the banqueters' dress. Two of the men have loosened their kaftan's top frogging to create opened lapels [**Figures 2.1d, 2.1e, 2.2 personages 4, 5**], while the others keep their front panels closed neatly around their necks. These two banqueters with turned down lapels also wear belts densely covered in gold plaques; the others wear belts with more widely interspersed plaques. Furthermore, looped from their belts, these two banqueters wear leather wallets with gold ornamentation while the others' wallets are plain. What do these subtle distinctions mean?

When considered as a whole, the banqueters appear to style their garments according to a status distinction. They finely tune differences in the amount of metallic

²⁹ In early descriptions of the paintings, the banqueters are said to have had small plaques placed near their heads, but none survive (Belenitskii and Marshak, "L'art de Piandjikent," 18).

ornamentation, specifically on the belts and wallets. Those individuals who sport the most gold-encrusted accessories wear a red and a cobalt kaftan, respectively, and for the banqueter in blue, strands of stitched pearls along the belt add to the lavishness of his dress [Figures 2.1d, 2.1e, 2.2 personages 4, 5]. This additional embellishment of the banqueters in red and cobalt kaftans correlates with the unbuttoning of the kaftan. The front panels fold outward to form triangular lapels and reveal a contrasting inner lining of color and a respectively blue and red collared under-tunic that complements the red and blue kaftan. This color pairing also extends to a matching blue and red dagger and tool case. Looking closely at posture, the banqueter in cobalt sits in front of the other attendees, as indicated by his knees overlapping a knee of the adjacent red- and white-clad banqueters.

Although no known textual sources link particular colored garments with Sogdians, some scholars, based on etymology, have associated the color blue with kingship in Central Asia, especially among Turkic groups, with whom the Sogdians were in close contact.³⁰ Chinese sources do occasionally mention for garment colors when recording encounters with Türkic and Uighur khagans. Unfortunately, the reported colorations are sporadic and inconsistent. For example, the Buddhist monk and traveler Xuanzang described Tong Yabghu, a khagan of the Western Turkic Khaganate, wearing a green-hued outer garment when they meet in Suyab in present-day Kyrgyzstan in 629.³¹ Contemporarily, according to histories of the Tang Dynasty, Illig Khagan of the Eastern Turkic Khaganate (r. 620-630) sent a

³⁰ Several historians and philologists have connected the color blue with a royal clan name of the Turks, A-shih-na. They have proposed that A-shih-na builds on the Sogdian word for blue, which likewise correlates with the Khotanese-Saka and Tokharian terms. Peter Golden writes that this proposal makes sense with the term Kök Türk, i.e., the Blue Turks, written in the Kül Tegin and Bilge Khagan inscriptions (Golden, “Thoughts on the Origins,” 142). In an art historical study of the wall paintings depicted in the Hall of Ambassadors at Afrasiab, Matteo Compareti connects these linguistic notes to the color choice of robes for the depicted Turks, specifically a figure larger than the others on the western wall (Compareti, *Samarkand the Center of the World*, 96, fn. 197). Larisa Kulakova also draws a connection between the figures painted in XVI:10 and the Turks through accoutrement choices: golden belt plaques and scarves carried on the belt (what I have called cloth pouches) (Kulakova, “Art of Sogdiana,” 183).

³¹ Huili, *Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, trans. Beal, 42.

polychrome garment to the leader of a northern administrative region of the Tang Dynasty (Hedong).³² Later in 697, Kapagan Khagan of the Second Turkic Khaganate presented red garments to Khitan diplomatic envoys and, Gele Khagan of the Second Uighur Khaganate wore yellow when a court official presented the daughter of Tang Emperor to him in 758.³³

Turning to material color value, a study of painting pigments by Aleksandr Kosolapov with Boris Marshak identified lazurite-pigmented ultramarine as the most expensive, non-local pigment in Sogdian painting.³⁴ In theory it is possible to compare paint pigment values with fabric dye value based on the accessibility of the materials needed for the fabric's dye bath, and the labor involved in the preparation. However, with regards to the color blue, current technology can not differentiate between plant species producing the most common blue fabric coloring matter, indigoferin.³⁵ It would be instinctive to presume that artists in Central Asia used indigenous woad, rather than *indigofera* species from southern tropical regions.³⁶ However, according to the analyses on some red-dyed textiles from Central Asia, artists purposefully selected certain dyes brought from afar, although they could produce similar colors from locally sources dye matters.³⁷

³² According to the *Jiu Tangshu* (Old Tang History) and *Xin Tangshu* (New Tang History) (Skaff, *Sui-Tang China*, 348, fn. 18).

³³ Skaff, *Sui-Tang China*, 153, 160.

³⁴ Kosolapov and Marshak, *Stennaia zhivopis'*, 53, 78. It is curious that at Afrasiab in the Hall of Ambassadors vermillion was used for a deep violet-red rather than an iron-based ochre as at Panjikent (Kosolapov and Marshak, *Stennaia zhivopis'*, 53, 78).

³⁵ Scientists can use thin-layer chromatography and high-performance liquid chromatography to identify dyestuffs in historical textiles. Though current technology is limited to a certain degree, it is possible to distinguish several red dye-stuffs, even sub-varieties of coccids. On the other hand, it is not possible to distinguish between the most common blue coloring matter of indigoferin coming from any of the *indigofera* species (commonly called indigo) and also woad (*isatis tinctoria*) (Hofenk de Graaff, *Colourful Past*, 53, 257).

³⁶ Hofenk de Graaff, *Colourful Past*, 244, 251.

³⁷ For instance a fragment of a garment at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2006.472) with a bright fuchsia coloring was dyed with lac (Phipps, "Cochineal Red," 12), which is found in the tropical climates of India, Southeast Asia, China and Japan (Hofenk de Graaff, *Colourful Past*, 85). Artists used this dye from afar despite other available coloring matters indigenous to the greater region of Central Asia, e.g., Armenian cochineal or sophora carmine scale insect, both of which were used to dye textiles in Late Antiquity (Cardon, *Natural Dyes*, 648-654).

Disconnected from the idealized banqueters is a shorter and stockier man with a cane [Figures 2.1c, 2.2 personage 1; Map 2.2]. Located on the protruding half-meter of the wall that composes the fire niche along the eastern wall, a real guest could not sit in front of the figure and thus mirror his position. Furthermore, this figure would have been visible only to those seated in the southeast corner, likely remaining unobserved to the majority of guests in the room. Scholars have previously suggested a priestly occupation for this figure based on his seemingly older age and position in the room; however, despite his unique placement and contrasting physique, the man does share with the younger banqueters the adherence to the dress code of the polychrome kaftan.³⁸ He uniquely wears his kaftan among the other idealized guests: he pulls a single lapel open, exposing a red lining. This single lapel turned out appears to mark a social rank higher than most attendees in the room who wear their kaftan closed around the neck; however, if this is the case, a few banqueters do surpass his social distinction with two lapels open. Perhaps his lack of belt accoutrements suggests his removal from the concerns of daily life, and thus he can be understood as an elder or ancestor partaking in or overseeing the festivities.

Attending the Banquet

When attending a banquet in XVI: 10, guests would first enter the house through a large courtyard (XVI:75) [Map 2.1]. The host would have likely shown off their affluence by leading the guests through a decorated entry into an enormous colonnaded hall covered with wall paintings.³⁹ Reaching the doorway into the main corridor, the guests could have caught a glimpse of a sizable four-column reception hall (see XVI:32a). The doorway's position would

³⁸ Belenitskii and Marshak, “L’art de Piandjikent,” 18; Iatsenko, “Late Sogdian Costume.”

³⁹ Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta*, 57.

not have required them to turn their heads to peer intrusively into the room, but instead, they would have had a direct view of the hall's eastern wall on which the host painted their family patron deity. Turning down the main corridor, these guests continued directly into XVI: 10.

Crimson-washed walls would have dramatized this transition from the 3 m wide corridor into a 1 m wide vestibule. Stepping out of the vestibule, the guests would have first caught sight of a fire on a podium just 1.5 m before the doorway. At this same moment, guests would have glimpsed the painted figures along the southeast corner. Because the protruding podium did not allow the guests to walk directly into the room, they had to turn right and then left. In doing so, they came face-to-face with the life-sized banqueters adorning the full perimeter of the room.

Textual sources from Sogdiana's neighboring polities, Sasanian Iran and Tang China, indicate that the host prescribed one's seating placement at the banquet. The sixth- to seventh-century middle Persian speech, the *Sūr saxwan*, addresses the guests of a banquet—both divine and mortal—hosted by the Sasanian King of Kings.⁴⁰ At these monumental events, announced seating arrangements, especially for the guests of a military, religious and judicial authority, instated and shifted hierarchical orders.⁴¹ Like in earlier Achaemenid tradition, the banquet was the social occasion at which “outstanding honors or humiliations, and occasional tragedies,” could occur.⁴² In the political treatise known as the *Nāma-ye Tansar*, the author describes how alongside their dress and ornaments, and other possessions and skills, the King of Kings differentiated elites by their seating placement at the banquet: “he [the Sasanian King of Kings] has set differences among the nobles themselves with regard to entrance- and drinking-places, sitting- and standing-places, clothes, ornaments, and

⁴⁰ *Sūr saxwan*, trans. Daryaei, 65-66.

⁴¹ Payne, *State of Mixture*, 119-120.

⁴² Garsoian, “Locus of the Death of the Kings,” 46-47, fn. 67.

houses, according to the dignity of each man's rank; that they may look after their own households and know the privileges and places appropriate to themselves.”⁴³

Later, in the eighth century, Chinese historical records document the Tang monarch Xuanzong hosting a banquet with diplomats from both the Türgish Khaganate and the Second Turkic Khaganate in attendance. With their relatively equal status a fight ensued over who would take the most distinguished guest seat at the banquet, which ultimately resulted in the construction of two separate tents, each with its own most distinguished guest seat.⁴⁴

Though no Sogdian textual sources survive explaining such seating protocols, the architectural features of gathering rooms make clear that a formulated seating arrangement existed [Map 2.2]. The seats along the *sufa* provided various degrees of seeing and being seen. The vantage point from the southeast corner had a clear view of the door, allowing for the supervision of who entered and exited the room. Moving along the western wall towards the northern wall, the ability to see the doorway lessened. Those guests seated in the southeast corner were not only honored by their proximity to the niche, but they also had an unobstructed view of the festivities. Based on the painting fragments found in this southeast corner, it was not coincidental that depictions of guests who signaled their status by unbuttoning both kaftan lapels accompanied these seats.

The narrow width of the vestibule allowed only one guest to enter at a time, thereby making one's entrance into the banquet appear somewhat ceremonial. Taking a seat along the furthest southern wall—and especially the southeast corner around the podium—would have

⁴³ *Nāma-ye Tansar*, trans. Boyce, 44.

⁴⁴ Skaff, *Sui-Tang China*, 154-155. Though much later, Mongol period sources provide fine details of such seating arrangements at imperial banquets. The Mongol Khan always sat in the north of the tent, facing and surveying the entrance at the south. His primary wife sat to his left, while to the right, but lower down, at the level of his feet, sat his sons and grandsons. Beyond the family, the nobles sat on small tables—men on the right and women on the left—and beyond them, the warriors gathered on carpets. See O'Connor, *Never-Ending Feast*, 138.

made a bold impression on the other guests. Those seated in the corner would have paraded across the room, presenting both front and back views of their garments for all those seated on the western and northern walls. Upon taking a seat, their dress details likely corresponded with those of the seated figures painted behind them. A scan of the room's sartorial assemblages, real and painted, would have reinforced one's own position and gave hints about fellow attendees' social status. In early descriptions of the paintings, the excavators noted that the banqueters had small inscriptions in plaques placed near their heads.⁴⁵ No inscriptions survive, but these probably once held names, titles, or ranks.⁴⁶

Note on the Drinking Party

Though scholars have only addressed banquet scenes as a single category, it is possible to identify two distinct types of feasting festivities attended by party guests represented in Sogdian wall paintings.⁴⁷ I propose a differentiation based on seating posture, the normative ways in which guests style their kaftan, and the social activity in which the guests are engaged.

The first type of festivity, already introduced with the wall painting from XVI:10, is the formal banquet [**Figure 2.1**.⁴⁸ At the formal banquet, attendees sit rigidly upright and turn their heads stiffly to speak with one another. They sit at a regular interval with their

⁴⁵ Belenitskii and Marshak, "L'art de Piandjikent," 18.

⁴⁶ Plaques— but no inscriptions— near the heads of a few select banqueters are still visible in wall paintings from Balalyk Tepe in neighboring Tokharistan [**Figure 2.9**], see also Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe*. The best-known and preserved plaques are found in ninth to eleventh century CE donor paintings from Bezeklik and Tuyok-Mazar in the Turfan oasis, and Dunhuang, further east in Gansu province, China. These are usually inscribed with a name or an offering wish, see Deshpande, *Peshchery tysiachi Budd*, cat. no. 151, 186, 187, 323, 325, 327, 333.

⁴⁷ This differentiation does not include depictions of a banquet taking place within a pictorial epic, as for example the banquet scene in VI:1 Panjikent (Belenitskii, Voronina and Kostrov, *Skul'ptura i zhivopis'*, pl. 8). This painting illustrates a wholly unique set of guests wearing distinct garments and accessories specific to an epic narrative.

⁴⁸ A sub-category of the formal banquet is that set within a sacred space and probably representing a sacred festivity. Such a banquet decorated a small room, I:10, the Temple I complex at Panjikent (Iakubovskii, D'iakonov, Belenitskii and Kostrov, *Zhivopis' drevnego Piandzhikenta*, pls. 9, 10).

knees overlapping one another. Most attendees wear their kaftan closed with the lapels turned up, and buttoned closed around the neck. Only select guests have the privilege to open the lapels of the kaftan, which expose a contrasting color of the inner lining and a tunic worn underneath. Each attendee sips a beverage from a personal drinking vessel.

The second type of festivity represented is a less formal banquet, which I call a rhyton scene and interpret as the drinking party. These scenes with a rhyton are illustrated in the first and lowest of multiple painting registers in rooms XXIV:1 [**Figure 2.6**], XXV:12 [**Figure 2.7**] and XXV:28 [**Figure 2.8**] at Panjikent. The attendees sit in more relaxed postures, turning more freely to neighbors with some torsos in a three-quarter view while extending their arms to indicate a more animated conversation. The guests are seated with more space between them, often at irregular intervals, with attendants, entertainers, or fruit dishes placed in between. At first glance, the figures in the rhyton scene appear quite similar to those who attend the formal banquet. The attendees all wear a belted two-toned kaftan, with one fabric for the trim and one for the body, and this garment accentuates the idealized masculine body type of broad shoulders and a wasp-thin waist. Upon closer study, however, the range of ways in which guests style their kaftans varies. In the rhyton scenes, attendees do not wear the kaftan closed high around the neck, as most attendees do at the formal banquet. Instead, they wear the kaftan with at least one lapel pulled open, exposing the lining of the right front panel of the garment. As common as wearing only one lapel pulled open, is wearing the kaftan with two lapels pulled open in the rhyton scenes [**Illustration 2.3**]. This manner of styling the kaftan with two lapels open is exceptional among the group attending a formal banquet. In the rhyton scenes, the figures with two lapels unbuttoned do not wear undergarments but expose a bare chest. Unique to the drinking party is wearing the kaftan unbuttoned and baring the midriff [**Figure 2.6**].

There are also differences in accessories; no guest wears weaponry to the drinking party; all guests wear simply a thin tool case or a small purse. If a guest unbuttons only one lapel, the cap consistently remains on the head, usually with bangs visible on the forehead [Figures 2.7, 2.8]. The ability to open two lapels corresponds with removing the cap [Figures 2.6, 2.8]. Thereafter, a fresh floral wreath is placed on the head in place of the removed cap, exposing a popular undercut hairstyle. In XXIV:1 [Figure 2.6], the guest actively drinking from the rhyton has recently received his wreath: he wears his kaftan with two lapels open, but his cap still covers his hair with the wreath temporarily strung around his neck.

In addition to seating posture and the range of ways in which guests style the kaftan, the social activity taking place indicates the drinking party. In the rhyton scene, attendees do not uniformly hold and drink from an individual cup or shallow bowl like the attendees of the formal banquet. Rather they use and share a rhyton— and sometimes multiple rhyta— among all the attendees.⁴⁹ The stream of liquid flowing from the rhyton in the paintings is always red, most likely indicating red wine, a beloved beverage in Sogdian culture.⁵⁰ I further explore the dynamics of a lively drinking game in which these banqueters participate in an *Iranian Studies* article.⁵¹

⁴⁹ The banqueters wrapping around the room in XXV:28 use multiple rhyta. An attendee actively drinks from a bird-shaped rhyton on the northern wall (**pl. 3**). The object in the shape of a head of a mountain ram, which the attendee in a yellow kaftan holds, is also perhaps a rhyton. On the southern part of the eastern wall, an attendee holds a horn-shaped rhyton with the head of a gazelle (see Marshak and Raspopova, “Wall Paintings from a House,” figs. 29, 30). In XXV:12, there are at least two horn-shaped rhyta in use on the western wall (see Baulo and Marshak, “Silver Rhyton,” figs. 3, 4). A figure on the northern end holds a peculiar curved object, which might be some kind of vessel. Boris I. Marshak argues that the figurine held by the attendee in a blue kaftan on the southern end of the wall is a type of figural rhyton (**pl. 2**) (see Baulo and Marshak, “Silver Rhyton,” 137).

⁵⁰ Scholars have previously suggested *haoma*, but this beverage is a creamy white color with ingredients including the twigs of the *hom* plant, twigs of the pomegranate tree (not the fruit), stream water, and milk (Boyce, “Haoma”). Wine is the only beverage mentioned among other foodstuffs in the eighth-century Sogdian economic documents discovered at the Mt. Mug citadel. One document, 6–2, records the delivery of wine for an evening banquet (*Sogdiiskie dokumenty*, trans. Bogoliubov and Smirnova, 29–31); Just beyond Panjikent’s city walls, archaeologists uncovered a winery dated to the 9th century CE (Marshak, “Panjikant”). Vineyards and wine production in the region corresponding to ancient Sogdiana still exist today: for example, the historic Xovrenko winery and museum in Samarkand.

⁵¹ I treat this subject in detail in an *Iranian Studies* article: Hensellek, *Sogdian Drinking Game*.

A Sartorial System

The banqueters of Panjikent appear to have demarcated a subtle scope of social distinction. No participant is overtly distinguished by unique dress or accoutrements, and each one shares more sartorial elements with his fellow banqueters than those that would set him apart. Dress and accoutrements appear not to have been based on fixed rules, but on broadly defined parameters within which negotiations of social status were permitted. On some occasions these details were serious, while at others they were playful. I propose that the subtle distinctions in clothing adornment and modes of wearing the kaftan depicted in the painting of Panjikent constitute a type of sartorial system.

This fluid sartorial system appears to allow for individual tastes, such as fabric pairing, but also incorporates fine hierarchical details such as a higher number of gilded accoutrements, matching accessories, being allowed to unbutton the neck of the kaftan, and possibly the wearing of specific colors, such as red and dark blue. The kaftan not only has design variations selected at the time of production of the garment, for example, trim and body fabric pairing, or the fashionable gathering in the upper sleeves; but more importantly, the lapels could be styled and re-styled effortlessly and instantaneously, transforming an individual for the desired role. Depending on the situation, attendees could enact transformations by quickly re-styling their kaftan, as, for example, when stepping from a meeting to a celebration. Furthermore, adding and taking away items attached to the belt– and the removal of the belt itself– is uncomplicated. For example, attendees of the formal banquet wear a dagger alongside a purse, tool case, and cloth bag. Significantly the dagger is not worn to a drinking party. If one were to attend the drinking party following a formal banquet, such a change is hypothetically effortless.

Such mutability could also be crucial when attendees approached someone of more senior rank, for whom they might close the lapels to show reverence. Likewise, quick shifts could also negatively signal demotions. Particularly to the drinking party, attendees could conveniently use the various settings of their lapels for scorekeeping.⁵² In both the formal banquet and the drinking party, opening two lapels represents the highest distinction. Thus, the kaftan became a familiar medium through which social roles and ranks were experienced, projected, and perceived.

Banqueting Beyond Sogdiana

Other communities across Central Eurasia wear a kaftan for a banquet. Though each cultural region uniquely personalizes the kaftan and oversees a range of acceptable distinctions, they likewise share sartorial features and practices. Communities did not need to wear the exact kaftans, in the same manner, to communicate sartorially. The following cross-cultural comparisons examine the wall painting from a sixth- to seventh-century estate of Balalyk Tepe in northern Tokharistan, and a sixth-century stone sarcophagus from China [Map 2.4].

An Estate in Tokharistan

The painting of banqueters once adorned a gathering room in the center of an isolated estate north of Termez, in present-day southern Uzbekistan [Map 2.5].⁵³ The inhabitants of Balalyk Tepe used room 14 for gatherings, as indicated by its bench-lined walls and the central podium, which could have supported refreshments or lighting implements [Map 2.6]. This 4.85 by 4.85 m space could accommodate twelve or thirteen guests seated cross-legged. The

⁵² Hensellek, *Sogdian Drinking Game*, 851.

⁵³ Archaeologists first detected painting remains in 1953. The team, led by Lazar Al'baum, began removing the paintings in 1954. In 1955, over the course of a month and a half, they fully removed the paintings from the walls of room 14 at Balalyk Tepe (Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe*, 105–107).

artist positioned the figures—47 are preserved—around the four walls above the *sufa* directly behind the seated guests [**Figure 2.9**.]⁵⁴

Formal decorum appears to dictate behavior and appearance at this painted banquet: guests recline, kneel or sit cross-legged, the latter being the most usual posture taken by men and the only posture by women; each drinks from a gilded vessel while speaking with a neighbor. Attendants, who are diminutive in size, stand behind the banqueters. The standard attire for all, whether a man, woman, or attendant, is a two-toned kaftan with one fabric selected for the body and another for contrasting trim.

The approved cut for men has a long sleeve; the front right panel overlapped the left; and the skirt falls below the knees, covering the top of the boots. The tailored cut highlights a schematic body type of broad shoulders and a narrow waist, accentuated by a belt that always includes a pouch on the right and a dagger on the left. Optional accoutrements include small cases and a long sword placed behind the seated individual.

Women wear their kaftan draped over the shoulders with the sleeves hanging empty, thus masking the contours of the body [**Illustration 2.4**]. When seated, they artfully wrap the garment with the left skirting panel corner pulled to the right knee and the right skirting panel corner pulled to the left knee. The remaining oval opening allows the wearer to move the hands freely for banqueting activities. Like the men, women pull the right lapel open. One could bring a personal fly whisk or fan for comfort.⁵⁵ Most men drink from a stemmed goblet with an oval open mouth and most women from one with a circular open mouth.

⁵⁴ In total, forty-seven figures survive—fourteen men, fourteen women, and nineteen attendants or entertainers. The northern section of the western wall is heavily damaged and missing at least one large banqueter. A third group of banqueters is thought to have been here, indicated by the lower body of a woman at the wall's northernmost point [**Figure 2.9 personage 21**]. Personage 20 could have been either a man or a woman. The eastern wall was especially poorly preserved; it might have held many more attendants.

⁵⁵ Al'baum identified these objects as mirrors (Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe*, 169). I do not agree with this identification based on how each figure holds this object: some listless, others actively waving. There are no consistent matches between the use of this fan or whisk with any other special attributes. The attendants wave a teardrop-shaped feathery fan, which differs from the circular ornamented ones held by the attendees themselves.

However, a few banqueters hold unique cups, likely dependent on the type of beverage rather than the drinker's status.⁵⁶

Amidst this uniformity, only the variety in kaftan color and the textile pattern is initially striking—each attendee's is unique. Many men and women wear kaftans with white and yellow background color, and red kaftans are not scarce. Contrasting black trims often accent men's kaftans, while a variety of colors embellish those of women. The most popular color pairing for both men and women is a kaftan with a yellow background and black trim. Motifs organized in roundels, rows, or allover grids pattern the kaftans.

Further differences are subtle. Some men sport a twisted gold torque with each hand bracelet, and pinkie fingers bejeweled in rings with cabochon gems; others, a plain torque, and a single ring. Some men have an additional contrasting-colored collar lining, always crimson.⁵⁷ One banqueter stands out on the western wall [**Figure 2.9b personage 13**]. He folds down the front panels on both sides of his kaftan, forming two lapels, instead of the usual one; he wears a black frock over his kaftan, and he is less trim in appearance than his fellow banqueters.

The women's jewelry varies greatly, from the number of pinkie rings and gold arm bangles to the combinations of gold, beaded or pendent necklaces. Every woman wears earrings, which range from a single drop disk to elaborate beaded flowers with pearls. Most women have waist ribbons, but not all. Still fewer have a highly embellished third layer peeking out from their undergarment's long sleeves. Certain attendants also attract more

⁵⁶ In 1960, Al'baum typologized men's versus women's vessel types. He linked represented goblets to a number of archaeological finds in the region (Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe*, 179–180, figs. 132, 133). However, there are a few outliers, for example, one woman holds a tumbler-like cup [**Figure 2.9c personage 27**] and two men have tall glasses [**Figure 2.9c personages 23, 31**]. There are no consistent matches between the use of these more unique vessels and other special attributes.

⁵⁷ A crimson collar denoting status is not unknown. In neighboring China, status-demarcating crimson details trimming the neck are known from the first millennium BCE during the Zhou Dynasty (Kuhn, "Reading the Magnificence," 2).

attention than others. Many wear bracelets, some wear torques, two wear a kaftan with a cross in lozenge pattern, and at least one carries a dagger [**Figure 2.9c, d personages 22, 37**].

Is it coincidental that the men who fully recline also wear twisted torques? These men's kaftans have a red collar lining as well [**Figure 2.9b personages 13, 18**.⁵⁸ At least one kneeling man also wears a twisted torque, but nevertheless flaunts the red collar lining [**Figure 2.9a personage 7**]. For women, the preservation of corresponding details is weaker, but wearing a scarf around the neck might be linked to more elaborate jewelry [**Figure 2.9a personages 2, 8**]. These accessories might also correlate with a double hair knot, instead of one large knot, and the wearing of an embellished underlayer.

For men, increased embellishment correlates with the red collar, a roundel patterning, and the privilege to recline.⁵⁹ The unbuttoning of the kaftan to expose a double-lapel appears to be the highest distinction, and, combined with a less trim physique, is possibly a mark of seniority [**Figure 2.9b personage 13**]. In the account of Menander Protector, he writes that the reclining couches are the most honorable seats at a banquet hosted by a Turkic Khan.⁶⁰ A kneeling rather than reclining attendee in a white kaftan with allover flower patterning also wears a twisted torque and red collar [**Figure 2.9a personage 7**]. These figures sit more forward than their conversation companions, as indicated by knees or arms overlapping those of neighbors [**Figure 2.9a, b personages 7, 13, 18**]. Examining their surroundings, a triple-looped ribbon with bells or baubles hangs along the wall behind two of these men, and

⁵⁸ Personages 34 and 39 also recline, but the poor preservation of their hands, neck, and head can not confirm if they too wore the twisted torque or had a red collar lining.

⁵⁹ There are two other reclining figures but their heads and upper bodies are missing, which makes it impossible to include these figures in this analysis.

⁶⁰ Menander Protector, *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, trans. Blockley, fragment 10,3 (p. 123).

partially behind the third. All three have a rectangular cream plaque placed next to their head.⁶¹

However, these subtly distinct banqueters need not be men. A woman conversation partner, unfortunately damaged, wears a unique beaded trim on an elaborately patterned kaftan [**Figure 2.9c personage 27**]. Like the reclining men, she wears a roundel patterned kaftan and has the most attendants— a man and two women— of any banqueter. Unlike most women in conversation with a man, she is not seated behind but equally forward with her male counterpart [**Figure 2.9c personages 26, 27**]. In two other pairs, the women sit in front of their male counterparts [**Figure 2.9a, b personages 10, 11, 23, 24**]. Furthermore, attendants usually stand directly behind the man, but in at least four cases, attendants directly serve women [**Figure 2.9b, c, d personages 16, 27, 35, and 40**].⁶² At least one of the women has bauble-embellished ribbons hanging above and a plaque next to her head, like the three most decorated men discussed above, attesting to women’s inclusion, and to their elevated status within this community [**Figure 2.9b personage 16**].

The most distinct difference between Sogdiana and Tokharistan is that women also attend the banquet in the latter region represented here. No image of banqueting within Sogdiana proper includes women attending a banquet, much less the social distinction that rivals their male counterparts. As at Panjikent, the banqueters at Balalyk Tepe all wear a kaftan and express a range of subtle social distinction in the way they style it. The variety in kaftan patterns and colors is extensive; no two attendees wear the same garment. Sogdiana-based banqueters appear to like deep, saturated hues at the formal banquet. Tokharistan-based banqueters, like at the drinking party in Sogdiana, prefer lighter shades of yellow, white, and

⁶¹ Thanks to Markus Mode for pointing out these plaques to me while discussing the paintings during a meeting in January 2017.

⁶² For personage 35 see the line drawing in Al’baum, *Balalyk-tepe*, fig. 119.

cream, and, curiously, the most distinguished men and women of Balalyk Tepe wear these colors. No attendee of the banquet in Tokharistan wears their lapels closed up entirely around the neck as in Sogdiana. When a banqueter folds down their right lapel— as is the case with most men and all women at Balalyk Tepe— they do not leave the left panel resting high around the neck, but fold it under (or remove it?) to expose the undergarment. Most significant in these two cultural regions is the occurrence together of open lapels, an exposed red inner lining and/or collar lining, and more opulent adornment. These kaftan design and styling details adorning gathering rooms would have allowed those in attendance—whether local or foreign— to visually understand the accepted range of social distinction within the current cultural location.

A Sogdian Funerary Couch in China

Among ceremonial parades, hunts, and dancing, artists most frequently carved images of banqueting on funerary monuments belonging to members of the Sogdian communities in China.⁶³ Some of the banquet scenes are intimate with a man and a woman drinking together under a pavilion with musicians playing songs. Other banquets are grandiose, with a group of attendees gathering under grapevines enjoying the crisp air and fresh fruits. This comparison focuses on two relief panels in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston that decorated a couch-like sarcophagus called a *shichuang* [Figures 2.10, 2.11].⁶⁴ The couch is said to be from Anyang, Henan Province, China and is dated iconographically to the Northern Qi period (550-577

⁶³ The burial in an underground tomb follows contemporary Chinese practices. Sogdians in their homeland used ossuaries. See Grenet, “Zoroastrian Funerary Practices,” for a brief discussion of Sogdian burial practices in their homeland of Sogdiana. Some ossuaries have also been excavated from cemeteries in China, see Wertmann, *Sogdians in China*, 100-102.

⁶⁴ One short side panel is now in the Musée Guimet in Paris while the second is lost. The front panels in the shape of gates with space for the open doorway are in the Museum for Asian Art in Cologne, Germany. A front base leg and two side cornice supports are in the National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC (Scaglia, “Central Asians,” 9-10).

CE).⁶⁵ The *shichuang* has short legs supporting a bed-like platform where the community placed the deceased for burial.⁶⁶ Side panels enclose the platform; a doorway and the top are left open. The artist carved the side-panels to face inward, towards the deceased, which would also make the panels legible to mourners approaching the *shichuang* if placed against a tomb wall.⁶⁷

The artist divided each of the two back panels into three vertical picture frames outlined with vegetal ornament. Among the six frames are four banqueting scenes [**Figures 2.10b-e**]. Two of the banquets occur outdoors under grapevines [**Figures 2.10b, 2.10e**], while the other two are in a pavilion [**Figures 2.10c and 2.10d**]. Each panel displays one scene in each location, and their placements mirror each other.

At the outdoor banquet in frame 1, fifteen personages sit together on a platform under grapevines [**Figure 2.10b**]. Below the platform, on which the banqueters sit, five musicians play instruments to the left, a dancer whirls at the center, and six attendants

⁶⁵ Because of its unsecured provenance I was hesitant to work with the piece but have done so because institutions acquired the pieces in the early twentieth century, I was able to study the panels in person, and many personages wear a kaftan.

⁶⁶ The funerary resting places for deceased Sogdians in China are of two different types. A house-shaped sarcophagus is formally most similar to that found in Chinese tombs. These stone house-shaped structures were first used in the Sichuan region during the Han dynastic period, but gained renewed popularity in the Tang dynasty importantly not only for Chinese but Sogdians in China. In the Chinese context the *guo*, the house-shaped structure, holds a *guan*, an inner coffin, but there is not a *guan* in Sogdian examples (Wu Hung, “A Case of Cultural Interaction,” 34). The second type of resting place like that discussed here is the funerary couch, called a *shichuang*, with short legs, a bed-like platform and panels around the side. On both types of resting place the imagery is distinct from that found on the Chinese sarcophagi, much of which has been explicitly labeled Sogdian or Zoroastrian by art historians. Art historical scholarship has primarily focused on iconographical studies of the panels. These studies have speculated the identity of figures, the special occasions depicted and laid out comparisons with Chinese versions (setting up categorizations of Chinese, non-Chinese and hybrid imagery). Although a number of these studies describe the figures’ dress, no study has scrutinized the garments depicted beyond creating labels of ‘Central Asian’ versus ‘Chinese’ (Marshak, “La thématique sogdienne”; Jiang Boqin, “Zoroastrian Art”; Rong, “The Migration and Settlements”). For several discussions on iconography, see the essays in Juliano and Lerner, *Monks and Merchants*, and Lerner, “Aspects of Assimilation.” For a discussion of the unique pictorial space, see Juliano, “Chinese Pictorial Space.”

⁶⁷ Other *shichuang* found in situ were indeed placed against a wall, for example the *shichuang* of An Jia, see Shanxi Sheng kao gu yan jiu suo, *Xi'an Bei Zhou Anjia mu*.

distribute refreshments on the right. Both men and women attend the banquet.⁶⁸ A centrally-placed banqueter leans against a large pillow with his left hand relaxed on his thigh, and the right raised high above his head holding a rhyton. He wears what appears to be feather or fur tail-like earrings or perhaps the ends of two long hair plaits.⁶⁹ He does not tilt his head back to drink from the rhyton, like the personages holding rhyta at Panjikent, but looks out towards the women guests. To his left, seven men kneel in two rows, only two of them hold cups. To the central figure's right, seven women kneel in three rows. The women are slightly smaller than the men, but two women also hold cups, among a fan (or mirror), and sliced melon.

Both men and women wear kaftans to the banquet. The men's kaftan has a long skirting, but which is not as long as that worn at Panjikent; when seated, the kaftan does not entirely cover the knees. The garment is fitted and belted, but, not as snugly as that worn at Panjikent. Men style the kaftan in two distinct ways. The first is with two lapels pulled open, one large and one small: they pull one lapel out wide to cover the shoulder, and the second only slightly. The second styling of the kaftan is with two lapels slightly pulled open in a symmetrical fashion.

The women wear shorter kaftans, falling just below their thighs when seated. Unlike at Balalyk Tepe, where women leave their kaftan sleeves hanging empty, the women here wear their kaftan arms. Therefore, the kaftan fits the women's body as that of the men. However, the women wear a belt much higher, just under the breasts and long ribbons fall from some of the belts, perhaps sewn into the garments as at Balalyk Tepe. Most women pair

⁶⁸ The figures' bodies are less pronounced and formulaic than those in the paintings at Panjikent and Balalyk Tepe: the men do not have broad shoulders contrasted with a narrow waist but soft full bodies. The women likewise have fuller bodies, and the artist distinguishes them from the men with a thicker waist and thighs. All men wear a square-shaped cap with only the edge of a hairline discernible, while the women wear their hair knotted twice with a ribbon on the crown of their head.

⁶⁹ Markus Mode calls these 'foxtails' and connects their use with that also depicted on the Orlat plaque discovered at Kurgan Tepe. On the bone plaque, the tails are fastened on the warriors' shoulders (Mode, "Heroic Fights and Dying Heroes," section 2).

their kaftan with a trouser similar to what the men wear, but the attendants delivering food wear skirts. Women style the kaftan either like some of the men with both lapels pulled open slightly, or in a third a manner, closed around the neck.⁷⁰

All the men in attendance wear the kaftan with two lapels open. The first row of men, including the significant central personage, wear their kaftan with the disproportionately large lapel, while the second row of attendees wears the small equal-sized lapels. However, the styling of the lapels on the women's kaftans does not appear to correlate with a particular seating.

Alongside lapel differentiations, trim detail varies among the attendees.⁷¹ The trim detail is a row of circles between two parallel lines. The central banqueter's kaftan has the most trim detail: front panels, lower hem, armband, and cuffs. This trim patterning extends beyond the kaftan adorning the shaft of the boots and the rhyton. The two personages next to him, also with one large lapel pulled open, have trim embellishing the lower hem of their kaftan, and only on one kaftan is this clear on the frontal panel opening. No attendee in the second row wearing two small lapels has trim detail. Five of the women whose right arms are visible wear kaftans with trim on the upper arm. Only one woman, who wears her kaftan closed around the neck, has this trim represented on the frontal opening of her garment.

Only men attend the second outdoor banquet in frame 6 [Figure 2.10e]. Here, all five men sit on a cushioned platform under grapevines, with four musicians seated below. At this banquet, all of the men wear the kaftan styled in a fourth distinctive way: they pull both front panels to the shoulders to form two large lapels. Furthermore, the artist indicates an inner

⁷⁰ A single woman in the middle of the front row wears an over the head garment with two vertical stripes on either side of the chest (the woman to her right seems to sport a similar garment with one vertical trim on her chest). A similar garment is worn by women at Panjikent, but in other social contexts.

⁷¹ On other funerary monuments, patterns in garments are added with paint. See, for example, the funerary couch of An Jia. Shanxi Sheng kao gu yan jiu suo, *Xi'an bei zhou Anjia mu*.

lining and inner collar lining—similar to the lapel detail at Balalyk Tepe—on all five attendees. The men kneel in a row with only the second figure from the left sitting in a crossed-legged position; subsequently, his knees overlap those of his neighbors. This personage sits directly in front of a basin (altar?), a furnishing that the artist also includes near the largest banqueter’s feet in frame 1 [**Figure 2.10b**].

At a pavilion banquet in frame 4, a man sits across from two kneeling women [**Figure 2.10d**]. A second man stands behind the seated man, and in an adjacent pavilion stand three women, one holding a cup and another a fan (or mirror). The seated man styles his kaftan with two large lapels in the same manner as the five men under the grapevines in frame 6 [**Figure 2.10e**]. Roundel trims his kaftan and contrasting fabric lines his lapel. The standing man wears a roundel-trimmed kaftan, but with the lapels closed up around the neck. All four women in frame 4—seated and standing—wear thigh-length kaftans closed high around the neck and paired with a long skirt [**Figure 2.10d**]. A trim decorates all the women’s cuffs, and at least four of the women’s kaftans’ frontal openings (the fourth hidden by a hand). Two of the women have either a trimmed neckline or wear a necklace. Furthermore, three of the five women—both of whom wear neck adornment and the woman with a cup nearest to the man—wear the bottom right front panel turned out, something like a skirting lapel.

The pavilion banquet in frame 3 introduces a fifth way of styling the kaftan: with only one lapel pulled open [**Figure 2.10c**]. Only the central figure with a cup wears his kaftan in this way, while the other men wear their kaftans with two small lapels; the three women’s lapels are unclear.

An artist depicted two more pavilion scenes on the shorter side panel housed in the Musée Guimet. A large, central figure banqueting is represented twice: at one banquet, he wears both lapels open with the lapel lining and inner collar like frames 4 and 6, while the

second is too damaged to determine from a photograph. In both scenes, he sits cross-legged before kneeling women, reminiscent of the composition on frame 4 on the back panels.

Considering these scenes as a whole, the central figure in each likely represents the deceased placed in this *shichuang*. Among the four scenes on the back panels, the central figure wears his kaftan in three distinct ways: one lapel pulled open, two small lapels pulled open, and twice, two large lapels pulled open with the lining and inner collar displayed. Based on how he styles his kaftan alongside surrounding attendees in each scene, the carved panels appear to present the central figure in three stages of rising social distinction.

Frame 3 is perhaps the earliest of these stages [**Figure 2.10c**]. Here the central personage is the only man to wear his kaftan with only a single lapel pulled open; the fellow men wear two lapels pulled open, and all women wear their kaftans closed. The standing figure passes a beverage to the central personage before all attendees, perhaps highlighting a transitional moment at which he would be able to turn his lapel to match the other men.

Frame 1 appears to follow as the central personage raises a rhyton at a jovial banquet [**Figure 2.10b**]. Some attendees look to him, while others are deep in conversation. The central personage wears his lapels asymmetrically, in unison with the men in the first row. These attendees appear to have a higher social distinction than those in the second row with small lapels and do not have trim detailing. Some women wear their lapels closed around the neck, and others open two small lapels like the men in the second row.

Frames 4 and 6 plus the legible frame in the side panel from Musée Guimet indicate the central personage with the highest social distinction wearing two large lapels pulled open [**Figures 2.10d, 2.10e**]. In frame 4, the artist places the central personage with five women, three of which have some sort of social distinction allowing for a turned out lower lapel. In

frame 6, the central personage sits only with men, all of whom share their social standing with the central figure.

It appears that men demonstrate the highest social distinction by opening out two large lapels on the kaftan, followed by a large lapel and a smaller lapel, two smaller lapels, and finally a single small lapel. Women who turn out a skirting lapel appear to be significant because the artist always pairs them with the most adornment and trim, and these women interact with the man/men wearing two large lapels. Less distinctive women wear the kaftan with two small lapels and finally a closed kaftan. Thus, in connecting the dress worn at the banquet with the carved panel layout on the *shichuang*, a life narrative appears work through transitional moments in the deceased's life. The narrative starts at the back center of the bed at frame 3. The story then moves counterclockwise around the panels until finally ending with frame 4.

Unlike in the Panjikent paintings, the dress depicted on Sogdian funerary monuments in China is not consistent. For example, on the house-shaped sarcophagus of Shi Jun or Lord Shi (史君) only a single figure seated in a tent wears a kaftan; though, he does wear the kaftan with two lapels pulled open.⁷² Because of this isolation, scholars usually refer to this figure as a Turkic leader.⁷³ On a *shichuang* belonging to An Jia (安伽), most men do indeed wear a kaftan, as on the Boston sarcophagus panels [**Figure 2.12**].⁷⁴ Several Sogdian

⁷² Shi Jun's tomb was excavated in 2003, east of east of Jingshang Village in the Weiyang district in Xi'an. The tomb was looted at the time of excavation, but his funerary couch and the epitaph—uniquely in both Sogdian and Chinese—remained. The epitaph states that Shi Jun was the *sabao* of Liangzhou (涼州) during the northern Zhou, from Kesh, south of Samarkand, and was buried in 580 CE (Yang Junkai, "Carvings on the Stone Outer Coffin," 21-22).

⁷³ Yang Junkai "Carvings on the Stone Outer Coffin," 29. Many scholars have interpreted this scene as a diplomatic discussion or transaction, with a caravan represented below, for example, see Wertmann, *Sogdians in China*, 153.

⁷⁴ An Jia was interred in 579 CE; his name is sometimes published as An Qie. Archaeologists excavated his tomb in 2000 in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. Looters plundered it, leaving only the funerary couch, bones, epitaph, and a belt buckle (Shanxi Sheng kao gu yan jiu suo, *Xi'an Bei Zhou Anjia mu*).

communities in China wore the kaftan by the late sixth century, and according to these funerary monuments, communities placed a high significance on the styling of the lapel, enough to render it on life narratives honoring the deceased.

Conclusion

The styling of the lapels appears to be a consistently important indicator of social status. The ability to wear two large lapels pulled open, sitting most forward than other attendees, and wearing the most adornment resonated in sixth-century China, seventh-century Tokharistan, and eighth-century Sogdiana. Several details—especially accoutrement choice, fabric pattern, and color pairing—were particular to each milieu, but the lapels' use remained mutually intelligible.

Each artwork creates recognized trans-regional hierarchical variations for use within a socio-economic context. I argue that these hierarchical variations likely built on business success, a significant social distinction, especially within Sogdian culture. The mercantile class within Sogdian society was unique among neighboring cultures. Unlike Iran, where merchants were grouped with artisans in the fourth and lowest class, the mercantile class in Sogdiana was elite.⁷⁵ An 8th-century Sogdian letter (A-9) from Mt. Mug lists the mercantile class directly below the nobility.⁷⁶ Sogdian Historian Étienne de La Vaissière has compiled contemporary sources in multiple languages that document the hard-working mentality and respected position of Sogdian merchants. For example, around 630 CE, Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang chronicled that the wealthier a Sogdian becomes from business, the more he is

⁷⁵ Daryaee, *Sasanian Persia*, 47-49.

⁷⁶ *Sogdian Epigraphy*, trans. Livshits, 76-77; Marshak and Belenitskii, *Paintings of Sogdiana*, 20; de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 161-162. Thank you to Pavel Lurje for first directing me to this document after a conference presentation on this topic in Saint Petersburg, autumn 2016.

respected, and a 7th-century Armenian source painted the Sogdians as “wealthy and industrious merchants.”⁷⁷

Balalyk Tepe in neighboring Tokharistan may, too, have welcomed guests from afar. Archaeological analogies show that small fortified towns with castles, like Balalyk Tepe, placed strategically along rivers and main roads were common for Tokharistan in this period.⁷⁸ A more recent excavation at Tavka, another small castle-like structure located northwest of Balalyk Tepe, provides comparative material. Tavka is compact with five rooms, including a main gathering hall painted on all four walls. The excavator Shoymardonkul Rahmonov dated the main occupation to the sixth and seventh centuries CE based on ceramics and iron implements and hypothesized that Tavka was a ‘customs post’ facilitating the movement of people and things through the region, because of its ideal placement directly above the Sherabad River.⁷⁹ The function of Balalyk Tepe remains unclear—could it have also been a caravanserai-like establishment providing travelers with not only a bed for the night but also a space to meet and converse with others? Balalyk Tepe’s room 14 was undoubtedly used for gatherings, as indicated by the bench-lined walls and the central podium, which could have supported refreshments or lighting implements.

In the Panjikent and Balalyk Tepe case studies, the paintings’ placement in a gathering space would have functioned as a visual manual for the banquet. The corresponding details between painted guests and actual guests would have reiterated the subtle sartorial distinctions demarcating idealized roles, which were likely attainable and could be filled by actual individuals attending events. A gathering for conversation, eating, and drinking was

⁷⁷ de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 160.

⁷⁸ Kurbanov, *The Hephthalites*, 219–222; Solov’ëv, *Severnyi Tokharistan*, 104–113.

⁷⁹ Rahmonov, *Tavka*, 139.

undoubtedly an event for multiple levels of society. However, the banquet and images of the banquet would have been particularly meaningful for the mercantile class, not merely as a pleasurable pastime, but an occasion critical for advancing one's career. Whether traveling long-distances, managing production and distribution at home, or hosting travelers along routes, the banquet provided a setting for building and maintaining relationships with other merchants, clients, and travelers.

Despite the clear funerary context of the *shichuang*, Sogdians' role in China illuminates further light on this monument's significance for the socio-economic realm. The Sogdians who first moved to China were part of the mercantile class living abroad. The surviving epitaphs in several of these tombs state that the interred was a *sabao* (薩保), a community leadership position that, according to several Chinese sources, was (at least initially) related to trade.⁸⁰ Scholars have interpreted several scenes on other funerary monuments as explicitly illustrating trade meetings between the Sogdians and Turks.⁸¹ The banqueting scenes certainly illustrated transitional moments in the deceased's life, perhaps some of which were associated with business success. Whatever the means for the growth, the artist visually demarcated his progressive success by how he could style his kaftan.

Thus, based on the visual analyses of these monuments, there are only subtle distinctions between banquet attendees' dress and posture. The similarities in self-presentation create a convivial and communal space—an impression reinforced by the close seating arrangement, the attendees' sartorial similarities, and their sharing of drinks and conversation. Simultaneously, minute details of fabric color, the decoration of accessories,

⁸⁰ de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders*, 149–150; Sun Fuxi, “Investigations on the Chinese Version,” 51-53.

⁸¹ For example, see the funerary monument of Lord Shi (史君; Sogdian Wirkak) near the village of Jinggshang in Shaanxi province. In particular, one scene shows a caravan parked below three figures who drink before the entrance to a tent with a fourth figure positioned in the tent's doorway. Scholars have persuasively interpreted this scene as the interred *sabao* making a business transaction with the Turks (Yang Junkai 2005, 29, fig. 5).

and, most important, the styling of an individual's kaftan, created a subtle social hierarchy that one could actively negotiate through the styling of the kaftan whether at home or traveling abroad.

CHAPTER III

THE KAFTAN AND THE HUNT

In a small boat, gliding across marshy waters, a standing hunter pulls back the taut string of a bow, moments away from releasing the arrow [**Figures 3.1a, Figure 3.1b**]. The arrow will fly forward and take the second of two giant boars in direct sight. Rows of musicians in boats entertain with live music [**Figures 3.1f, 3.1g**]. The music does not alert the game to flee; instead, twelve colossal elephants navigate the fifty-odd boars racing around the reedy waters contained by a fenced enclosure [**Figure 3.1i**]. As the boars fall, attendants on elephants retrieve the carcasses and carry them outside of the game park walls to be butchered [**Figures 3.1l, 3.1m**].

The active boar hunter in the center of the relief wears a kaftan, and a second hunter in a docked boat wears a nearly identical garment [**Figures 3.1b, Figure 3.1c**]. This second hunter along the enclosure wall appears, at first glance, to be the same active, centrally-placed hunter. Each wears a kaftan falling to the knees with the front panels closed one over the other; a mythical dog-bird creature interspersed with rosettes decorates each kaftan. Each hunter sports a necklace with three drop-pearls and wraps a utility belt around his waist. However, the artist only depicted the active boar hunter with a sword and tool case, while the second docked hunter displays a discrete nimbus.¹ Despite this distinction by accoutrement, these two figures share the same unique garment type, the kaftan. It stands out not only among those worn by all other members of the hunting party, but also among those represented in the corpus of Sasanian court

¹ Katsumi Tanabe first emphasized this difference of accoutrements and thus each figure's distinct identity (Tanabe, "Iconography of the Royal Hunt," 104).

art; garments typically worn are the clasp coat, surplice-neckline jacket, or outer tunic

[Illustration 3.1].

The rock relief, measuring 3.5 m in height by 5.7 m in length, comes from a more extensive rupestrian decorative program at Tāq-e Bostān, located on the northern edge of the present-day city of Kermanshah, Iran [Figure 3.3].² The rectangular relief fills the lower northwest (left) wall of one of two barrel-vaulted ayvāns carved out of the foot of the Kuh-e Paroo mountain in the Zagros range [Figure 3.4]. Known as the great or large ayvān of Tāq-e Bostān, scholars have attributed this monument to a royal commission by a King of Kings of the last pre-Islamic Iranian Empire, the Sasanian Empire, which ruled Iran from the second quarter of the third century through the mid-seventh century CE [Figure 3.5].

This chapter investigates the kaftan as represented on the two rock reliefs of a boar hunt and a fallow deer hunt on facing walls of the large ayvān of Tāq-e Bostān [Figures 3.1, 3.2]. Numerous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travel accounts document the monument, and by the early twentieth century, archaeologists began to analyze the imagery of Tāq-e Bostān.³ Already in 1920, Ernst Herzfeld dedicated twenty pages of *Am Tor von Asien* to a discussion of the textiles represented in the two hunting reliefs.⁴ In subsequent studies, scholars highlight particular motifs, notably a mythical dog-bird (often called a *sēnmurw*) decorating the active and

² I take all measurements concerning Tāq-e Bostān from the Tokyo Expedition team, who placed the highest importance on photography and photogrammetry for obtaining correct measurements (Fukai, *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 4, iv; Tanabe, “Royal Hunt,” 83). Tāq-e Bostān translates to ‘arch of the garden’; however, some Medieval texts commenting on this complex have called it Tāq-e Bestām, translating to ‘the arch of Bestām’. Bestām was a relative of and general under Sasanian King of Kings, Kōsrow II. This General Bestām usurped a large territory and established himself as ruler in the early seventh century. Some scholars have suggested that Bestām was perhaps the builder of the large ayvān. (Scarcia and Cristoforetti, “Talking about Simurg,” 339–52; Compareti, “Observations on the Rock Reliefs,” 76).

³ See Johanna Domela Movassat’s thorough discussion of early travelers, as well as art historical and archaeological work carried out on the monument (Movassat, *Large Vault*, 9–18, 204–208).

⁴ Herzfeld discusses the silks in the context of silk weaving workshops, building on the typologies of Julius Lessing and Otto von Falke (Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, 121–139).

docked hunters' kaftan, and formally compare them to an array of imagery on metalwork, textiles, and other media.⁵ In 1969 Elsie Holmes Peck wrote a thesis-turned-article dedicated to the costumes in the reliefs.⁶ Members of the Tokyo University Iraq-Iran Archaeological Expedition undertook art historical research at Tāq-e Bostān in 1965 and 1975. Comprehensive and systematic photographs make up the first two volumes of *Taq-i Bustan* (1969, 1972); the third small volume summarizes the photogrammetric survey (1976); essays on the reliefs compose the fourth volume (1984), with several pieces dedicated to the garments and textile designs represented in each section of the rock reliefs at Tāq-e Bostān.⁷ In catalogs accompanying Sasanian art exhibitions, authors often include textile sections, highlighting the fabric patterns represented in the hunting relief.⁸ Though scholars have addressed the fabric patterns of garments represented in the reliefs—often pairing them with surviving textile fragments found outside of Iran—they have given little attention to the garments themselves. Only two scholars, Elsie Holmes-Peck and Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, differentiate and emphasize the variations between the garment designs depicted at Tāq-e Bostān.⁹

This study builds on identifying the kaftan as a unique garment by making sense of who can wear the kaftan, how they wear it, and why they might have worn it instead of a different ubiquitous garment, the tunic. Wearing the kaftan for a hunt makes the Iranian imperial context stand out in comparison to the banquet discussed in chapter II. In Sogdiana and Tokharistan, every individual attending the banquet wears a kaftan. The artist made certain personages distinct

⁵ For an up-to-date discussion of the sēnmurw, see Compareti, "So-Called Senmurm"; e.g., Sarre, *Kunst des Alten Persien*, 46-48; Goetz, "The History of Persian Costume," 2227-56.

⁶ Peck, "Representation of Costumes."

⁷ Fukai, *Taq-i Bustan*, vols. 1-4.

⁸ e.g., Bier, "Textiles," 119-25; Ierusalimskaia, "Soieries Sassanides," 113-19.

⁹ Peck, "Representation of Costumes," 121-122; Vogelsang-Eastwood, "Sasanian 'Riding-Coats,'" 223-224.

by how they styled their kaftan, for example, turning out two lapels rather than wearing the lapels closed up around the neck. In contrast, in the Iranian imperial context, the kaftan stands out by design as a unique garment among many tunics [Illustration 3.2]. The outer tunics depicted on the reliefs at Tāq-e Bostān are equally elaborately decorated, but are fundamentally different garments: the tunic is pulled on over the head and does not have a frontal opening.

I argue that during the imperial hunt in late Sasanian Iran, the King of Kings physically transferred the kaftan to members of the hunting party to reinforce the power structure of the empire. I suspect that the Sasanian family began utilizing a kaftan at hunts that included influential Parthian family members following a dissenting period between these family houses in the late sixth and early seventh century.

This chapter first introduces Tāq-e Bostān and the phases in which artists likely constructed the ayvān with the hunting panels. Following, I analyze the personages and their activities on the two surviving hunting reliefs. I demonstrate how the kaftan functioned as a medium through which the King of Kings could transfer power to establish and showcase his authority over court members, especially those of the rival Parthian families.

Tāq-e Bostān

The archaeologically best-preserved Sasanian hunting park is located a kilometer south from Tāq-e Bostān [Map 3.1].¹⁰ The mudbrick enclosure of the park occupies an area of 750 x 800

¹⁰ This enclosure is most commonly cited as being visible in Erich Friedrich Schmidt's aerial photography from 1940 (Schmidt, *Flights over Ancient Cities of Iran*, plate 96), but it is in fact still clear in satellite imagery. It can be visited today in Kermanshah. Only an Imam Khomeini Religious School and a few residential structures have been built inside of its ancient walls: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kerm%C4%81nsch%C4%81h,+Iran/@34.3795665,47.1208627,3571m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x3ffaed9fb779436f:0xdff40ef2ccc68ad3!8m2!3d34.3276924!4d47.0777685>

m.¹¹ Hunts may have taken place in the wild, but according to written documents, pictorial representations, and archaeological remains, Iranian aristocratic hunts, especially those of Sasanian kings and their court, most often took place in such artificial enclosures.¹²

This practice continued into the Islamic era.¹³

The Sasanians usually built their hunting parks outside of cities or palatial complexes. However, the Tāq-e Bostān ayvāns cut into the Kuh-e Paroo mountain are not part of a palatial or residential complex, but two single isolated rooms. Archaeologists have not found Sasanian-period settlements around Tāq-e Bostān.¹⁴ The nearest remains of a permanent structure come from Bīsotūn, 32 km away, where archaeologists excavated the foundations of a contemporary caravanserai or palatial structure [Map 3.2].¹⁵ They also found carved column capitals from the Sasanian period, and the smoothed out face of a cliff wall 200 m in width, perhaps for a rock

¹¹ Archaeologists have identified another enclosure about 30 kilometers away from Tāq-e Bostān at Bīsotūn as a second hunting enclosure. The park is rectangular, 1130 x 550 m, and framed on two sides by a dam that runs perpendicular to the ‘Sasanian Street’ and the Pol-e Kosrow (bridge) with a third side framed by a river, where archaeologists found a bronze Sasanian-era arrowhead. The Gāmāsiāb (river) ran under the Pol-e Kosrow and through the enclosure, perhaps, as the excavators suggested, to maintain a specialized hunting environment for a particular game. Archaeologist Wolfram Kleiss suggested that this wet biome would have been ideal for boar hunting. In contrast, the dry environment near Kermanshah would have been ideal for deer, mirroring the Tāq-e Bostān hunting reliefs (Kleiss, “Die sasanidische Brücke,” 110, 113, figs. 10, 14). Archaeologists have located further remains of hunting parks at Qaṣr-e Shīrīn and Hawsh Kuri (Canepa, *Iranian Expanse*, 367-374).

¹² Abka’i -Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 88. The Old Persian name for artificial hunting parks is *pairidaiza*, or paradise; the Middle Persian term is not known. Scholars have argued for and against the *pairidaiza* becoming distinctively Iranian under Achaemenid rule, versus continuing Mesopotamian tradition. See Allsen, *Royal Hunt*, 35-36; Canepa, *Two Eyes*, 313, n. 80.

¹³ Daryaee, *Sasanian Persia*, 52. Multiple later histories in Arabic reference hunting parks of the Sasanians. For example, Ebn Esfandiār’s eighth-century history of Tabaristan describes a hunting ground outside of the then repaired palace at Ispahbaden (Ebn Esfandiār, *Tārīk-e Tabarestān*, trans. Browne, 115). Al-Mas‘ūdī recounts the many visits of King of Kings Bahram V ‘Gur’ to hunting parks (Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-dahab*, trans. de Meynard and de Courteille, 169), and the unknown author of the *Kitāb al-Bayzara* mentions the hunts of the military general Bahram Chōbīn (*Kitāb al-Bayzara*, trans. Viré, 17).

¹⁴ Nearby is only a prehistoric site and a Parthian cemetery. See Matheson, *Persia*.

¹⁵ The excavations at the early Islamic caravanserai by the German Archaeological Institute brought to light the reuse of Sasanian building stones for this later monument (Kleiss, “Architektur des Alten Karavanserails,” 131-145).

relief, which they attributed to the same era.¹⁶ A further 60 km to the east is the Sasanian palatial complex of Kangavar.

The Ayvāns of Tāq-e Bostān

With their proximity to an artificial hunting park, the ayvāns of Tāq-e Bostān would have served as an ideal resting and celebratory location for a hunting party of 20 to 30 people [Figure 3.3].

The ayvāns are unique in that they merge a hallmark architectural feature of Sasanian palatial structures with a long tradition of rock reliefs in Iran. It is, however, unlikely that the ayvāns functioned as royal reception halls here. Their size— the floor in the large ayvān with the two surviving hunting reliefs measures about 6,8 m deep by 7,5 m wide— alongside the lack of other closed rooms or segmented spaces commonly associated with the Sasanian throne room, speaks against this suggestion.¹⁷

The Sasanians built the ayvāns where a natural spring dropped water from both the east and west of the southern face of the Kuh-e Paroo.¹⁸ These mountain spring waters filled a basin, a little over one meter deep, directly in front of the two ayvāns and the rock relief known as Tāq-

¹⁶ Recently Qader Ebrahimi and Sirvan Mohammadi Qasrian proposed that a stonecutting workshop was located at Tāq-e Bostān (Ebrahimi and Qasrian, “Late Sasanian Stonecutting Workshop”). However, scholars generally accept that the column capitals at Tāq-e Bostān were brought there from Bīsotūn, and were not originally part of any contemporary architectural structure at Tāq-e Bostān. Communities in the early Islamic period reused several Sasanian capitals and stone blocks for a caravanserai at Bīsotūn (Kleiss “Architektur des Alten Karavanserails,” 131; Luschey “Datierung der sasanidischen Kapitelle,” 129-142). On the Sasanian rock face preparation (Tarāš-e Farhād at Bīsotūn), see Luschey, “Felsarbeitung des Farhad.”

¹⁷ For suggestions of and arguments for the large ayvān’s use as a throne room or diplomatic space, see Harper, “Taq-i Bostan,” 120; von Gall, *Reiterkampfbild*, 46-47; Canepa, *Two Eyes*, 148; Canepa, *The Iranian Expanse*, 362; Movassat, *Large Vault*, 124-25. Other suggestions as to its function include a victory monument, a place for religious festivities, a ‘review stand’, or a combination of these. See chapter three of Movassat, *Large Vault*.

¹⁸ According to the prints made by E. Ollivier for the 1840-1841 expedition publication of Eugène Flandin and Pascal Xavier Coste in 1851, this waterway was still visible before Qājār princes made interventions to the site later in the nineteenth century. The eldest son of Fath-‘Alī Shah Qājār, Mohammad-‘Alī Mīrzā Dawlatshāh, added an enthronement relief on the upper west wall of the large ayvān (Luft, “Qajar Rock Reliefs,” 36). A grandson added the two large reservoirs in front of the ayvāns, a villa (now dismantled) to the east (Movassat, *Large Vault*, 6).

e Bostān I.¹⁹ From the spring, three irrigation canals ran to the east, west and south, the latter of which connected to the Karkeh Qarasu (river), around 2,5 km away, and 1,5 km beyond the hunting ground [Map 3.2].²⁰

Traveling to the ayvān from the hunting park would have created a short, but grandiose transition between the hunt and the feast. Located one kilometer from the park, a ride on horseback to Tāq-e Bostān would have been quick, but the view dramatic, moving from the flat plain to the foot of the Kuh-e Paroo with more Zagros peaks in the distance. Upon arrival, it was not possible to step directly into the ayvān. Members of the hunting party would have needed to line up and row small boats across the spring-filled basin—ranging from 5 to 10 m in width—to reach the terrace of the large ayvān. Crossing the spring was undoubtedly a transitional space for renewal and cleansing after a day of hunting. Crossing the spring would have also taken one effectively from the *razm* to the *bazm*, from the fight to the feast, the millennia-old pairing of a competitive and comradely activity in Iranian culture.²¹

The large and small ayvāns both open to the southwest; the sun would have lit the interiors most brightly in the afternoon. Grooves in both thresholds may have once supported posts stringing textiles to both decorate the space and provide shade before sunset in the evening.²² Carpets, cushions, and other textiles would have blanketed the floors, which later

¹⁹ Flandin and Coste, *Voyage En Perse*, v. 1, plates 2 and 4. The source today only flows from the western side. The eastern side, apparently still flowing at the time of the visit of Flandin and Coste, was apparently blocked after the removal of the bridge and building of the Qājār villa (Movassat, *Large Vault*, 4, 6).

²⁰ Measurements taken from the site plan of Flandin and Coste, *Voyage En Perse*, vol. 1, plate 1.

²¹ For a deep history of *bazm* and *razm* in Iranian visual culture, see Sims, *Peerless Images*.

²² See plates X and XV in vol. 1 Fukai and Horiuchi, *Taq-i Bustan*, and plates LXIII and LXIV in vol. 2 Fukai and Horiuchi, *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 2. In discussions of the large ayvān, others have suggested that these grooves were for doors, e.g., Canepa, *Iranian Expanse*, 362. Mossavat suggests that these postholes in the ayvān's floor stabilized scaffolding for the execution of the reliefs (Mossavat, *Large Vault*, 106-107; Fukai and Horiuchi, *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1, plate XXVIII).

Persian authors allude to, especially in the *Šāh-nāma*.²³ Guests would have taken a seat on their assigned cushions or couches; a guest's proximity to the sovereign established his place in the court hierarchy.²⁴

The space within the large ayvān is modest, especially in comparison to the monumental palatial ayvāns such as the Tāq-e Kestrā (Ayvān-e Kestrā) which measures over 1000 square meters.²⁵ Such mega-spaces would have accommodated the throne room activities described by Ferdowsī, Mas' ūdī, Pseudo-Jāhiz, Procopius, or Tabarī.²⁶ The large ayvān at Tāq-e Bostān, on the other hand, offers a more intimate space. If seated in four rows, which would have allowed guests to stretch their legs, it would fit around 40 adults. More likely is seating placed around the edge of the ayvān in a 'U' shape. With around 75 cm of personal space, I estimate that the ayvān would accommodate around 25 guests. However, if using couches, which typically hold two people in the Sasanian context, the numbers would still be less.²⁷ Seated in a 'U' shape, the central open space of the ayvān provided space for attendants to deliver food and wine, as well as for entertainment including musicians, dancers, and courtesans.²⁸ Guests seated along the walls

²³ Abka'i -Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 78.

²⁴ Canepa, *Two Eyes*, 183; Abka'i -Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 78. The number of an attendee's cushions held significance (Daryae, *Sasanian Persia*, 11; Abka'i -Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 79). Note the contour of individual pillows depicted on couches on Sasanian silver plates.

²⁵ Sarre and Herzfeld measured the floor plan of this ayvān at 4322 cm long by 2563 cm wide (Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, 71). For a recent discussion of Sasanian palatial spaces and especially ayvāns, see Canepa, *Iranian Expanse*, 324-344.

²⁶ Textual descriptions of Sasanian throne rooms emphasize the theatricality of the king receiving guests, including the opening and closing of curtains, a mechanical apparatus to create an artificial indoor storm, and the hanging of the weighty crown (Abka'i -Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 78; Canepa, *Two Eyes*, 139-140, fns. 103-106).

²⁷ Daryae, *Sasanian Persia*, 11.

²⁸ For the food and wine served at banquets of various kinds, as well as the different types of entertainment, see Abka'i -Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 81-84; Daryae, *Sasanian Persia*, 50-51.

of the ayvān would have had not only other guests seated across from them, but also the once vividly painted hunting reliefs framing the social occasion.²⁹

Unlike the depictions of a king in full regalia hunting wild beasts on well-known Sasanian silver plates, the ayvān reliefs depict complex and monumental images in which dozens of individuals work together to stage an event. Rather than illustrating a romanticized king in a compact vignette as the plates, the reliefs show the full choreography of an imperial hunt, down to the gritty details of dragging carcasses off the field. These details of the process, from coordinating tasks to distributing workforce and supplies, provide a fuller picture of how such events theoretically worked; that is to say, the reliefs appear to show a faithful representation of an imperial Sasanian hunt.

Construction of the Large Ayvān

I am approaching the hunting reliefs as a three-panel program under the lunette *without* the equestrian statue [Figure 3.6a]. Based on various anomalies, several scholars have suggested multiple phases for the large ayvān's construction.³⁰ Having examined the monument twice in person, I agree with Markus Mode's proposal, which draws attention to the sizeable equestrian rider's stylistic and technical disunity from the rest of the ayvān program.³¹ The rider is

²⁹ Around 903 CE, Al-Buldān Ibn Faqīh describes the reliefs at Tāq-e Bostān as being vibrantly painted (Abka'i Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 31, fn. 76). Archaeologist Alexander Nagel is currently working on an article about Sasanian relief polychromy, including paint traces left on the reliefs at Tāq-e Bostān (personal correspondence).

³⁰ In addition to the proposals discussed in the text by Heinz Luschey (Luschey, "Taq-i Bustan," 121-122) and Markus Mode (Mode, "Art and Ideology at Taq-i Bustan," 397-401), Hubertus von Gall suggested that the back wall and facade were created during the reign of Frūz (Pērōz) and then finished in the reign of Kōsrow II (von Gall, *Das Reiterkampfbild*, 38). Matteo Comparetti agrees with the construction phases proposed by Mode, but suggests that the Parthian general Bestām is the one who made changes after the initial construction by Kōsrow II (Comparetti, "Observations on the Rock Reliefs").

³¹ Mode, "Art and Ideology at Taq-i Bustan," 397-401. Mode builds on, but also breaks away from Heinz Luschey's observations (Luschey, "Taq-i Bustan," 122.). These stylistic anomalies are often brushed off by other scholars as being an 'influence' of Byzantium, Central Asia or India, e.g., Vanden Berghe, "Sculpture," 87.

disproportionate to the figures in the lunette, the columns on either side melt awkwardly into the wall, and a heavy cavalry figure has no thematic relation to the investiture above or the hunts to the left and right [**Figure 3.6b**.³² Heinz Luschey first argued that the equestrian was a later addition to the *ayvān*: the back wall frames the equestrian rider on all four sides in the same manner as the two hunts on the left and right wall. Sculptors then carved a rider out from a pre-existing frame.³³ Mode pushes this argument further, suggesting that the rider was certainly not part of the original *ayvān*'s plan; he proposes three distinct phases of construction under at least two distinct rulers.

Mode's first phase is an *ayvān*, with only the figures carved in the upper lunette. This layout mirrors the small *ayvān*'s composition, which has only two figures in the lunette on the upper back wall [**Figures 3.7, 3.8**]. At this point, perhaps, sculptors also carved the facade reliefs. Second, sculptors carved the boar and deer hunt relief panels, alongside another relief on the back wall under the lunette [**Map 3.3**]. Work on these reliefs suddenly stopped, as can be seen from large unfinished sections of the deer hunt and smaller sections of the boar hunt. A third phase began under new leadership.³⁴ Sculptors knocked the back wall out to carve the rider into the pre-existing frame [**Figure 3.6**]. Grooves along the top of the hunting frames suggest that someone may have intended to also remove these scenes to build new high reliefs like that of the rider on the back wall. However, after the carving of the rider, all work stopped.

³² Luschey, "Taq-i Bostan," 121-122; Mode, "Art and Ideology at Taq-i Bustan," 397-398.

³³ Luschey, "Taq-i Bostan," 122.

³⁴ Mode suggests two distinct royal patrons: Kosrow II had the upper lunette and hunt program created, while the destruction and creation of the equestrian took place under Yazdegerd III (Mode, "Art and Ideology at Taq-i Bustan," 400-401).

The Hunting Reliefs

Sculptors carved the two hunting reliefs on opposite walls of the large ayvān in dialogue with one another. The reliefs are the same size: each measures 3.5 m in height and 5.7 m in length, and a think border frames them both [Figure 3.5]. The northwest relief depicts the hunt of wild boar from boats in a marsh [Figure 3.1], and the southeast relief depicts the hunt of fallow deer on horseback [Figure 3.2].³⁵ The sculptors clustered the figures represented in both the boar and deer hunts in sets. Each set of figures shares a task, and likewise, the dress they wear for the hunt. The artists rendered the figures in a hierarchy of scale with three primary categories.³⁶ ‘Enormous’ figures measure between 60 and 70cm in height, and these are the main actors.³⁷ ‘Normal’ figures are about half the size of enormous figures, and form the majority of the relief: fellow hunters, musicians, arrow-bearers, elephant riders, and main boat gondoliers.³⁸ ‘Diminutive’ figures are even smaller and include gondoliers, elephant beaters, and field facilitators.³⁹

³⁵ The boar species is identified as *sus scrofa* and the deer species is *dama mesopotamica* (Reed, “Imperial Sassanian Hunting,” 3, 7).

³⁶ Measurements of all figures within the reliefs are based on the wall measurements and proportion comparisons in Fukai and Horiuchi, *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1, and Fukai, *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 4.

³⁷ On the boar hunt relief the figures’ bodies from the neck to the lower hem of the kaftan measure 41 cm and 37,5 cm, respectively for the active central hunter and docked hunter. On the deer hunt their heights are based on measurements from the figures’ waist to the shoulders in order to compare those riding and those standing. The enormous figures’ waist to shoulder measure 14 to 16 cm; the hunter under a parasol is 16 cm, while the active deer hunter and the hunter with a beribboned deer are 14 cm tall.

³⁸ On the boar hunt relief, normal figures measure between 30-40 cm in height, with garment heights measuring 18 to 25 cm. In the deer hunt, there are two divisions of normal hunters. Those that are ‘larger than normal’ have torsos that measure 9 to 10 cm, and include the figures behind the hunter under a parasol and some field facilitators. ‘Normal’ figures have torsos that measure 6 to 7 cm and include fellow hunters, elephant riders, numerous field facilitators. ‘Smaller than normal’ figures have torsos that measure 4-5cm, and include musicians and some field facilitators.

³⁹ In the boar hunt, diminutive figures measure 20-25 cm in height, with garment heights measuring 10 to 16 cm. In the deer hunt diminutive figures have torsos that measure 3-4 cm. These are elephant beaters.

The Wild Boar Hunt

The sculptor placed the active hunter dressed in a kaftan in the middle of the relief [**Figures 3.1b**]. This personage is taller than all others represented, measuring approximately 70 cm from his hat down to the bottom of the boat. He stands frontally, his face turned slightly towards the target of his next arrow: the second of two giant boars in the open water. The first floats listlessly in the water, while the second dashes through the reeds with its legs outstretched.

To the right of the giant boars stands a second enormous hunter [**Figure 3.1c**]. The artist also depicted this hunter frontally, but slightly smaller than the active hunter, around 60 cm in height. This hunter stands in a large boat pulled away from the open water and docked on the marshes' edge. This position is lower on the relief than the active hunter. Both hunters share the same garment type: a kaftan made of a fabric decorated with a repeating dog-bird motif. Each wears a utility belt and a necklace with three drop-pearls. The central active hunter also sports a long sword on his belt, the handle visible under his drawn bow. The docked hunter does not have such a sword but instead a discrete nimbus around his head. These two figures are related, but not intended to be the same personage.⁴⁰

The enormous hunters stand in the two largest of five gondola-like boats on the water [**Figures 3.1d, 3.1e**]. In each of the two large boats are four smaller, normal-sized figures: two gondoliers, an arrow bearer, and a harpist. All eight wear elaborately patterned tunics with belts;

⁴⁰ Scholars have addressed each of the large hunters' different accoutrement as an artist's mistake or simply ignored. For example, Ernst Herzfeld suggested that a nimbus on the central active hunter was perhaps once painted (Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, 97). On the other hand, Katsumi Tanabe argues for a depiction of a king and a divine counterpart, but importantly not a god or the apotheosis of a king (Tanabe, "Royal Boar Hunt," 87-89). Matthew Canepa has dealt with the nimbus in Sasanian court art, including the reliefs, as part of an agonistic cross-cultural exchange (Canepa, *Two Eyes*, 194-196).

the tunics have decorative semi-circular trimmed gores on either side of the skirting, and on their upper left shoulder rectangular plackets are visible [**Illustration 3.2 type 2**]. The figures passing arrows wear a more embellished tunic. Circular beading edges the gores, and a decorative trim runs vertically down the front of the skirting [**Illustration 3.2 type 4**]. The arrow bearers, harpists, and gondoliers wear thick adorned belts without additional accoutrement holders.

The artist paired each large boat carrying an enormous hunter with a smaller boat carrying five female harpists and a slightly smaller gondolier at the boat's bow [**Figures 3.1f, 3.1g**.⁴¹ The female harpists and the gondoliers both wear a draped garment. On the former, the sleeves are fitted and patterned, but the body is loose and pulled diagonally across the upper body. On the other hand, the gondoliers' garment drapes symmetrically towards the center of the garment, creating U-shaped folds.

Beyond the open waters, in the reedy edge of the enclosure, is the fifth boat. Framed by a gondolier in the bow and stern, five fellow standing hunters watch and appear to cheer on the feats of the central active hunter. The gondoliers are diminutive and clad like those gondoliers who guide the harpist boats. The five normal-sized men clapping their hands together all wear a tunic with semi-circular gores; two rows of beads trim the gores of all five tunics [**Illustration 3.2, types 3, 5**]. The two men towards the bow have an additional vertical trim in the center of their skirting, like the arrow-bearers, and wear a square cap like the central active hunter. Two men wear utility belts (one with and one without the skirting trim), and the other three wrap densely bejeweled belts around their waists.

⁴¹ All of the harpists in a single boat have breasts, while the harpists in the larger boats with the hunters do not. The body of the fourth figure in the boat behind the active hunter's boat is unfortunately lost in the crack.

Another set of figures steers boars from atop elephants [**Figure 3.1i**]. There are five pairs of elephants, one on top of another on the left side of the hunting field. A rider in a patterned tunic sits on the elephant closest to the viewer in each set. These riders, who are the same size as the fellow hunters and harpists, are between smaller figures astride each elephants' neck and haunch. The riders on the second and fourth elephants wear a tunic, like the other hunters, but without inserted gores [**Figure 3.1k; Illustration 3.2 type 1**]. The riders on the first, third, and fifth elephant register wear square-skirted tunics with vents rendered in profile by an elegant 'W' shape [**Figure 3.1j; Illustration 3.2 type 7**]. All five of these riders wear the utility belt and trousers with a contrasting pattern.⁴² The small figures astride the neck and haunches instead wear plain tunics with only some folds indicated, notably around the chest.

Along the bottom of the muddy field are other diminutive figures on elephants who are badly damaged but appear to wear plain loose tunics [**Figure 3.1l**]. A figure who opens the netting that encloses the field and several figures who carry and butcher the fallen boars wear plain tunics with symmetrical U-shaped draping [**Figure 3.1m**].

Synthesizing dress details among all the figures represented, it becomes clear that only the two enormous-sized hunters wear a kaftan. All men of normal size wear a tunic of equally elaborate patterned fabric, but the artist made subtle differentiations by the cut and trim decoration of the tunic [**Illustration 3.2**]. The five figures in the fifth boat [**Figure 3.1h**] appear to be particularly distinguished: all wear a tunic with inserted skirting gores, trimmed with two rows of beads [**Illustration 3.2 types 3, 5**]. The two figures in the bow are particularly notable with additional skirting trim and hats like those of the enormous hunters.

⁴² The hunters on register four and five appear to be unfinished without patterns on their garments.

The figures passing arrows to the enormous hunters [**Figures 3.1d 3.1e**] and the elephant riders [**Figure 3.1i**] follow in social distinction. These figures respectively wear tunics with a vertical skirting trim and gores—much like the fellow hunters in the fifth boat, but only a single row of beads trim the gores [**Illustration 3.2 type 4**]—and a square-skirted tunic [**Illustration 3.2 type 7**]. Although these figures have some elite status, they are not like the five figures in the boat in terms of their hunting role [**Figure 3.1h**]. The arrow bearers and elephant riders undertake tasks that facilitate the success of the active hunter, while the others are spectators of the hunt, who likely wait on their turn for the bow and arrow.

The musicians are different; they are entertainers and not fellow sportsmen [**Figures 3.1f, 3.1g**]. However, the two male harpists seated directly next to the enormous hunters might have a unique role, because they do indeed wear utility belts over elaborately patterned tunics [**Figures 3.1d, 3.1e**]. The gondoliers, the elephant beaters, and the field assistants are altogether separate based on their diminutive size. In this group, gondoliers who move the enormous hunters’ boats appear to have a special status [**Figures 3.1d, 3.1e**]. The artist does not dramatize their size (e.g., in comparison to the fifth boat’s gondoliers), they wear patterned tunics, and they are in proximity to the hunters.

The Fallow Deer Hunt

Like the composition of the wild boar hunt, in the fallow deer hunt relief, the artist placed an enormous active hunter in the center of the hunting field framed by an unfinished netted fence [**Figure 3.2c**]. This hunter pulls back the arrow, ready to take one of the two deer springing before him. He wears a long sword and what appears to be a kaftan: the lower skirting hem is

straight and does not have the usual tunic skirting gores or the delineated corners of a square-skirted tunic. Unlike the frontally facing active hunter on the opposite boar hunt, this active hunter turns his back to the viewer while his head looks forward in profile.

Nine accompanying normal-sized hunters trail the main enormous hunter in three rows with a stray tenth hunter above [**Figure 3.2e**]. As the rendering of the main hunter, these figures are not complete: raised outlines of the horses and riders are apparent, but garment details and facial features are missing. However, the lower hems of fellow hunters' garments are not straight like that of the main hunter but have a pointed edge. This differentiation suggests that the main hunter wore a kaftan while the trailing hunters wore a square-skirted tunic [**Illustration 3.2 type 6**].

The artist placed a second enormous personage in the upper right corner of the main field [**Figure 3.2b**]. They depicted this enormous figure frontally astride his horse, who stands in a three-quarter profile. A normal-sized attendant shades this hunter with a parasol. The hunter wears a square-skirted tunic, as indicated by the angled lower hem [**Illustration 3.2 types 6, 7**]. He carries a bedazzled long sword, a bow that hangs in resting position over his shoulders, a square cap, and a thick necklace with three drop pearls. This hunter is several centimeters taller than any other figure in the relief and is notably the only personage with completed carved costume details.

A third enormous figure on horseback prances across the lower edge of the field [**Figure 3.2d**]. The artist renders this rider in a partial three-quarter profile. The figure wears a kaftan, to judge the fall of the lower hemline. The sculptor distances this figure from the action taking place in the center of the field: he does not observe the central hunter but is, on the contrary,

looking towards and following two female or de-antlered male deer who wear ribbons around their necks.⁴³ His horse does not outstretch his legs in flying gallop like those of the other riders; instead, he appears to prance. The man wears a long sword, carries a bow in resting position, and holds a thick stick in his right hand like the hunter under the parasol.

Alongside the three enormous personages and the central group of fellow hunters, many field facilitators, attendants, and musicians participate in the deer hunt. The field facilitators work to herd and release the deer and carry the dead game off the field. No dress on these figures—more generally, no dress beyond that of the personage under the parasol—is completed, so only a garment’s preliminary outline is visible. They all wear a thigh-, knee- or calf-length tunic. To the right of the main field are three holding enclosures; in each stands two rows of elephants. As in the boar hunt relief, a comparatively larger figure in a tunic (‘W’-shaped square-skirted tunic or regular) [Illustration 3.2 type 7] and diminutive elephant beaters ride each elephant.

Attendants lined up behind the enormous figure under the parasol wear long tunics [Figure 3.2f]. Only the details of the figure holding the parasol are complete: the artist carved symmetrical draping into his tunic, similar to the drapery of the gondoliers in the boar hunt. Flute and harp players seated together on a platform in the upper left of the field wear unidentified garments, but the standing horn players wear square-skirted tunics [Figure 3.2g].

⁴³ These deer are typically ignored (and in one case read as dogs, see Domyo, “Royal Deer Hunt,” 136), while the male figure is written off as the king leaving the field. Only Matteo Comparetti has taken note of the curious relationship between this enormous figure and the beribboned deers (Comparetti, “Observations on the Rock Reliefs,” 75-76).

The Enormous Figures

Scholars have assumed that the five enormous figures spread across both reliefs represent the same Sasanian King of Kings within a royal hunting narrative.⁴⁴ I argue that this is not the case: the selective distribution of adornments, arms, and accoutrements are not accidental but serves to distinguish individuals who play specific roles in an idealized royal hunt. The artist furthermore signaled these roles by the size, positioning, and action of each figure.

Of these five enormous figures, those positioned highest in the reliefs are the tallest: the active hunter in the boar hunt [**Figure 3.1b**] and the hunter under the parasol in the deer hunt [**fig. 3.2b**]. These two personages do not wear the same garment, but they carry and wear the same arms and adornments: bow and arrow, long sword, boxy hat, and a thick necklace with three drop pearls. The active deer hunter carries less ostentatious versions of hunting accoutrements— the bow, long sword, and boxy hat— but not the flashy necklace [**Figure 3.2c**]. Since divinities in Sasanian visual culture do not carry arms, these three figures must represent living mortal bodies.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The identification of the king represented remains debated. The most popular proposal is for King of Kings Kosrow II (r. 590; 591-628 CE), for which Ernst Herzfeld first strongly argued (Herzfeld, *Am Tor von Asien*, 57, 58, 89; Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, 329-331). Leading art historians behind Herzfeld/Kosrow II were/are Roman Ghirshman (Ghirshman, *Persian Art*), Prudence Harper (Harper, “Taq-i Bostan,” 119, fn. 2), and Matthew Canepa (Canepa, *Two Eyes*, 157). Harper, however, remains less firm about the dating (Harper, *Royal Hunter*, 167).

Some scholars have also argued for King of Kings Firuz (Pērōz) (r. 457/459-484), see e.g., Kurt Erdmann (Erdmann, “Datum des Tāk-i Bustān”). Followers of the Erdmann/Firuz camp are/were Robert Göbl (Göbl, “Investitur im Sasanidischen Iran,” 49, ft. 48) and Pierfrancesco Callieri (Callieri, *Architecture et représentations*, 215). However, Callieri believed that Byzantine artisans must have created the facade, which he argues was only possible in the fifth century CE, as opposed to an argument based on crowns or later textual sources.

Katsumi Tanabe’s identified the figures as Ardashir III, the last Sasanian King of Kings, based on the iconography of the necklaces worn (Tanabe, “Identification of the King of Kings”). Gianroberto Scarcia proposed Bestām, a Parthian military general (Scarcia and Cristoforetti, “Talking about Simurg,” 344-346).

⁴⁵ A King of Kings can share his dress with Ohrmazd, which is evident for example in the rock reliefs of Bahrām I and Šāpūr I, in which both the king and the divine wear a loose tunic over loose trousers, and even their hairstyle and horses’ accoutrements match. Nevertheless, the king’s long sword is prominent, while Ohrmazd wears no visible arms. This lack of weaponry remains consistent on depictions of the divine in Sasanian court art.

Of these three figures, the active deer hunter does not have a drop pearl necklace like the active boar hunter or the hunter under the parasol. The active boar hunter and the hunter under the parasol only share this necklace with the haloed hunter in the docked boat [**Figure 3.1c**]. This haloed hunter does not, however, carry a sword. The lack of arms combined with the halo suggests that this figure presents a body opposite that of the living: one of the otherworldly or divine.

I argue that these two reliefs depict the rotation of the main active hunter, and they use dress to signify the personages' ontological and social status. The active hunter always wears a kaftan [**Figures 3.1b, 3.2c**], unlike their fellow mortal hunters who always wear tunics, whether watching the hunt from the sidelines or accompanying the active hunter on the field [**Figures 3.1h; 3.2e**]. Thus, the first personage who takes the field wearing a kaftan fills the role of an active hunter in the boar hunt [**Figure 3.1b**]. Fellow hunters in tunics applaud his successful kill of the two giant boars [**Figure 3.1h**], and an otherworldly counterpart, who wears the same kaftan but is made distinctively divine with the nimbus, oversees him [**Figures 3.1c, 3.2d**].⁴⁶

In the deer hunt, the active hunter in the center of the field and the hunter under the parasol forge a similar relationship [**Figures 3.2b, 3.2c**]. However, based on dress and accouterments, this relationship is developed between two earthly personages. The active hunter is smaller in size, rendered in profile, and does not sport a necklace with three pearl-drops, thus indicating lesser social distinction. I believe that the personage under the parasol is the same as the central figure in the boar hunt. He has removed the kaftan, but still wears the necklace with

⁴⁶ Considering the profound link between traditions of *bazm* and *razm*, that of feasting and fighting, in Iranian culture, spiritual participants would have likely mirrored the mortal participants in the hunt as well. The concept of otherworldly guests participating in earthly events is documented in the sixth- to seventh-century *Sūr saxwan*. The text addresses the banquet attendees, and otherworldly guests are included— gods, the *amaharspandan*, and the seven heavens— alongside mortal elite guests (*Sūr saxwan*, trans. Daryaee, 66).

three pearl-drops, the long sword, and, as in the boar hunt, he is still the largest figure on the field and located vertically higher in the relief. The once active boar hunter now presides over the deer hunt. He has situated himself in a position nearly equal to that of the divine counterpart in the boar hunt. Based on their accoutrements, size, positioning, and actions, the active hunter in the boar hunt and the hunter under the parasol in the deer hunt should represent the same Sasanian King of Kings.

The Hunt, the Kaftan, and the Divine

The transfer of a kaftan in the hunting reliefs at Tāq-e Bostān demonstrates a power structure. Very select figures— and only enormous figures— wear the kaftan, while the tunic is ubiquitous, albeit with its own subtle social distinctions. From the practical sporting standpoint, the kaftan can quickly identify the main hunter. If running across and around the field, the lead hunter could become lost among fellow hunters. Like sports jerseys today with bright colors and bold numbers, slipping on a unique garment over a tunic could visually make this distinction. Having a garment distinct from one's fellow hunters is textually documented in the Turkic Steppe.⁴⁷ In an account by Theophanes documenting the raids made by Heraclius on a hunting enclosure at a palace, silk outer garments are specifically mentioned among foodstuffs and furnishings.⁴⁸ A guest would undoubtedly come dressed to the hunting park, but the preserve of silk outerwear

⁴⁷ In 630 Xuanzang, a Chinese pilgrim describes his first encounter with the Khan of the Western Turkic Khaganate, Ton Yabghu, on his famous journey West. He writes that the Turkic Khan who was leaving on a hunting trip was easily recognizable among all his accompanying *targans*, because the Khan wore a green silk garment, while the *targans* wore polychrome (Skaff, *Sui-Tang China*, 151-152; Huili, *Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, trans. Beal, 41-42).

⁴⁸ “In his palace of Dastagerd the Roman army found [...] much silk and pepper, more linen shirts than one could count [...] silver, silken garments, woolen rugs, and woven carpets— a great quantity of them and very beautiful, but on account of their weight they burnt them all” (Theophanes, *Chronicle of Theophanes*, trans. Mango and Scott, *Annals Mundi* 6118.322 [p. 451]).

stored at the hunting site, among other items needed for organizing the event, would suggest that these garments served a specific purpose.

The transfer of a designated garment would have also communicated a substantial cosmopolitan political function: who takes credit for the successful hunt. Both histories and myths describe members of the Sasanian royal family as naturally-born hunters; thus, their hunting ability could circularly both prove and be a result of their divine legitimacy as the ruling family of Iran. Later authors highlight this innate ability for Sasanian kings to overcome wild beasts, as for example in the *Šāh-nāma*, especially Ardašir I and Bahrām V ‘Gur’.⁴⁹ Visually rendering a sovereign with an otherworldly counterpart on the hunting field would have highlighted this talent and fit into Sasanian political theology, which places the King of Kings in a close relationship with the supreme Zoroastrian divinity.⁵⁰ Artists visually articulated this relationship with a King of Kings

⁴⁹ See a discussion of this topic in Allsen, *Royal Hunt*, 125.

⁵⁰ Inscriptions describe the King of Kings as a descendant of the gods and the earthly King of Kings before himself. Artists inscribe this relationship repeatedly in monumental inscriptions, following a traditional formula. For example, the bas-relief of Ardašir I at Naqš-e Rostam reads:

1. the image (is) this of the Mazda-worshipping god [bage/bag] Ardashir,
2. king of kings of Iran, **who (is) a scion [čitre/čihr]**
3. **of the Gods [bage/bag]**, the son of Papak, the king.

Paikuli, trans. Herzfeld, 85.

For comparison, about 100 years later, an inscription by Šāpūr II in the small ayvān of Tāq-e Bostān states:

1. the image is
2. this of the Mazda-worshipping
3. god [bag]
4. Shahpuhr
5. King of Kings
6. of Iran and non-Iran,
7. who is a scion [čitre] of the Gods
8. the son of the Mazda-worshipping god [bag]
9. Shahpuhr, king of
10. kings of Iran and non-Iran,
11. **who is a scion [čitre] of the Gods [bag]**, the grandson
12. of the god Hormizd
13. king of kings

Paikuli, trans. Herzfeld, 124.

mirroring a divine counterpart, including shared garments. In rock reliefs depicting the king's investiture, the king is either the same size, if not larger than the god; in some instances, artists emphasize this with the king's crown breaking the frame of the rock relief [Figure 3.9].

The divine counterpart on the hunting field would have functioned as a *gemina persona*, the divine counterpart created to coexist eternally with earthly kingships, as theorized by Ernst Kantorowicz.⁵¹ Though scholars have studied this concept and its iconography primarily in the art of the medieval Mediterranean and European worlds, there are emic Iranian (Zoroastrian) concepts for an everlasting divine counterpart.⁵² The divine counterpart represented in the boar hunt may perhaps be *xwarrah*, that is, the king's royal glory or fortune.⁵³ Another possibility is a *fravaši*, a protective counterpart to every earthly being in the Zoroastrian belief system.⁵⁴ Katsumi Tanabe first suggested the latter in 1983, but subsequent studies often overlook this plausible attribution.⁵⁵ However, neither the concept of *xwarrah* nor that of a *fravaši* has a secure visual representation in Iranian art.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 78-79.

⁵² The concept of pairing and juxtaposing the historical sovereign with a supernatural counterpart has a long history in the greater region as Adam T. Smith has demonstrated with the imagery rendered on Bronze Age vessels from Armenia, notably the imagery wrapping around the Karashamb goblet (Smith, *Political Machine*, 149-151).

⁵³ The iconography of *xwarrah* has most often been attached to the sun disk figure often found in Achaemenid art, and also the ring, often shown in investitures of kings. However, a number of scholars have also looked to images of flames emanating from human figures and birds of prey, both of which are discussed with reference to *xwarrah* in texts (Gnoli, "Farr(Ah)"). See, for example, Guitty Azarpay's discussion of the nimbus as potentially representing *xwarrah*, Azarpay, "Crowns and Some Royal Insignia," 113.

⁵⁴ Grammatically feminine, a *fravaši* is described in the *Yašt* 13 (v. 70) as being able to "swoop down like an eagle" to help in a time of need (Boyce, "Fravaši").

⁵⁵ Although I agree with Katsumi Tanabe's identification of this second figure in the boar hunt as a divine counterpart to the king, I do not agree with his identification of all three larger figures on the deer hunt as the king or the interpretation of the monument itself (Tanabe, "Iconography of the Royal Hunt," 103, 111-112; Tanabe, "Royal Boar Hunt," 89). Tanabe, following von Gall's 1971 proposal, also identifies the massive high relief equestrian figure a *fravaši* and not a reference to a specific king (von Gall, "Entwicklung und Gestalt").

⁵⁶ The winged figure of the Achaemenid kings has been identified in different ways including a *fravaši* by J. H. Moulton in the early twentieth century. Though this image as a *fravaši* is generally accepted by practicing Zoroastrians today, Western scholars have more recently suggested that the figure represents *xwarrnah*, the royal glory. See Boyce, "Fravaši."

The third enormous personage of the deer hunt might be a quasi-divine heroic figure, of a similar status as the well-known Iranian hero, Rostam. This figure carries a bow in a resting position and a peculiar club-like object in his right hand. The hunter under the parasol also carries this object. The object is not a weapon and not used against the animals, unlike the bow and arrow. On the contrary, it is reminiscent of the *barsom*, a bundle of wrapped *haoma* or pomegranate sticks used by Zoroastrian priests in rituals, but also for Zoroastrian followers to give thanks to the divinities, thus connecting the worlds of the spiritual and the divine. Surviving Middle Persian texts explicitly describe the King of Kings holding a *barsom* to give thanks for a meal.⁵⁷ In Sasanian visual culture, divinities typically hold a *barsom* during investiture, thus bringing the mortal Sasanian King into a close relationship with Zoroastrian gods. Whether this is the *barsom* proper or another unknown accoutrement on the ayvān reliefs, its shared usage connects the hunter following the beribboned deer and the hunter under the parasol.

The figure with the beribboned deer is perhaps related to other fallow deer imagery found in Sasanian art. In these visual representations, a single figure interacts with fallow deer. Molded stucco plaques and depictions hammered in silver show a personage riding the deer and tugging at its antlers.⁵⁸ This scene of a human figure and the fallow deer appears to refer to a narrative of some kind, for which no written sources survive.⁵⁹ This figure perhaps adds an element of the

⁵⁷ Kanga, “Barsom.”

⁵⁸ On 31 excavated stucco plaques which once decorated the interiors of an estate at Čāl Tarkān Ešqābād, the rider carries no weaponry. However, this rider has removed one antler of the stag with his right hand and pulls at the other with his left (Thompson, *Stucco from Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad*, 50, 168-175). In a silver plate at the British Museum, a kingly figure likewise rides the back of a fallow deer with one hand tugging at one of its antlers while the second hand is pushing a sword into the neck of the deer. A second deer lies recumbent below. Thompson refers to another plate with this imagery, but the citation is illegible (Thompson, *Stucco from Chal Tarkhan-Eshqabad*, 50).

⁵⁹ Harper and Meyers, *Silver Vessels*, 59, fn. 100.

supernatural, which could grant further presiding powers to the king who, like the hero following the deer, holds a *barsom*.

The Hunt, the Kaftan, and the King's Court

From the reliefs, the figure placement shows that the hunters took turns shooting an arrow. Only one hunter actively shoots on the field at a time. In the deer hunt, ten fellow hunters race alongside the main hunter, but only the latter aims his bow, ready to shoot. The King of Kings thus commences the hunt with the first shot, and only afterward, other court members take the field in turn. Such turn-taking is explicitly documented for the hunt in earlier Achaemenid Iran and survives in reference to other sporting events in Sasanian Iran.⁶⁰ If the sovereign took the first shot on the hunting field while wearing a kaftan, he would ‘consecrate’ the garment, imbuing it physically with his essence, an essential characteristic of gifted garments in the history of dress in Asia.⁶¹ By handing the kaftan to a court member, the king could establish a physical bond between himself and the following wearer. Upon transferring the kaftan to a court member, which the artist shows by way of the king’s rotation from the active kaftan-wearing hunter in the boar hunting relief to the tunic-wearing overseer in the deer hunt, the king’s hunting talents would have remained in the kaftan worn now by kaftan-wearing active hunter on the deer hunt field.

⁶⁰ Summarizing Ctesias’ *Persika*, “[the King of King’s] zeal in chasing the quarry or facing wild beasts was not to be surpassed. No one was allowed to throw his javelin at a beast before the king, even if the latter’s life was threatened” (Shahbazi, “Hunting in Iran”). At an archery competition Šāpūr I boasts of his archery abilities before regional kings, ‘princes of royal blood’, the ‘Great Ones’, and other aristocrats. Šāpūr I takes the first shot and then asks if any others could shoot an arrow any further. According to a Pahlavi and Parthian inscription at Hajjiabad, and also at Tanq-e Boraq (ŠTBq). See Huyse, “Inscriptional Literature,” 94–95, Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, 87–89.

⁶¹ Any residual stench would have formed an inseparable bond with the original wearer of the garment, whether positive or negative, as Finbarr Barry Flood has discussed for early Islamic robe exchanges (Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 77). See also this aspect of gift giving under the Mongols in Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 90.

Members of the court were indeed also great hunters. A person's appearance, possessions, and skills, particularly that of hunting, is said to have distinguished the nobility in Sasanian Iran. In the political treatise known as the *Letter of Tansar*, the author wrote that “[t]he nobles are distinguished from artisans and tradespeople by their dress and horses and trappings of pomp, and their women likewise by silken garments; also by their lofty dwellings, their trousers, headgear, hunting and whatever else is customary for the noble.”⁶² Furthermore, a Middle Persian proverb, within a collection known as the *Andarz ī Ošnar ī dānāg*, implies that poor hunting skills are a character flaw: “[o]n account of four things a man is most harmful: much drinking of wine, lust for women, much indulgence in backgammon, and immoderate hunting.”⁶³ In the Treatise of *Kosrow and the Page*, the young page tells to the King of Kings that, among many other necessary abilities such as using different weapons and writing calligraphy or his knowledge obtained about the Avesta and history, he has also mastered skills critical for both hunting and warfare.⁶⁴

Thus, hunting was a lauded and even necessary skill for all court members— including those with the high-ranking titles of Master of the Hunt and Warden of the Wild Boars.⁶⁵ However, if a court member pulled on a kaftan previously worn by the king on the hunting field,

⁶² *Nāma-ye Tansar*, trans. Boyce, 48.

⁶³ See Blois, “Two Sources of the Handarz of Ōšnar,” 95; Macuch, “Pahlavi Literature,” 163.

⁶⁴

And my skill in riding and archery is such that the other (i.e. opponent) must be taken for fortunate who can escape through my race-course. My skill in leveling the spear is such that the rider must be taken for unfortunate who comes for encounter and combat with me on horse-back with spear and sword, and in the race-course wishes predominance. In an instant I rise over my girth, the other under me, and over his head my horse. I strike him quickly and easily as one strikes swift melodies on a lute; and the battle-axe and arrow-heads appear in this moment.

Kusraw ī Kawādān ud rēdak-ēw, trans. Monchi-Zadeh, lines 11-12 [pp. 64-65].

⁶⁵ *Sagbus ī Naxčīrbed*, (Sagbus, Master of the Hunt) and *Gulag ī Wārāzbed*, (Gulag, Warden of the Wild Boars) are listed in Šāpūr I’s inscription on the Ka’ba-ye Zardošt at Naqš-e Rostam (*Die dreisprachige Inschrift*, trans. Huyse, §43 and 50 [pp. 56, 62]).

the king could claim the credit for the successful kills made by a court member. Totaling the number of kills made by the entire court but under the king's name has a long tradition across Eurasia; in Iran, the much later Safavid court explicitly documents this scoring system.⁶⁶ In the Sasanian-era *Tāq-e Bostān* deer hunt, the artist visually delineates this relationship: after the court member slips on the kaftan and take center stage on the hunting field, the King of Kings oversees his skill taking effect through the court member's success on the field. This relationship between the King of Kings and a court members mirrors that of the divine counterpart and the King of Kings on the opposite field: the divine counterpart ensures the king's success from the edge of the field, and subsequently the king presides over the hunt of the court member—acting as the divine— from the field's edge.

Later sources document the systematic use of garments to establish, channel, and maintain power structures throughout the region.⁶⁷ In the early Islamic era, gifting robes of honor, *khil'a*, requested the giftee's allegiance to the gifter. By accepting the garment, the giftee likewise affirmed their subordination to the gifter.⁶⁸ A luxurious or costly material did not define the power relationship as much as the garment's ownership lineage. The gifter, who first owned and wore the garment themselves, would leave their essence in the garment. Transferring this garment forged not only a physical connection between the gifter and giftee, including textures of the garment felt on the skin and scents left from the previous wearer, but also a political connection, which was visible to all those watching the field. The transfer of a kaftan thus

⁶⁶ For example, throughout Chinese dynastic history, Pharaonic Egypt, Assyria, and pre-Islamic southern Arabia. See Allsen, *Royal Hunt*, 134-136.

⁶⁷ Sourdel, "Robes of Honor," 137.

⁶⁸ Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 77, 82-83; Hambly, "From Baghdad to Bukhara," 193-222.

established a socio-political hierarchy.⁶⁹ Like the pledging of political allegiance by wearing a *khil'a*, taking the kaftan during the hunt would have created an agreement between the sovereign and his court members that all hunting successes were cumulative and ultimately credited to the sovereign.

The King of Kings operated the imperial hunt as a social event that reinforced his role as much as his courtly entourage.⁷⁰ The success of the hunt depended not only on the king's ability but also on that of his court members. Who exactly were these courtiers who joined the sovereign on the hunt?

The Sasanian court included both individuals of the royal Sasanian (*Pārsīg*) family line and also the heads of long powerful, and land-owning Parthian (*Pahlav*) families.⁷¹ Monumental Middle Persian inscriptions include lists of court members, for example, the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt at Naqš-e Rostam, Hājiābād, and Paikuli, as does literature, for example, the banquet speech, *Sūr saxwan*. These lists illustrate that the most critical and consistent members are the *śahrdārs*, kings of larger provinces; the *wispuhrs*, the princes of the royal blood, that is, son(s) of the King of Kings; the *wuzurgs*, often translated as the 'grandees' or 'great ones', those heads of aristocratic families and semi-independent rulers of small provinces; and other aristocrats, the

⁶⁹ In the Mongol era, historians documented instances in which the giftees refused such gifts, and in doing so, refused the proposed hierarchical dynamics. See Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 82.

⁷⁰ Later Medieval sources, for example the ninth-century *Book of the Crown* by al-Jahīz written under the Abbasids discusses how sovereigns and their court should properly interact with one another, specifically during their participation at athletic events like hunting and archery (Walker, *Legend of Mar Qardagh*, 138-139). A number of monumental rock reliefs depicted not only the King of Kings himself, but also his family— including women— and courtiers. For example, in Bahrām II's relief at Naqš-e Rostam, the king is accompanied by family and courtiers. At Sarab-e Bahrām, the king is seated frontally on a throne with two courtiers on either side. Śāpūr I also presents himself with his court at Naqš-e Rajab, and both Śāpūr I and Śāpūr II present themselves victorious not as individual vanquishers, but backed by their courtiers.

⁷¹ Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, 50, fn. 232.

āzāds.⁷² Members of Parthian families could be a *sahryārān*, *wuzurgān* or *āzādān*; only the *wispührān* came exclusively from the ruling Sasanian house.

The houses of Spāhbadān, Kanārangīyān, Kārin, Mehrān, and Sūrēn were powerful landowners ruling alongside the leading Sasanian house.⁷³ The noble houses worked together by contractual agreement supporting one another, but also experienced several conflicts, which historian Parvaneh Pourshariati argues eventually led to the collapse of the Sasanian Empire. These tensions ranged from smaller territorial spats which crossed previously outlined contractual agreements, to revolts against the Sasanian dynasty by Bahrām Chōbīn of the Mehrān family and Besṭām of the Spāhbadān family.⁷⁴ In the sixth century, Parthian families exercised greater autonomous power in their territories, as the Sasanian house began to lose support from the reign of Ḵosrow I (531-579 CE).⁷⁵

Tāq-e Bostān does not lie in the heart of Fārs, the Sasanian family's homeland, but in Media, a territory long controlled by the Kārin family.⁷⁶ Tāq-e Bostān sits near the main road connecting Ctesiphon and Hamadan through the Zagros. After Hamadan this road opens onto the Iranian plateau: connections to the northeast take one into Khorasan or to the southeast into Fārs. Many of Iran's inhabitants, including the King of Kings and court members, traveled this road connecting the Sasanian capital with the Sasanian heartland. Stopping to set up temporary tents to rest, refresh, and even enjoy a hunt would have been necessary on this multiple-day journey.

⁷² Daryae, *Sasanian Persia*, 52-53; Lukonin, "Political, Social and Administrative Institutions," 698, 700-703; Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, 500; Shaki, "Class System." Also by the fifth century, additional categories of courtiers were added to lists, notably military leaders. See *Sūr saxwan*, trans. Daryae, 66.

⁷³ Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, 3.

⁷⁴ Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, 52, 59-67.

⁷⁵ Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, 97.

⁷⁶ Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, 49; Lukonin, "Political, Social and Administrative Institutions," 705.

The King of Kings going on a hunt together with his court would have reinforced the political cosmology supporting a divinely selected leader.⁷⁷ The Sasanian king's inclusion of Parthian courtiers and local Kārin dynasts of the Median region would be fundamental for preforming the imperial hierarchical structure during a hunt at Tāq-e Bostān. The hunting event process, as reflected visually in the relief, highlight two different, but essential faces of the king: the active, impulsive, and violent hunter, and the restrained and peaceful, but vigilant hunter.⁷⁸ The boar hunt panel showcases the king's ability to instantaneously enact violence and showcase his authority over the field, that is, his realm. Complementarily, on the opposite wall, the king is holding his bow not even to his side, but in full resting position across his shoulder, exercising self-restraint. He holds a club-like object that is visually similar to the *barsom* held by divinities in Sasanian investiture imagery.⁷⁹ Although he peacefully watches the field's events, this role is god-like, in that he is ultimately to thank for the successful hunt, a role which mirrors that of his actual divine counterpart on the opposite boar hunt relief.

The Sasanian king's use of the kaftan on the hunting field would have nonchalantly reinforced the dynasty's cosmological hierarchy. When the King of Kings passed the kaftan to a Parthian court member, it foremost appeared to reflect the game rules rather than a critical allegiance decision. This proclamation of hierarchy would have operated not only physically on the field, but also the walls of the ayvān would physically reiterate it during the banquet to

⁷⁷ The Sasanians used the same claim to power as the Arsacids: “the power of the gods, the *xwarrah* of the Iranians and the Kayanian, and the religion of the Ohrmazd-worshippers” (Payne, “Cosmology,” 25, after Bailey). Thus the Sasanians needed a way to differentiate themselves. In contrast, Pourshariati argues that the goal of Bahrām Chōbīn’s rebellion in 590 CE was to replace Sasanian Zoroastrianism with Mithraism (Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall*, 397-414).

⁷⁸ Thank you to Adam Smith for first emphasizing the significance of this juxtaposition in the reliefs during a meeting in September 2018.

⁷⁹ Kanga, “Barsom.”

follow. While enjoying refreshments and entertainment, the attendees could reflect on the day's hunt and reminisce on past hunts with fellow hunters. The reliefs positioned behind the attendees would have continually reminded guests of the hunt's prescribed operations and origins of success, themselves included: the court member's prosperity is presided over and insured by the King of Kings, while the King of King's success is due to his *xwarrāh*, which dwells within him as the rightful, legitimate King of Kings.⁸⁰ If glancing up higher than the reliefs to the vault of the *ayvān*, the lunette furthermore illustrates the foundational bestowal of the Sasanian King of Kings' *xwarrāh*: the goddess Anāhitā pours a libation on the left, as the king reaches out to accept the investiture ring directly from the hand of Orhmazd to the right [Figure 3.7].

The messaging of the hunting reliefs was not hostile and confrontational, but diplomatic. The kaftan played a binding role in the royal hunt, which brought together the king and his courtly entourage and reinforced a cosmologically correct hierarchy that would have been particularly potent in the early seventh century. By allegorizing the Sasanian-Parthian symbiotic relationship for the continuation of a cosmologically constituted political order, the Sasanians utilized the hunt as an activity for which members of Parthian families could actively perform their allegiance. The ultimate result, a successful hunt followed by a bountiful banquet, furthermore allegorized the success promised for all families if embracing this political order.

Conclusion

How hunters wore the kaftan in Sasanian Iran and how banqueters wore the kaftan in Central Asia is jarringly different. In the Iranian reliefs, a select few out of dozens pull on a kaftan, and

⁸⁰ Abka'i-Khavari, *Bild des Königs*, 41-44; Canepa, *Two Eyes*, 424-425; Gnoli, "Farr(ah)."

all style the kaftan closed up around the neck, in the same manner. According to the reliefs, the kaftan stood out by garment design among a sea of tunics; perhaps color was also a factor, but too little evidence has been published. Thus the kaftan constructed from a unique garment design among the usual dress of Sasanian Iran fulfilled a specific task of standing out. In the context of the hunt, it marked one as either the Sasanian King of Kings, a court member loyal to Sasanian rule, or a divinity.

On the contrary, in Central Asia at the banquet, all attendees wear the kaftan. No garment by design stands out to overtly distinguish the host or a guest; each attendee shares more sartorial elements with their fellow banqueters than those that set them apart. Guests express personalization through color pairing and perform their social distinction through the styling of their kaftan lapels. How one wore the kaftan was not based on fixed rules, but on broadly defined parameters within which the community permitted negotiations.

Thus, in the sixth century, the kaftan climbed to the pinnacle of an already relatively strict sartorial hierarchy within imperial Iran.⁸¹ As Vogelsang-Eastwood and Peck have suggested, perhaps the Sasanians did associate the kaftan with its earliest usage in Central Asia.⁸² The Sasanians could have indeed utilized the kaftan as a symbolic means of usurping *Anērān*, non-Iran, and particularly Central Asia, which many Parthian families called their homeland. However, the Sasanians did not merely take the kaftan and make it their own; they selected it precisely as a political tool. For use at the hunt, they did not select a garment type with a long tradition in the region, which might have various claims of origin or uses for particular

⁸¹ *Nāma-ye Tansar*, trans. Boyce, 48. Most observers of these codes note difference in colors of garments, see Shaki, “Class System”; Christensen, *L’Iran sous les Sassanides*, 107.

⁸² Peck, “Representation of Costumes,” 121-122; Vogelsang-Eastwood, “Sasanian ‘Riding-Coats’,” 223-224.

occasions. Instead, the Sasanians selected a relatively new garment, one with a connection to Central Asia, and, perhaps most significantly, one with built-in mutability. The Sasanians thus appear to manipulate and repress the kaftan's hallmark lapels purposefully. In essence, within the Sasanian hunt, kaftan's ability to engage in dynamic dialogue by utilizing the lapels for negotiating one's social status is effectively ceased; the kaftan can only deliver a monologue, that is, the message of the Sasanian King of Kings.

CHAPTER IV

THE KAFTAN AND THE FUNERAL

In systematic waves, golden-hued silk threads rise and fall into a sea of turquoise [Figure 4.1].

Line after line, a curious mythical creature emerges. The creature's profile head has a dog's furled snort with snarling teeth. Two clawed paws swing forward from its swooping S-shaped body. The maker contrasted its muscular, ferocious forebody with a whimsical set of bird's wings and a bulky tail. Interconnected pearl-studded roundels heraldically frame each dog-bird creature, one after another in a grid pattern. An expert seamster pieced together no less than five meters of this woven silk into an adult's garment, layered over a linen interface, and lined with velvety squirrel fur.¹ The fit of the garment accentuates broad shoulders, and the tailoring in the bodice follows the contours of a tall and muscular body. The maker attached the skirting below the natural waistline, with the lower hem falling below the knees. The flared cut of the skirting complements the broad shoulders that would have filled this garment. No longer attached, long narrowing sleeves once extended a bit beyond the wrists.

One thousand four hundred years ago, about 100 kilometers from present-day Sochi, Russia, the Alans living in the foothills of the northern Caucasus mountains buried a member of their community in this ostentatious silk kaftan.² Not only does tightly woven silk entirely cover this kaftan, but also it is exceptionally well preserved. These two combined characteristics have prompted stand-alone articles about the garment, and its inclusion and even sensationalization as

¹ According to selvages, Anna Ierusalimskaia calculates that the silk fabric at a width of 80cm would have needed no less than five meters of silk to construct the kaftan. Ierusalimskaia, "Novaia nakhodka," 13.

² Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 235.

a wholly unique garment in international exhibitions, and their accompanying catalogs about the northern Caucasus, greater Iran, and the Silk Roads.³ However, the kaftan, based on its garment design—sleeves, a fitted bodice, attached skirting, and overlapping front panels that can form lapels—was not unique to one or even a few community members. The Alans deemed the kaftan the appropriate attire for every man: whether an adult, an elder, or a child. This kaftan is one of the dozens of kaftans and kaftan fragments found at the sixth- to the ninth-century cemetery of Moshchevaia Balka [Map 4.2]. Though allover shining silks like the one patterned with dog-birds flamboyantly embellished some of the kaftans recovered from the burials, others have only embellished trims, while still others have no decoration at all.

This chapter investigates how the kaftan functioned socially within the funerary context. The investigation is grounded in kaftans and kaftan fragments from burial assemblages dated from the sixth through the ninth centuries. Archaeologists scientifically excavated some of the kaftans, while explorers and geographers collected others. I focus on the remains from Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz, cemeteries located in parallel river valleys in the densely forested foothills of the northern Caucasus of the present-day Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia in the Federation of Russia [Map 4.1].

Scholarship on Alanic dress follows one of two primary approaches. The first—most forcefully advanced by curator and archaeologist Anna Ierusalimskaia—is a global narrative that places the northern Caucasus on the Great Silk Roads by attributing the silks, among other

³ See Ierusalimskaia, “Novaia nakhodka,” an article which was extended and translated into French as “Le Cafetan aux Simourghs.” The kaftan was highlighted at special exhibitions in Tehran in 1973 (State Hermitage Museum, and Iran Bastan Museum, *Chefs-d’œuvre sassanides*), Saint Petersburg in 1992 (Ierusalimskaia, *Kavkaz na shēlkovom puti*), Brussels in 1993 (Ierusalimskaia, “Soieries sassanides”), in Munich in 1996 (Ierusalimskaia, *Von China nach Byzanz*), again in Saint Petersburg in 2004 (Ierusalimskaia, “Iran i Severnii Kavkaz”), and Amsterdam in 2014 (Ierusalimskaia, “Early Medieval Burial Grounds”).

objects, to geographical regions beyond the Caucasus.⁴ The kaftan with dog-birds has received particular attention in this argument [Figure 4.1].⁵ Ierusalimskaia compares the motif to similar dog-bird patterned textiles and representations of such textiles in neighboring Iran and Central Asia, including that represented on the hunters in the rock reliefs discussed in chapter III.⁶ The comparisons sensationalize this garment as ‘the chieftain’s kaftan’, sometimes leading to speculation about the wearer’s similitude to the King of Kings of Iran.⁷ This comparison has subsequently misled other scholars to discuss the kaftan within the cultural context of Sasanian Iran.⁸

The second line of argument presents a local narrative. Scholars outline garment typologies for different groups of Alanic community members: men and women; children and adults. Based on cuts and materials, researchers place the garments into an evolutionary narrative, often comparing the garments worn in the pre-Christian seventh to the ninth century

⁴ E.g., Ierusalimskaia, “O Severokavkazskom ‘shëlkovom puti’”; Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*.

⁵ Ierusalimskaia debuted the kaftan in the Reports of the Hermitage in 1972 followed by an extensive study in French a few years later in *Studia Iranica* (Ierusalimskaia, “Noviiia nakhodka”; Ierusalimskaia, “Le Cafetan aux Simourghs”). Textile historian Krishna Riboud published an article on the kaftan two years earlier in English in the Textile Museum Journal. This article appears to translate and pull from other work by Ierusalimskaia, with a note explicitly stating that Ierusalimskaia’s work “forms the basis of [her] own presentation” (Riboud, “Newly Excavated Caftan,” 24, ft. 3). Riboud does not appear to be familiar with this region or its archaeology, as there multiple geographical mistakes and generalizations. Most interestingly, she provides a technical report which differs from those of Ierusalimskaia.

⁶ Ierusalimskaia draws textile comparisons to those from reliquaries in medieval Europe, namely that from the reliquary of the head of St. Helena in Saint-Leu, now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (n. 8579-1863), and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris (no. 16364 and no. 19166). She also draws comparisons to the representation of the dog-bird motif on three figures’ garments at Tāq-e Bostān in Iran (including two figures from the hunting reliefs discussed in chapter III), and one figure’s garment on a wall painting in the Hall of Ambassadors at Afrāsiāb in Sogdiana.

⁷ e.g., Ierusalimskaia, “Soieries sassanides,” 275-277; Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 235-241; Ierusalimskaia, “Early Medieval Burial Grounds,” 240, 242.

⁸ E.g., Vogelsang-Eastwood, “Sasanian ‘Riding-Coats’,” 222; Knauer, “Man’s Caftan,” 127. These comparisons are further fueled by the only early English language ‘translation’ by Krishna Riboud (Riboud, “Newly Excavated Caftan,” 24, 26-37).

with those of the Christian, pre-Mongol tenth to the thirteenth century.⁹ The primary conclusions tend to revolve around dress as the reflection of an Alanic ethnic identity.¹⁰

Prior studies have not, however, discussed the substantial variety of kaftans worn by community members, and how this correlates with standard Alanic burial practices. The Alanic community reveals the significance of the kaftan not only through the action of burying every male community member— regardless of age— in a kaftan, but also by uniquely embellishing each kaftan. Furthermore, according to signs of thread wear, individuals indeed also wore their kaftans during their life.

In this chapter, I identify distinctive groups of kaftans worn in the northern Caucasus and explore why the Alans specially selected and utilized the kaftan for both life and death in their community. I preface my analysis with a discussion of Alanic cemeteries, giving special attention to Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz. I then analyze a set of well-preserved kaftans from these two cemeteries to understand how the Alans established visible variations on this garment type. Thereafter, I investigate if the visible variations correlate with the garment's styling and if the Alans styled their kaftans in different ways for communication.

⁹ e.g., Orfinskaia and Arzhantseva, “Cut of the Clothes”; Orfinskaia, “Alanskii Kostium”; Ierusalimskaia, “Nekotorye voprosy izucheniiia.”

¹⁰ E.g., Dode, “Costume as Text,” 13; Dode, *Srednevekovyi kostium*, 113-114.

Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz

The Alans inhabited the region north of the Great Caucasus in the first millennium CE.¹¹ In the second half of the first millennium, they built relatively small, fortified, and multifunctional settlements. Based on studies of grain consumption, archaeologists Sabine Reinhold and Dmitri Korobov estimate that between 5 and 40 people lived in a typical Alanic settlement.¹² Reinhold and Korobov describe the majority of fifth- to eighth-century settlements as small three- to four-family strongholds. The Alans used local stone to build their settlement structures on steep plateau edges, overlooking valleys.¹³ They built far fewer settlements on smaller hills rising from the landscape, although they could hold more families. Without the natural defense system of the first type of settlement, some of this type had an artificial stone wall tracing the perimeter, while others had a ditch.¹⁴

Alongside the pastoral activities well suited for this mountainous region, the Alans practiced agriculture, building substantial artificially terraced fields in this period.¹⁵ Korobov and Alexander V. Borisov found that the Alans connected stone-lined rectangular fields to their

¹¹ Many scholars identify the Alans of this milieu as a multi-ethnic group. I accordingly use the name ‘Alan’ to broadly describe the peoples inhabiting the region as a chronological marker rather than an ethnic identifier. Archaeologist Svetlana A. Pletnëva first strongly argued that the inhabitants of this greater region—particularly addressing those living further north around the forest-steppe along the Middle Don River—were multi-ethnic (Pletnëva, *Na Slaviano-Khazarskom pogranich’ye*, 7-23). The contrast to an understood multi-ethnic community is the attribution of different groups to different geographical zones stretching from the Black Sea to the Caspian based on historical documents, based on historical sources, namely the Armenian geography source, *Ashkharatsuyts* by Anania Shirakatsi, and archaeological assemblage variations. Accordingly, some archaeologists have to that end paired ethnonyms with variations found in material culture. See a summary in Korobov, “Settlement of Alanic Tribes,” and for more in-depth discussions about the ethnicity and archaeology of the Alans, and its scholarly discourses, see Kuznetsov and Lebedynsky, *Les Alains*; Korobov, “Early Medieval Settlement”; Bachrach, *History of the Alans*; and Kovalevskaia, *Kavkaz*.

¹² Reinhold and Korobov, “Kislovodsk Basin,” 204.

¹³ Of 125 mapped settlements, Reinhold and Korobov identify 105 as being of this type of settlement (Reinhold and Korobov, “Kislovodsk Basin,” 198).

¹⁴ Reinhold and Korobov, “Kislovodsk Basin,” 198-200.

¹⁵ Korobov and Borisov, “Origins of Terraced Field Agriculture.”

settlements, usually no further than one kilometer away.¹⁶ They typically integrated a cemetery at or near their settlement [**Figure 4.2a**]. Archaeologists have identified a few dozen Alanic cemeteries and investigated them to varying degrees. Depending on the surrounding landscape, these cemeteries took a wide variety of forms.¹⁷ They ranged from earthen and catacomb burials in the steppe and foothills of the Caucasus to rocky terrace and cave burials in the rising foothills and mountain valleys. Some cemeteries—primarily catacomb-style cemeteries—have a long history of use, even spanning millennia.¹⁸ Others, such as the rock terrace burials, often fit within the second half of the first millennium CE.

The rock burials in higher elevation mountainous terrain best preserve textiles and other organic materials. Archaeologists have documented the stone terraced cemeteries of Moshchevaia Balka and Gamovskaia Balka in the Bol'shoe Laba river valley, Podorvannaia Balka and the other Nizhnii Arkhyz terrace cemeteries of the Bol'shoe Zelonchuk valley, Amgata and Nizhnii Teberda in the Teberda river valley, Balka Balabanka in the Urup river valley, Eshkakon in the Eshkakon river valley, Khasaut in the Khasaut river valley, and Ulla-Kol in the Ulla-Kol river valley.¹⁹

Some cemeteries primarily utilize the sandstone faces protruding from steep mountain valley walls, such as Khasaut [**Figure 4.2b**]. The softness of the sandstone allowed the Alans to

¹⁶ Korobov and Borisov, “Origins of Terraced Field Agriculture,” 1099.

¹⁷ Some scholars who use ‘Alanic’ as an ethnic marker argue otherwise. For example, Dmitry Korobov interprets the T-shaped catacomb tomb as an ‘ethnic marker’ of the Alans. However, he questions if the cave or rock terrace burials belong to the same ‘Alans’, in the ethnic sense (Korobov, “Settlement of Alanic Tribes,” 53). See lists of the catacomb gravesites pages 57-60, figures 3, 4.

¹⁸ For a recent study encompassing dozens of catacomb cemeteries, see Korobov, *Sotsial'naia organizatsiia Alan*. For an example of millennia-spanning usage from the Bronze to the Middle Ages, see the recent excavations at Klin-Yar (Belinskij and Härke, *Ritual, Society and Population at Klin-Yar*).

¹⁹ There is no comprehensive study of Alanic terrace burials; scholarship remains site-focused. Nevertheless, scholars have written atlas-like books that document the archaeological sites of a particular administrative district, including short historiographies of the sites. For example, E. P. Alekseeva’s *Arkeologicheskie pamiatniki Karachaevo-Cherkessii* is invaluable for locating sites in the Republic of Karachaevо-Cherkessia.

carve niches up and across the walls efficiently. The Alans also built cemeteries, such as Moshchevaia Balka, onto naturally formed stone terraces and ledges hanging along twisting gorges, many of which have a river or seasonal stream running below [Figure 4.3]. If a terrace had soft sandstone walls, the Alans carved out burial niches along the walls maximizing the horizontal and vertical space. They constructed graves on the floors of the long terraces and ledges from stone slabs (a cist burial) [Figure 4.3c]. Standard cist tombs were rectangular, sometimes utilizing multiple stones placed together, or a single slab. Because of limited space, many of the tombs shared walls or were attached to monoliths or rock walls, which Ierusalimskaia describes as honeycomb-like.²⁰ Alongside manmade niches in the walls and cist tombs on the floor, the Alans also utilized natural odd-shaped niches and crevices in the rock for burials [Figure 4.2c].²¹ Archaeologists typologize these various Alanic burial types differently.²²

In most tomb types, the community placed the body of the deceased on a layer of pebbles and a mat of grass or wool.²³ A solid stone, wood piece, or a layered mix of rocks and wood enclosed the space, which was then sealed with clay.²⁴ Terrace graves typically held one

²⁰ Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 34, 36-37.

²¹ For documentation at Moshchevaia Balka, see Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 37-38. For documentation at Nizhnii Arkhyz, see Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 70-71. For a description at another contemporary cemetery, Khasaut, see Fomenko, “Khasautskii nekropol’,” 2.

²² For example Tikhonov and Orfinskaia name three primary tomb types at pre-Christian Nizhnii Arkhyz: rocky [cist or niches] (*skal’nye*), semi-underground crypt [which can be covered with a stone] (*polupodzemnyi sklep*), and stone box [which sounds to resemble a cist tomb, but is classified by Tikhonov and Orfinskaia as bigger] (*kamennyi iashchik*) (Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 70-72). Savchenko describes three tomb types at Moshchevaia Balka: cist (*grobniitsa*), [natural] niche (*nish*), and ‘constructed niche’ (*posttroennyi v nishe*) (Savchenko, “Moshchevaia Balka,” 1999, 128-130; Savchenko, “Pogrebal’nyi obriad Moshchevaia Balka,” 1999, 156-157). Ierusalimskaia only separates the tombs at Moshchevaia Balka into two types, which she more descriptively names ‘walled up niche-shaped caves’ [i.e., a niche] (*zamurovannyе nisheobraznye peshcherki*) and ‘stone cists’ (*kammenye grobnitsy*) (Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 35-37).

²³ The community leveled these with pebbles or burnt embers, which archaeologists often interpret as the result of some kind of fire ritual (Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 36).

²⁴ Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 36.

individual, but several examples held two or three people. Communities buried children both individually and with adults.²⁵

Organic materials— notably textiles belonging to garments but also other textile accessories, leather belts and shoes, and wooden toiletries, utensils, and weapons— survive within many of these burials. Because the Alans sealed their burials, only a limited amount of oxygen could seep into the burial space. Also, no direct contact between the organic materials and acidic earth occurred, which would have promoted the degradation of these materials.²⁶

Archaeologists found the kaftans discussed in this chapter at the rock terrace cemeteries of Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz [**Appendix I**]. The Alans built Moshchevaia Balka on a rocky outcrop tracing along two sides of a densely forested mountain [**Maps 4.2, 4.3**]. The mountain rises above the right bank of the Bol'shoe Laba River, a tributary of the Kuban River. The mountain is about one kilometer from the Bol'shoe Laba's confluence with the Beskes River, and downriver from the Labinskii Pass (formerly called Tsagerker) at a height of 2800 meters. Moshchevaia Balka is located about five kilometers south from the village of Kurdzhinovo and a kilometer north of the village of Aziatskii. A now seasonal stream, the Moshchevaia River, runs under the south side of the mountain and drops into the Bol'shoe Laba.

The Alans built the cemetery on a stone terrace about 400 meters up the mountainside and two-thirds of the way to its summit. The terrace is long, extending several hundred meters as it wraps around two sides of the mountain, as well as narrow, ranging between two and eight meters in width. Much of the terrace is composed of eroded sandstone, a geological formation distinctive to the region [**Figure 4.3**]. An overhang protects the stone terrace in its entirety—

²⁵ Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 71.

²⁶ Kajitani, “Man’s Caftan and Leggings,” 87-88.

though to varying degrees.²⁷ The cemetery had well over 500 tombs, and archaeologists date the assemblages from the seventh to the ninth centuries CE.²⁸

During her excavations at the cemetery in the late 1960s and 70s, Ierusalimskaia found a small section of surviving stone rampart above the cemetery. Pottery sherds here were consistent with those found in the cemetery, suggesting concurrent use. To this date, however, researchers have not undertaken further archaeological investigations of the settlement.²⁹

About 50 kilometers southeast from Moshchevaia Balka in the river valley of Bol'shoi Zelenchuk and at the foot of Mt. Pastukhov is the archaeological complex of Nizhnii Arkhyz. The complex includes a fortified settlement, three churches, and four cemetery clusters in the gorges radiating around the central valley [**Map 4.4**]. The ancient settlement, of about 63 to 65 hectares, and a modern village of around 500 people of the same name (formerly Bukovo) are located on the right bank of the Bol'shoi Zelenchyk river. Nizhnii Arkhyz is about 25 km north of the town Arkhyz and 25 km south of Zelenchykskaia.

Archaeologists date the primary occupation period of the Nizhnii Arkhyz settlement, which includes the three churches, to the later Alanic Christian period, from tenth to the thirteenth century.³⁰ Many graves in the cemeteries predate the Christian-era constructions,

²⁷ Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 33-34. See a drawing of the shifting profile of the gorge in Savchenko, “Pogrebal’nyi obriad Moshchevaia Balka,” 149, fig. 2.

²⁸ Savchenko makes this estimate for the number of tombs (Savchenko, “Moshchevaia Balka,” 128); however, Ierusalimskaia disagrees (Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 26).

²⁹ Archaeologists did find part of an iron plow, which is now in the local Kurdzhinovo Museum. I could not spot any foundations or remains above the terrace during a visit to the cemetery in September 2019. Ierusalimskaia speculated that much of the construction of the settlement was of wood, and the heavy rainfall in the region destroyed it. She comments that this part of the site is in such terrible condition that there is no hope for further study (Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 19).

³⁰ For a history of the later settlement and churches, see Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz v X-XII vekakh*; Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz i rannee pravoslavie*. According to Vladimir Kuznetsov, the site has earlier layers that date back as far as the Bronze Age. Kuznetsov, “Drevnie Vyrabotki,” 62-67; Alekseeva, *Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki Karachaevo-Cherkessii*, 45-46.

ranging from the eighth through the twelfth centuries. Most of the stone terrace burials in the gorges are contemporary with the burial grounds of Moshchevaia Balka, while other burial types are later and usually distinguished in literature as the Christian burials.³¹ In total, archaeologists have identified around 3000 graves at Nizhnii Arkhyz.³²

About half of the tombs are located in the Podorvannaia and Tserkovnaia gorges, which branch out to the east of the Zelenchyk River and stretch out at the foot of Mt. Uzhum positioned to the southeast of Nizhnii Arkhyz. Cemetery I, usually referred to as a site in and of itself, Podorvannaia Balka, is located on the right (north) bank of the Podorvannaia gorge. The Alans built the burials on staggered, small ledges, rather than one long terrace, as at Moshchevaia Balka. The ledges range in heights of 15 to 250 meters above the stream bed and are composed of hard angular stones that stack (as opposed to the soft erodible and easy-to-carve sandstone of other sites). Ol'ga Orfinskaia and Nikolai Tikhonov estimate that about 1000 burials cover a total space of about 40 hectares.³³

Cemetery II is located on the right (north) bank of Tserkovnaia Balka, as well as two patches of a cliff between Podorvannaia and Tserkovnaia known as the Three Pines (*tri sosny*). The burials in the gorge run for about 400 meters and range in height from 20-30 to 250 m above the river bed [**Figure 4.4**]. Cemetery II has about 230-300 stone terrace burials, plus about 20 ‘vault’ (*sklep*) burials, and a patch of later Christian burials at the nearby Northern Church.³⁴

Cemetery III is located on the opposite bank of the Bol'shoi Zelenchuk River, and runs for about 7km [Figure 4.5]. The majority of graves—around 1500— are rock burials on ledges

³¹ Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 73.

³² Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 70.

³³ Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 72.

³⁴ Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 73.

ranging from 80 to 200 meters above the riverbed. Others, which Orfinskaia and Tikhonov classify as ‘stone box’ (*kamennyi iashchik*) and vault types, are in distinct clusters.³⁵ Cemetery IV is around two small gorges, which are also located on the left bank of the Bol’shoi Zelenchuk River, stretching out from Mt. Mytseshta. This cemetery has around 150 stone terrace graves.³⁶

Museums in Russia, notably Saint Petersburg, Cherkessk, Stavropol, Nizhnii Arkhyz, Krasnodar, and Moscow, primarily house the kaftans and other finds from Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz [Appendix III].

The Alanic Kaftan

The Alans clothed all their community members for burial. Men—adults, elders, and children—all wore a kaftan on their upper body, while women wore a tunic dress [Figure 4.6].³⁷ The Alans

³⁵ Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 73.

³⁶ Tikhonov and Orfinskaia, “Mogil’niki v raione,” 73.

³⁷ Makers used several pattern variations for the dress, some specific to different sites. Nevertheless, the tunic revolved around the same silhouette with a loose boxy body (which was likely belted) with narrower fitted sleeves. The jewel-neckline is high, but a slit on the shoulder or down the front of the tunic allowed the wearer to easily pull it on or off over the head. Makers always made tunics of linen. They decorated the tunic in various places with silk patches, including the neckline, slit opening, sleeve cuffs. Maker also adhered square- and rectangular-shaped patches on the upper body and shoulders. Over the tunic dress, women wore an outer garment lined with sheep’s fleece or fur. The outer garment sometimes took the form of a large tunic with a deeper slit to pull on over the head. Others took the form of a long or short mantle with a semi-circle pattern. One mantle skirt set from ‘grave 1’ at Moshchevaia Balka appears to be a rain set of leather with a matching mantle and skirt; see this ensemble in Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 199-201.

paired both the men's kaftan and woman's tunic with short trousers, leggings, and ankle boots.³⁸

I base this discussion of the kaftan on nine nearly complete adult kaftans from Moshchevaia Balka, seven nearly complete adult kaftans from Nizhnii Arkhyz (most from Podorvannaia Balka), four children's kaftans from Moshchevaia Balka and two from Nizhnii Arkhyz, plus one complete miniature 'doll' kaftan from Moshchevaia Balka. Dozens of smaller diagnostic fragments of silk and linen supplement and support the analysis and conclusions.

The Alans constructed kaftans around the four key features distinguished from other types of outer garments and additionally created variations that remained consistent across the region. The most significant variants are a lightweight single layer kaftan versus an insulated kaftan. These two types appear to be an under and outer variation, as well as a seasonal choice. Nizhnii Arkhyz is situated at an elevation of 1205 m above sea level, with current temperature averages at +18c in July, but -3c in January. Moshchevaia Balka, about 1000 m above sea level, compares with averages at +18c and -2c, while lower-lying Cherkessk (530m) is around +25c versus 0c.³⁹

The kaftans furthermore have visible variations according to silk embellishments. The Alans adorned their kaftans— among other garments— with one of two primary types of silk. The first type of silk is imported silk, usually attributed to the greater Mediterranean world, Iran, or

³⁸ Makers always constructed the trouser across the northern Caucasus of two identical sizes of rectangular cloth and one square piece of cloth. The two rectangular pieces are folded and form the legs, and the square piece forms a loose crotch that could facilitate movement. A drawstring is typically inserted around the waistline to pull on and adjust the pants to the wearer's size. The skirting of the kaftan covered the trousers: this might clarify why makers always made trousers of plain, woven linen— some quite coarse— and without any decorative elements. The Alans wore leggings with footies (attached socks) on the lower leg. The upper part of the legging reached the knee, where the trouser ended. The front and center of the legging had a button-like hole reinforced with leather, through which the wearer could pull a string to attach the legging to the trouser. Silk decorated some upper sections of the leggings, but the lower footie section was always plain linen. This sock-like section of the legging slides into soft leather ankle boots, or less often, a knee-high boot. Headgear usually took the form of either a pointed or half shell helmet, sometimes decorated with silk or leather.

³⁹ Average temperatures listed for Nizhnii Arkhyz on Yandex weather.

China [e.g., Figures 4.1c, 4.6, 4.17].⁴⁰ Visually, these silks vary greatly by motif and coloration.

The second type of silk is one that the Alans likely wove into fabric themselves [e.g., Figures

4.7d, 4.18]. Once vibrantly polychrome, the predominant colors, now faded, appear as brown

and gold. The pattern is most often a double-crescent (or double-headed axe) motif.⁴¹ Past

scholarship has treated the latter set of silks as ‘Sogdian’, meaning Sogdian imports; however,

this association is tied up in the ‘Zandanjī problem’, that is, an attribution to an imaginary silk

production center.⁴²

The Alans did themselves weave textiles. Archaeologists have found weaving implements in graves; based on historical and ethnographic comparisons, these pieces belong to body tension looms.⁴³ Inhabitants of the greater region did grow linen, and they also likely spun and wove it.⁴⁴ Though burials do not provide evidence specifically for sericulture, the Alans may have imported raw or even ready-to-weave spools of silk. Textual sources specifically include raw silk as a product carried through the Caucasus: in ca. 567/8 Menander Protector records a Sogdian leader advising a Turkic Khan that they should export raw silk to Byzantium over other polities, taking

⁴⁰ E.g., Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 96-119.

⁴¹ I believe that this motif is a crescent form with a local significance, considering that it also appears on numerous metallic amulets. However, Ierusalimskaia interprets this motif as a stylization of the so-called Sasanian boar head (Ierusalimskaia, “Dvoinaia sekira”).

⁴² The interest in so-called Zandanjī silks, the supposed western variation of new samite silk weaving technology appearing in the late sixth century, follows the first identification of a so-called Zandanjī fabric in a 1959 article by Shepherd and Henning (Shepherd and Henning, “Zandanjī Identified?”). Art historians and archaeologists deepened this identification by creating silk typologies (e.g., Ierusalimskaia, “K slozheniui shkoly”). The identification of the so-called Zandanjī silks was based on a reading of a thought-to-be Sogdian ink inscription on a silk textile housed in Belgium. However, Nicholas Sims-Williams and Geoffrey Khan have since reexamined the handwriting arguing that it is, in fact, not Sogdian, but Arabic. This discovery aligns with historical sources, which state that textiles from Zandanjī were made from cotton, and not silk (Sims-Williams and Khan, “Zandanjī Misidentified”). See a summary of the historiography of Zandanjī silks in Dode, ““Zandanjī Silks”.”

⁴³ Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 262-272.

⁴⁴ Dode “Costume as Text,” 8-9. Scholarship often links linen to trade with Egypt. However, the inhabitants in numerous parts of Eurasia have domesticated flax (linen) for millennia, and the plant is indeed native to the Caucasus. See, for example, the 30,000-year old dyed flax fibers found in a cave in Georgia (Kvavadze, “30,000-Year-Old Wild Flax Fibers,” 1359).

a route through the Caucasus.⁴⁵ Archaeologists have found this second type of silk, which I label as locally woven, at nearly every Alanic site with textiles. The Alans furthermore applied this silk to all kinds of garments and accessories, ranging from kaftans, dresses, leggings, and shoes to belt pouches and cosmetic cases. Textile specialists have indeed pointed out that the quality of this locally woven silk varies technically from many of the pre-woven imported silks. Foremost, the density of the weave grounds this judgment. The locally woven silk carries around 12-14 warp threads and 18-22 weft threads per centimeter, as opposed to, for example, the dog-bird silk, attributed to an Iranian or Byzantine import, which carries 16-18 warp threads and 72 weft threads per centimeter.⁴⁶ Also, these local silks have less consistency in their pattern repeats. Martina Ferrari from the Metropolitan Museum of Art Textile Conservation pointed out how dramatically the size and proportion of the pattern could shift in a few rows on the Alanic crescent motif silks housed in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁴⁷ This inconsistency could more easily occur using body tension looms. This type of loom, including those which archaeologists have found in Alanic graves, relies on the weaver's body as a point for tension for the warp threads. Furthermore, the weaver moves these threads each time they take the loom on and off the body to start and stop periods of weaving. On the other hand, a drawloom, which weavers likely used to produce the densely-woven imported silk fabrics, provides constant tension and control because the weaver fixes the warp threads on the stationary drawloom.

⁴⁵ Menander Protector, *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, trans. Blockley, fragment 10,1 [p. 115].

⁴⁶ Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 155, 235, 238.

⁴⁷ Personal communication with Martina Ferrari.

Non-Insulated Kaftans

The Alans made non-insulated kaftans of a single layer of material. This fabric is typically linen, but examples of both adult and children kaftans of a single layer of silk also survive. Adult kaftans are relatively consistent in their silhouette [**Illustration 4.1**]. The bodice fits close around the chest. This contoured fit sometimes continues through to the waistline, where the skirting attaches, or the kaftan bodice alternatively has godets inserted at either side of the waist to allow for fuller body types. A seam line circling the waist attaches the skirting; the maker never cuts the bodice and skirting from the same continuous piece of fabric. The skirting panels drop from the waist with a subtle flare opening below the thighs. The sleeves are fitted in the lower arm but become looser toward the upper arm and shoulder. When worn, the kaftan fashions an H-line or subtle A-line silhouette, which is in contrast to the more dramatic hourglass silhouette popular in further east in eighth-century Central Asia [**Illustration 2.1**].

The wearer closed the kaftan with frogging closures, a fabric button which fits through a fabric loop [**Figure 4.7c**]. The maker placed two to four frogs on the exterior along the upper body and collar and hid another frog inside to secure the waistline. By fastening all frogs, the wearer would establish a relatively static fitted silhouette on the upper body. In contrast, because the maker did not place frogs on the skirting, the lower half of the garment could be much more dynamic when activated by movement. Stepping forward or back would open and close not only the front of the skirting with the wearer's legs, but also the two vents cut into the backside of the garment.

Children kaftans have a similar silhouette, but the pattern varies from adult kaftans [**Figure 4.8**]. The maker cut the skirting from the same continuous piece of fabric as the bodice,

meaning that they did not place a seam at the waistline. Because of this straight cut with the bodice, the maker inserted two sets of gores at the skirting sides to create a more voluminous flare.⁴⁸

The non-insulated kaftan has three visible variations based on fabric type and decoration placement.⁴⁹ The first type is made entirely of plain linen. The wearer constructed the garment body and all of its details, including the collar and frogging of linen [Figure 4.9]. The quality of the linen used for kaftans varies. Some weavers tightly spun threads and wove them together in a dense, fine-handed fabric. Other weavers show variations in the thickness and tightness of the spun thread; some wove quite loosely, creating an overall coarser but more airy fabric. Repairs to many of the excavated garments resulted in a mix of thread densities on a single garment.⁵⁰

The second variation is also linen, but the maker covered select features in an additional decorative silk fabric. Of the three types of non-insulated kaftans, this variation is the most common amongst surviving garments. The decorative silk fabric typically covers a combination

⁴⁸ A unique child's kaftan-like garment with a square neckline comes from both Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz. Even though this garment does have overlapping front panels, it does not have an attached skirting, but only covers the torso. This feature has no parallel in adult clothing. However, the upper body's silhouette and the construction of the sleeves are familiar. The shoulders are looser with full dolman or pieced dolman sleeves, and the hem of the waistline is fitted. Unique for non-insulated kaftans is the square neckline. The maker cut the neckline out on both the front and back of the bodice, which they made from a single continuous piece of folded fabric. The maker added rectangular pieces to the front of the bodice to create the overlapping panels. See Orfinskaia, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv.," 332-333, fig. 1.4.2.

⁴⁹ As Ol'ga Orfinskaia has illustrated in her research, the pattern pieces composing a linen kaftan were relatively standard within the Alanic community, with variation—though not highly visible—primarily occurring in the piecing of the sleeves. In the first variation that Orfinskaia defines, the sleeves are of a dolman style: the maker cut the sleeve in a single piece and attached to the front and back of the bodice with one vertical seam. The elongated curve of the dolman sleeve allows for the sleeve to be fitted around the wrist, but it dramatically widens in the upper arm. The garment subsequently allows for freer movement in the arms, while retaining a contoured body. The maker added additional fabric to extend the length of the cuffs. In the second variation that Orfinskaia defines, the maker composed the sleeves of four pieces plus a cuff. The sleeve proper has two oblique rectangles that allow for the sleeve to taper at the wrists. The upper arm and shoulder have an additional rectangular piece, which is attached to a triangular piece working as gusset along the front lower torso. This piece furthermore adheres to another small triangular gusset on the front. Once pieced together, this sleeve's overall shape would have functioned and appeared similar to the dolman sleeve version. See Orfinskaia and Arzhantseva, "The Cut of the Clothes," 88-89.

⁵⁰ For example, a maker primarily composed a women's tunic from the collection of Han Jürgen von Oertzen in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1999.153.36) of tightly woven linen. They used coarser linen pieces for what appears to be replacements for areas of wear.

of the collar, cuffs, vents, or frogs, the most common being the collar and cuffs together.⁵¹ A maker composed a kaftan from Moshchevaia Balka of plain linen fabric, while double-crescent patterned silk trimmed the cuffs and collar [Figure 4.7].⁵²

The third variation is a silk kaftan (not linen) with a second contrasting silk fabric used for the kaftan's features such as cuffs, collar, or frogging.⁵³ On a kaftan from Nizhnii Arkhyz, a maker applied an imported rosette-patterned golden damask silk to the entirety of the garment body [Figure 4.10]. For contrast, double-crescent patterned silk trims the collar and cuffs as well as the top frog.⁵⁴

Makers also applied visible variations on children's kaftans. For example, on a two- to three-year-old's kaftan from Nizhnii Arkhyz, a maker used plain silk for the body of the garment, and then embellished a rounded collar and the cuffs with another samite silk; the pattern on the collar is unclear, but rosettes are discernible on the cuffs [Figure 4.8].⁵⁵

A complete miniature kaftan found with an individual in a tomb replicates the most common non-insulated kaftan variation of a linen body with silk trim [Figure 4.11].⁵⁶ Undyed linen composes the miniature garment measuring 16,5 cm, while samite silk adorns the collar

⁵¹ On a conserved kaftan from Nizhnii Arkhyz published by S. F. Lubova, a contrasting fabric also lined the upper portions of the side vents, see S. F. Lubova, "Tipologii kostiumov". Zvezdana Dode includes these trimmed vents in her reconstructions (Dode, *Srednevekovyi kostium*, 106, ills. 2,3).

⁵² On another kaftan 9644/2 from Nizhnii Arkhyz, two variations of a double axe motif in samite silk trim the cuffs and collar, see a description of garment in Orfinskaia, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv.", 279.

⁵³ The silk adult kaftans uses the same construction patterns as the linen kaftans. For example KC no. 9537/6 (written at 9537/16 in 2013 publication, but 9537/6 in Orfinskaia, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv").

⁵⁴ Orfinskaia, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv.", 279 (no. 1.18, fig. 1.1.8). S. F. Lubova published a second silk kaftan without insulation 'found in the vicinity of Nizhnii Arkhyz' patterned with two birds within a roundel; however, Lubova does not give further detail (Lubova, "Tipologii kostiumov," fig. 2,1, photo 2). Ol'ga Orfinskaia seems to make a short reference to this unique uninsulated kaftan in her dissertation in which she writes "there is a silk kaftan without insulation with birds" but no further reference or photos are given (Orfinskaia, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv.", 31, appendix 2, fig. 1.1).

⁵⁵ Orfinskaia, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv.", 333.

⁵⁶ At least one other fragment of a miniature kaftan from Moshchevaia Balka is in the collection of the Prozritelev and Prave Stavropol State Museum.

and three exterior frogs along the bodice. The maker, however, simplified the kaftan pattern-piecing to make this miniature version, and thus it does not reflect the pattern construction utilized for life-sized kaftans.

Insulated Kaftans

Insulated kaftans have the addition of a sheep's wool or wild animal's fur lining the entirety of the garment, including the sleeves. The fur or fleece rarely survives; often, only remnants of the brittle leather hide remain around the edge of the kaftan, where stitching connects the animal skin to the garment's structural body.

The insulated kaftan has the same silhouette as the non-insulated kaftan [Illustration 4.1]. The upper shoulders are broad and loose, allowing for movement, while both the sleeves narrow towards the wrist and the bodice tapers in at the waistline. An attached skirting flares slightly, and movement accentuates this feature because of the front opening without frogging and two vents.

Visible variations occur with degrees of embellishment on the insulated kaftan.⁵⁷ These degrees of embellishment correspond with the kind of silk the maker used, how much silk they used, and where they placed the silk. The first insulated kaftan group is unembellished. The maker simply added a fur or wool lining to the interior of the garment, including the sleeves.⁵⁸ The second kaftan group is linen with select silk trimmed features. Similar to the non-insulated

⁵⁷ The pattern of the kaftan can also vary less visibly in the sleeves and neckline.

⁵⁸ A kaftan from Moshchevaia Balka found by Milovanov in 1972 includes about half of the bodice (with three frog buttons), the left sleeve, and part of the skirt. The maker had sewn a light-colored fur lining with linen thread to the coarse linen fabric on the exterior (Orfinskaia, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv.," 273). The pieces of the left sleeve confirm that the maker constructed the sleeves of this insulated kaftan according to the same pattern as some uninsulated kaftans. Orfinskaia points out this shared pattern in Orfinskaia and Arzhantseva, "Cut of the Clothes," 88.

models, the maker placed the trim— sometimes imported and sometimes local— on a combination of the collar, cuffs, and frogging. They typically used a dense, overall high quality linen for these kaftans.⁵⁹ On a kaftan from Moshchevaia Balka, a mix of lamb’s wool and the fur of a wild animal once lined the entirety of the interior [Figure 4.12]. Fur decorates the banded collar, while samite silk adorns the the frogging.⁶⁰ Most children’s insulated kaftans are of this type, and as the non-insulated children’s kaftan, the maker cut the skirting from the same continuous piece of fabric as the bodice.⁶¹

A third variation is similar to the second group but furthermore has the locally woven silk— often with a double-crescent pattern— lining the front panel closure, and sometimes the inside lower hem and the skirting vents as well [Figures 4.13, 4.14].⁶² For example, at Nizhnii Arkhyz, a maker structurally built a kaftan with tightly woven linen insulated with thick sheep’s wool [Figure 4.14b]. They then trimmed the inside of the front opening, from the collar down to the hemline, with a 10 cm wide silk strip [Figure 4.14c].⁶³

A fourth variation has a linen structural body lined with fur or wool and, also, silk covers the exterior, often those classified as imported silks. The maker placed a variety of silk fragments of various sizes all over the garment, such as on the surviving bodice and sleeves of a kaftan found by Ierusalimskaia at Moshchevaia Balka in 1974 [Figure 4.15]. Fur insulates the linen body (which only survives in the arms), and three differently patterned silks decorate the exterior

⁵⁹ Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 46.

⁶⁰ Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 151.

⁶¹ The maker added two sets of gores at the sides to create the flare of the skirting. They made the sleeves from folded rectangular pieces of fabric attached on a vertical seam and added a diamond-shaped gusset under the arm for movement.

⁶² See a short discussion about one of these kaftans found on an intact mummy by Milovanov in 1973, in Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 46. Other kaftan(s) with this interior trim are at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

⁶³ Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 46-47, fig. 68; Tekeev, “Novye materialy,” 153, fig. 1.

of the garment. The placement and cut of these mixed silks suggest that the maker had a limited supply of individual silks, and this layout was not merely an aesthetic preference. For example, the maker placed lozenge-patterned silk symmetrically on the shoulders and upper arms of the garment. They laid the pattern horizontally along the shoulder and then turned the fabric, placing it vertically, to form the upper sleeve. However, further down the arms, the maker fitted smaller pieces of the same pattern to complete the lower left arm, while they used a large dark blue rosette patch to fill out the lower right arm. Nevertheless, makers carefully paired similar color combinations and patterns together on a given garment, as one maker did with the silks in shades of blue and turquoise on this kaftan.⁶⁴

A final fifth embellishment group uses primarily one type of imported silk to adorn the entirety of the exterior. The kaftan introduced at the beginning of the chapter used a relatively immense amount of the same dog-bird patterned silk to cover the garment exterior [Figure 4.1]. Squirrel fur lined the interior, including the arms, and, additionally, the maker utilized strips of four other patterned silks to decorate the interior lower hem and vents, the lapels, and the frogging.⁶⁵ The dog-bird silk covers the entirety of the exterior, and furthermore, the maker positioned the mythical creatures within the medallions in the upright position on the front and back of the garment. Archaeologist Ol'ga Orfinskaia has pointed out that placing a seam across the shoulder made this fabric pattern alignment possible. This pattern adjustment, apparently made to accommodate the pattern motif's visibility, disrupted the usual pattern construction that the Alans utilized for most of their kaftans.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ierusalimskaia and Borkopp, *Von China nach Byzanz*, 22-23.

⁶⁵ Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 151; Ierusalimskaia, *Kavkaz na shělkovom puti*, 14-15.

⁶⁶ Orfinskaia and Arzhantseva, "Cut of the Clothes," 90-91.

Archaeologists have recovered numerous fabric fragments belonging to all-over silk insulated kaftans from cemeteries. Ierusalimskaia counted at least 16 in 1996 from Moshchevaia Balka in the collection of the State Hermitage, for example, a large piece of red samite silk with a pheasant motif that belonged to the back bodice and skirting of a kaftan [Figure 4.16], and resist-dyed vegetal-patterned silk that belonged to the front of a kaftan [Figure 4.17].⁶⁷ In addition to these larger fragments, archaeologists and explorers have collected dozens of strips of silk that once lined cuffs, necklines, and interior hems from both Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz [Figure 4.18].⁶⁸ Some of these pieces still have linen and leather in layers underneath, showing that they once composed part of an insulated kaftan.

Wearing a Kaftan

The Alans established highly visible kaftan embellishment variations, ranging from no additional fabric adornment to wholly covered silk exteriors. As discussed in chapter II on the banquet, artists represented all attendees wearing a polychrome kaftan in Sogdiana. The patterns and colors vary among the attendees, but a monochromatic body fabric paired with contrasting trim composed each kaftan. In chapter III on the hunt, the sculptor depicted the fabrics on the hunting reliefs with equally elaborate patterning, whether they belonged to the main hunter's kaftan or his fellow's tunics.

What does such a degree of embellishment variation on the kaftan mean for the Alans? Did community members similarly wear and style their kaftans despite conspicuous visual

⁶⁷ Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 47.

⁶⁸ See just a handful of well-described examples from Moshchevaia Balka and Khasaut in Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, cat nos. 86-88, 93, 103-108.

variations? It would be simple to create a social hierarchy that labeled the unembellished kaftan as belonging to a wearer of the lowest class and those covered entirely in imported silk as belonging to the highest class or community leaders, as the present literature suggests.⁶⁹ However, what exactly do researchers know about Alanic social structure: was it rigidly hierarchical with little or no ability for social mobility, such as in the Sasanian Empire? Or did it allow for diligent work to propel one's class upward, as occurred for members of the mercantile class in Sogdiana? Furthermore, what does it mean if one place patterned silk not in the conspicuous exterior, but primarily on the hidden interior of the kaftan?

Archaeologist Dmitri Korobov has recently investigated forth- to ninth-century Alanic social structure. He argues for a relatively egalitarian society based primarily on catacomb type burials in the Kislovodsk Basin, a region beyond the more mountainous terrain with stone terrace burials. In the catacomb burials assessed, the Alan gendered their deceased according to the in situ assemblages of metallic and ceramic objects; these gendered objects parallel the two distinctive types of upper garments— the kaftan and tunic dress— which survives in the stone terrace burials higher in the mountains. Men's graves often include horse harnesses, weaponry, arrows, swords or daggers— bronze cauldrons, jugs, and buckles. Fibula, toiletry sets, bags, shells, earrings, and bracelets fill women's tombs. Communities placed cups, knives, amulets, and belts in both men's and women's graves.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ e.g., Ierusalimskaia, "Soieries sassanides," 275-277; Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 235-241; Ierusalimskaia, "Early Medieval Burial Grounds," 240, 242.

⁷⁰ Korobov, *Sotsial'naia organizatsiia Alan*, especially chapters 3.3-3.6. For shorter summaries of a mass syntheses of grave goods across the region, see Kovalevskii, *Kavkaz i Alany*, 156-167; Korobov, *Alany Severnogo Kavkaza*, 93-111.

Korobov draws his conclusions about a relatively uniform society, based on the labor invested in creating the burials, the chamber sizes, and documented grave goods. His conclusion contrasts some earlier studies focused wholly on grave goods, which make minute divisions between grave goods and subsequently advance a more rigid class division often labeled an early ‘feudal state’.⁷¹ Korobov counterargues that the multiple strata distinctions are not transparent or consistent. He advocates for a ruling elite, which he calls the ‘military leaders’, but finds rigid subdivisions of the population inaccurate.⁷² The relatively few graves belonging to these leaders especially take into account the tomb’s overall size and construction, in addition to grave goods, especially considering that looters disturbed many Alanic graves and potential use of ersatz wooden weapons for some burials.⁷³ These military leaders are perhaps the ‘kings’ of Alania referred to in numerous Latin, Greek, Arabic, Persian, and Armenian textual documents.⁷⁴ Korobov uses the term ‘military democracy’ to describe the Alanic socio-political structure.⁷⁵

Though Korobov’s studies are based on the Alanic catacomb graves further north, the consideration of tomb labor and size is insightful for the stone terrace tombs as well: the honeycomb-like packing of tombs along ledges and in sandstone walls are relatively consistent in size and construction materials. Based on this information, the stone terrace tombs

⁷¹ Past scholarship has argued for a broad spectrum of socio-political structures for the sixth- to ninth-century Alans. These range from a uniform community, described as ‘democratic’ or ‘socialist’, to one with rigid social divisions, what Russian scholarship has described as the early ‘feudal state’. See a summary of the history of these viewpoints in Korobov, *Sotsial’naia organizatsiia Alan*, 21-33, 290-291. The conclusions made by archaeologists heavily rely on excavations of catacomb tombs and have not focused on the rock terrace tombs under discussion here.

⁷² For a focused discussion on these military leaders and their centers of power see Korobov, “Alanskie ‘vozhdeskie’.”

⁷³ Korobov, *Sotsial’naia organizatsiia Alan*, 281. See a discussion of such wooden weaponry in Ierusalimskaia, “Arkheologicheskie Paralleli,” 102-105.

⁷⁴ Only a few examples are Menander Protector, Theophanes of Byzantium, Movsēs Xorenac’i, and Ebn Rustah (Ibn Rustah), see Alemany, *Sources on the Alans*.

⁷⁵ Korobov, *Sotsial’naia organizatsiia Alan*, 287-289. He compares the army linguistically with the Ossetian *afsad*. Leading the ‘*afsad*’ are a few military leaders, the Ossetian *aldar*.

accommodating thousands does not suggest that the community built a cemetery for rigidly divided strata of society. As for burial goods, very few sealed stone terrace burials survive in comparison to catacomb cemeteries.⁷⁶ Archaeologists consistently noted that looters scattered the textiles, and snatched up the precious metals; only a few, and usually small items survive, such as a single earring or a bracteate.

What stands out amongst the few undisturbed and many scattered grave goods is the total number of items coming into the community from far beyond the Caucasus. In addition to the imported textiles, other items include Byzantine glass, early Islamic coins, and a piece of a Chinese Buddhist Sutra.⁷⁷ A merchant's fragmentary list in Chinese records an interaction that entailed '6000 (?) of wheat' and 'meat bought for 4 Yuan' on the '14th day of the 4th month'.⁷⁸ Ierusalimskaia has long argued that the Alans strategically utilized their location on the Caucasus passes to control trade and diplomatic traffic. Perhaps the most cited account of travelers moving through the Alanic Caucasus is that written by Menander Protector in the sixth century. After the Sogdians and Turks unsuccessfully worked out a trade deal with Iran, they joined forces with Byzantium, and for which they escorted a Byzantine embassy out to Central Asia to see the Turkic Khan. When the Turko-Sogdian embassy escorted the Romans back, they traveled through the Caucasus. They met with the 'King of the Alans' called Sarosius. The Turks argued

⁷⁶ Alanic earthen burials, i.e., catacomb burials, further north in the steppe were less affected by looting. Thus comparisons can be made to some degree about the types of metal assemblages included in burials. These metallic assemblages include adornments, weaponry, and horse trappings. See, for example, the excavation reports from Klin-Yar (Belinskij and Härke, *Ritual, Society and Population at Klin-Yar*) and belt plaques from the catacombs of Mokraia Balka (Afanas'ev, "Priazhki Katakombnogo Mogil'nika Mokraia Balka"). For a study specifically on women's adornments from graves, see Mastykova, *Zhenskii Kostium*. For a broader overview of the types of materials dating to the Alanic period, see Bálint, *Archäologie der Steppe*.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the international objects from Moshchevaia Balka see, Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 347-369.

⁷⁸ Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 368-369.

about disarming themselves for several days until they finally gave in and entered Alania. The Alans guided the embassy safely through the Caucasus to avoid an ambush by the Iranians to reach the Black Sea to sail home.⁷⁹ Thus Ierusalimskaia has soundly argued that such groups needing to cross through the Alan's territory likely presented imported objects— including the imported silks that the Alans adhered to many kaftans— as gifts or as toll payment.⁸⁰

The imported and locally produced silks adhered to kaftans, among other garments and objects, offer further insight into the social dynamics and professional roles of Alanic community members. A mercantile profession certainly existed within the Alanic community; at the very least, specific individuals acquired the skills for appraising outside goods that travelers offered, whether for compensation or thanks. Perhaps those buried with large quantities of imported silks on their kaftans worked as merchants. On the other hand, some community members attaching silks— and always locally-produced silks— on the inside of their garments brings up a different question concerning restrictions. Some rules or social understanding appear to regulate who could showcase their wealth of silks on the exterior of their garment. Perhaps the wearers of the hidden silks worked as the weavers and makers who produced the linen and local silk fabrics but could not regularly show off their wealth.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Menander Protector, *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, trans. Blockley, fragment 10,1 [pp. 111-127].

⁸⁰ Ierusalimskaia, “O Severokavkazskom s’helkovom puti”. This is the first time Ierusalimskaia firmly grounds the argument but she repeats it in later publications as well.

⁸¹ Placing valuable patterned silks on the garment’s interior might appear strange at first, but it is not without historical comparison. In the Edo period of Japan, the ruling military class, the samurai, utilized clothing for social distinction. Nevertheless, the lower merchant class surpassed the samurai in wealth. The samurai had fixed incomes while merchants could prosper because of the extensive trade of the period. Merchants could compensate their inability to raise their social status by acquiring material goods. The explosion of wealth in the mercantile class led the samurai to decree extensive sumptuary laws. These laws restricted the outer appearance of merchants’ dress, including specific colors, patterns, and pattern-making techniques, for example, the 1789 Kansei reform or the Tendō reform of 1842 (Jackson, “Dress in the Edo Period,” 27). The restrictions catalyzed a new aesthetic called the iki, which emphasized details. Sumptuary laws did not regulate undergarments or linings, so restricted items were often used in these unseen and unrestricted locations on garments.

Professions beyond leaders, merchants, and weavers certainly made up this community, and from the burials, it is clear that they all wore a kaftan. Thus it is perhaps most productive to consider what firm evidence the surviving materials provide to reconstruct how the Alans wore these kaftans that they embellished to various degrees. Despite substantial variations in embellishment with silk on both the uninsulated and insulated kaftans, the garment's fundamental design and silhouette remained the same for adult men. This consistency ensured that regardless of individual variations in silk, the wearer could still style the kaftan in different ways.

However, silk lining the exterior or interior of the kaftan made the lapel styling more conspicuous. In the case of the dog-bird patterned kaftan, small strips of contrasting silk woven in light blue and cream line the inside of the lapels [**Figure 4.1b**.⁸² When turned out, the light-colored silks frame the neckline by contrasting the deep turquoise of the body fabric. On the kaftans with hidden interior trim, the lapels' turning out may have provided an element of surprise and probably an act reserved for particular settings and audiences. This hidden trim would have permitted the wearer to transition between degrees of visibility and invisibility, depending on the social situation. For example, in one setting the wearer may have wanted or needed the lapels to remain closed: thus the kaftan would be entirely one beige color except for perhaps the cuffs, which the wearer could likewise easily hide if rolling the sleeves or placing the hands behind the back or out of sight. On the other hand, if opening the lapels, a pop of vivid colors would make this individual more visible, especially considering the wooded and

⁸² Ierusalimskaia and Borkopp, *Von China nach Byzanz*, 19-21.

mountainous terrain in which the Alans lived. It would furthermore frame the individual's face in the same manner as the contrasting lining did for wearers of full silk-covered kaftans.

The kaftans without any silk embellishment along the neckline—inside or out—could not provide the same vivid individuality in a social setting. However, if insulated, the kaftan would have at least provided a subtle contrast with the fur lining color and texture.

Few representations of the human figure survive to draw comparisons for contemporary kaftan wearing practices.⁸³ Later tenth- to twelfth-century Alanic stone monuments encompass both low relief panels that decorate architectural monuments and in-the-round anthropomorphic statues. The majority of the sculpture is highly stylized, for example, a relief dated to the tenth or eleventh century from the Kochubeievskii Raion in Stavropol Krai [Figure 4.20]. Four triangular-silhouetted figures stand frontally in a row holding hands.⁸⁴ The shape of the knee-length garment convincingly represents a kaftan, using the voluminous skirting as a distinctive hallmark. However, other carved or painted details are no longer visible.

On size-life and monumental sculptural *balbals*, the sculptor carved the lapel as a prominent feature of the garment.⁸⁵ *Balbals* are anthropomorphic stone sculptures associated with ancestors and indigenous steppe religions that communities across the vast steppe

⁸³ Within Alanic graves, archaeologists have uncovered a few small anthropomorphic pendants (usually described as amulets) made of bronze. They depict small figures on horseback or standing within a roundel. The figures are highly stylized, composed of stick-like bodies and appendages. No dress details are made legible on these representations; the artist placed more detail in the horse than the rider. See Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz i rannee pravoslavie*, 269; and a few drawings of such amulets in Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky, *Les Alains*, 107, 117.

⁸⁴ Dode, *Srednevekovyi kostium*, 20. See another monument that I. Pomialovskii documented with figures wearing stylized skirted garments or a boxy ankle-length robe in Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz i rannee pravoslavie*, 301.

⁸⁵ Representations of dress were also preserved in church frescoes. These are primarily clerical garments, but a few do indeed include a skirted kaftan under a mantle. See Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz i rannee pravoslavie*, 120-121; Ravdonikas, “O nekotorykh tipakh Alanskoi odezhdy,” 198–208.

constructed for millennia.⁸⁶ Though associated with a pagan belief system, post-tenth-century Christianized Alans sometimes incorporate *balbals* into Christian funerary culture, for example, a *balbal* from Stanitsa Pregradhiia wearing crosses on his shoulders and a helmet.⁸⁷ A twelfth-century *balbal* sporting a kaftan with exceptionally preserved detail comes from Dlinnaia Poliana at Nizhnii Arkhyz, and is now on exhibit at the Prozritelev and Prave Stavropol State Museum [Figure 4.21].⁸⁸ The figure, carved from a single stone, stands in the typical pose of a *balbal* with the arms bent, covering the front of the body to fit the stone's rectangular shape. The figure balances a small cup in his right hand; the left hand grips a sword. Certain aspects of the kaftan compare with the seventh- to ninth-century kaftan, most notably the two out turned triangular lapels [Figure 4.21b]. However, the kaftan's opening differs substantially from earlier kaftans: a thick trim edges the opening, which dozens of buttons secure. Later eleventh- to twelfth-century surviving garments likewise reflect this shift in the front closure, such as those from the catacomb cemetery at Zmeiskii.⁸⁹

As images of honored ancestors, the stone *balbals* connote an aspiration for which one might envision styling the kaftan with both lapels turned out. The Turks in the neighboring Steppe also depicted their *balbals* dressed in kaftans: some sculptors emphasized the lapels with large triangles spreading across the shoulders [Figure 4.22], while others only schematically

⁸⁶ First millennium CE Turkic communities stood some *balbals* in groups in stone enclosures identified as commemorative complexes and spread others through the landscape. Chinese sources state that *balbals* represented the defeated enemies of the Turkic Khaganates, but emic sources describe the statues as honored ancestors. See a discussion of these sources in Stark, *Die Altürkenzeit in Zentralasien*, 109-112, 126-128. However, who these stone figures represent, and what they mean is still hotly debated among art historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists. See e.g., Kubarev, "Ancient Turkic Statues."

⁸⁷ See Ravdonikas, "O nekotorykh tipakh Alanskoi odezhdy," fig. 1.5. Some travelers between the tenth and thirteenth century comment on the Alanic king identifying as Christian but the populations still worshipping idols. See, for example, the account of Ebn Rosta (Ibn Rustah) in Alemany, *Sources on the Alans*, 260.

⁸⁸ Dode, *Srednevekovyi kostium*, 55-56; Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz i rannee pravoslavie*, 29, 291.

⁸⁹ Dode, "Kostium naseleniia," 132-136, 761-fig. 103.

referenced them with a 'V'-shape carved along the neckline [**Figure 4.23**.⁹⁰ An ancestor– lifting his cup and gripping his sword– references his banqueting grace and military prowess, qualities that resonate with the occasions for which he would have worn his kaftan. The stone *balbals* across Central Eurasia suggest an aspirational way of wearing the kaftan with both lapels turned out.

Dressed in a Kaftan for Burial

Archaeologists have recorded only a few kaftans *in situ* on mummies from rock terrace burials, because of looting or inadequate documentation. A well-preserved, intact, clothed mummy from Moshchevaia Balka exemplifies how the community prepared an adult man for burial [**Figure 4.13**.⁹¹ The community lay the man on his back and positioned him to the northeast. To the left of his head, they placed a ceramic jug, while to the right, an iron adze and a broken-handled hatchet, with the splintered piece placed on the chest.⁹²

The outermost and only surviving layer of the man's dress consisted of a linen kaftan lined with thick, white sheep's wool. The sleeves reached just beyond his wrists, and the skirting's hemline fell to the middle of his shins. Along a plateau of undyed beige linen, once

⁹⁰ On about half of the *balbals*, the 'V' neckline has two equally-sized triangular lapels, whereas the others show a simple 'V'. The former is always discussed and highlighted as a kaftan, while the second variety, as Gleb Kubarev emphasizes, is most often ignored (Kubarev, *Kyl'tura drevnikh Tiurok Altaia*, 33, 170). Kubarev describes the latter garment as also being a kaftan but without lapels (Kubarev, *Kyl'tura drevnikh Tiurok Altaia*, 33). This garment could be a shirt or mantle, as there is sometimes another line or two indicated around the neckline, which is found less often on the visibly lapeled garments. However, taking into account that the neckline is always 'V'-shaped and that both lapels, when present, are always pulled open, I suggest that the plain 'V'-neckline is a simplification and stylization of a kaftan with the lapels pulled open. On the balbals with clearly depicted lapels, the lapels illustrate a wide range of detail, sometimes including small collar-latching frogs drawn onto the tips, an inner collar outline, or even a patterned lining. Thus, the 'V' neckline appears to be one of these variations, which included the least amount of detailed information.

⁹¹ A local school teacher, E. A. Milovanov, opened the stone terrace tomb in 1973.

⁹² Tekeev, "Novye materialy," 152.

polychrome double-crescent silk trim traced only the sleeves' cuffs. However, inside the kaftan, this colorful silk trimmed the front panels, hemline, and vents.⁹³ The man wore ankle-high leather boots.

The community prepared the man in his kaftan for his funeral. They drew his arms through the sleeves, and then stretched his front left panel across his chest, followed by the right panel covering the left. The community wrapped a thin leather belt around the man's waist to secure the kaftan.⁹⁴ They pulled the lapels closed around the neckline, looping the uppermost loop to secure the closure; they left the other frogs unhooked.⁹⁵

Staining and decomposition patterns help illuminate how the community fashioned kaftans on the deceased for burials.⁹⁶ In the burial, when the body decomposes, it stains the garment leaving patterns of discoloration. This phenomenon is visible to the naked eye on linen kaftans, and no scientific equipment is needed. When the community laid the kaftan panels one on top of the other for burial, they created layers through which staining and decomposition would take place. That means that, in theory, the staining and decomposition naturally mirror a unique patterning across both of the two front panels, and it is possible to reconstruct exactly how the panels overlapped.

⁹³ Tekeev, "Novye materialy," 152; Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 46-47.

⁹⁴ Ierusalimskaia writes that the leather belt did not have a metal tongue, but Tekeev says that it does (Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 46; Tekeev, "Novye Materialy," 155, fig. 2). Men always wore the kaftans with a belt, an item found in all men's graves. Orfinskaia notes that leather belts closed kaftans, as well as those made of linen and silk (Orfinskaia, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv.," 30). Several scholars have addressed the belt beyond its functionality, which is particularly evident considering that the built-in frogging closures of the kaftan already held the kaftan closed. However, these interpretations are typically a simple hierarchical explanation.

⁹⁵ Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 46.

⁹⁶ A huge thank you to Martina Ferrari for introducing and working through this investigation technique for analyzing staining and crease patterns of ancient garments with me.

However, depending on both the excavation era and the institution housing the garment, different garments underwent different means of conservation and restoration work. Cleaning procedures—especially vigorous washing or ironing before the introduction of modern minimally invasive conservation practices—might have made the garments more aesthetically pleasing for the historical public, but they spread, lightened, and even eliminated this valuable evidence. Furthermore, reconstructing missing fragments of a garment can help provide a full visualization of the garment in a gallery space, but these added new layers of fabric and threads make getting to the ancient ones for study an arduous task, and there is always a chance for error as research continually evolves.

Luckily, some garments experienced very minimal cleaning and restoration, such as a kaftan skirting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art [**Figure 4.19**]. The image shows the skirting fully extended, the garment's interior facing up, and the exterior lying against the table. The central section is the back panel. The staining here is unique, absorbing the decomposition of the backside of the body. However, the front panels to the left and right absorbed the decomposition from the body's front side. Thus the staining on each panel mirrors the other. For example, following the perspective of the wearer lying on their back, the fanning pattern rising from the hemline in the wearer's right front panel—located on their far right, in the lower corner—can be overlaid with onto the fanning patterning on the left front panel—located on their near left, in the lower corner. The visual mirroring of the stains on these panels continues with precision up to the waistline, confirming that the community at least pulled the skirting of this kaftan completely closed for burial. The linen kaftans I studied in person in Cherkessk, Russia, with minimal restoration and washing, demonstrate a similar mirroring of body stains across the front panels.

This mirrored staining across several necklines suggests that the community regularly closed both lapels around the neck for burials. I have not found a case in which a lapel section further mirrors staining with the part of the front panel resting underneath [**Figures 4.1b, 4.7b, 4.10c, 4.14**].

In addition to staining patterns, fabric decay and damage patterns can also be helpful. These other effects of the body decomposition are especially useful for dyed and patterned silks because the polychrome coloration, more complex weaving structures, and the natural iridescence of the fiber often make detecting and following borders of a stain difficult. Like body fluid stains, the left and right front panels should illustrate mirrored damage. On a kaftan from Nizhnii Arkhyz, the shapes of the 'holes'— where the stabilizing modern lighter cream fabric is visible— on the bodice and skirting align [**Figure 4.10**]. The outlines of the 'hole' patterns on the wearer's left panel are slightly larger in perimeter because this layer laid closer to the body. Thus, from my close examinations, the community pulled the kaftan closed, with the right panel over the left and the lapels pulled up and secured around the neckline for a conventional funeral.

Conclusions

The silks embellishing Alanic kaftans tell a story that I believe had little to do with a set socio-economic class and much more to do with understood professional and community roles. Regardless of the silk embellishment, the Alans took advantage of the kaftan's communicative convertible lapels. They gave all community members a garment that could speak differently, according to how one styled it. It is unclear if the community encouraged free mutability of the lapels, or restricted their use; if members earned it or received it as an honor. In any case, it is

significant that all members had this versatility built into their garment, suggesting that every member at the very least had a chance to utilize the lapels.

The mutability of the lapels combined with the silk embellishments did, however, mean that community members performed different types of garment transformations. Some wearers turned their lapels out subtly, displaying only tufts of a fur lining; others flipped them open surprisingly, revealing a hidden silk trim; and still, others folded their lapels out ostentatiously, showing off contrasting silk patterns. The Alans could utilize their lapels internally within the Alanic community considering the kaftan was the standard attire for all men and also for trans-regional communication. For those working with the traders, envoys, and pilgrims moving through the northern Caucasus, silk-adorned lapels would have been an invaluable tool for cross-cultural dialogues and negotiations.

The use of the communicative lapels finally came to an end with the burial. At the death of a community member, the Alans pulled a kaftan from circulation in the earthly world. The owner could no longer pass down, trade, or sell the kaftan, and, thus, the kaftan could no longer facilitate dialogue with other kaftans in the earthly realm. The community elected and approved of which kaftans they would twin with their wearer for the afterlife. They dressed the deceased in his kaftan and pulled the lapels closed. The community sealed the tomb in the cemetery away from the settlement, bringing the kaftan's communicative life to an end.

CONCLUSION

SARTORIAL SYSTEMS OF CENTRAL EURASIA

Communities across Central Eurasia collectively crafted the kaftan into a cosmopolitan fashion.¹

Though the kaftan first appeared in fifth-century Central Asia based on representations in wall paintings and other media, by the sixth and early seventh century, communities from the Caucasus Mountains to the Gobi Desert welcomed this new garment into their sartorial systems. The kaftan did not reflect any singular geographical or ethnic identity; rather, it illuminated the wearer's worldly, multicultural awareness as a denizen of greater Central Eurasia. As a cosmopolitan fashion, the kaftan did not transform all of its wearers in the same way, or fit them into a single fashion system. The communities that adopted the kaftan were exceptionally diverse, ranging from rigidly hierarchical empires to more socially-mobile city-states, and relatively democratic nomadic polities. As a new garment cast into preexisting, culturally-tailored sartorial systems, the kaftan stimulated each system differently. However, strikingly, all of them placed the kaftan at the center of their sartorial systems. As a result, regional systems began to overlap, some mildly brushing edges and others layering over one another. As an internationally recognized fashion, the kaftan became a critical tool for cross-cultural communication.

¹ Cosmopolitan fashion is a fashion term first coined by anthropologist Ernest Crawley. Dress historians Joanne Eicher and Barbara Sumberg pinpoint jeans, the T-shirts, and the business suit among the 'global fashion' or 'cosmopolitan fashion' of the twenty-first century. See Eicher and Sumberg, "World Fashion, Ethnic and National Dress."

The kaftan's fundamental design provided the garment with requisites for becoming a cosmopolitan fashion throughout the second half of the first millennium CE. For nearly 500 years, communities across Central Eurasia actively and consistently constructed kaftans according to four combined hallmark design features: sleeves, a fitted bodice, attached skirting, and front panels that can form lapels. On the one hand, a foundational design kept the garment easily recognizable and distinguishable from other garment types [**Illustration 0.1**]. On the other hand, communities only needed the most fundamental aspects of each feature to maintain the garment's typological identity. The flexible but distinctive combination of features encouraged communities to modify, customize, and adorn other aspects of the garment while maintaining its recognizability. Makers could lengthen and shorten sleeves or variegate their shape, for example, with a unique gathered shoulder seam in eighth-century Sogdiana [e.g., **Figure 2.1**.² They could cut the bodice pattern to shape, or utilize intricate pattern piecing, both of which achieved a similar contoured fit, as Alanic pattern design variations demonstrate [e.g., **Figures 4.1, 4.7, 4.10**.³ Skirting lengths ranged from the hem hitting below the lower knees to the ankles. Makers could cut vents or add gores, which manipulated the skirting volume and the overall silhouette. For example, from the mid-seventh to the early eighth-century, the kaftan silhouette in Sogdiana adjusted rather dramatically from a straight H-line to an hourglass silhouette [**Illustration 2.1**].

The material choice could substantially change the look of the garment. Makers produced kaftans of a variety of materials: wool, silk, linen, and cotton versions all survive. Seasonal

² See Hensellek, "Sogdian Fashion."

³ See variations in pattern piecing of Alanic kaftans in Orfinskaia and Arzhantseva, "The Cut of the Clothes."

variations ranged from single layer warm-weather versions to insulated, felt-, fleece- or fur-lined winter models. Colorways were endless, and fabric producers used multiple pattern-making techniques: woven patterns, resist-dyeing, stamping, appliquéd, and embroidery [e.g., Figures 4.15, 4.16, 4.17]. Moreover, trim application diversified the look of kaftans, especially if using contrasting colors, patterns, or materials. As an outer garment, wearers could furthermore determine what they or their community deemed appropriate underneath, only showing hints of an undergarment at the sleeves or neckline, or hiding it entirely from public view. Wearers completed their kaftans with accessories and accoutrements, notably the belt.⁴

The kaftan's most striking design feature was the convertible lapel. Depending on the situation, the wearer could enact a transformation by effortlessly and instantaneously re-styling their kaftan. The wearer could slip on and button up the front panels of the kaftan entirely to the neck. They could loosen and pull down one lapel, or turn out both. As gleaned from Sogdian funerary monuments in China [Figure 2.10], the wearer could turn out the lapel in increments: partially to form small lapels, or entirely, to create large lapels. Wearers could wear the front panels loosely buttoned at the waist or unbuttoned entirely with the front panels draped to the side. The wearer could drape the kaftan over the shoulders with the sleeves left empty to hang at the side and the front panels open or artfully draped, as women in Sogdiana and Tokharistan [Figure 2.9].⁵

⁴ Belts were certainly an important aspect of the kaftan ensemble in multiple communities but they are a subject too large to be treated in detail here. Literature concerning belts of this era are most rich for the Turks and Sogdians. See for example Stark, *Alttürkenzeit in Zentralasien*, 172; Belenitskii and Raspopova, “Sogdiiskie ‘Zolotye Poiasa’.”

⁵ Though not discussed here, women in Sogdiana wear a kaftan draped over the shoulder for religious occasions. See, Hensellek, "Sogdian Fashion."

With innumerable combinations for making and styling the kaftan, communities implemented the garment into their evolving sartorial systems in different ways. Through the three case studies of the banquet in Sogdiana, the hunt in Iran, and the funeral in Alania, I analyzed how three culturally distinct communities made and wore the kaftan. In Sogdiana, though all attendees wore a kaftan at a banquet, the greater community did not reflect a sartorial uniformity to the degree of the Alans. According to wall paintings and representations in other media, Sogdians associated a kaftan foremost with dressing up for a banquet and religious events. When engaged in sports and fighting, Sogdians turned to a surplice-neckline robe.⁶ However, at the occasion of the banquet, everyone wore a rather elaborate patterned kaftan.⁷

What marks social distinction among the Sogdian banquet attendees is how each styled the lapels on the kaftan. The Sogdian sartorial system permitted negotiations of social status based on broadly defined parameters. This styling and re-styling of the lapels broke down strict hierarchies and provided the wearer a fluid social status that could change according to their social situation. This system hinged on a kaftan wearer's understanding the spectrum of acceptable distinction, and the wall paintings decorating banqueting spaces provided a visual manual of precisely that.

Alania promoted a comparatively egalitarian sartorial system. The community buried each man in a kaftan, which paralleled the protocol for burying each woman in a tunic dress. Though each man had a kaftan, extreme variations in adornment push against a genuinely

⁶ Hensellek, "Sogdian Fashion."

⁷ Though rarely depicted, Sogdians also wore unadorned kaftans. The only securely excavated kaftan from Sanjar Shah is a child's kaftan composed solely of undyed cotton. See Hensellek, "Child's Kaftan."

egalitarian system. The variations in color, pattern, and material texture created a contrast between the lapel lining and exterior of the kaftan when the convertible lapels were pulled open. Accordingly, the degree of contrast determined the type of transformation one could make when styling and re-styling the kaftan. In some cases, the audience might expect a transformation; for example, if a man in a silk-adorned kaftan turned out brightly contrasting lapels. However, the audience might be surprised or even shocked by a transformation from a plain linen kaftan that suddenly displayed vivid polychrome silk lapels. Like the Sogdians, the Alans built their sartorial system around a social fluidity, but unlike the Sogdian transformation, that of the Alans was less predictable.

The sartorial system operating in Iran was jarringly different from Sogdiana and Alania. Although all the hunting party members wore equally elaborate garments in terms of their fabric patterning, those fancy fabrics only adorned a hand full of kaftans. The kaftan, standing out by design in a sea of tunics, established a pinnacle in Iran's sartorial system. The king of kings restricted access to a kaftan at the hunt. Fellow hunters' access to the garment then depended on the king of kings, who determined which hunter could next wear the kaftan and when. In contrast, Alania and Sogdiana placed the kaftan at the center of their systems: wearers independently navigated the conviviality and competition brought with the mutable styling of the garment.

The overlapping of sartorial systems revolving around a kaftan fostered communication across a continent. In some cases, this communication strived for dialogue, conviviality, and mutual understanding, but for others, competition and even conflict. In Central Asia, cultural

regions had protocols for making a kaftan and styling it for different occasions. Nevertheless, the variations encountered were compatible and encouraged attendees from neighboring regions to re-style their kaftans to fit it. If Sogdian merchants traveled to Tokharistan, and those Tokharians invited the Sogdians to join a banquet, the wall paintings adorning gathering rooms, as those in Balalyk Tepe, would have acted as visual etiquette manuals. In seconds, the visiting Sogdians could have gleaned that at the Tokharian formal banquet one does not, by default, wear both lapels closed around the neck as in Sogdiana, but opens one lapel. If entering with both lapels closed, one could have corrected their kaftan lapels instantaneously.

Thus one could effortlessly follow the ‘house rules’ of a host and fit it. One could also utilize the lapels to express submission, such as when approaching someone of senior rank, for whom closing the lapel could be understood as a sign of respect. Alternatively, this sartorial language permitted negotiations and even the ability to dispute authority by turning up the lapels.⁸ These evolving norms—whether molding to them or breaking out of them—allowed individuals to create non-verbal dialogues, which were sometimes friendly and other times fraught. Using the kaftan to express subtle but mutable social distinctions was ideal for occasions bringing people of diverse backgrounds together to find a mutual understanding, especially merchants, but also inn-keepers, guides, and translators. It was furthermore well suited to socially-mobile communities, as the Sogdians.

⁸ Chinese textual sources survive, which enumerate how their Turkic neighbors disputed authority through dress. For example in 758 when a family member of the Tang Chinese emperor arrived at the Uyghur court of Gele Khagan, the Khagan presented himself in a yellow kaftan, a color reserved for the Tang Emperor. For example Skaff, *Sui-Tang China*, 153.

The kaftans excavated in Alania likewise express a common aim for providing non-verbal dialogue. Alanic archaeological assemblages include many items imported from afar, including economic documents, and historical accounts describe diplomatic, trade, and mercenary missions crossing through the Caucasus Mountains and encountering the Alans. Thus the styling of the kaftan lapels would have eased communication with the members of such missions. The Alans built larger centers north of the mountains, especially in the Kislovodsk Basin. However, many of those inhabiting the deeper mountainous regions, where archaeologists excavated the kaftans, lived in small settlements ('strongholds') lining mountain and plateau edges.⁹ A kaftan, regardless of its materials, equipped each community member with a tool for communicating with unexpected visitors. The variety of kaftans in burials perhaps points to the various designated roles that members of the community played in planned or forewarned encounters. Unlike the Sogdian merchants who could expect certain colleagues and clients in a particular place with aims of finding a mutually beneficial solution, the Alanic community members found themselves in volatile situations, inhabiting a territory that many people merely wanted to get through. They could not expect a particular outcome of their encounters and needed more substantial leverage for potentially laborious negotiations. The kaftans excavated from Alanic burial appear to have provided this with an ability to express opinions both subtly and dramatically. Such communication continued until death when one was buried in their kaftan with the lapels closed.

⁹ Korobov, "Alanskie 'Vozhdeski'"; Reinhold and Korobov, "Kislovodsk Basin," 198-200.

In contrast, Iran did not use the kaftan for negotiations, let alone dialogue. In terms of communications, the kaftan spoke in a monologue and expressed the Sasanian perspective on rightful leadership and showcased the king's power. In a fashion world blooming with flexibility and mutable social distinctions, the Sasanian monarch appeared to have purposely worked against the ideals of the sartorial systems in neighboring communities, especially to the north and east. He manipulated the kaftan, deliberately debilitating its dialogic dimension, which might undermine the empire's rigid socio-political structure. Thus, the Sasanian king expressed his total authority by passing down a single kaftan to Parthian court members to enforce the empire's strict hierarchy. He then affirmed the Sasanian social structure's inflexibility by always styling the kaftan in the same manner— the lapels closed around the neck. In effect, this silenced a garment otherwise widely recognized for its negotiability.

Each community's approach to making and wearing a kaftan illuminates how they responded to the increasingly cosmopolitan and polycentric political landscape of first millennium Central Eurasia. Some communities, such as the Sogdians, fully embraced the kaftan's mutable design, and used it to establish subtle social distinctions in the context of transcontinental economic ventures. Some approached it more cautiously, concealing luxurious details to allow surprise transformations during difficult negotiations: for example, the Alans, who steered trade and traffic through their territory. Still others pushed against the kaftan's advancement of social fluidity. The ruling Sasanian elite manipulated the kaftan by hindering its dialogic dimension which might undermine the empire's rigid socio-political structure.

Whether it produced conviviality, competition, or conflict, the kaftan delivered a cosmopolitan fashion for a cosmopolitan milieu. The kaftan enabled transcultural dialogue beyond leaders and elites, encompassing the multiple layers of society who might participate in non-verbal communication. The kaftan equipped Central Eurasian denizens for a multitude of social, economic, and political endeavors, and allowed them to step in and out of sartorial systems for communicating on the local, regional, and international scale.

APPENDIX I

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT

MOSHCHEVAIA BALKA AND NIZHNII ARKHYZ

Moshchevaia Balka was already heavily looted by the nineteenth century; its name, ‘gorge of the relics’, strongly conveys the modern inhabitants’ primary association with the site. In 2019, except for remnants of picnic fires and graffiti covering some trees and boulders, the site was bare. Even most of the cist burial stone slabs had been moved about, many tumbling down to the gorge floor.

It seems likely that archaeologist Nikolai I. Vorob’ev visited Moshchevaia Balka in 1905 or 1907, and archaeologists Nikolai I. Veselovskii perhaps visited the site a few years earlier in 1901.¹ In 1951 archaeologist Aleksandr A. Iessen stopped at Moshchevaia Balka while surveying sites in the northern Caucasus and described it as heavily plundered.² In 1966 archaeologist Tat’iana M. Minaeva visited the site for an upcoming publication cataloguing Alanic sites of the Upper Kuban.³ It was not until 1969 that Anna A. Ierusalimskaia commenced a scientific excavation under the auspices of the State Hermitage Museum. Ierusalimskaia directed three further seasons at the site from 1973 to 1976. She, like others before her, describes materials scattered across the terrace. She excavated 20 discrete tombs, a few undisturbed and most

¹ Archaeologists suggest different years for the date that Vorob’ev visited the site, Evgeniia P. Alekseeva writes 1907 (Alekseeva, *Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki Karachaevo-Cherkessii*, 12) and Anna A. Ierusalimskaia 1905 (Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 17). Ierusalimskaia always writes that N. I. Veselovskii visited the site in 1901 (Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 17), but Alekseeva is skeptical about this (Alekseeva, *Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki Karachaevo-Cherkessii*, 12). Minaeva’s 1971 study of Alanic archaeology only mentions an early twentieth-century visit of Veselovskii with no mention of Vorob’ev (Minaeva *Istorii Alan*, 92).

² Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 18; Tekeev, “Novye materialy,” 152.

³ Minaeva, *Istorii Alan*, 92-93.

looted.⁴ Locals handed over additional items that they had themselves gathered. A local school teacher, E. A. Milovanov, was particularly enthusiastic and helped with the excavations. Milovanov had collected several items from the site— including a full burial assemblage— for display in the local Kurdzinovo school museum.⁵ The archaeological team sent some of the items to the Karachaevo-Cherkesia Regional Museum and others to the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg (see appendix II). Ierusalimskaia has published extensively on the objects from Moshchevaia Balka, in both scholarly articles and exhibition catalogs. In 1996 she completed a comprehensive monograph of the northern Caucasus material in the State Hermitage Museum, *Die Gräber der Moščevaja Balka: Frühmittelalterliche Funde an der Nordkaukasischen Seidenstrasse*, and another thematic monograph on the site in 2012, *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na Severokavkazskom shēlkovom puty* [Moshchevaia Balka: An Unusual Archaeological Site in the North Caucasian Silk Road].

In the late 1970s, V. N. Kaminskii carried out salvage excavations on looted graves and sent a number of the finds to the State Hermitage Museum and regional museums in Krasnodar and Stavropol.⁶ In 1980-1982 I. S. Savchenko and I. S. Kamenetskii from Moscow led another excavation. They sent the items collected to the Prozritelev and Prave Stavropol State Museum. Savchenko published minimal reports some years later with a few unpublished reports kept in the archives of the Institute of Archaeology in Moscow.⁷

⁴ Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 139-142.

⁵ Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 23; Tekeev, “Novye materialy,” 152.

⁶ Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 25.

⁷ Inventory numbers 29494/1-91 (Dode, “Kostium naseleniia”); Savchenko, “Pogrebal’nyi obriad Moshchevaia Balka”; Savchenko, “Moshchevaia Balka.”

Nizhnii Arkhyz has a more extensive history of excavations, but it has focused on the Christian era, including the settlement, three churches, and the Christian-era burials. Vladimir A. Kuznetsov has most extensively excavated and published on the later tenth- through the thirteenth-century city.⁸ Evgeniia A. Alekseeva's *Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki Karachaevo-Cherkessii* can be referenced for the broader history of work focused on this milieu.⁹

Documentation of the pre-Christian burials around Nizhnii Arkhyz are noted already in publications by Naryshkin in 1877, by V. M. Sysoev in 1898 (he excavated at the settlement in 1895), and by G. N. Prozritelev in 1908.¹⁰ L. N. Glushkov visited and collected some materials from Podorvannia Balka in 1959.¹¹ Soviet archaeologists of the Caucasus, Evgeniia A. Alekseeva and Tat'iana Minaeva visited the burials in this gorge, and published their descriptions in books documenting sites of the Caucasus.¹²

From 1960 through 1980, Vladimir A. Kuznetsov was the lead archaeologist for excavations at the site. Much of his emphasis was on the Christian occupation, but he also excavated some pre-Christian burials. Kuznetsov's major excavations operated from 1960 to 1972, then a season again in 1978 and 1980.¹³ Several other excavations began in the 1970s and continue through today. The missions with textile assemblages from the pre-Christian stone

⁸ Alongside numerous articles, see the monographs on Nizhnii Arkhyz: Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz v X-XII vekakh*; Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz i rannee pravoslavie*.

⁹ For a comprehensive discussion of travelers, documentation, and excavations in the Nizhnii Arkhyz complex from the nineteenth century through the 1990s, see Alekseeva, *Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki Karachaevo-Cherkessii*, 6-28.

¹⁰ Sysoev, *Poezda na reki*, 117-120; Prozritelev, *Arkheologicheskaiia nakhodka*, 2. See also the historiographical summaries in Alekseeva, *Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki Karachaevo-Cherkessii*, 48; Kuznetsov, *Nizhnii Arkhyz i rannee pravoslavie*, 33.

¹¹ Minaeva, *Istorii Alan*, 93.

¹² Minaeva, *Istorii Alan*, 93-94.

¹³ The excavations had a number of institutional affiliations. See Alekseeva, *Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki Karachaevo-Cherkessii*, 45-49; Kuznetsov, "Nizhnii-Arkhyzskoe Gorodishche," 245.

terrace burials include the missions of Kuznetsov between 1963-69, V. N. Kaminskii between 1986-1988, and U. Iu. El'kanov between 1990-1995. The majority of textiles from these Nizhnii Arkhyz excavations are in the Karachaevo-Cherkesia Regional Museum, the Prozritelev and Prave Stavropol State Museum, or the on-site Nizhnii Arkhyz Museum.

APPENDIX II

ALANIC TEXTILE COLLECTIONS

The majority of archaeological assemblages, including Alanic textiles, are housed in museums in Russia, namely Saint Petersburg, Cherkessk, Stavropol, Nizhnii Arkhyz, Krasnodar, and Moscow. A few small collections are spread worldwide.¹

The garments from Moshchevaia Balka and Nizhnii Arkhyz grounding chapter VI are primarily in the collections of the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, and the Karachaevo-Cherkesia Regional Museum in Cherkessk. Both textile collections are comprehensively published by Anna Ierusalimskaia and Ol'ga Orfinskaia, respectively. Ierusalimskaia published the collection of the State Hermitage Museum in *Die Gräber der Moščevaja Balka: Frühmittelalterliche Funde an der Nordkaukasischen Seidenstrasse*. Her 2012 *Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na Severokavkazskom shelkovom puti* complements the first reference-driven work, with more essays and updated color photographs. Orfinskaia's publication of the Alanic textile collection in the Karachaevo-Cherkesia Regional Museum is her 2001 doctoral dissertation titled, "Tekstil' VIII-IX vv. iz kolleksii Karachaevo-Cherkesskogo myzeia: tekhnologicheskie osobennosti v kontekste kul'tury rannesrednevekovoi Evrazii."

¹ One of these collections is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It includes nearly 50 burial objects, nine of which are garments. Hans Jürgen von Oertzen collected these materials from an unknown site in the 1920s and later gave them to one of his daughters, Andrea Ulrich-von Oertzen, who sold them through an auction house in the 1990s. I discuss this collection separately in a forthcoming article with textile conservator Martina Ferrari. In 1994, the Stuttgarter Kunstuaktionshaus, Dr. Fritz Nagel sold two kaftan skirtings, a pair of leggings, and part of an upper-body garment. Rossi and Rossi Ltd. London purchased these pieces, reconstructed them, and then sold the kaftan and the legging in 1996 to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 1996, a separate lot of items—also from Andrea Ulrich-von Oertzen—was put on auction at the same auction house in Stuttgart. The assemblage did not immediately sell, and later Jacqueline Simcox purchased it. Simcox then gifted the majority of the materials to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1999. Another collection—with less provenance information—is in the Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg; this collection includes two complete kaftans.

The collection in the State Hermitage Museum consists of materials acquired from disparate sources. Anna Ierusalimskaia, the curator of the Northern Caucasus at the museum, led scientific excavations at Moshchevaia Balka in 1969, and 1973-1976. Earlier finds in the collection were gathered by Maksim M. Kovalevskii at Khasaut in 1885. These textiles were first in the State History Museum in Moscow and later transferred to the State Hermitage in 1929. In 1900 or 1901, Nikolai Veselovskii collected a significant number of materials followed by Nikolai Vorob'ev in 1905 or 1907. The finds of Veselovskii and Vorob'ev were respectively sent to the ethnographic department of the Russian Museum and the Kunstkammer of Peter I, both in St. Petersburg, because it seemed impossible that such organic materials—textiles, leather, and wood—could be older than a few hundred years. It was not until 1935 that Iosif Orbeli, curator and later director of the State Hermitage Museum, recognized that the materials did not originate between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, but in fact, dated to the sixth to the ninth century. Some 800 objects were first transferred in 1935 to the State Hermitage from Peter I's Kunstkamera. After the Second World War, another group (of which many objects were unfortunately lost in the German siege of St. Petersburg) was transferred from the Russian Museum.² Find comparisons only suggest that these early objects may have also come from Moshchevaia Balka. Ierusalimskaia strongly argues that many of the textiles come from Moshchevaia Balka because the textiles found in the early twentieth century share many of the same silks with finds from her 1969-1976 excavations.³ Because of this strong supposition, Ierusalimskaia often publishes these earlier collected materials under the attribution of

² Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka*, 17-18.

³ Ierusalimskaia, *Gräber der Moščevaja Balka*, 19.

Moshchevaia Balka. Though these pieces are confidently from the same Alanic archaeological culture, excavations of the greater region have highlighted how neighboring sites produce relatively similar and even identical silks and other objects.⁴ The State Hermitage's collection also includes the textiles collected in 1885 by Maksim M. Kovalevskii from the cemeteries in the Khasaut valley. These were transferred from the State History Museum in Moscow in 1929.⁵

The collection of textiles from Alanic burials at the Karachaevo-Cherkesia Museum took shape more recently in the 1950s. Locals and archaeologists gifted the earliest textiles. In the 1960s, scientific excavations began sending materials.⁶ The collection increased substantially in the 1970s with regular expeditions throughout the region, notably that at Nizhnii Arkhyz headed under the leadership of Vladimir Kuznetsov. Expeditions with substantial textile finds include those of G. Kh.-U. Tekeev (1971-75); V. A. Kuznetsov (1978); V. N. Kaminskii (1986, 1987); U. Iu. El'kanov (with A. A. Demakov and O. V. Orfinskaia) (1990, 1991); and A. A. Demakov (1992). Orfinskaia writes— as of 2001— that 74% of the museum collection's textiles come from excavations at the site of Nizhnii Arkhyz, 24% from Nizhnii Teberda, and 2% from Moshchevaia Balka.⁷

⁴ Simply compare the number of sites from which the samite silk with a double-axe motif found as a trim on countless garments across the northern Caucasus.

⁵ Maksim M. Kovalevskii published his visit to Khasaut in 1886 in *Vestnik Evropy*. It was then Nikodim P. Kondakov, who highlighted the textiles for the first time in a book on medieval art. The textiles are situated in a long narrative of ‘Byzantine and Oriental Textiles of the Medieval Ages,’ though it is primarily their motifs, which he discussed. (*Kondakov, Ocherki i zametki*, 337-344).

⁶ A collection from E. P. Alekseeva initiated the collection in 1957. In addition, other textiles were given by E. A. Milovanov, S. D. Mastepanov, S. F. Varchenko, A. A. Bostanov. See Orfinskaia, “Tekstil’ VIII-IX vv.,” 20.

⁷ Orfinskaia, “Tekstil’ VIII-IX vv.,” 21.

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GLOSSARY

Armseye the armhole on the body of a garment where the sleeve is connected

Bodice the upper chest-covering section of a garment that extends to the legs

Bias cutting cutting diagonal to the grain of the fabric

Caftan/Cafetan a garment produced by the modern fashion industry; a sleeved, long-skirted, loose-fitting women's dress, which is typically constructed on a T-shaped pattern; also a modern anglicized catch-all term for various ankle-length garments worn by men in northern African and western Asian communities, as well as knee-length garments worn by men and women in Central Asia

Cape a front-fastening garment without sleeves; the shoulders are structured, but thereafter the garment hangs loosely; the length ranges from the hips to the thigh; similar to the cloak but shorter in length

Cloak a front-fastening garment without sleeves; the shoulders are structured, but thereafter the garment hangs loosely; the length ranges from the knees to the floor; similar to a cape but longer in length

Coat a front-fastening garment with symmetrical front panels and sleeves (narrow or loose); the fit can be tailored or loose, and the length can range from the hips to the mid-calf

Colorway range of color combinations in which a garment is produced

Collar the part of the garment that fastens around the neck

Band collar a collar with a generally straight edge around the neck; also called a stand-up collar

Shawl collar when the collar continues on the front panels down the front of the garment; most common on modern tuxedo

Stand collar also called a rolled or turned down collar and can be divided into high and low stand collars; the stand collar can form lapels; not to be confused with a band/stand-up collar

Construction/Garment construction the particular way in which the garment is sewn together from pattern pieces

Cuff end of the sleeve; often a separately cut piece of fabric sewn to the sleeve

Cut-to-shape using the shape of the pattern pieces to fit the contour of the body or the desired shape rather than through tailoring, e.g., darting or inserting gores and godets

Epaulette decorative shoulder adornment; often still used on military uniform

Dart/Darting tapered V-shaped tuck sewn into a garment; used to tailor the garment to the body's contours; especially for back shoulder, waist, elbow and bust; taking away the fullness of a seam line

Design/Garment design the unique way in which pattern pieces are put together to create a complete garment

Fit how tight or loose the garment sits on the body

Flat technical garment drawing from the perspective of a garment spread out flat

Frog/Frogging a decorative cord or braid fastening; one side is a loop and the other a knot

Front-fastening garment a garment that is pulled on over the shoulders and/or arms; can be secured on the front or side of the body; in contrast to an over the head garment

Front panels the pattern pieces on the front side of a front-fashioning garment

Godet tapering triangular piece of fabric to add volume; inserted from the seam to the hem

Gore tapering triangular piece of fabric added to add volume; inserted at the hem and does not extend to the seam

Hem edge of a garment that has been stitched to cover the raw edge; common hems include: plain hem is simply turned up and sewn in place; rolled hem is rolled up and sewn with small stitches (best for delicate fabrics); faced hem is with an additional piece of fabric sewn to the edge and then turned up to the underside and sew into place

Hemline lower edge on a garment, especially on a coat, skirt or dress

Interlining fabric adding insulation under a garment, especially outerwear

Jacket a front-fastening garment with symmetrical or asymmetrical front panels and generally narrow sleeves; the fit is usually tailored with a defined waist; the length can range from the hips to mid-thigh

Kaftan a front-fastening garment with asymmetrical front panels and narrow sleeves; the fit is tailored with a defined waist and the length can range from knee to the mid-calf or ankle; the first millennium CE kaftan has distinctive front panels that can turn out to form lapels

Lapel also called a revers; the part of a garment, especially a coat or jacket, below the collar which is folded back to expose the undersurface

Lining an additional layer of fabric sewn all or part of the inside of a garment

Mantle a front-fastening garment without sleeves; it is structureless hanging loosely around the body; the length ranges from the knee to the floor; similar to the mantlet but longer in length

Mantelet a front-fastening garment without sleeves; it is structureless hanging loosely around the body; the length ranges from the hips to the thighs; similar to the mantle but shorter in length

Neckline shape of the garment at or around the neck

Jewel neckline high rounded neckline at base of neck

Square-shaped neckline cut in front to form two right angles

Surplice neckline two discrete front panels of the top are wrapped one over another to form a V shape

V-shaped neckline cut in front to form a V shape

Over the head garment a garment that is worn by pulling it on over top of the head, often called pullover; e.g., a T-shirt, which is in contrast to a front-fastening garment

Pattern the pieces from which a garment is sewn

Robe a front-fastening garment with symmetrical or asymmetrical front panels and sleeves (narrow or loose); the fit is loose, but sometimes cinched with a belt around the waist; the length ranges from the knees to the floor

Seam place where two pieces of fabric are joined

Set-in sleeves sleeve constructed with a high rounded cape so that when seamed to the garment's body, it hangs more naturally; in contrast to a kimono or dolman sleeve

Sleeve section of a garment covering part of or the entire arm

Bracelet sleeve sleeve extending three-quarters of the length of the arm, hitting between the elbow and wrist

Dolman sleeve when the sleeve is cut with the bodice of the garment or connected to the body with a single straight vertical seam; the dolman (or batwing) sleeve differs from the kimono sleeve in that the under part of the sleeve is curved instead of meeting/cut at a right angle

Kimono sleeve when the sleeve is cut with the bodice of the garment or connected to the body with a single straight vertical seam; the kimono sleeve differs from the dolman sleeve in that the under part of the sleeve is cut at a right angle rather than curved

Silhouette the form of the garment and how it fits over the body; the garment creates the silhouette by distorting or amplifying the body's own form

A-Line a triangular form moving from a narrow upper body tapering to wide skirting

Hourglass has two broad end points that narrow in the center; typically associated with the description of the exaggerated female body contour extending from the shoulder through the waist to the hips, but it can also describe the architectural shape of the dress

H-Line hanging in straight lines that remove curves of the body

V-Line broader shoulders and a narrow waist that continues straight down through the legs

Skirting the length of a garment hanging below a waistline

Tailor/Tailoring fitting the garment to the body, especially implying a complex pattern piecing system and/or using darting, pleats, and tucks

Tunic an over the head garment with narrow sleeves; the fit is loose or tailored, the former typically made fitted by means of a belt; the length can range from the mid-thigh to the knees or even mid-calves

Vent slit in a garment allowing for movement; common today on trench coats and pencil skirts

Waistline line between the upper and lower part of a garment— often between a bodice and skirting— indicated by a seam or fabric; does not need to be at the natural waistline

FIGURES

VOGUE



TORY BURCH
PRE-FALL 2017

LOOK
4

Figure 0.1

Caftan, Tory Burch, Pre-Fall 2017 Collection

[image source: Vogue website:

<https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/pre-fall-2017/tory-burch/slideshow/collection#4>



Figure 0.2

Moroccan Djellabah

Silk, cotton, metal-wrapped thread

Morocco, 1875–1941

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, C.I.41.86.8

[image source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art website:
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/85612>]



Figure 0.3

Uzbek adras chapan

Silk, cotton, metal-wrapped thread

Bukhara, Uzbekistan, 19th or early 20th century

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1971.83.6

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art website:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/85431>

Plate IV



Figure 0.4

Plate 78 'Türkvölker und tartarische Völker Asiens' in Max Tilke's *Kostümschnitte und Gewandformen* (1945)
[image source: Max Tilke, *Kostümschnitte und Gewandformen: eine Übersicht der Kostümschnitte und Gewandformen aller Zeiten und Völker vom Altertum bis zur Neuzeit* (Tübingen: E. Wasmuth, 1945), pl. 78]



Figure 1.1

Wall painting of donors ('Sixteen Sword-bearers'), Kuchaean

ca. 152 x 205 cm

430-557 CE (C14 dates by Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz; debate by other C14 dates)

Cave of Sixteen Sword-Bearers, Kizil Caves, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Museum für asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Berlin, No. MIK III 8426

[image source: Albert von Le Coq, *Die buddhistische Spätantike in Mittelasien* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1922), pl. 4]



Figure 1.2

Goat fur coat

1000-500 BCE

Qaradöwä Cemetery, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China
Museum of the Hami District, Hami

[image source: Alfried Wieczorek and Christoph Lind, eds., *Ursprünge der Seidenstrasse: Sensationelle Neufunde aus Xinjiang, China* (Stuttgart; Mannheim: Theiss; Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, 2007), 143, fig. 45]



Figure 1.3

Brown wool coat
1000-600 BCE

Grave 2, Zagunluk near Chärcän, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China
Museum of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Ürümqi

[image source: Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu bowuguan bian, ed. *Gudai xiyu fushi xie cui* (Beijing: Wenwu chuban she, 2010), p. 24]



Figure 1.4

Zagunluk striped wool coat

1000-600 BCE

grave 4, Zagunluk near Chärchän, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Museum of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Ürümqi

[image source: Alfried Wieczorek and Christoph Lind, eds., *Ursprünge der Seidenstrasse:*

Sensationelle Neufunde aus Xinjiang, China (Stuttgart; Mannheim: Theiss; Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, 2007), 188, fig. 83]



Figure 1.5

Fur coat on a female mummy

5th to 3rd century BCE

Cemetery III, grave 6, Subeshi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

[image source: Wang Binghua, ed. *Xinjiang gu shi: gudai Xinjiang jumin ji qi wenhua* (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chuban she, 2001), p. 98]



Figure 1.6

Woven wool coat

5th to 3rd century BCE

Cemetery I, grave 4, Subeshi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

[image source: Alfried Wieczorek and Christoph Lind, eds., *Ursprünge der Seidenstrasse: Sensationelle Neufunde aus Xinjiang, China* (Stuttgart; Mannheim: Theiss; Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, 2007), 179, fig. 80]



Figure 1.7

Sheep and marmot coat

5th to 3rd century BCE

Kurgan 1 at Verkh-Kal'dzhin 2, Ukok Plateau, Russian Federation

Museum of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, Novosibirsk

[image source: website of the Museum of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences]

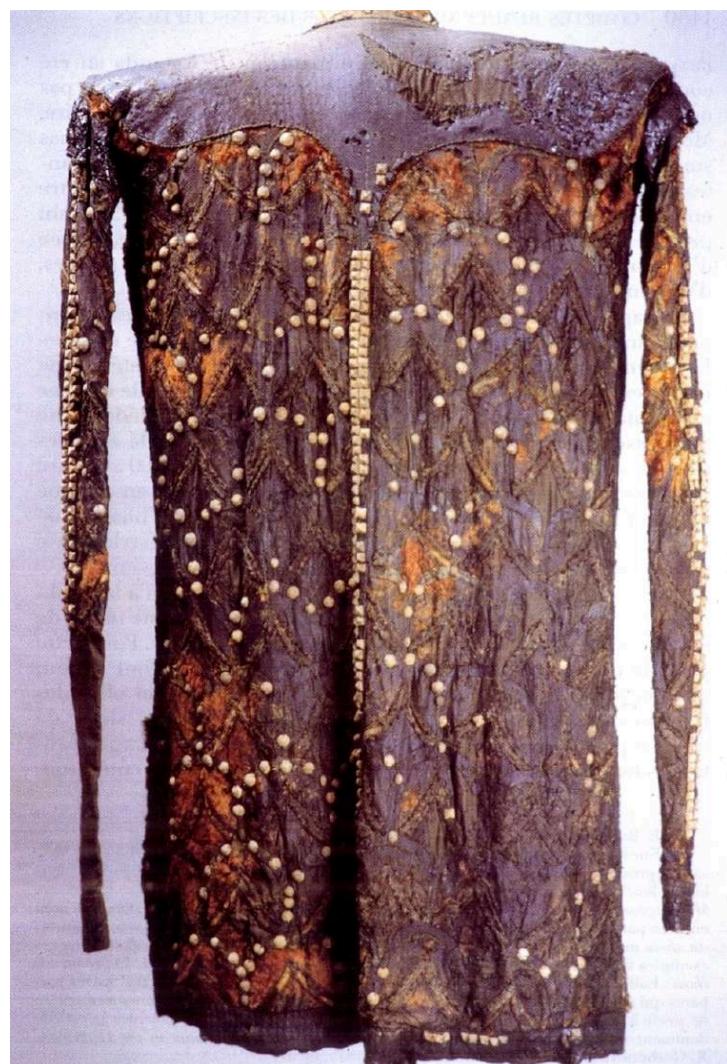


Figure 1.8

Fur jacket (back view)

5th to 3rd century BCE

Large kurgan, Katanda, Altai Republic, Russian Federation

State History Museum, Moscow

[image source: Elfriede Regina Knauer, "Le Vêtement des Nomades Eurasiatiques et sa Postérité," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 143, no. 4 (1999): fig. 3]



Figure 1.9

Sheep and sable coat

5th to 3rd century BCE

Verkh-Kal'dzhin 2, kurgan 3, Ukok Plateau, Russian Federation

Museum of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, Novosibirsk

[image source: N. V. Polos'mak and L. L. Barkova, *Kostium i tekstil' pazyryktsev Altaia (IV-III vv. do n.e.)* (Novosibirsk: Infolio Publishing House, 2005), fig 2.30]



Figure 1.10
Half-circle fur coat
5th to 3rd century BCE
Kurgan 2, Pazyryk, Altai Republic, Russian Federation
State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 1.11
Silk robe, Chinese
Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE)
tomb 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha, Hunan Province, China
[image source: Dieter Kuhn, ed., *Chinese Silks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), fig. 3.18]



Figure 1.12
Wool and silk robe, Xiongnu
1st century BCE to 1st century CE
Kurgan 6, Noin Ula, Tov Province, Mongolia
State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg
[image source: author's own photograph]

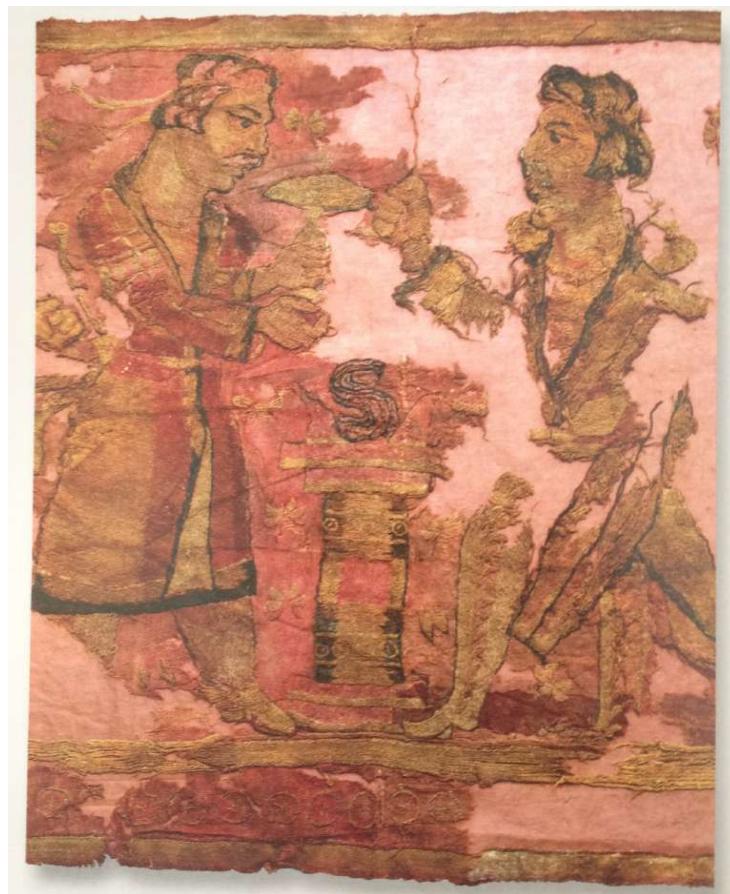


Figure 1.13

Detail of wool embroidery, Xiongnu

1st century BCE to 1st century CE

Kurgan 31, Noin Ula, Tov Province, Mongolia

Museum of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, Novosibirsk

[image source: N. V. Polos'mak and E. S. Bogdanov, *Noin-Ulinskaia kolleksiia: rezul'taty raboty rossiisko-mongol'skoi ekspeditsii, 2006-2012 gg.* (Novosibirsk: Infolio Publishing House, 2016), p. 146]



Figure 1.14

Silk robe fragment, Xiongnu

1st century BCE to 1st century CE

Noin-Ula, Tov Province, Mongolia

State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

[image source: Arnoud Bijl and Birgit Boelens, eds., *Expedition Silk Road: Journey to the West: Treasures from the Hermitage* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Hermitage, 2014), 99, no. 1]



Figure 1.15

Detail of gold comb, Scythian

5th to 4th century BCE

Solokha kurgan, Zaporizhia Oblast, Ukraine

State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

[image source: Andrey Alexeyev, *The Gold of the Scythian Kings in the Hermitage Collection* (Saint Petersburg: The State Hermitage Publishers, 2012), p. 131]



Figure 1.16

Gold plaque (1 of 13), Scythian

Early 4th century BCE

Solokha kurgan, Zaporizhia Oblast, Ukraine

State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

[image source: Andrey Alexeyev, *The Gold of the Scythian Kings in the Hermitage Collection* (Saint Petersburg: The State Hermitage Publishers, 2012), p. 161]

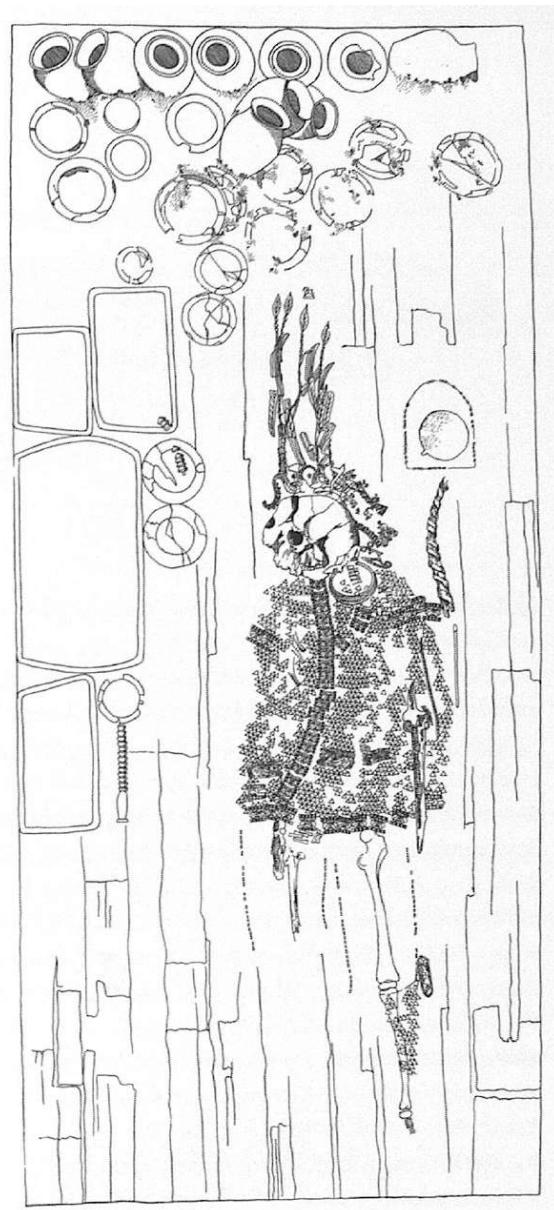


Figure 1.17

Drawing of the burial chamber of Issyk Kurgan after excavation

5th to 3rd century BCE

Issyk, Kazakhstan

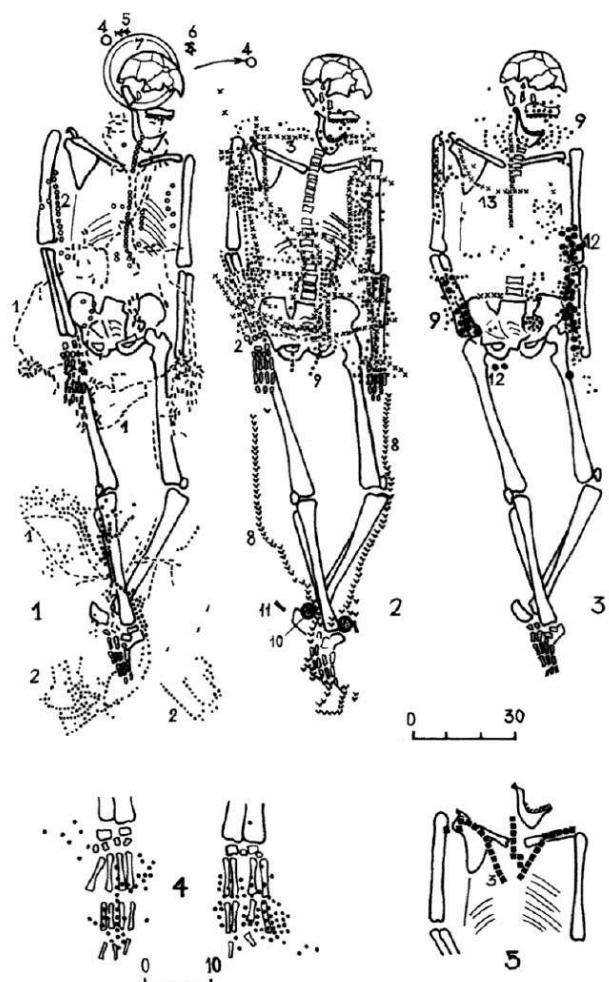
[image source: Akishev, *Kurgan Issyk: iskusstvo Sakov Kazakhstana* (Moscow: 'Iskusstvo' Publishing House, 1978), fig. 5]



Figure 1.18
Bronze statue, Arsacid
2nd century BCE to 2nd century CE
Šāmi, Khūzestān Province, Iran; found 1935
Iran Bāstān Museum, Tehran
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 1.19
Shell plaque, Arsacid
2nd century BCE to 2nd century CE
Izeh, Khūzestān Province, Iran
Iran Bāstān Museum, Tehran
[image source: author's own photograph]



Pl. 5. Grave 4, Tillya-tepe (drawings of S. Yatsenko & E. Kurkina).

1 - the upper layer of clothes-1; 2 - the middle layer of clothes-2; 3 - the lower layer of clothes-3; 4 - mittens; 5 - the back of layer-2 (kurtak). Types of ornaments (by Sarianidi 1985 a, Catalogue): 1 - 4.11; 2, 9 - 4.18-19; 3 - 4.13; 4 - 4.24; 5 - 4.28; 6 - 4.3; 7 - 4.31; 8 - 4.14; 10 - 4.1; 11 - 4.34; 12 - 4.17; 13 - 4.20.

Figure 1.20

Drawing of grave 4, Tillya Tepe; illustration of the multiple layers of dress according to adornment plaques
1st century CE

Tillya Tepe, Jowzjan Province, Afghanistan

[image source: S. A. Iatsenko, "The Costume of the Yuech-Chihs/Kushans and Its Analogies to the East and to the West." *Silkroad Art and Archaeology* 7 (2001): pl. 5]



Figure 1.21

One of a pair of pendants, Sakan

1st century CE

Tomb II, Tillya Tepe, Jowzjan Province, Afghanistan

[image source: Fredrik T. Hiebert and Pierre Cambon, eds., *Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2008), no. 31]



Figure 1.22

Statue

South wall of stupa 120, Butkara, Swat, Pakistan

[image source: Chantal Fabrègues, 'The Indo-Parthian Beginnings of Gandhara Sculpture', *The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies: Ancient Iranian Art, Archaeology & Architecture*, fig. 13]



Figure 1.23
Terracotta figurine, Sogdian
2nd century BCE to 4th century CE
Afrasiab, Samarkand, Uzbekistan
Afrasiab Museum, inv. RM A420 1
[image source: Fiona J. Kidd, "Costume of the Samarkand Region of Sogdiana between the 2nd/1st Century B.C.E. and the 4th Century C.E.," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 17 (2003): fig. 5]



Figure 1.24

Detail of a hunt scene on a belt plaque (?)

1st to 3rd century CE

Takht-i Sangin, Tajikistan

Museum of National Antiquities of Tajikistan, Dushanbe

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 1.25
Šāpur I statue, Sasanian
3rd century CE
Šāpur cave, Tang-e Čowgān, near Kazerun, Fārs Province, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 1.26

Sculpture of King Kanishka

1st to second century CE

Mathura, India

Mathura Museum, Mathura

[image source: wikipedia commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Great_Emporer_Kanishka_-_Greatest_of_Kushan_Monarchs_-_Circa_1st_Century_CE_-_Mathura_-_Government_Museum_-_Mathura_2013-02-23_5836.JPG]



Figure 1.27
Rock relief of Bahrām II with wife, Sasanian
3rd century CE
Sarāb-e Qandil/Tang-e Qandil, near Kazerun, Fārs Province, Iran
[image source: [livius.org: https://www.livius.org/pictures/iran/sarab-e-qandil/sarab-e-qandil-relief/](https://www.livius.org/pictures/iran/sarab-e-qandil/sarab-e-qandil-relief/)]



Figure 1.28

Couple buried in Grave M3

3rd to 4th century CE

Grave M3, Niyā, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Xinjiang Archaeological Institute, Ürümqi

[image source: Wang Binghua, ed. *Xinjiang gu shi: gudai Xinjiang jumin ji qi wenhua* (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chuban she, 2001), p. 119]



Figure 1.29

Under robe

3rd to 4th century CE

Grave M3, Niyä, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Xinjiang Archaeological Institute, Ürümqi

[image source: Zhao Feng and Yu Zhiyong, *Legacy of the Desert King: Textiles and Treasures Excavated at Niya on the Silk Road* (Hong Kong: ISAT/Costume Squad Ltd., 2000), fig. 19b]



Figure 1.30

Yingpan mummy

3rd to 5th century CE

grave M15, Yingpan, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Xinjiang Archaeological Institute, Ürümqi

[image source: Regula Schorta, ed., *Central Asian Textiles and Their Contexts in the Early Middle Ages* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2006), fig. 185]



Figure 1.31

Silk child's robe

1st to 5th century CE

Loulan-Gu Cheng, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Xinjiang Archaeological Institute, Ürümqi

[image source: Victor H Mair, ed., *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China* (Santa Ana: Bowers Museum, 2010), no. 72]



Figure 1.32

Silk kaftan/robe

5th century CE

Niyä, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Xinjiang Archaeological Institute, Ürümqi

[image source: Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqiu bowuguan bian, ed. *Gudai xiyu fushi xie cui* (Beijing: Wenwu chuban she, 2010), p. 54]



Figure 1.33

Silk robe with painted buddha

4th to 5th century CE

Grave 1, Loulan-Gu Cheng, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Xinjiang Archaeological Institute, Ürümqi

[image source: Victor H Mair, ed., *Secrets of the Silk Road: An Exhibition of Discoveries from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China* (Santa Ana: Bowers Museum, 2010), no. 73]



Figure 1.34

Miniature kaftan

3rd to 5th century CE

grave M15, Yingpan, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Xinjiang Archaeological Institute, Ürümqi

[image source: Wang Binghua, ed. *Xinjiang gu shi: gudai Xinjiang jumin ji qi wenhua* (Urumqi: Xinjiang renmin chuban she, 2001), p. 161]



Figure 1.35a

Detail of a wall painting with donors

5th century CE; fresco

Northern wall, Room 16, Dilberjin, Afghanistan

[image source: I. T. Kruglikova, ed., *Drevniaia Baktria: materialy Sovetsko-Afganskoi ekspeditsii 1969-1973 gg.* Volume 1 (Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1976), 124, fig. 3]

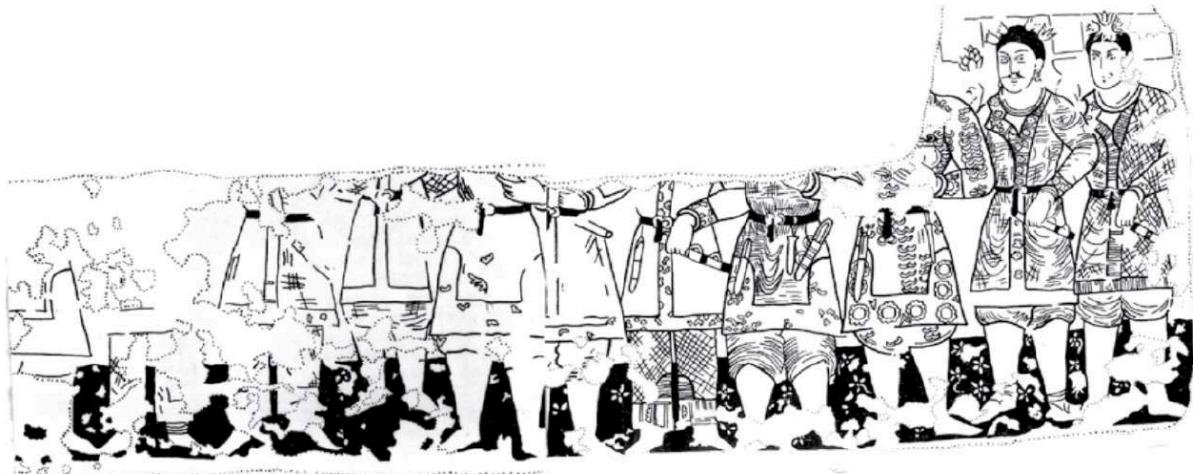


Figure 1.35b
Drawing of wall painting with donors from Dilberjin
5th century CE
Northern wall, Room 16 , Dilberjin, Afghanistan
[image source: I. T. Kruglikova, ed., *Drevniaia Baktria: materialy Sovetsko-Afganskoi ekspeditsii 1969-1973 gg.* Volume 1 (Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1976), 122, fig. 2]



Figure 1.36a

Drawing of ceramic vessel imagery from Gyaur-Kala by Matteo Compareti

5th to 6th century CE

Gyaur-Kala, Merv, Turkmenistan

National Museum of History of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat

[image source: Matteo Compareti, "The Painted Vase of Merv in the Context of Central Asian Pre-Islamic Funerary Tradition," *The Silk Road Newsletter* 9 (2011): fig. 1]



Figure 1.36b
Detail of hunting scene, ceramic vessel
5th to 6th century CE
Gyaur-Kala, Merv, Turkmenistan
National Museum of History of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat
[image source: Steppe History Forum: <https://steppes.proboards.com/thread/1984/merv-vase>]



Figure 1.37

Drachm of Zabocco (Alkhan)

Second half of 5th century CE

Kunsthistorischen Museum, Vienna

[image source: Michael Alram, Anna Filigenzi, Matthias Pfisterer, and Klaus Vondrovec, "Das Antlitz des Fremden: Die Münzen der Hunnen und Westtürken in Zentralasien und Indien." Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien: <http://pro.geo.univie.ac.at/projects/khm/coins/coin175?ref=views/ajax>]



Figure 1.38

Drachm of Unknown Hephthalite King

1st half of 6th century CE

Kunsthistorischen Museum, Vienna

[image source: Michael Alram, Anna Filigenzi, Matthias Pfisterer, and Klaus Vondrovec, "Das Antlitz des Fremden: Die Münzen der Hunnen und Westtürken in Zentralasien und Indien." Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien: <http://pro.geo.univie.ac.at/projects/khm/coins/coin152?ref=views/ajax>

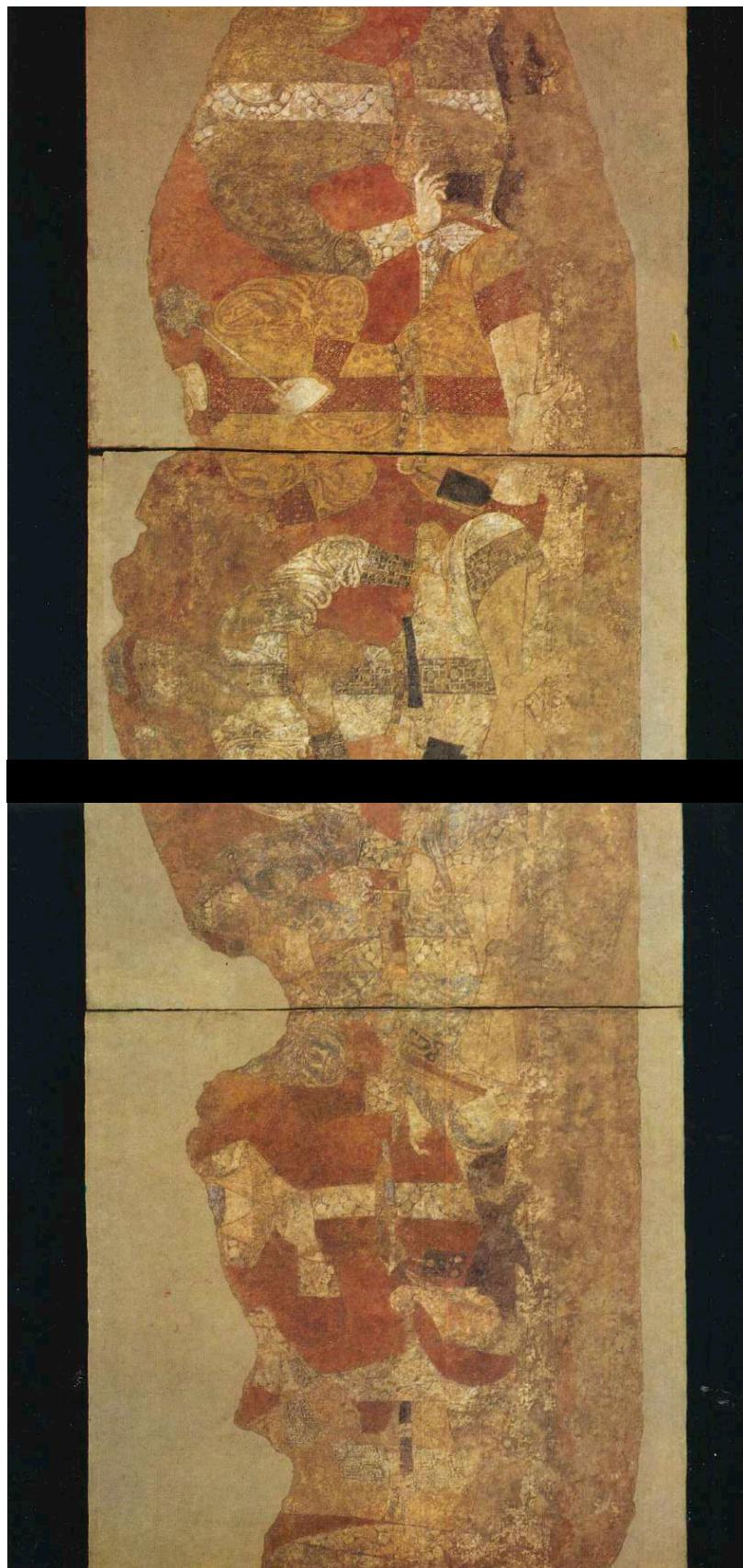


Figure 2.1a
Wall painting with banqueters, Sogdian
c. 700 – 722 CE; fresco
XVI:10 Panjikent, Tajikistan
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; Panjikent Archaeological Expedition, inv. no. SA-16215, 16216, 16217
[image source: A. M. Belenitskii, *Monumental'noe iskusstvo Pendzhikenta* (Moscow, Iskusstvo Publishing House, 1973), no. 19]



Figure 2.1b

Wall painting with banqueters (additional section), Sogdian

c. 700 – 722 CE; fresco

XVI:10 Panjikent, Tajikistan

The State Hermitage Museum, Staraya Derevnia Restoration and Storage Facilities

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 2.1c

Wall painting with banqueters (additional section, man with a cane), Sogdian

c. 700 – 722 CE; fresco

XVI:10 Panjikent, Tajikistan

The State Hermitage Museum, Staraia Derevnia Restoration and Storage Facilities

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 2.1d
Wall painting with banqueters (detail of personage in blue), Sogdian
c. 700 – 722 CE; fresco
XVI;10 Panjikent, Tajikistan
State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 2.1e

Wall painting with banqueters (detail of personage in red), Sogdian
c. 700 – 722 CE; fresco

XVI:10 Panjikent, Tajikistan
State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg
[image source: author's own photograph]

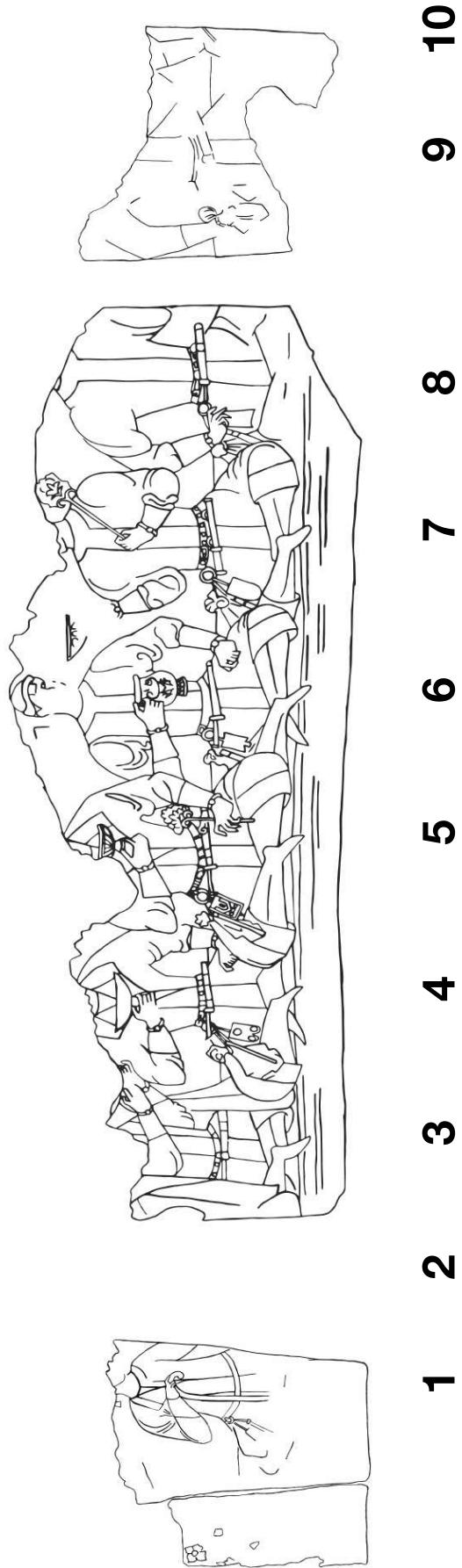


Figure 2.2
Surviving painted figures from the southeast corner of XVI:10 Panjikent; personage numbers are designated
for reference in the essay and also for their placement along the wall in Map 2.2
[image source: author's own drawing]



Рис. 25. Объект XVI, помещение 10.

У восточной стены — очаг-алтарь, вдоль стен — суфы, на стенах — остатки живописи.

Figure 2.3

Photograph of the southeastern corner of XVI:10 Panjikent, Tajikistan

[image source: V. I. Raspopova, *Zhilishcha Pendzhikenta: opyt istoriko-sotsial'noi interpretastii* (Leningrad, Nauka Publishing House, 1990), fig. 25]



Figure 2.4

Display of the multi-register wall painting from VI:41 Panjikent, Tajikistan
State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 2.5

Wall painting with banqueters

520-600 CE; fresco

Temple I, chapel 10/10a, room 10, Panjikent, Tajikistan

Museum of National Antiquities of Tajikistan, Dushanbe

[image source: author's own photograph]

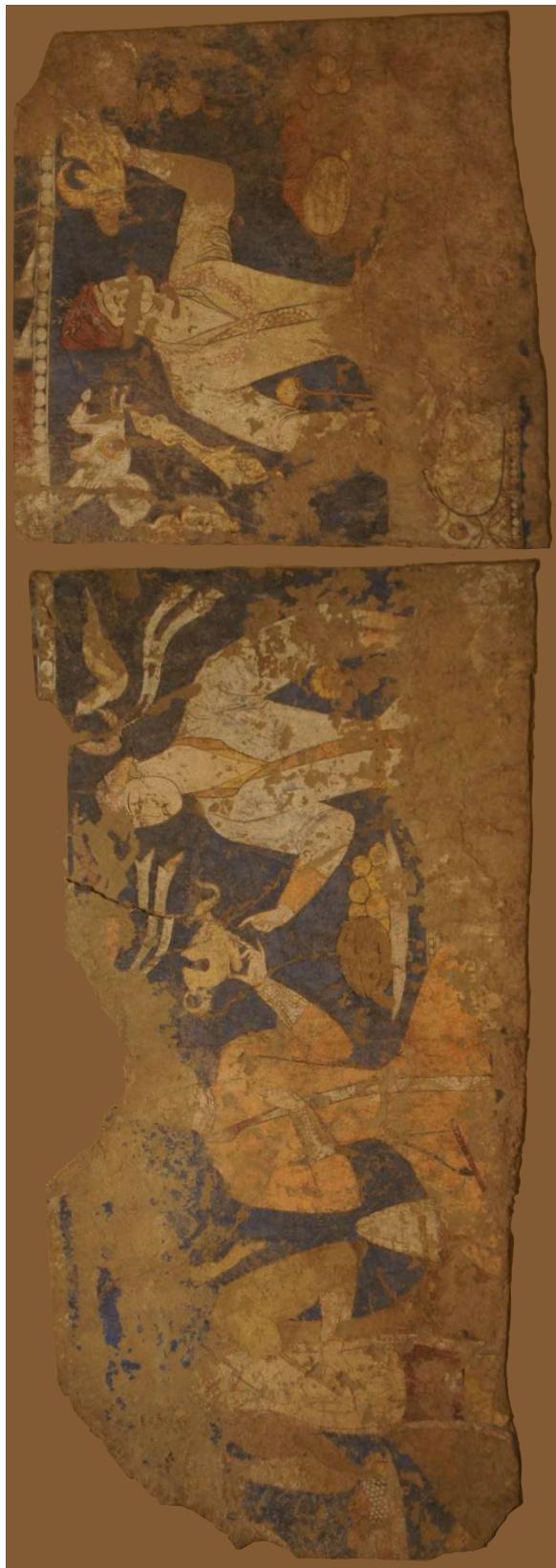


Figure 2.6
Wall painting with banqueters, Sogdian
c. 740 – 750 CE; fresco
XXIV.1 Panjikent, Tajikistan
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; Panjikent Archaeological Expedition, inv. no. SA-16235
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 2.7

Wall painting with banqueters, Sogdian
c. 740 – 750 CE; fresco

XXV:12 Panjikent, Tajikistan

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; Panjikent Archaeological Expedition, inv. no. SA-16238

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 2.8
Wall painting with banqueters; Sogdian
c. 700 – 722 CE; fresco
XXV:28 Panjikent, Tajikistan
The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg; Panjikent Archaeological Expedition, inv. no. V-2738, 2739, 2740, 2741, 2742
[image source: author's own photograph]

Plate LVII

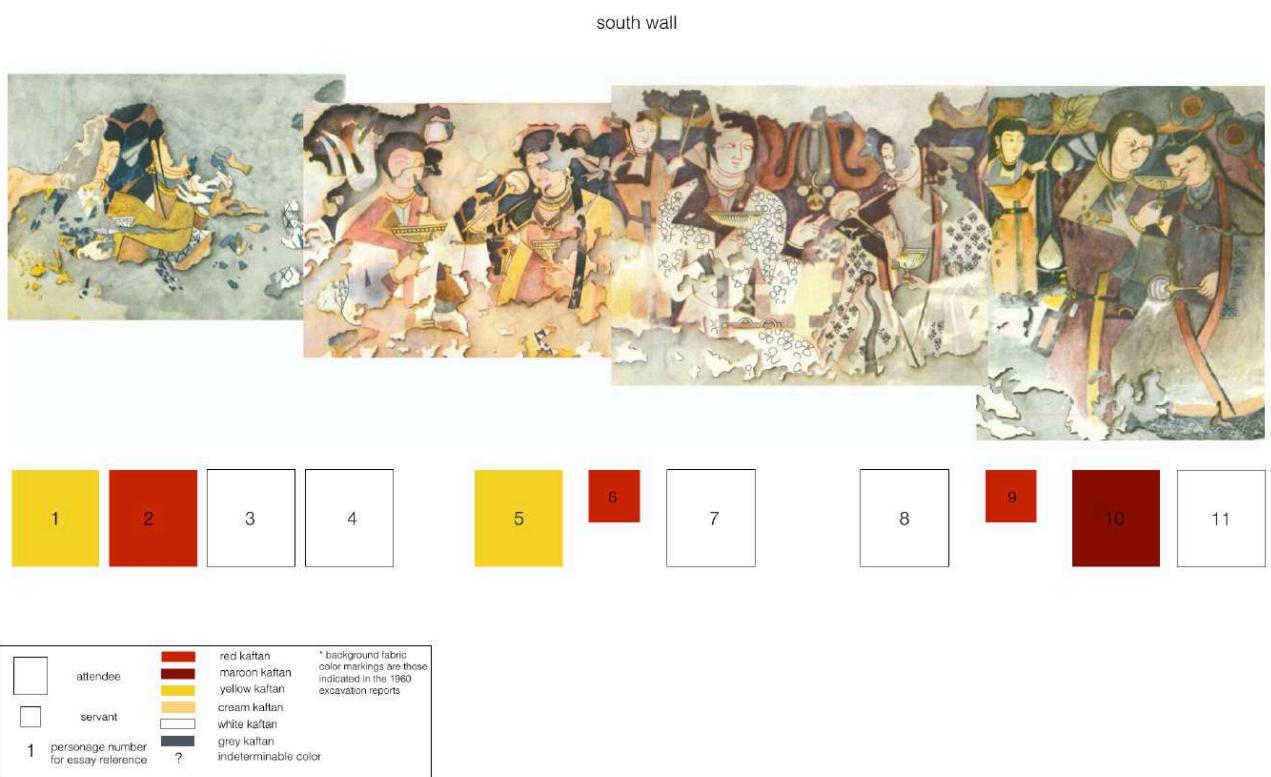


Figure 2.9a

Wall painting with banqueters, Tokharian (watercolors)

6th to 7th century CE

Room 14, Balalyk Tepe, Uzbekistan

Wall paintings in the Institute of Archaeology, Uzbek Academy of Science, Samarkand

[image source: watercolors after L. I. Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe: k istorii material'noi kul'tury i iskusstva Tokharistana* (Tashkent: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the UzSSR, 1960), figs. 98, 100, 102, 104; author's splicing, arrangement and markings]

Plate LVIII

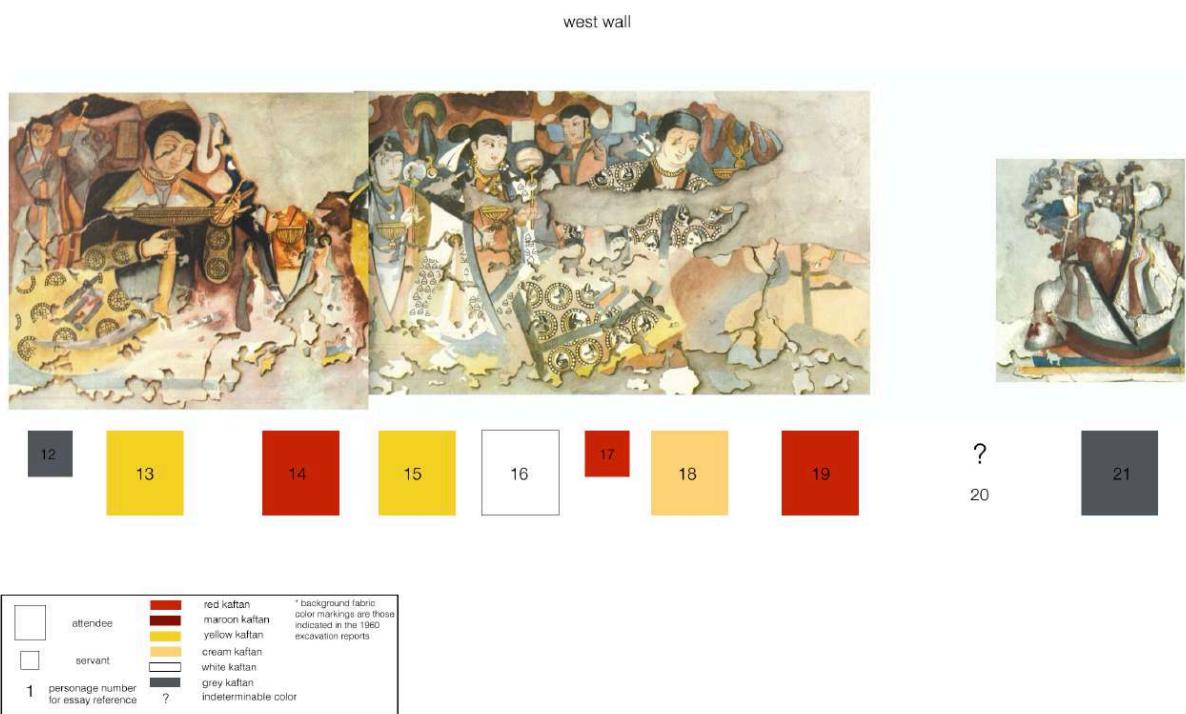


Figure 2.9b

Wall painting with banqueters, Tokharian (watercolors)

6th to 7th century CE

Room 14, Balalyk Tepe, Uzbekistan

Wall paintings in the Institute of Archaeology, Uzbek Academy of Science, Samarkand

[image source: watercolors after L. I. Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe: k istorii material'noi kul'tury i iskusstva Tokharistana* (Tashkent: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the UzSSR, 1960), figs. 107, 109, 111; author's splicing, arrangement and markings]

Plate LVIX

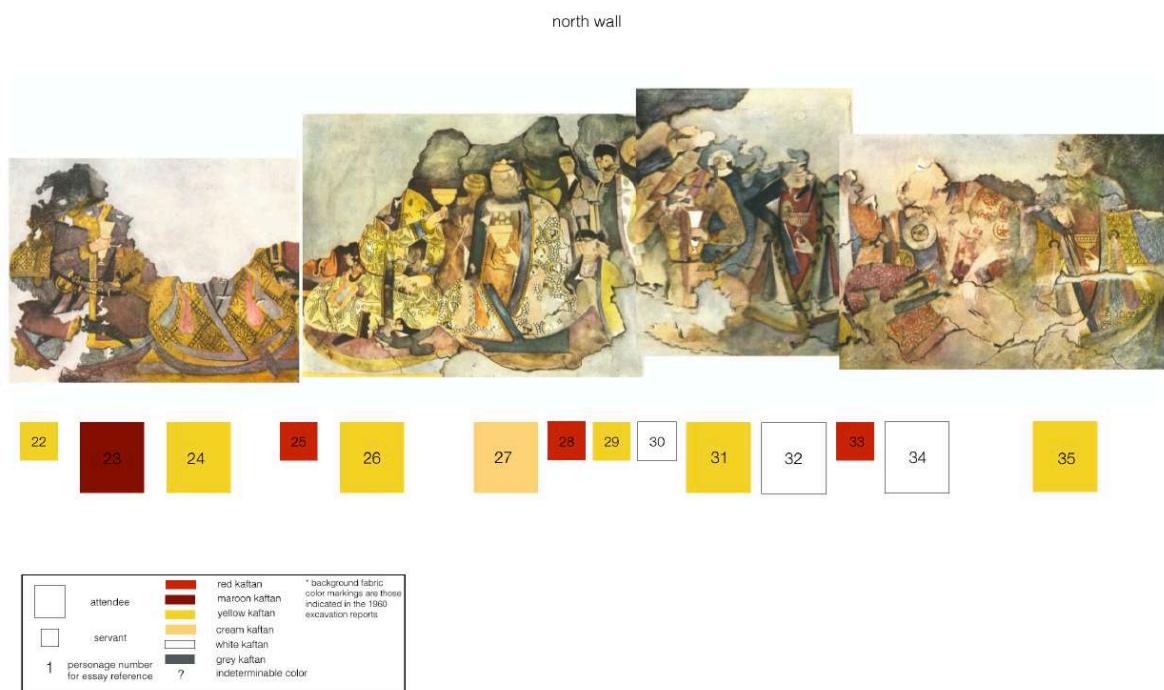


Figure 2.9c

Wall painting with banqueters, Tokharian (watercolors)

6th to 7th century CE

Room 14, Balalyk Tepe, Uzbekistan

Wall paintings in the Institute of Archaeology, Uzbek Academy of Science, Samarkand

[image source: watercolors after L. I. Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe: k istorii material'noi kul'tury i iskusstva Tokharistana* (Tashkent: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the UzSSR, 1960), figs. 114, 116, 118, 120; author's splicing, arrangement and markings]

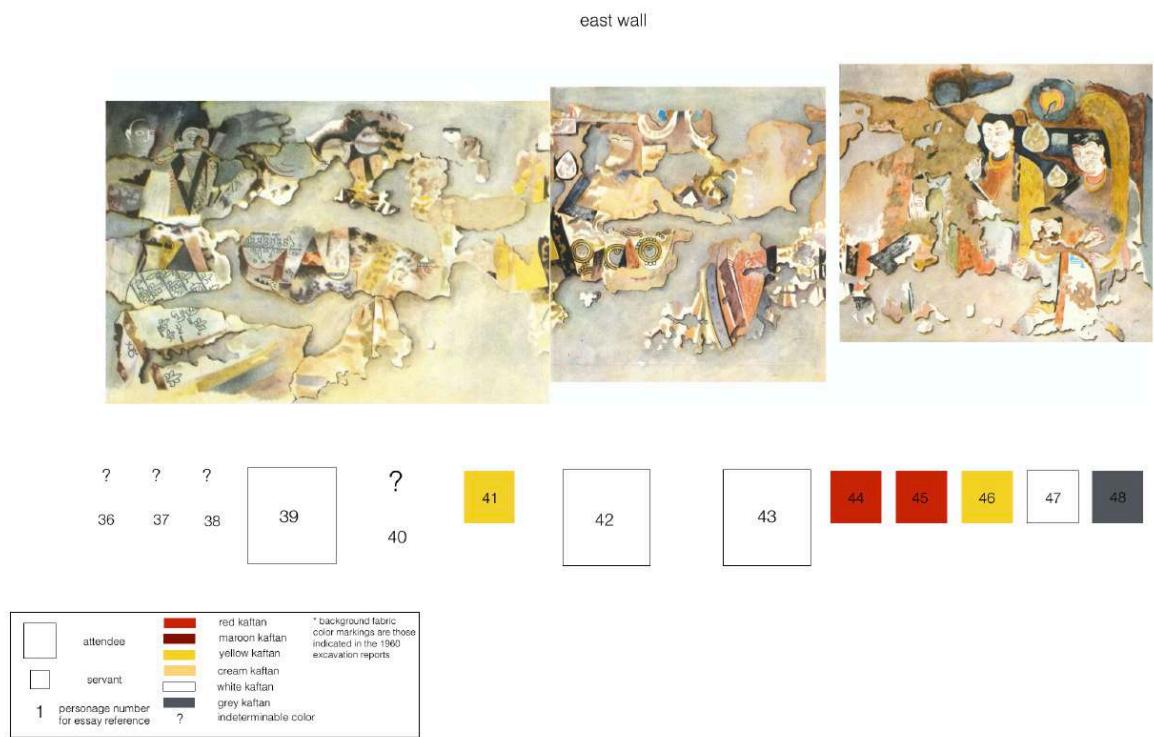


Figure 2.9d

Wall painting with banqueters, Tokharian (watercolors)

6th to 7th century CE

Room 14, Balalyk Tepe, Uzbekistan

Wall paintings in the Institute of Archaeology, Uzbek Academy of Science, Samarkand

[image source: watercolors after L. I. Al'baum, *Balalyk-tepe: k istorii material'noi kul'tury i iskusstva Tokharistana* (Tashkent: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the UzSSR, 1960), figs. 123, 125, 127; author's splicing, arrangement and markings]

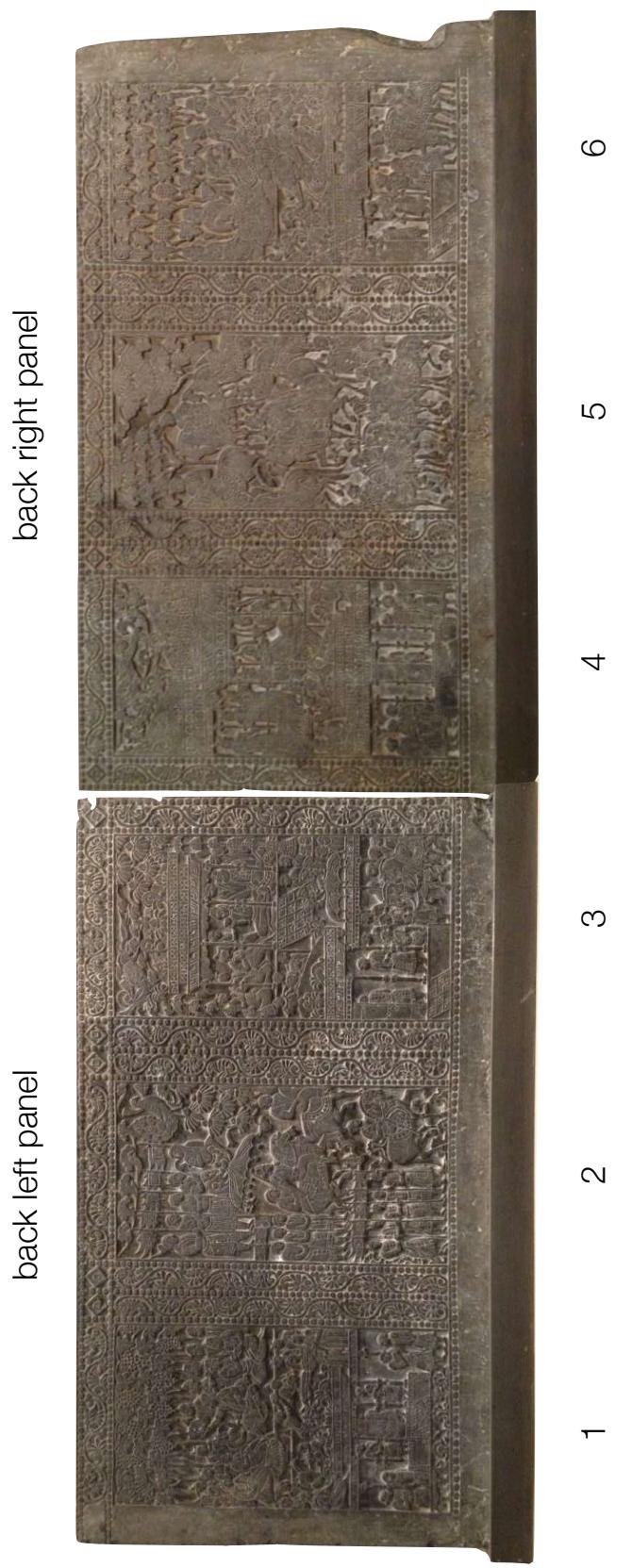


Figure 2.10a
Funerary couch, back panels, Sogdian
Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577 CE); marble
64 x 116 cm
Anyang (?), Henan Province, China
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. nos. 12.588, 12.589
[image source: author's own photograph]

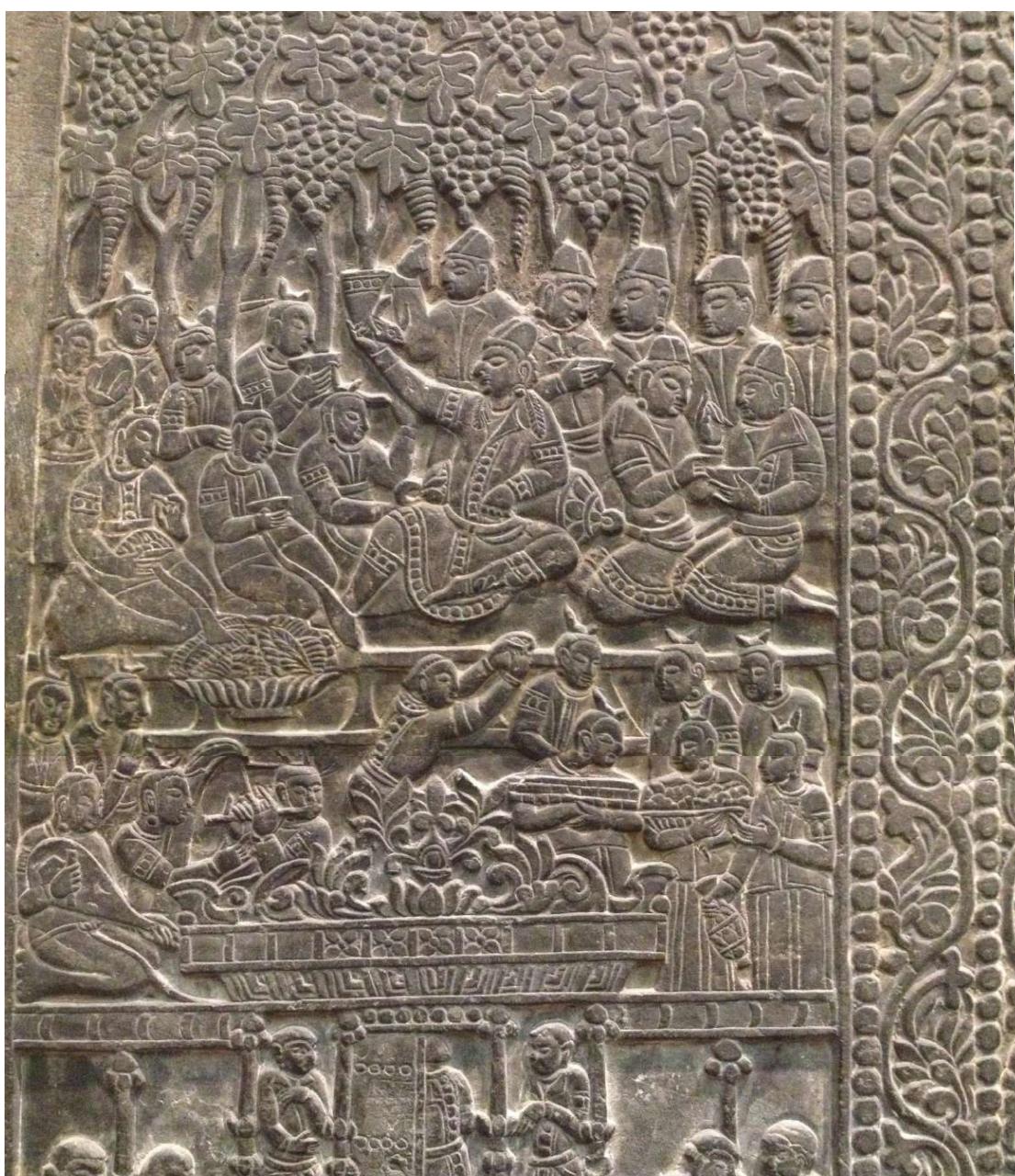


Figure 2.10b

Funerary couch, back panels, banquet frame 1, Sogdian

Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577 CE); marble

Anyang (?), Henan Province, China

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 2.10c
Funerary couch, back panels, banquet frame 3, Sogdian
Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577 CE); marble
Anyang (?), Henan Province, China
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
[image source: author's own photograph]

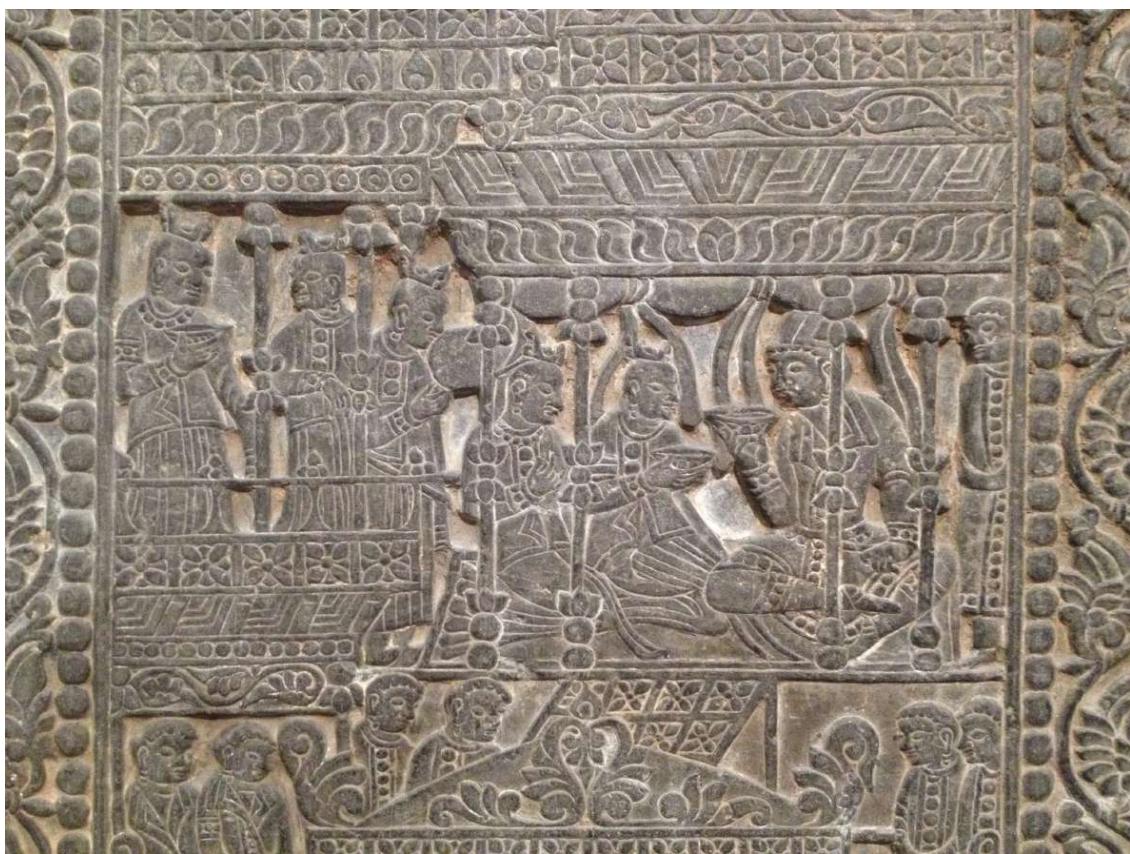


Figure 2.10d

Funerary couch, back panels, banquet frame 4, Sogdian

Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577 CE); marble

Anyang (?), Henan Province, China

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

[image source: author's own photograph]

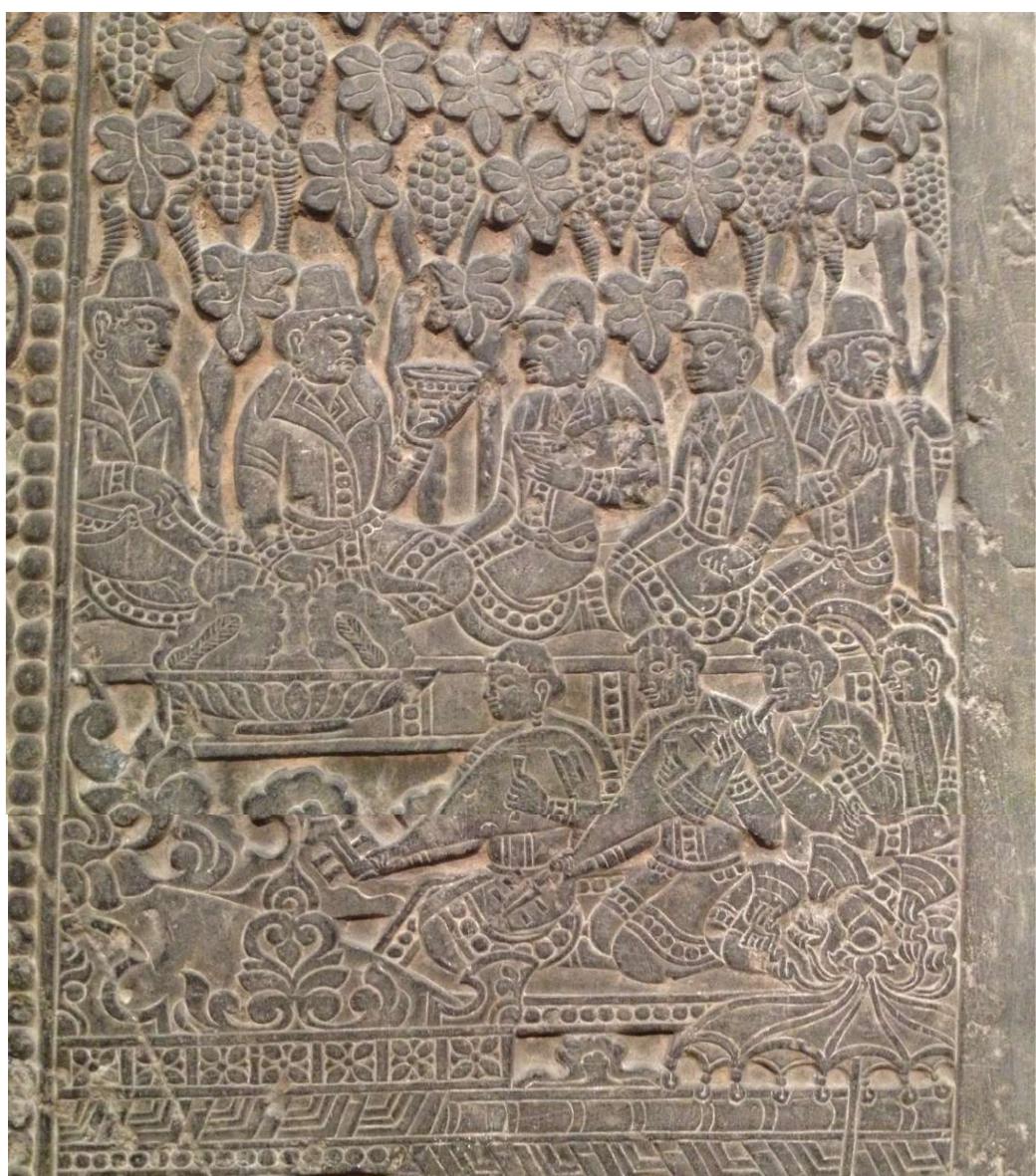


Figure 2.10e
Funerary couch, back panels, banquet frame 6, Sogdian
Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577 CE); marble
Anyang (?), Henan Province, China
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
[image source: author's own photograph]

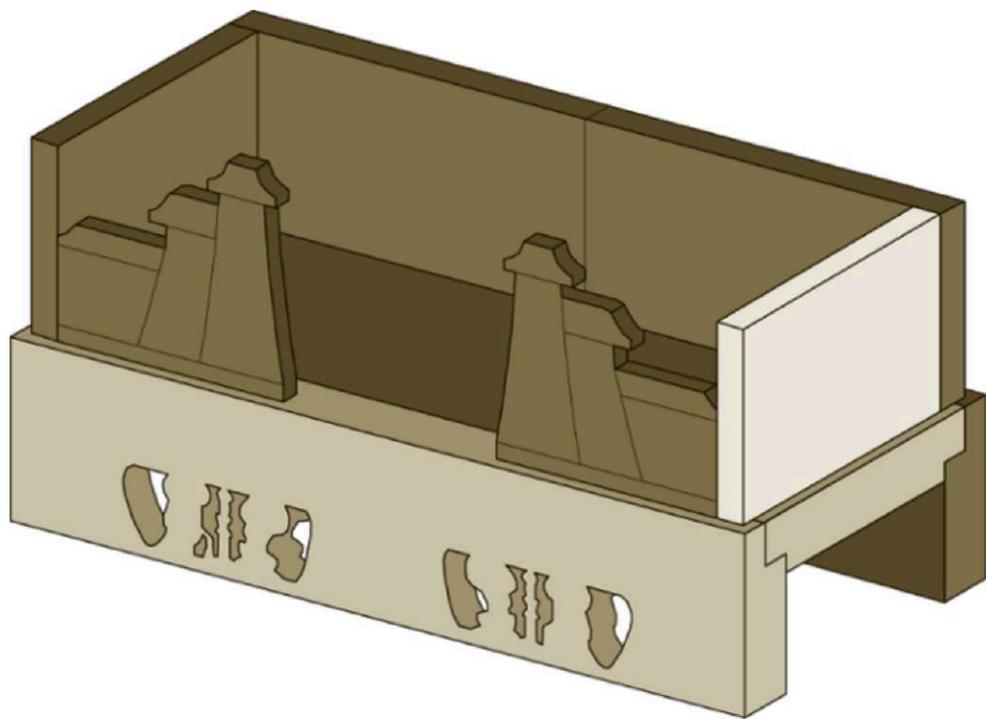
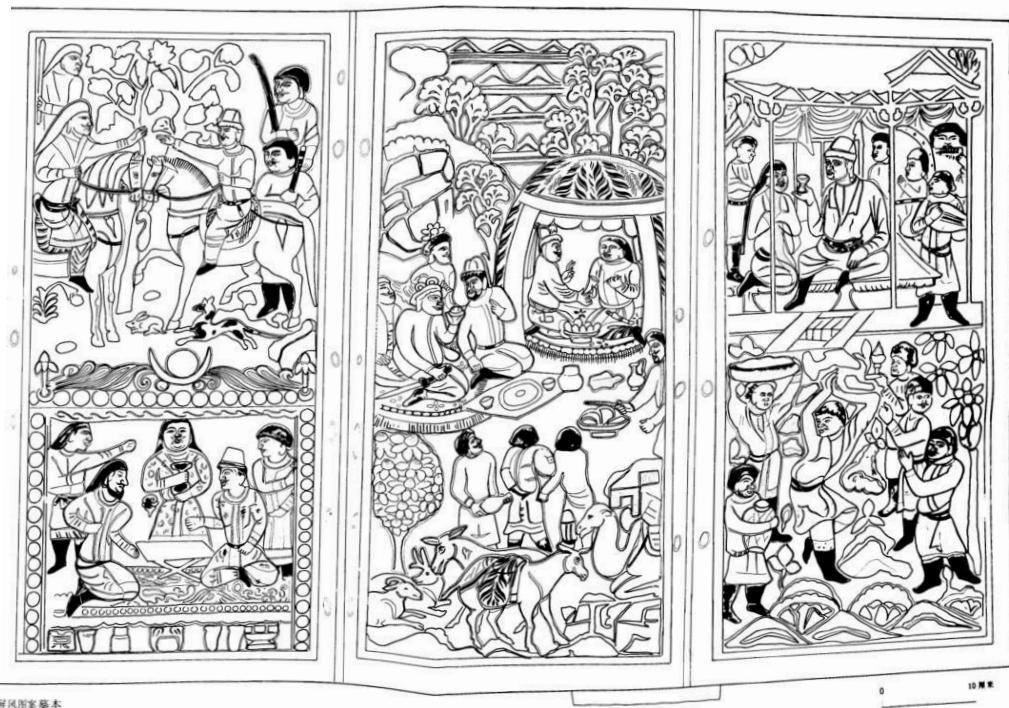


Figure 2.11 Figure 32
Reconstruction of the Anyang (?) funerary couch split between Boston, Musee Guimet, Köln and Freer Gallery
[image source: Freer|Sackler Museum website: <https://sogdians.si.edu/anyang-funerary-bed/>]



晋风图案摹本

Figure 2.12

Drawing of three back panels of An Jia funerary couch

[image source: Shanxi sheng kaogu yan jiu suo, ed. *Xi'an beizhou An Jia mu* (Beijing: Wenwu chuban she, 2003), pl. 24]

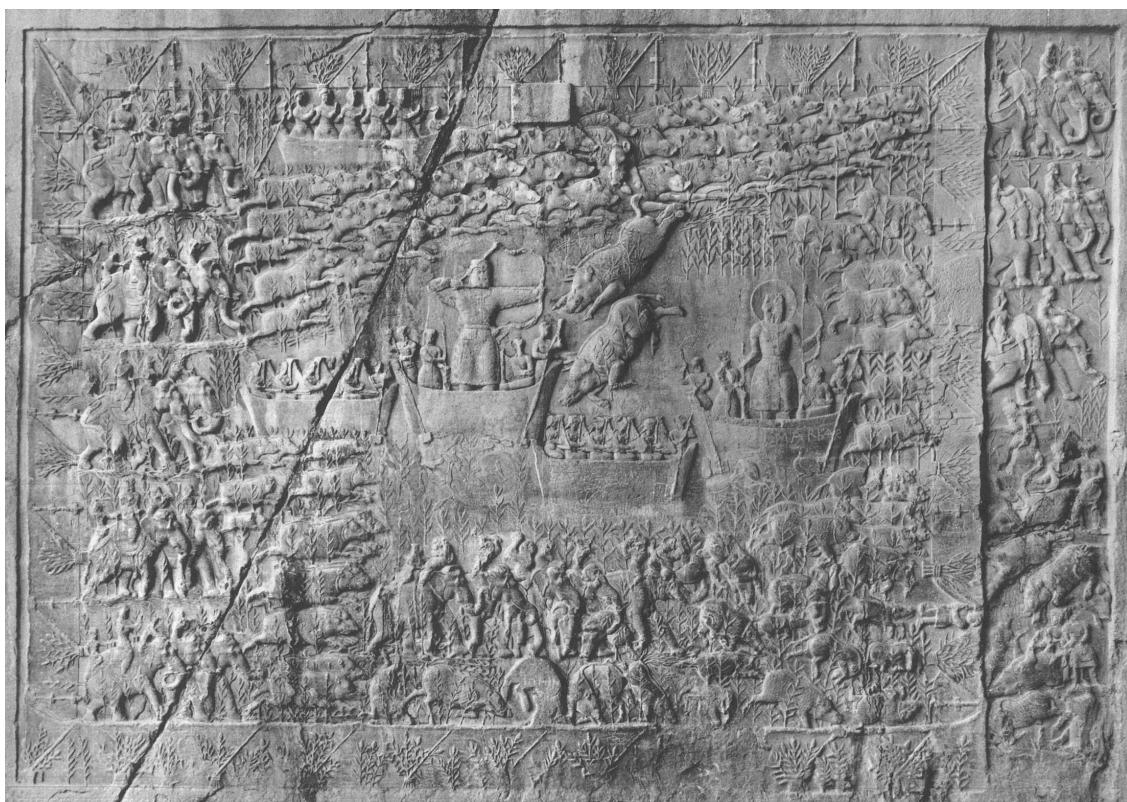


Figure 3.1a
Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran
[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XXXII]



Figure 3.1b

Detail of Active Central Hunter, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XLVIII]



Figure 3.1c

Detail of Docked and Nimbed Hunter, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall

Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LXII]



Figure 3.1d

Detail of Active Central Hunter's Boat, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XLVII]



Figure 3.1e

Detail of Docked and Nimbed Hunter's Boat Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall

Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoaru Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LXI]



Figure 3.1f

Detail of Active Central Hunter's Musician Boat, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall

Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LVIII]



Figure 3.1g

Detail of Docked and Nimbed Hunter's Musician Boat, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LXVIII]



Figure 3.1h

Detail of Fifth Hunter's Boat, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyo Haru Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LVI]



Figure 3.1i

Detail of Elephant Riders, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall, Taq-e Bustan

Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1
(Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XXXIII]



Figure 3.1j

Detail of First Elephant Rider, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XXXV]

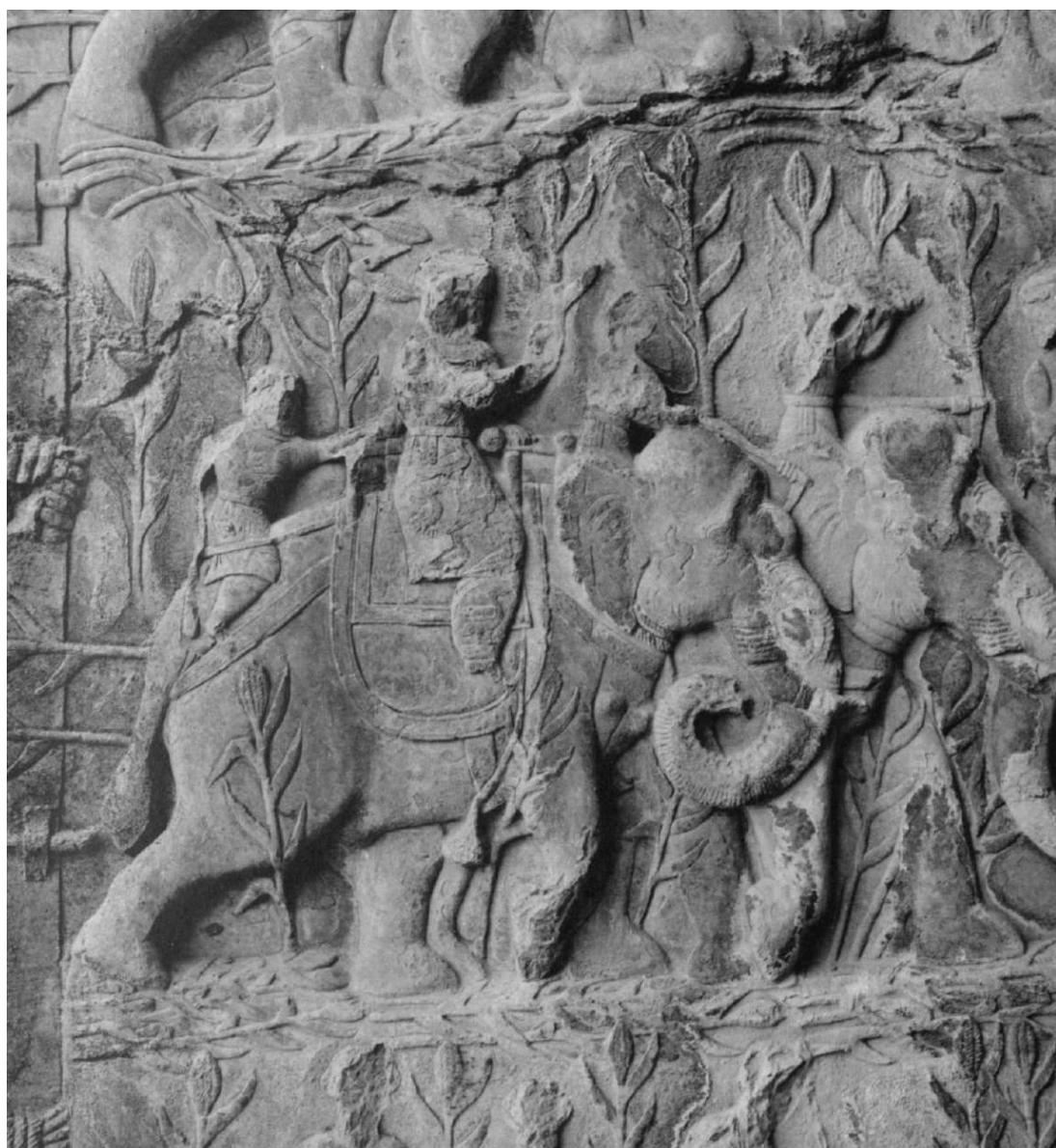


Figure 3.1k

Detail of Second Elephant Rider, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoaru Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XXXVII]



Figure 3.11

Detail of Hunt Facilitators on the Field, Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LXXII]



Figure 3.1m

Detail of Hunt Facilitators outside of the Field Wild Boar Hunt Relief, western wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LXXIV]

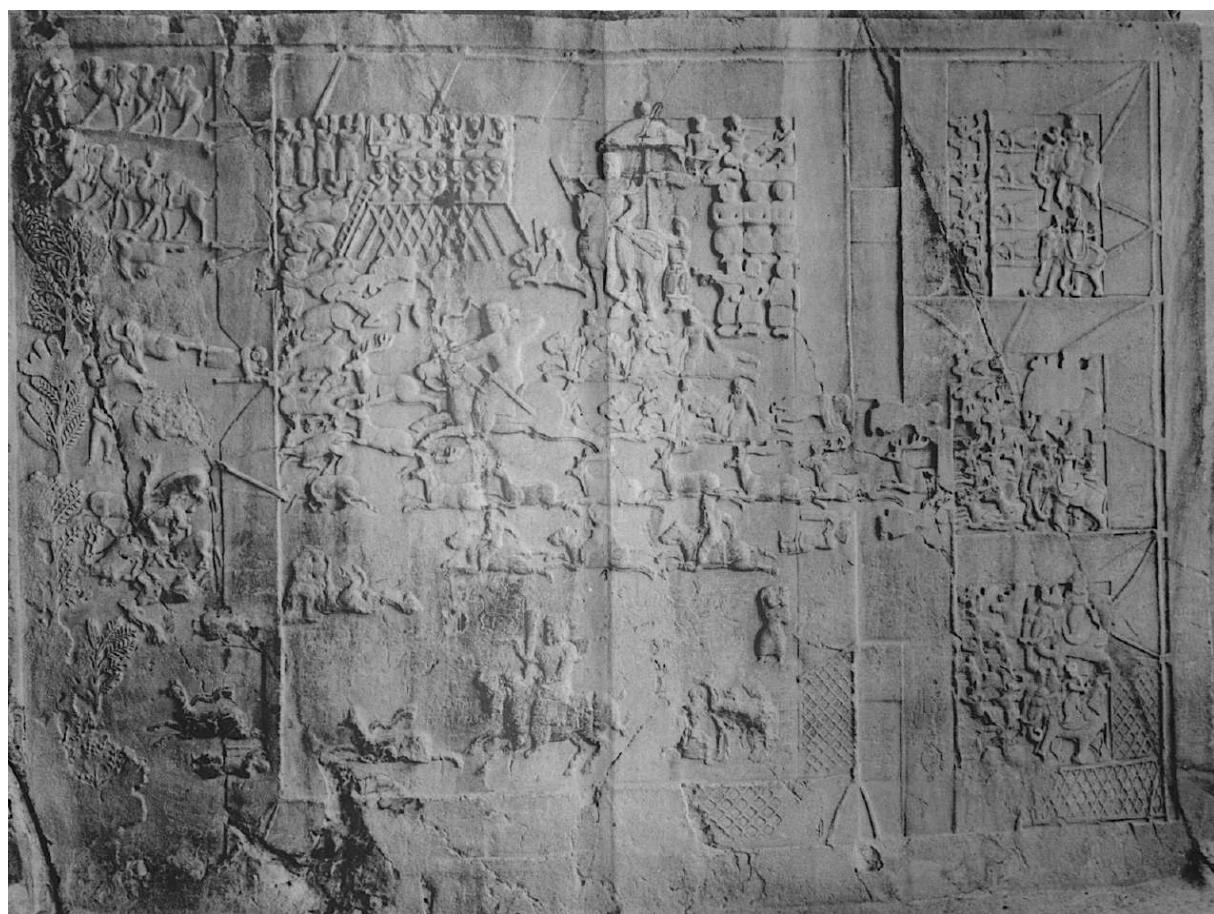


Figure 3.2a

Fallow Deer Hunt Relief, eastern wall, Taq-e Bustan

Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LXXXI]



Figure 3.2b

Detail of Hunter under a Parasol, Fallow Deer Hunt Relief, eastern wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. LXXXVIII]



Figure 3.2c

Detail of active, central hunter, Fallow Deer Hunt Relief, eastern wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XCII]



Figure 3.2d

Detail of personage with beribboned deer, Fallow Deer Hunt Relief, eastern wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XCVII]

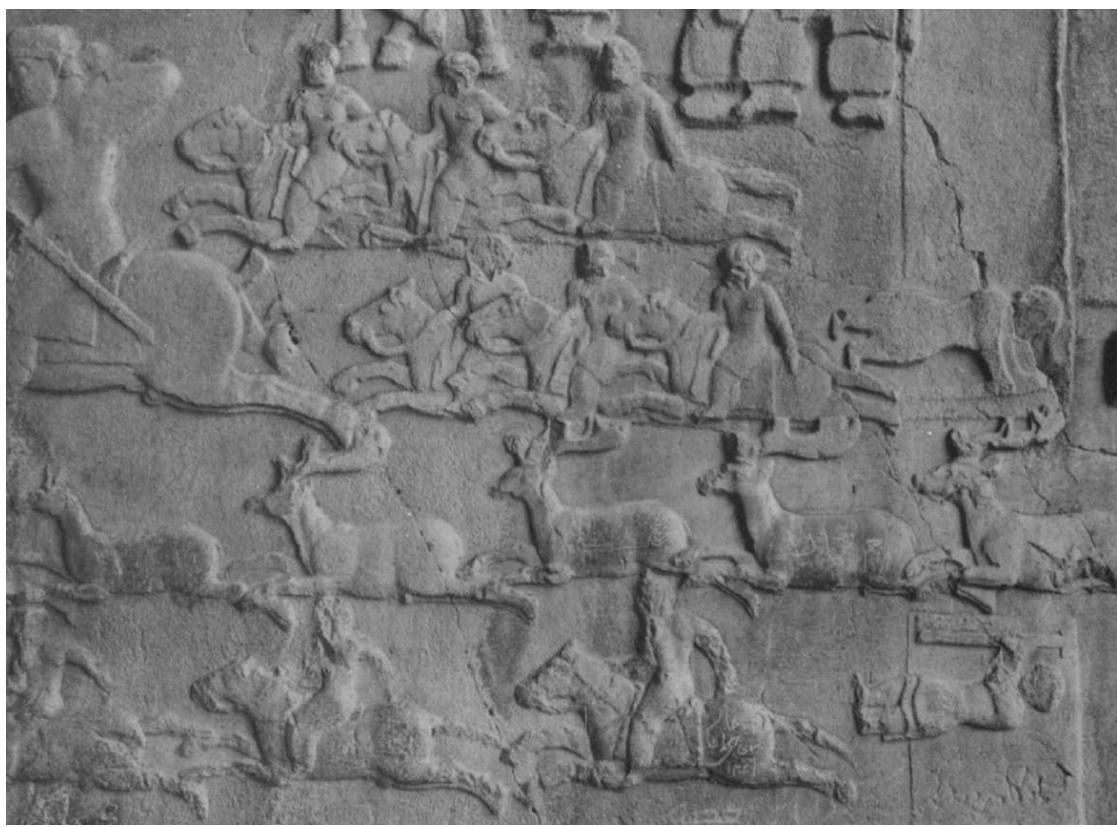


Figure 3.2e

Detail of fellow hunters, Fallow Deer Hunt Relief, eastern wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XCII]



Figure 3.2f

Detail of attendants behind hunter under a parasol, Fallow Deer Hunt Relief, eastern wall, Taq-e Bustan
Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XCI]



Figure 3.2g Figure 24

Detail of musicians, Fallow Deer Hunt Relief, eastern wall, Taq-e Bustan

Kermanshah, Iran

[image source: Shinji Fukai and Kiyoharu Horiuchi, eds., *Taq-i Bustan*, vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 1969), pl. XCIV]



Figure 3.3
View of Tāq-e Bostān I relief, small ayvān, and large ayvān
Kermanshah, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 3.4
Oblique view of the Boar Hunt Relief in the large ayvān at Tāq-e Bostān
Kermanshah, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]

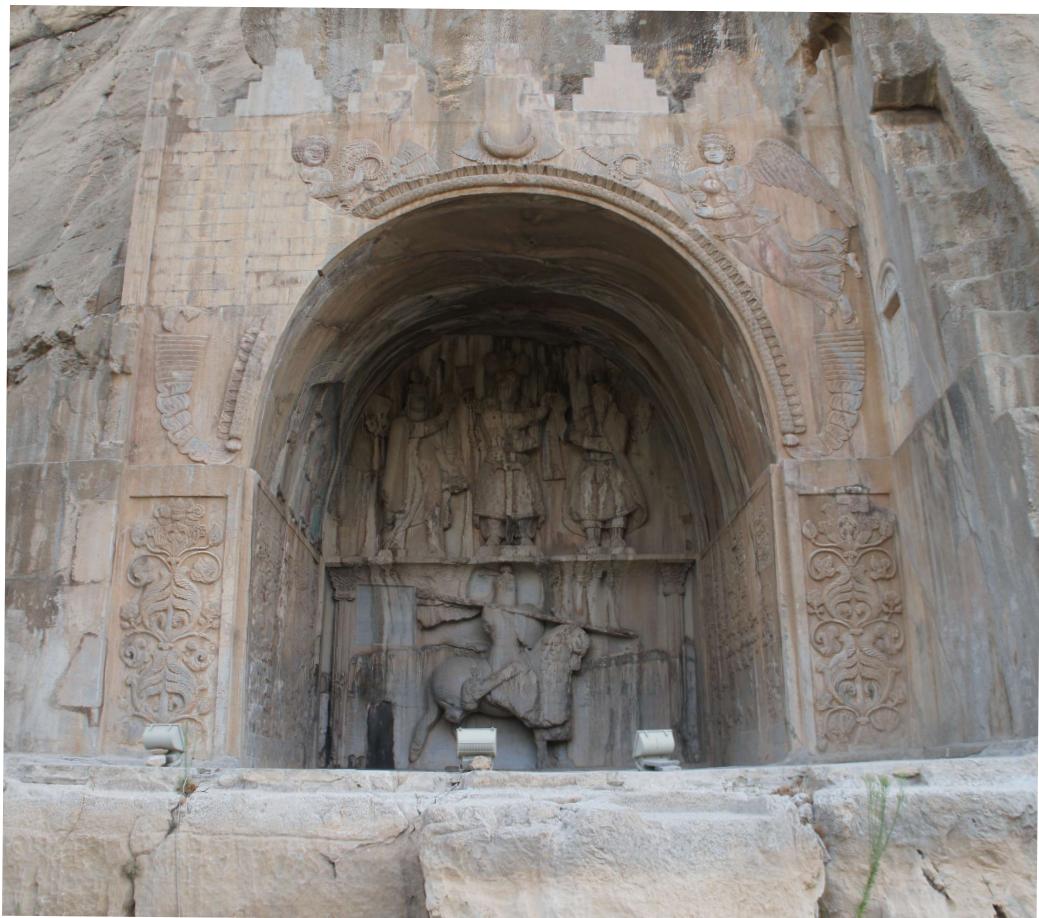


Figure 3.5
Large ayvān at Tāq-e Bostān
Kermanshah, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 3.6a Figure 30
Equestrian figure in large ayvān at Tāq-e Bostān
Kermanshah, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]

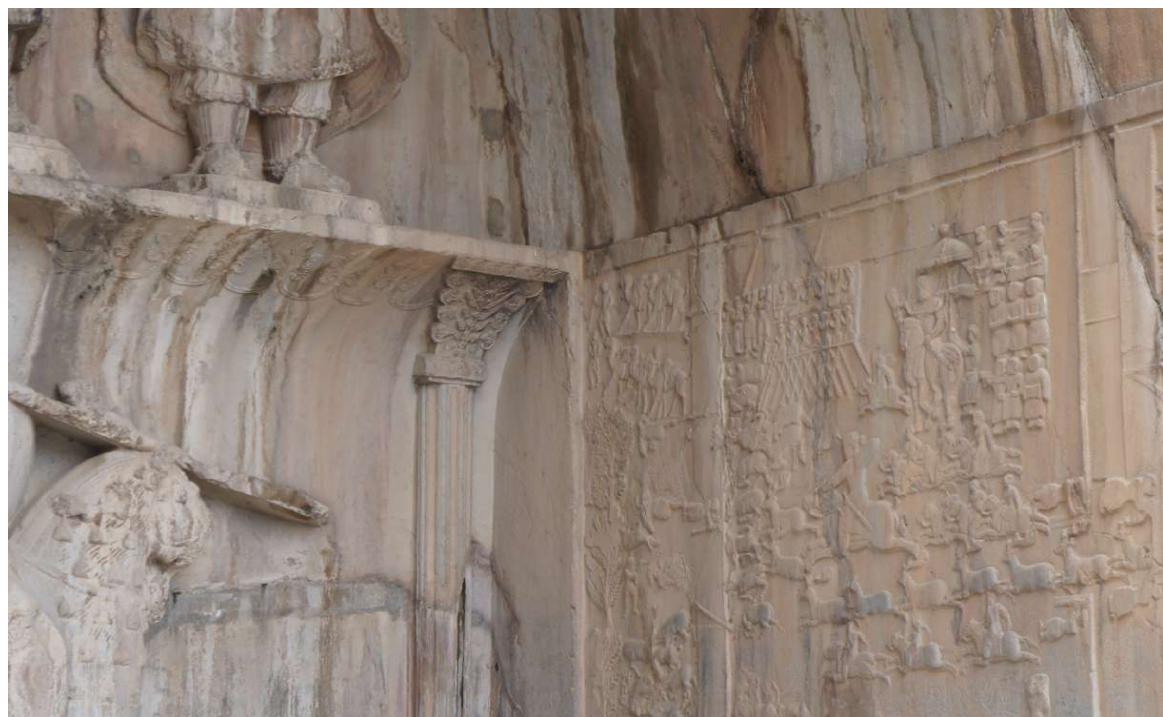


Figure 3.6b
Detail of north (back) and west (right) wall of the large ayvān at Tāq-e Bostān
Kermanshah, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 3.7
Lunette in large ayvān at Tāq-e Bostān
Kermanshah, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]

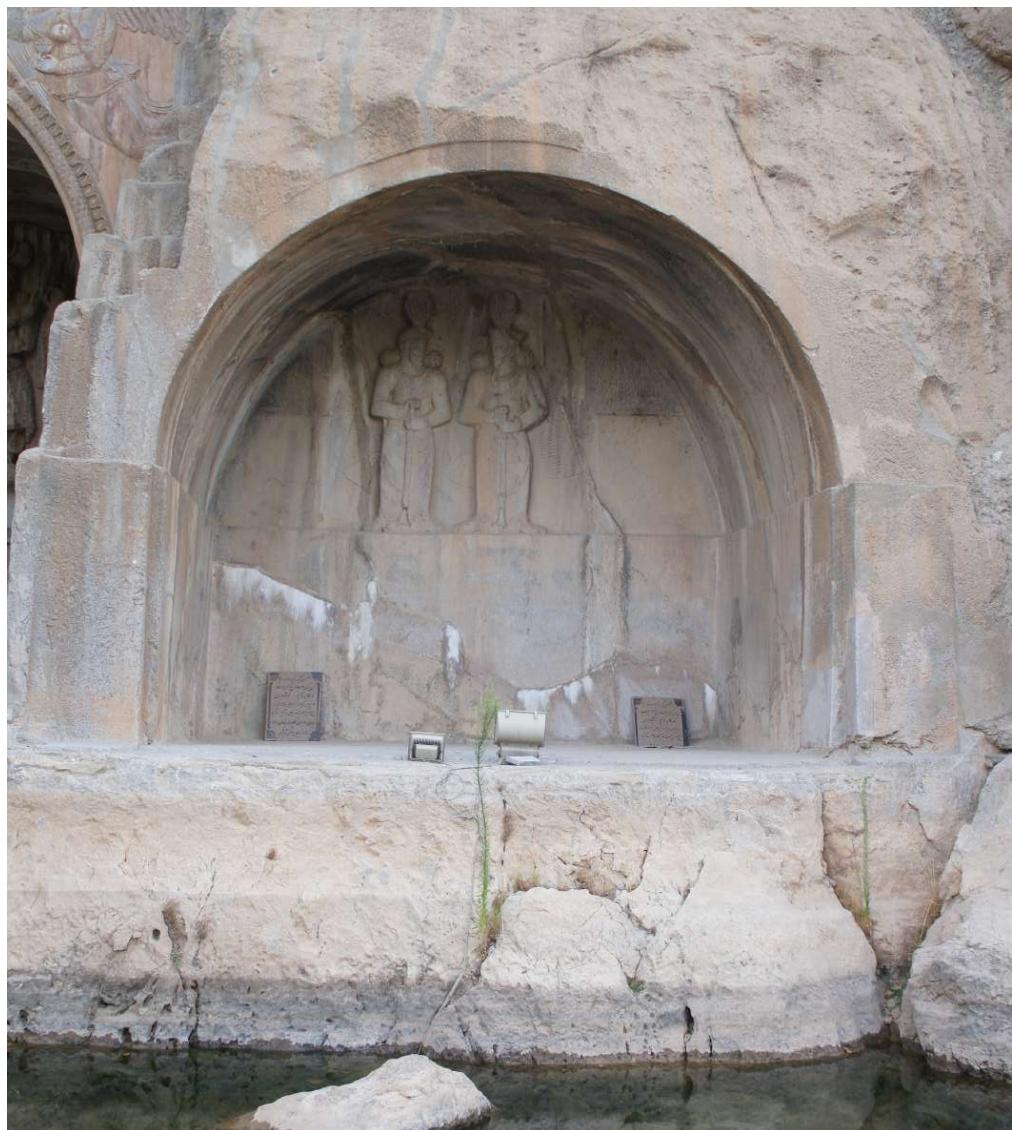


Figure 3.8
Small ayvān at Tāq-e Bostān
Kermanshah, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 3.9
Rock relief, Sasanian
Tang-e Cowgān, Kazerun, Iran
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.1a

Kaftan, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; silk, linen and squirrel fur

Moshchevaja Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesia, Russian Federation

State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 6584

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaia, *Die Gräber der Moščevaja Balka: Frühmittelalterliche Funde an der Nordkaukasischen Seidenstrasse* (Munich: Editio Maris, 1996), fig. 196; author's markings where sleeves once extended]

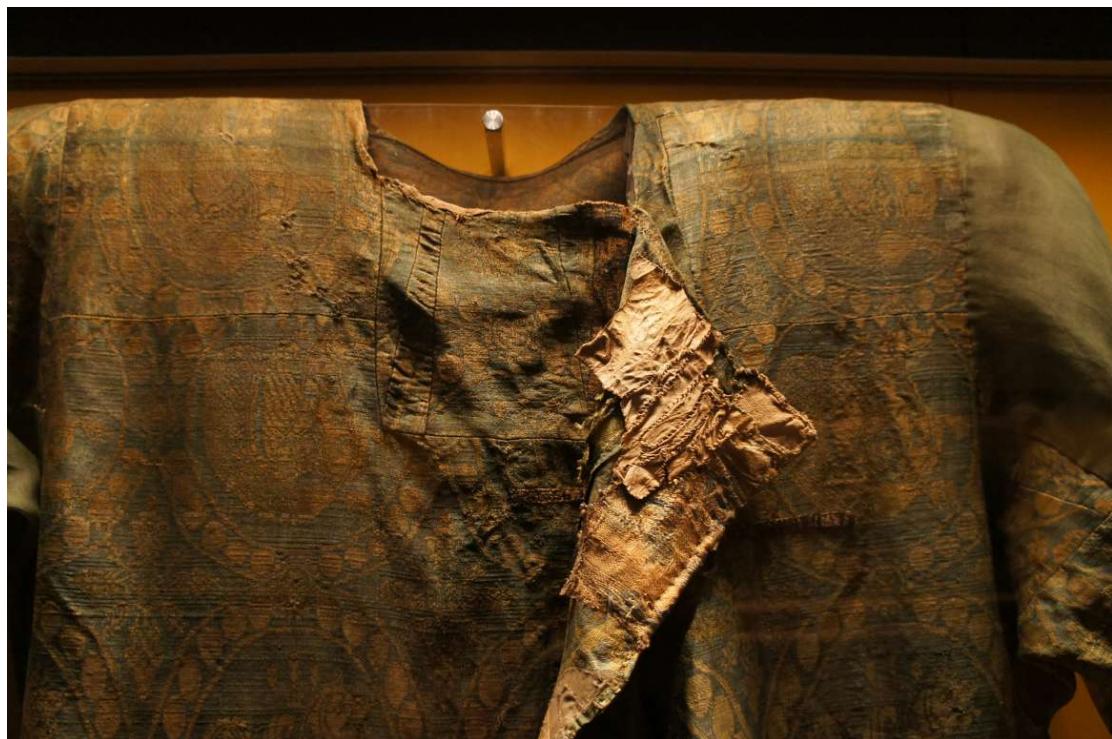


Figure 4.1b

Kaftan (detail), Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; silk, linen and squirrel fur

Moshchëvaia Balka, Republic of Karachaëvo-Cherkesiia, Russian Federation

State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 6584

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.1c

Kaftan (detail), Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; silk, linen and squirrel fur

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation

State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 6584

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.2a

Alanic cemetery utilizing the sandstone rock face in the distance, view from a small settlement/watchtower
Khasaut valley, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
[image source: author's own photograph]

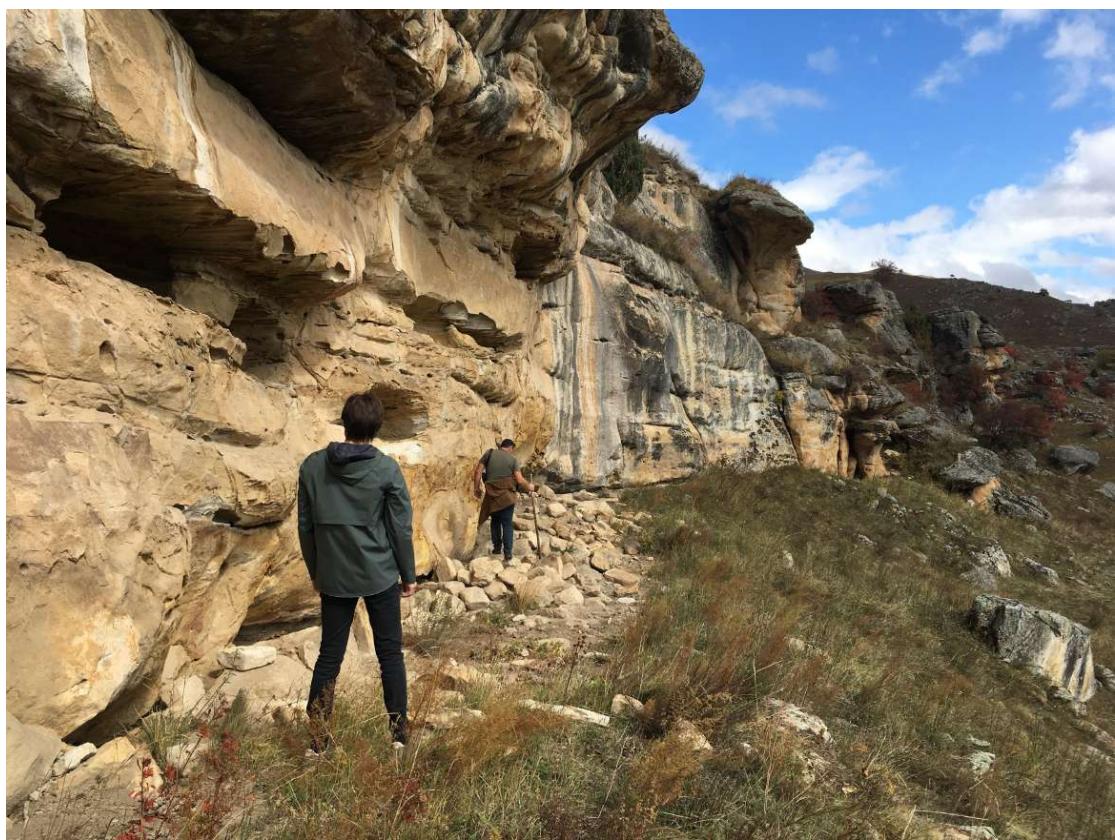


Figure 4.2b
Alanic burial niches carved into sandstone rock face
Khasaut valley, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.2c
Natural Crevice Tomb, Alanic
Khasaut valley, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesiia, Russian Federation
[image source: author's own photograph]

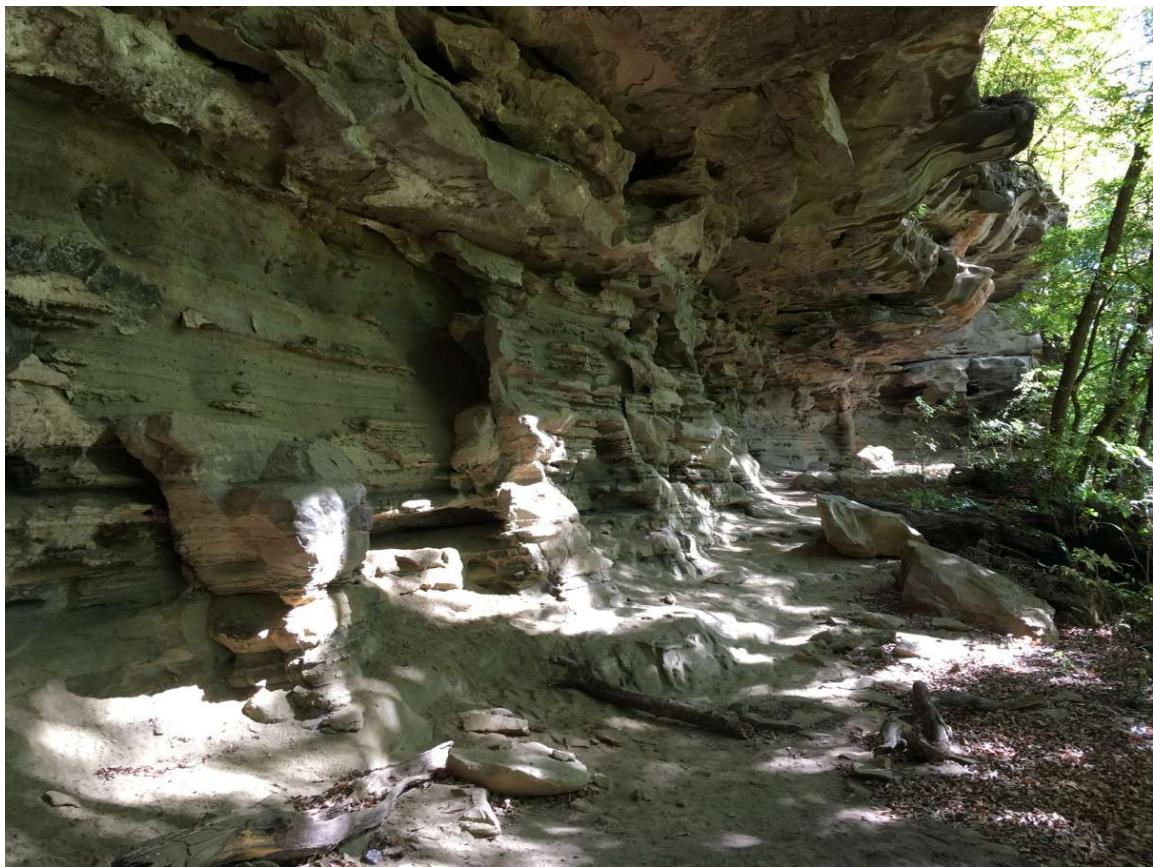


Figure 4.3a
View of western terrace
Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.3b

View of the southern terrace

Moshchevaiia Balka, Republic of Karachaevо-Cherkesiia, Russian Federation

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.3c

Alanic cist burial stone remnants (note those still squared for a burial in the left bottom corner of the image)
Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.4

Rocky gorge

Balka Tserkovnaia, Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.5

View of cemetery III region from across the Bol'shoe Zelenchyk
Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesiia, Russian Federation
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.6

Young women's tunic, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; silk and linen

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevо-Cherkesia, Russian Federation

State Hermitage Museum

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na Severokavkazskom shelkovom puti* (Saint Petersburg: State Hermitage 2012), fig. 124]



Figure 4.7a
Kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; linen and silk
Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesia, Russian Federation
Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, KC no. 10269/1, Found by E. A. Milovanov in 1972
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.7b

Details of kaftan collar, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; linen and silk

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation

Karachaev-Cherkessk Regional Museum, KC no. 10269/1, Found by E. A. Milovanov in 1972

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.7c

Details of front frogging of kaftan, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; linen and silk

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation

Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, KC no. 10269/1, Found by E. A. Milovanov in 1972

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.7d

Details of cuff silk of kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; linen and silk

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation

Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk, KC no. 10269/1, Found by E. A. Milovanov in 1972
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.8
Child's kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; silk
Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk, KC no. 9107/109
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.9

Coarsely woven kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; linen

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 4797, collected by Vorob'ev in 1905

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na Severokavkazkom shelkovom puti* (Saint Petersburg: State Hermitage 2012), fig. 134]



Figure 4.10a
Kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; silk
Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk, KC no. KC no. 9537/6
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.10b

Detail of frogging on kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; silk

Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk, KC no. KC no. 9537/6
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.10c

Collar detail of a kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; silk

Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk, KC no. KC no. 9537/6
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.11

Miniature kaftan, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; linen and silk

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevо-Cherkessia, Russian Federation

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 6726

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaya, *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na Severokavkazkom shelkovom puti* (Saint Petersburg: State Hermitage 2012), fig. 122r]



Figure 4.12

Kaftan, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; linen, silk, fur

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 4800, collected by Vorob'ev in 1905

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na Severokavkazskom shelkovom puti* (Saint Petersburg: State Hermitage 2012), fig. 131]



Figure 4.13

Burial of a man in a linen kaftan, lined with fur and an interior silk trim from Moshchevaia Balka
7th to 9th century CE

Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaia, *Die Gräber der Moščevaja Balka: Frühmittelalterliche Funde an der Nordkaukasischen Seidenstrasse* (Munich: Editio Maris, 1996), fig. 68]



Figure 4.14a

Kaftan, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; linen, silk, fur

Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation

Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.14a
Detail of interior hemline of kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; linen, silk, fur
Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.14c
Detail of interior trim of kaftan, Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; linen, silk, fur
Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.15

Kaftan, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; linen, silk, fur

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesia, Russian Federation

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 6733

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaya, *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na Severokavkazkom shelkovom puti* (Saint Petersburg: State Hermitage 2012), fig. 132a; author's markings showing the missing sections of the garment]



Figure 4.16

Kaftan fragment, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; woven samite silk

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 6618

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaia, *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamiatnik na Severokavkazkom shelkovom puti* (Saint Petersburg: State Hermitage 2012), fig. 65]



Figure 4.17

Kaftan fragment, Alanic

7th to 9th century CE; resist-dyed silk

Moshchevaia Balka, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesiia, Russian Federation

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, KZ 6734

[image source: Anna A. Ierusalimskaya, *Moshchevaia Balka: Neobychnyi arkheologicheskii pamyatnik na Severokavkazkom shelkovom puti* (Saint Petersburg: State Hermitage 2012), fig. 97]



Figure 4.18

Kaftan fragment (inner vent), Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; silk

Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Russian Federation
Karachaevo-Cherkessk Regional Museum, Cherkessk
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.19
Inside skirting of a kaftan (spread open), Alanic
7th to 9th century CE; linen
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 1999.153.37
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.20

Stone Relief with Figures, Alanic

10th to 12th century CE; stone

Kochubeievskii Raion, Stavropol Krai, Russian Federation

Stavropol Regional Museum, Stavropol

[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.21a

Dlinnaia Poliana *balbal* statue, Alanic
10th to 12th century CE; stone

Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesiia, Russian Federation
Stavropol Regional Museum, Stavropol
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.21b
Dlinnaia Poliana *balbal* statue, Alanic
10th to 12th century CE; stone
Nizhnii Arkhyz, Republic of Karachaevo-Cherkesia, Russian Federation
Stavropol Regional Museum, Stavropol
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.22
Balbal statue with defined triangular lapels, Turkic
6th to 8th century CE; stone
State History Museum in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
[image source: author's own photograph]



Figure 4.23
Balbal statue with V-shaped neckline (simplified lapels), Turkic
6th to 8th century CE; stone
State History Museum in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
[image source: author's own photograph]

ILLUSTRATIONS

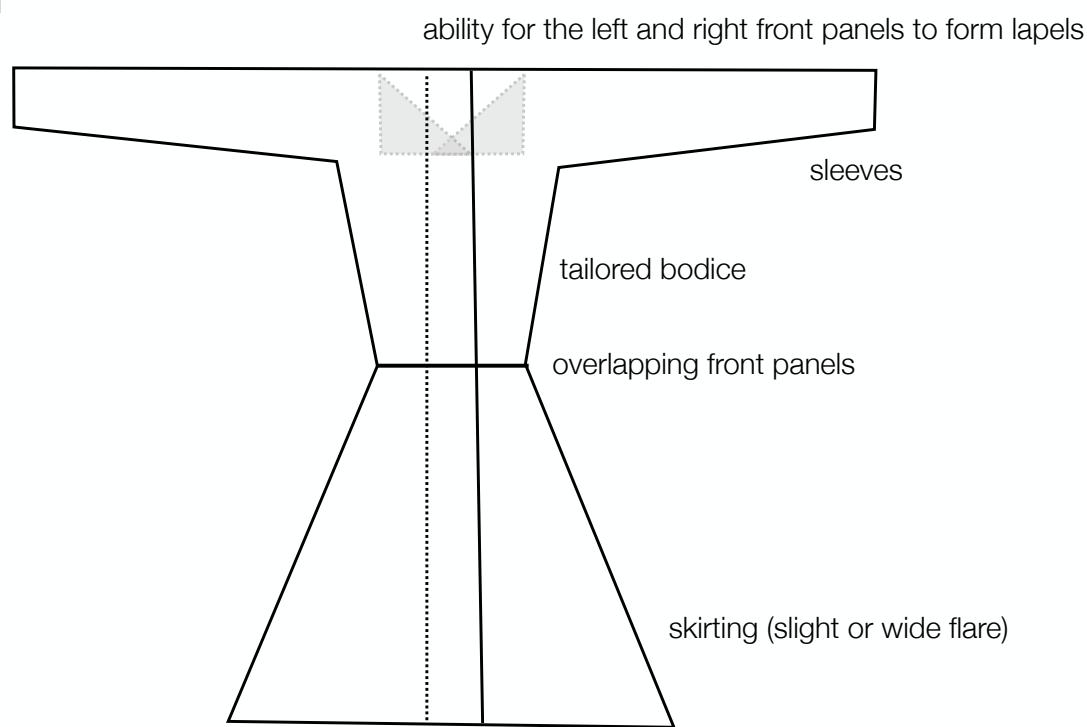


Illustration 0.1

Design features of a typical kaftan

[image source: author's own drawing]

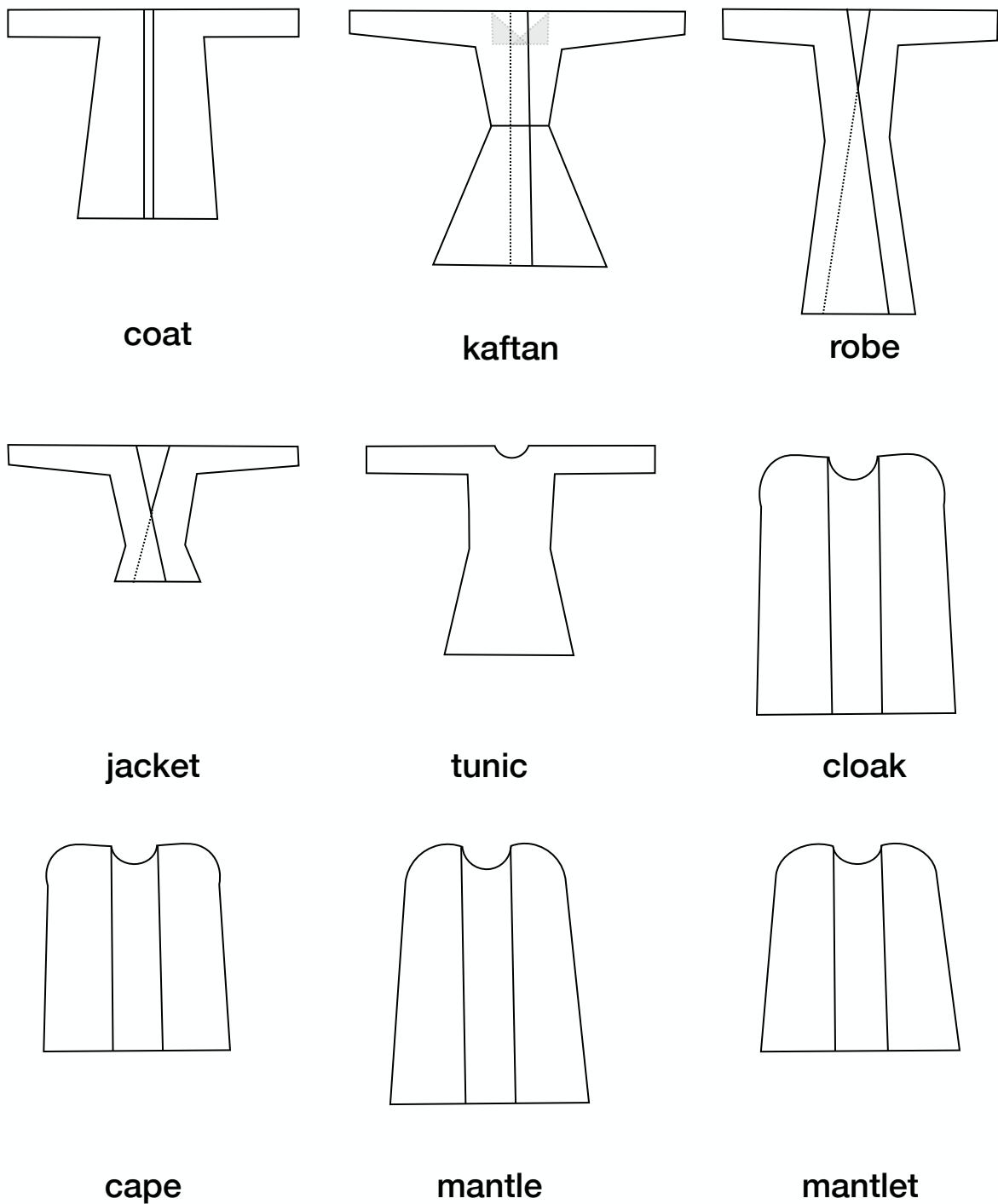
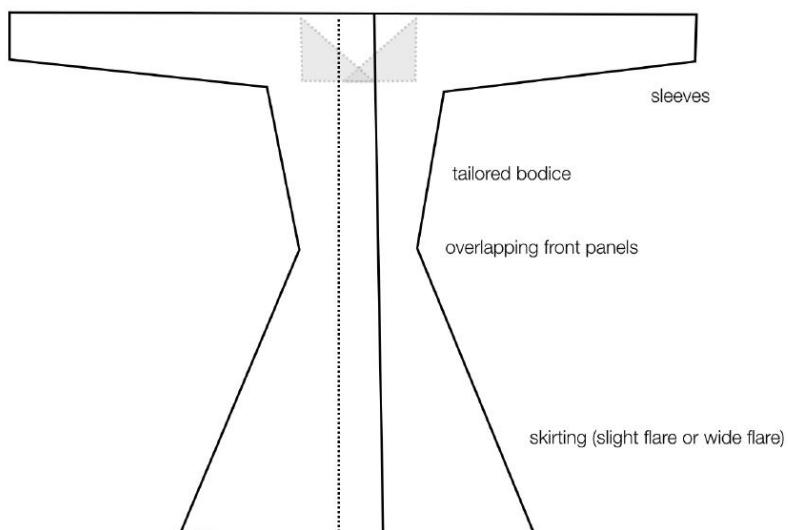


Illustration 0.2
Typical outer garment designs of the first millennium CE
[image source: author's own drawing]

men's kaftan

ability for the left and right front panels to form lapels



men's robe

surplice neckline formed from closure of left and right front panels

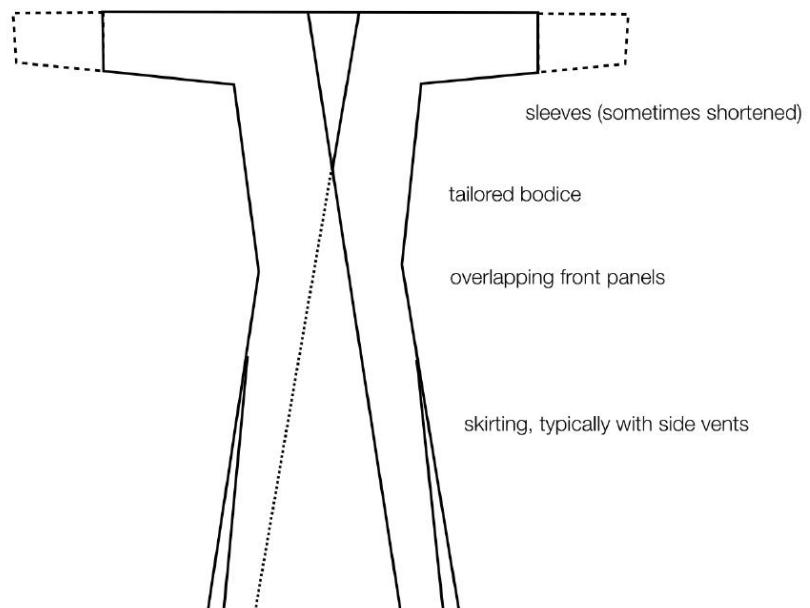


Illustration 1.1

Design feature comparison between a typical kaftan and a surplice-neckline robe
[image source: author's own drawing]

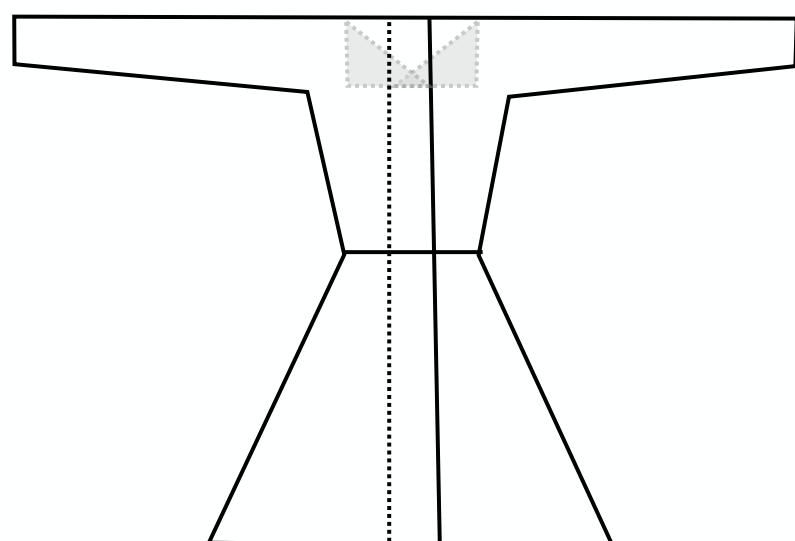
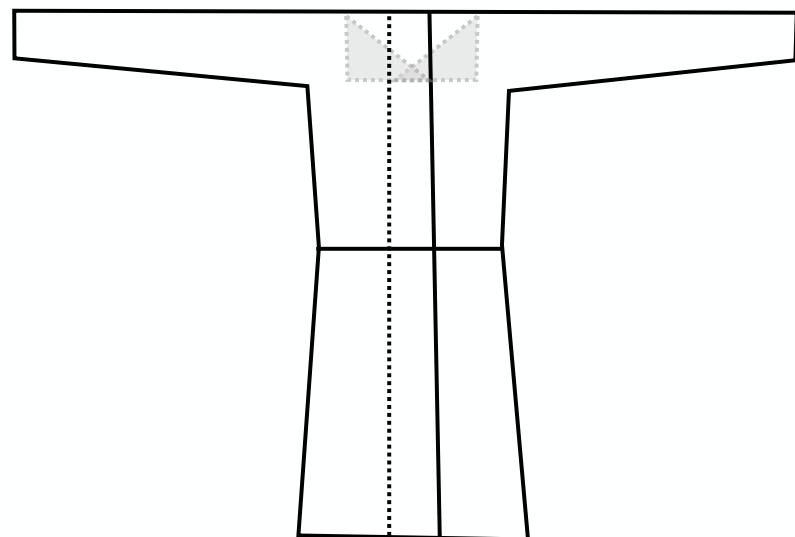


Illustration 2.1
Sogdian men's kaftan silhouette in the mid-seventh and early eighth century CE
[image source: author's own drawing]

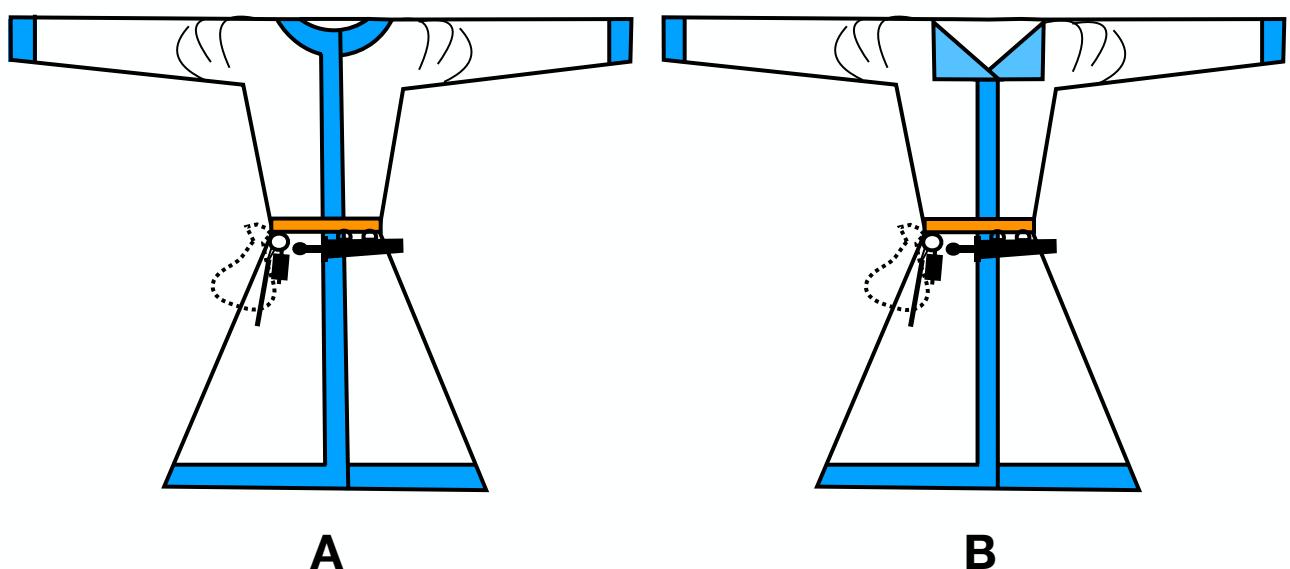


Illustration 2.2

Kaftan lapel styling and belt accoutrements for the early eighth-century formal banquet: a. with closed lapels, b. with both lapels open
[image source: author's own drawing]

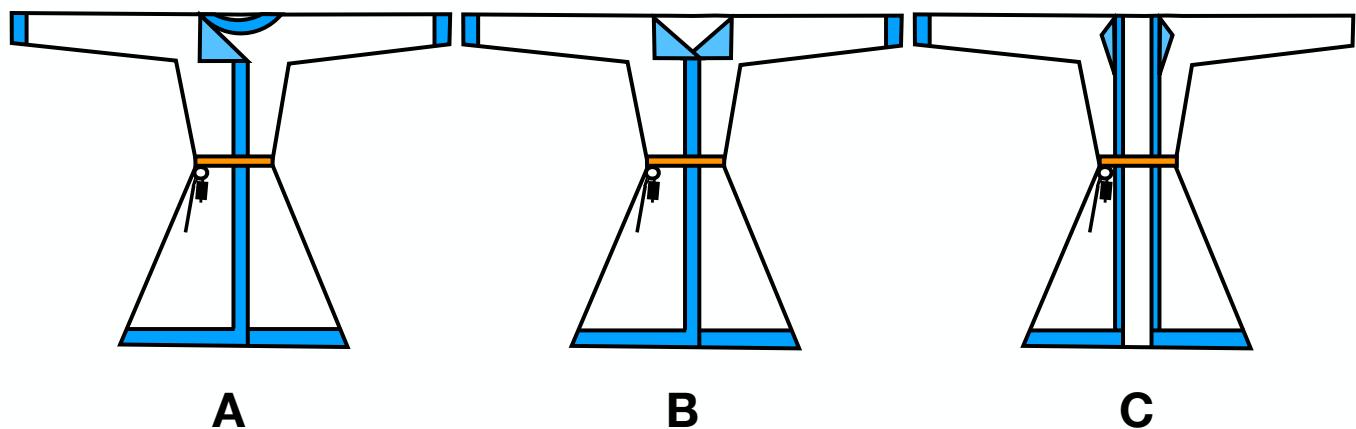


Illustration 2.3

Kaftan lapel styling and belt accoutrements for the drinking party: a. with one lapel open, b. with both lapels open c. with the front panels unbuttoned and the belt removed
[image source: author's own drawing]

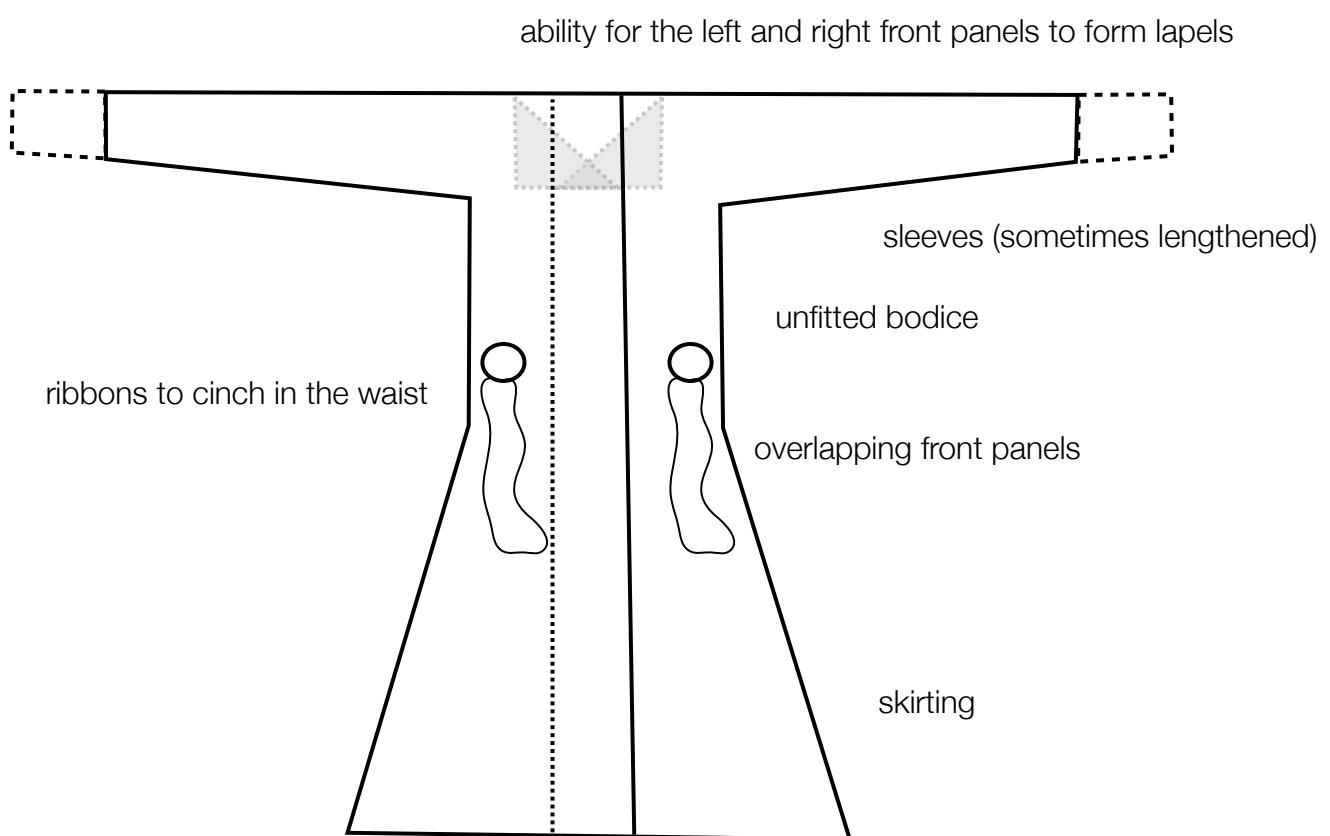


Illustration 2.4

Design features of a typical Sogdian and Tokharian women's kaftan
[image source: author's own drawing]

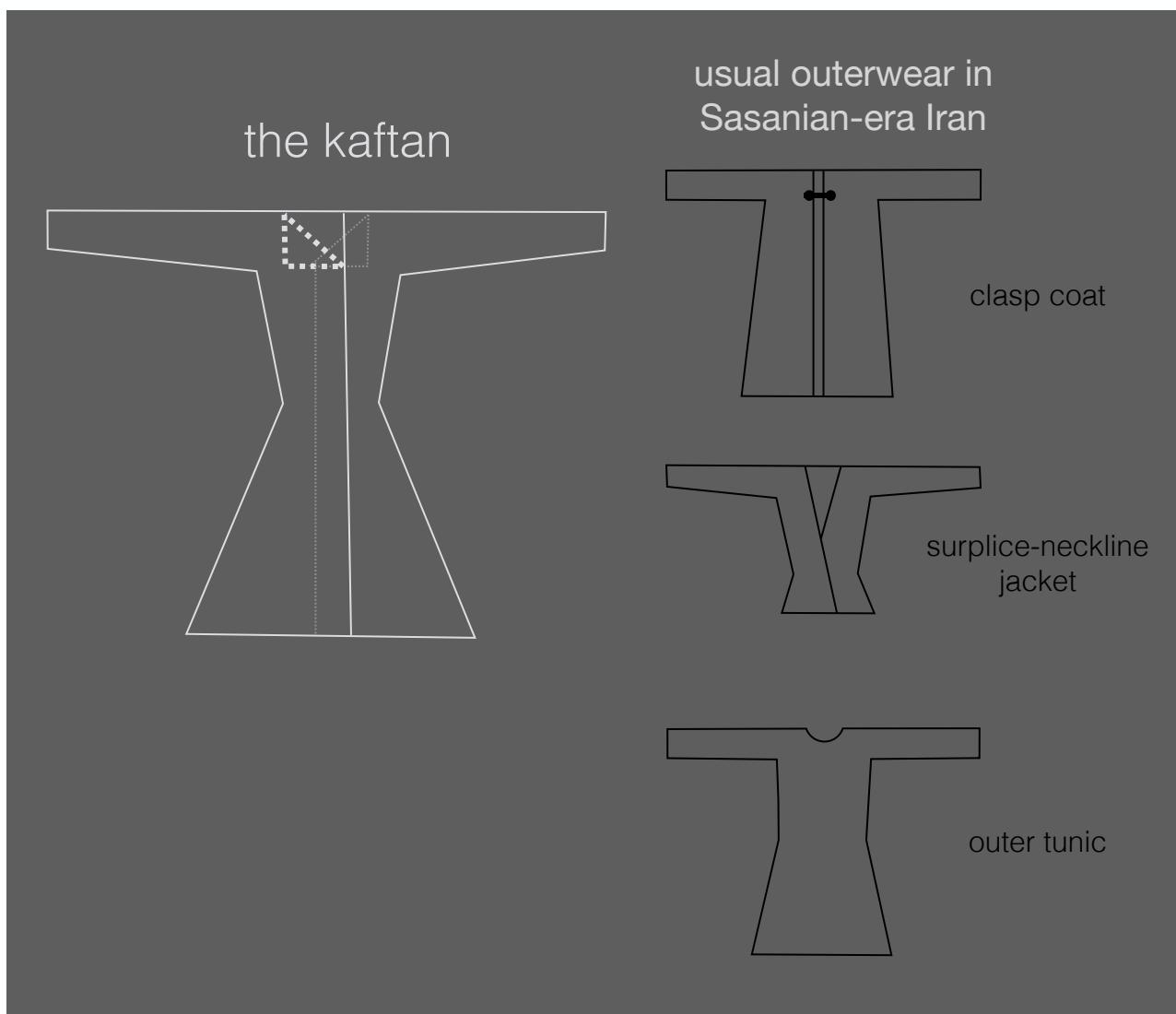
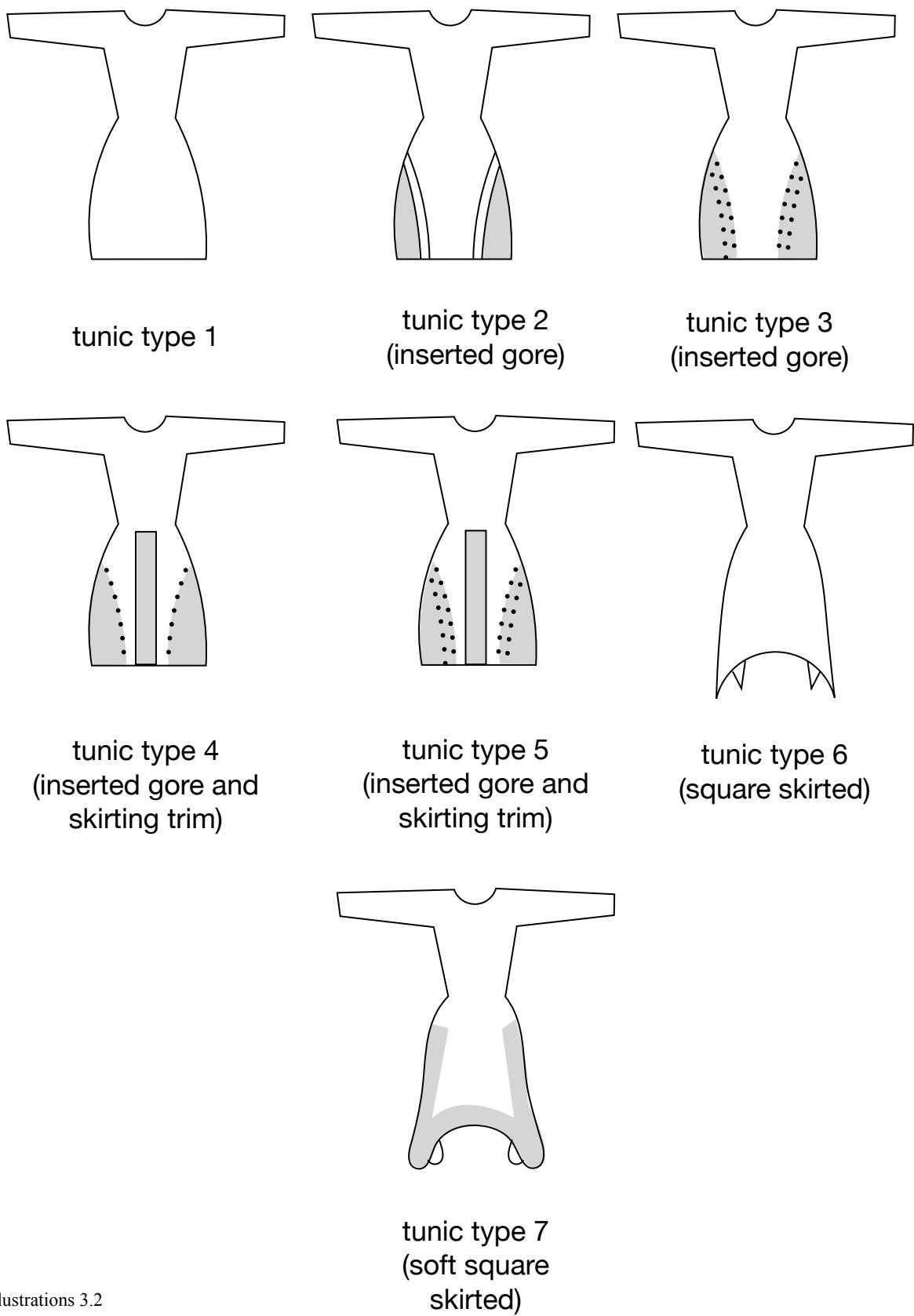


Illustration 3.1

Sasanian era outer garments: typical patterns for the kaftan versus the clasp-coat, surplice-neckline jacket, and tunic
[image source: author's own drawing]



Illustrations 3.2

Tunic patterns depicted in Tāq-e Bostān
[image source: author's own drawing]

ability for the left and right front panels to form lapels

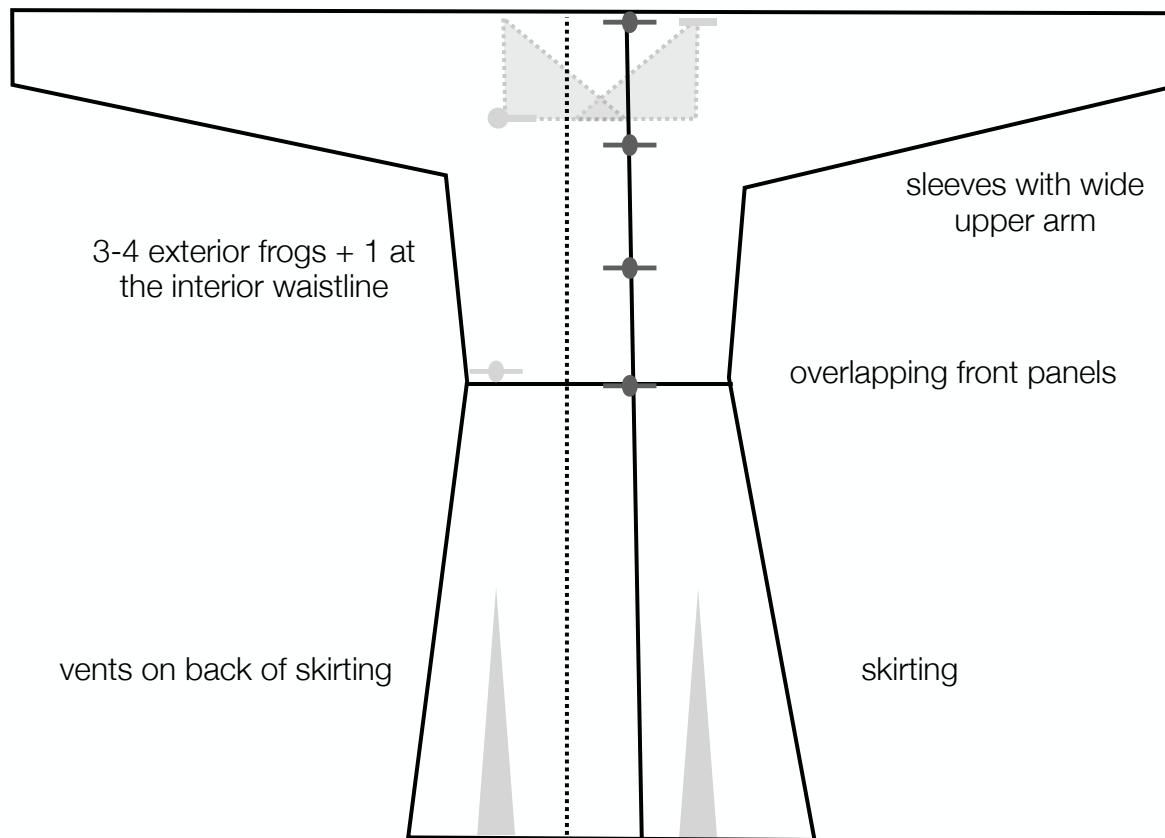
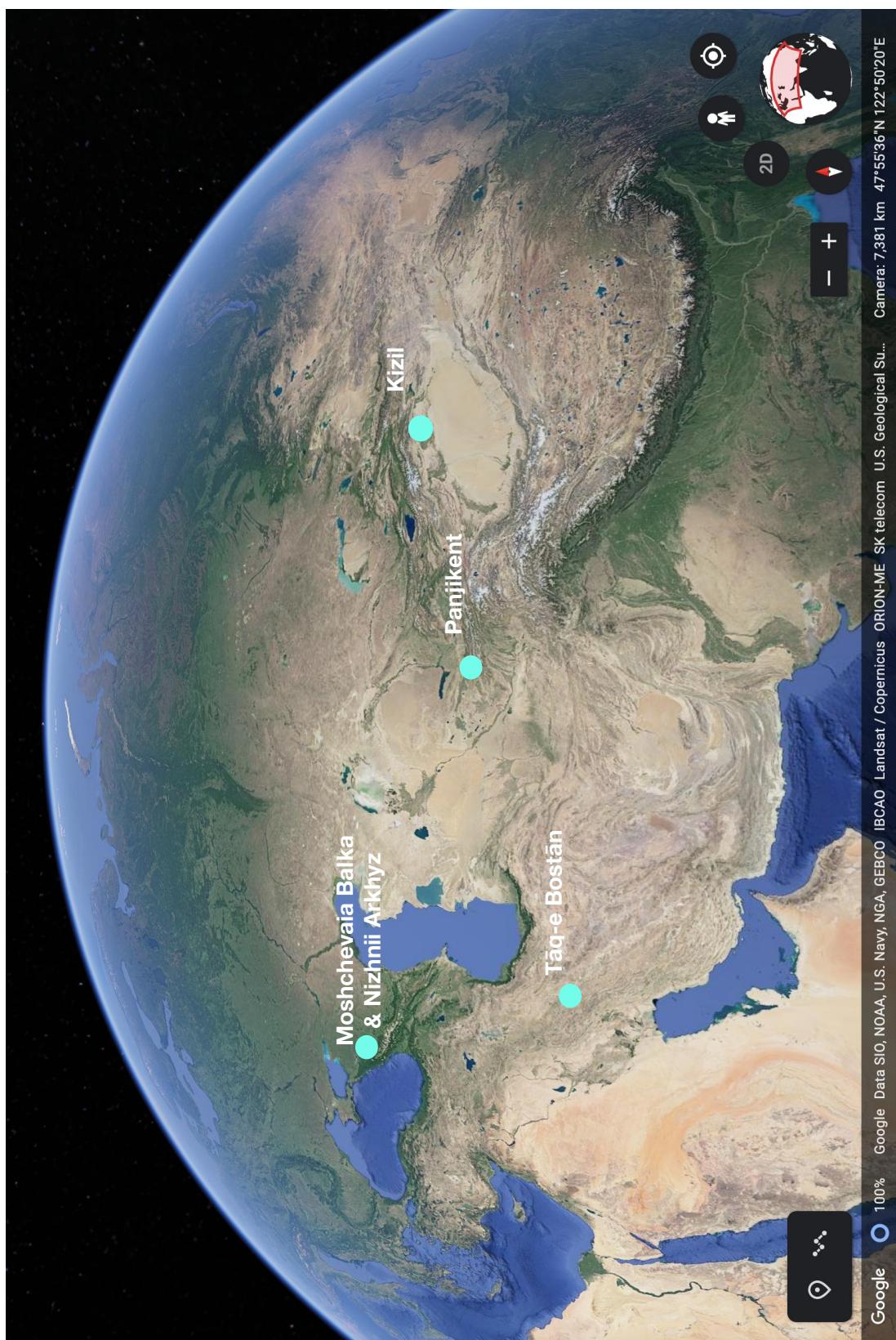
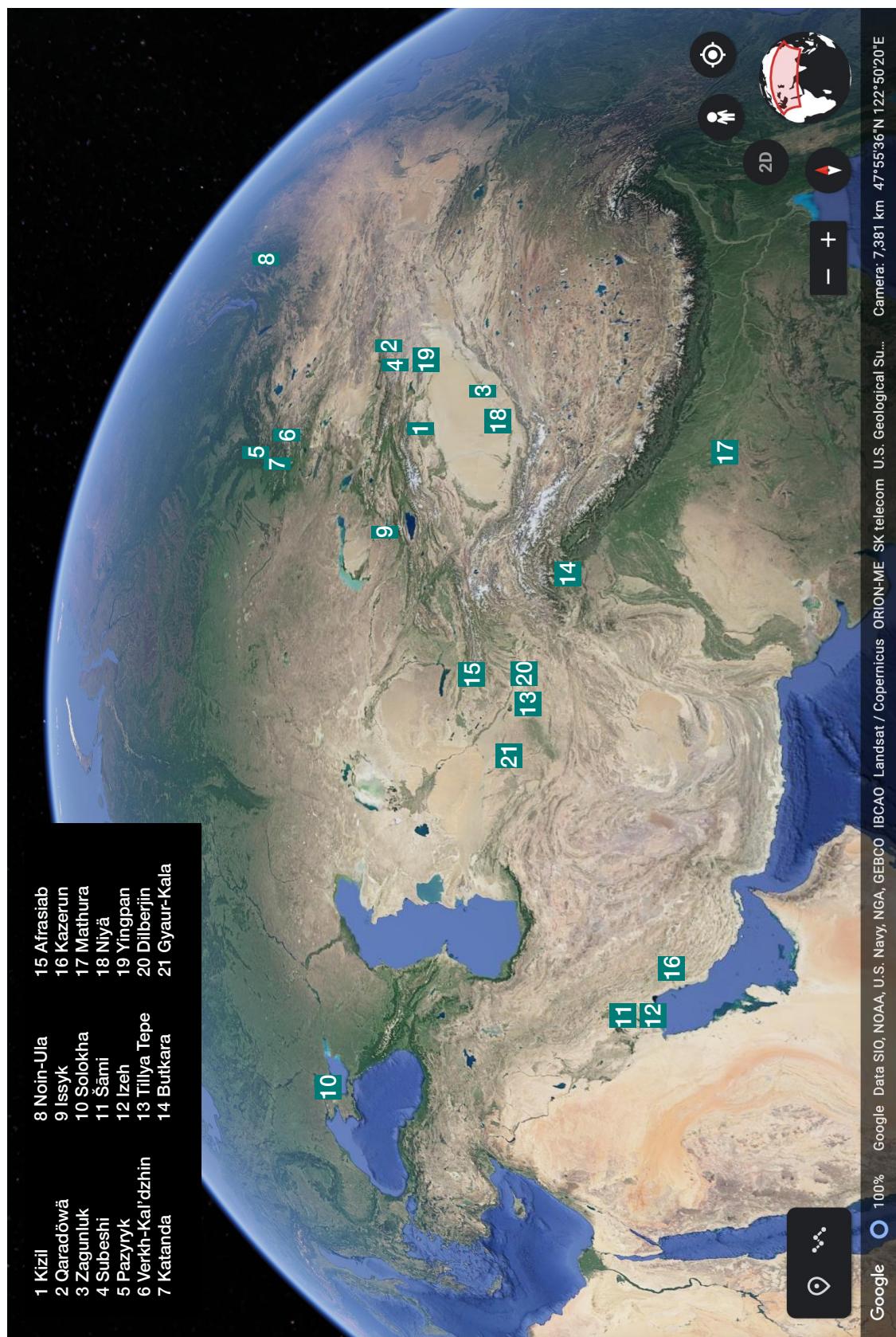


Illustration 4.1
Design features of a typical Alanic kaftan
[image source: author's own drawing]

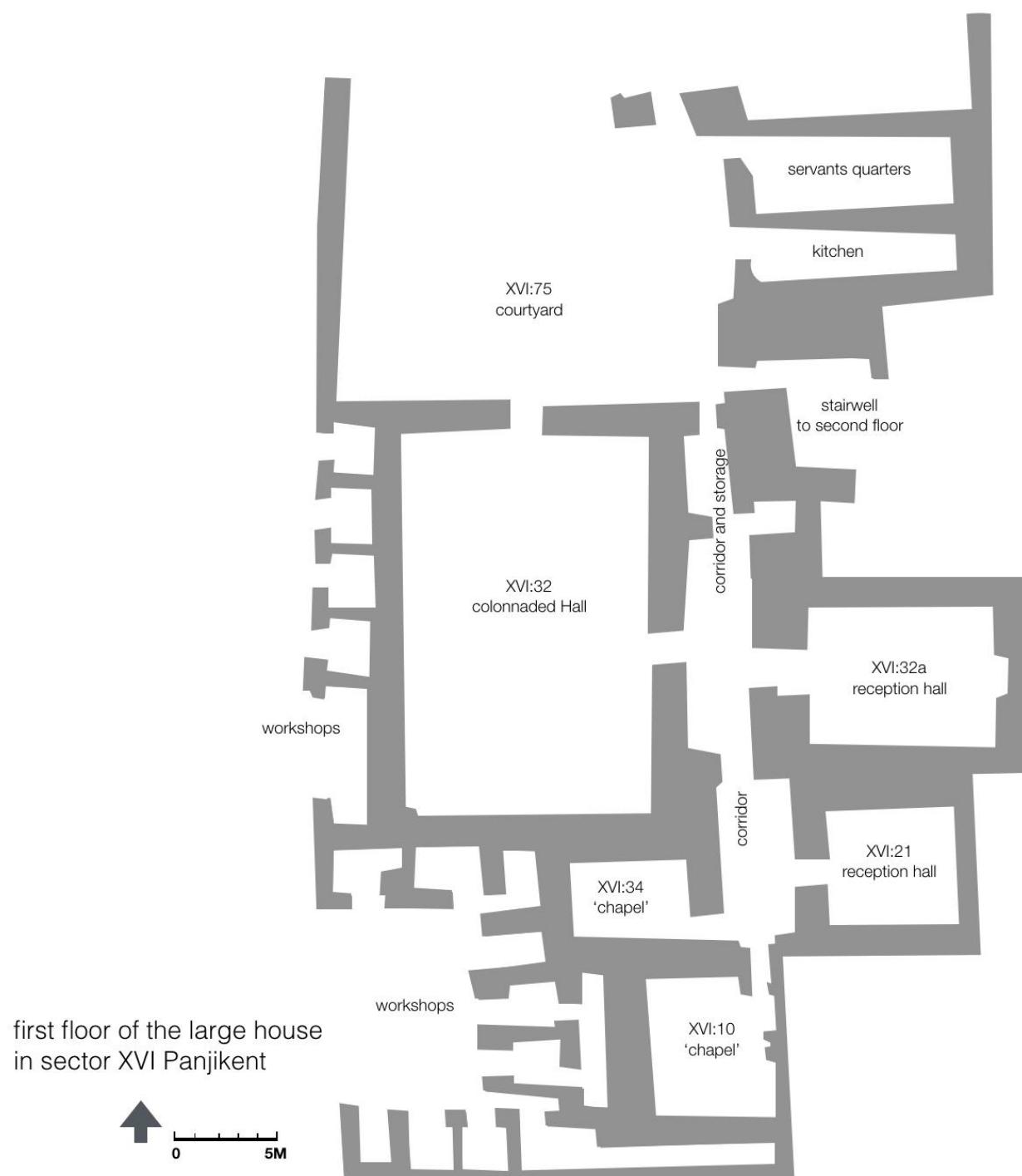
MAPS



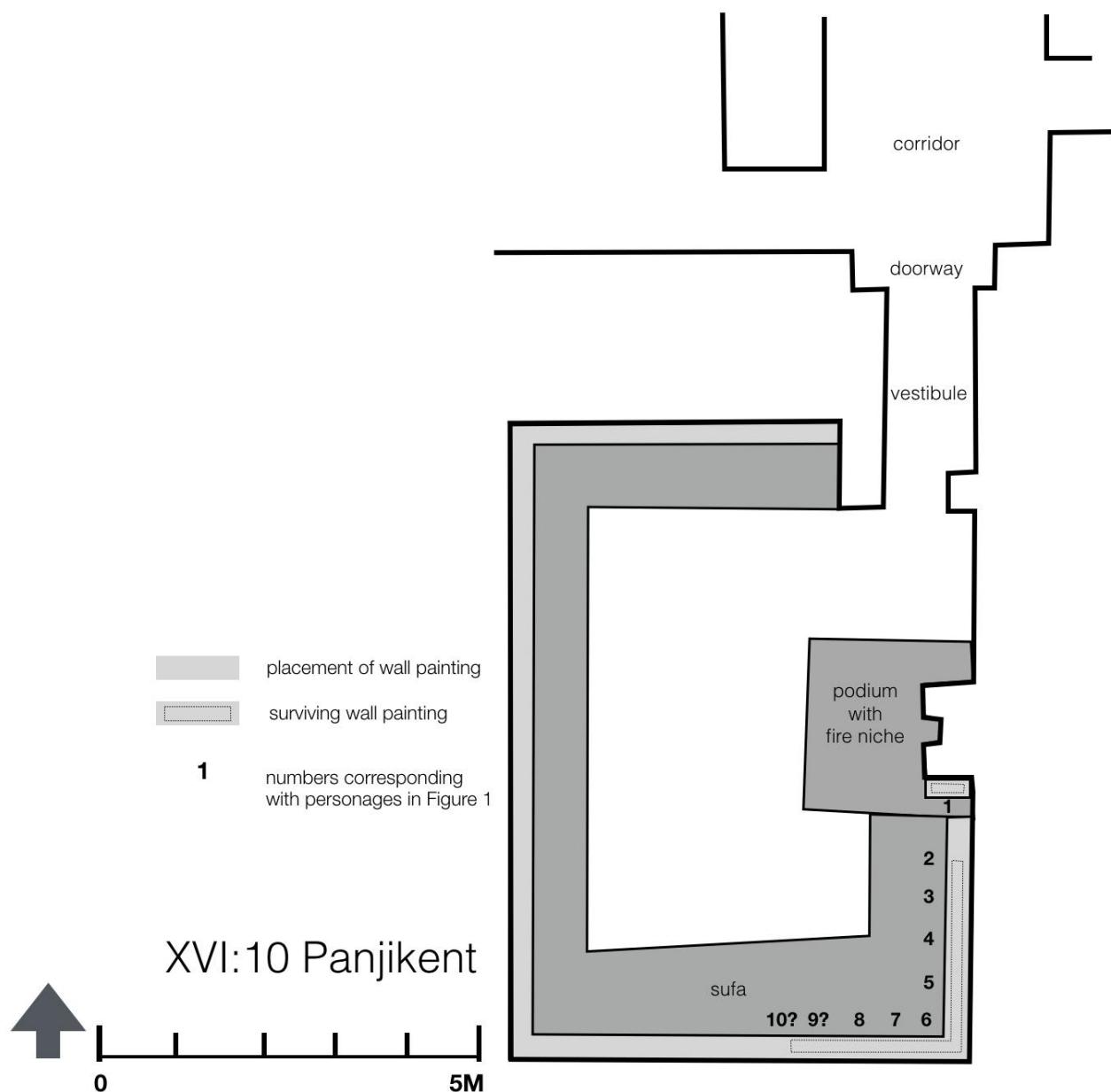
Map 0.1
Case study locations
[image source: google earth; author's markings]



Map 1.1
Chapter I site markings
[image source: google earth; author's markings]

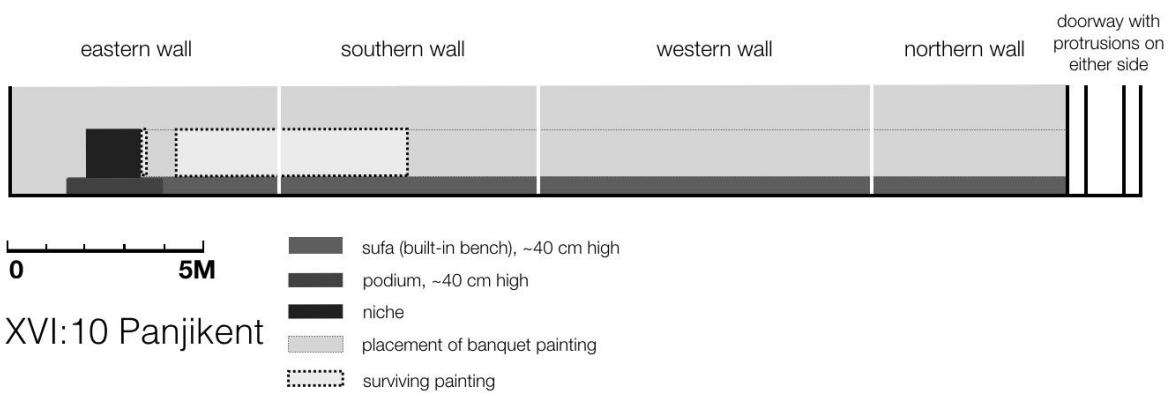


Map 2.1
Large home in sector XVI Panjikent including room XVI:10
[image source: drawing by author]

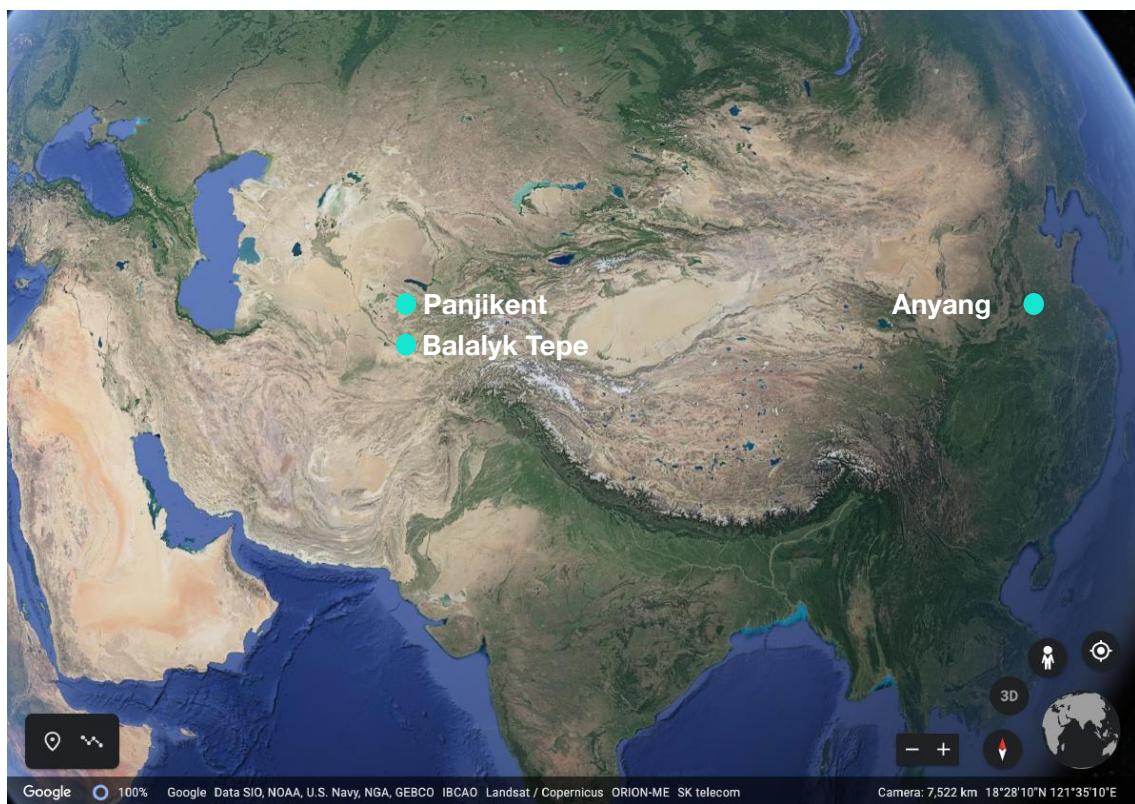


Map 2.2

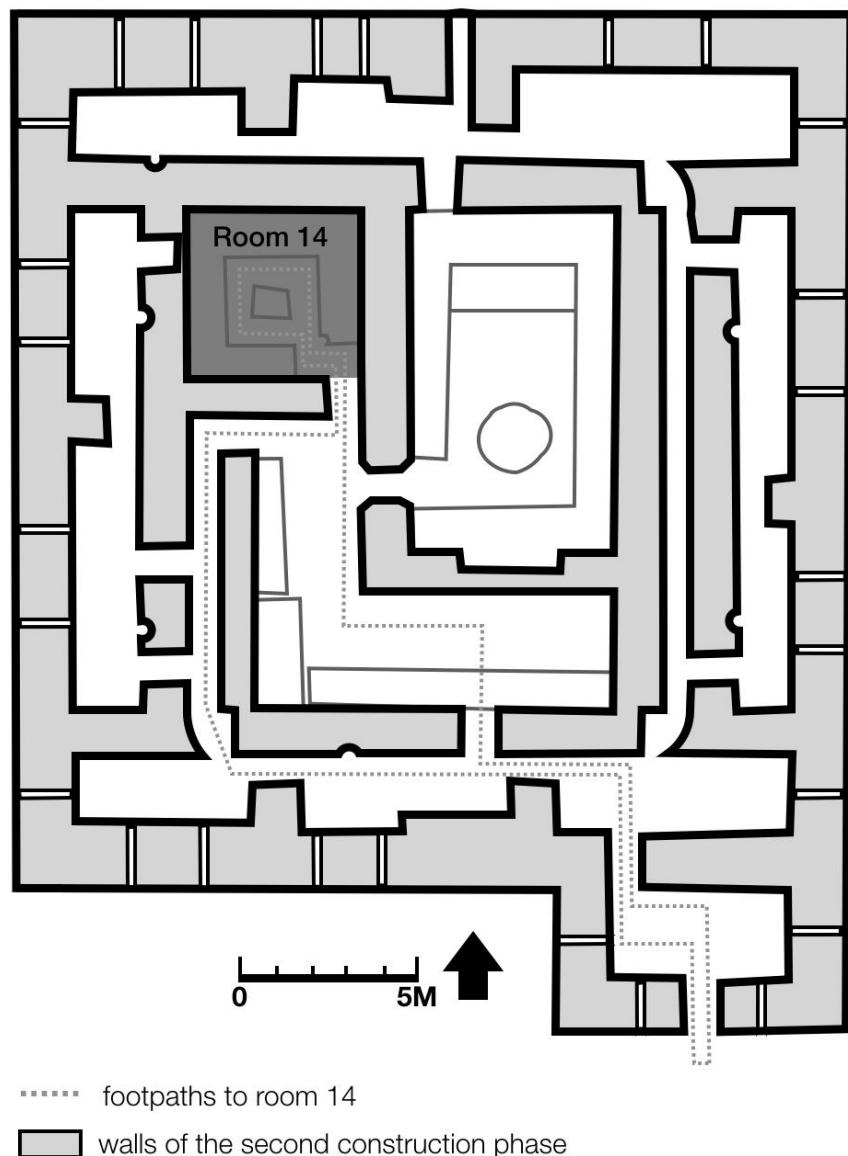
Floor plan of XVI:10 Panjikent with surviving painting placement indicated
[image source: drawing by author]



Map 2.3
elevation plan of XVI:10 Panjikent with surviving painting placement indicated
[image source: drawing by author]

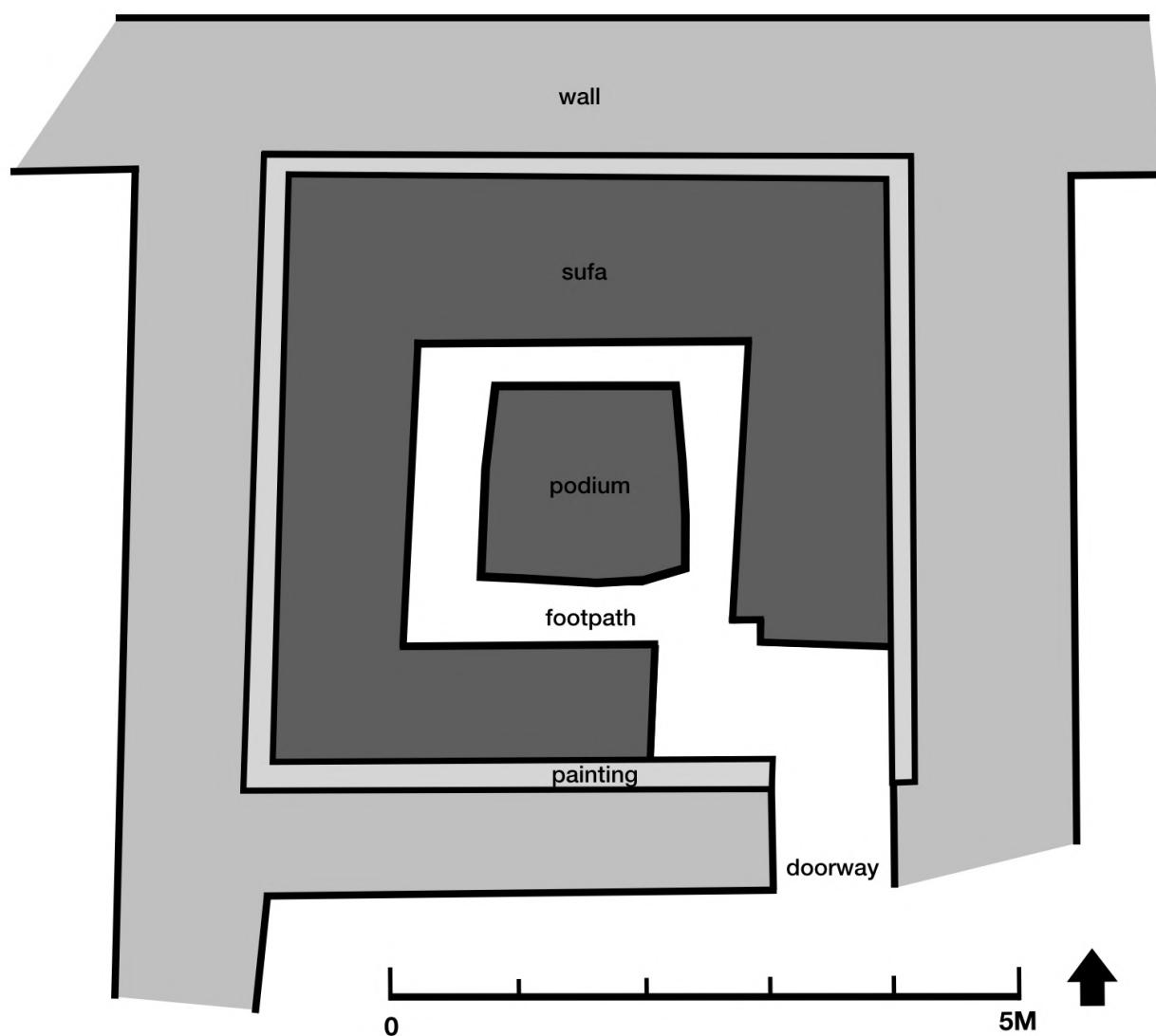


Map 2.4
Location case study comparisons in Chapter II
[image source: google earth; author's markings]



Map 2.5

Floor plan of Balalyk Tepe; room 14 indicated within the second phase of construction
[image source: drawing by author]



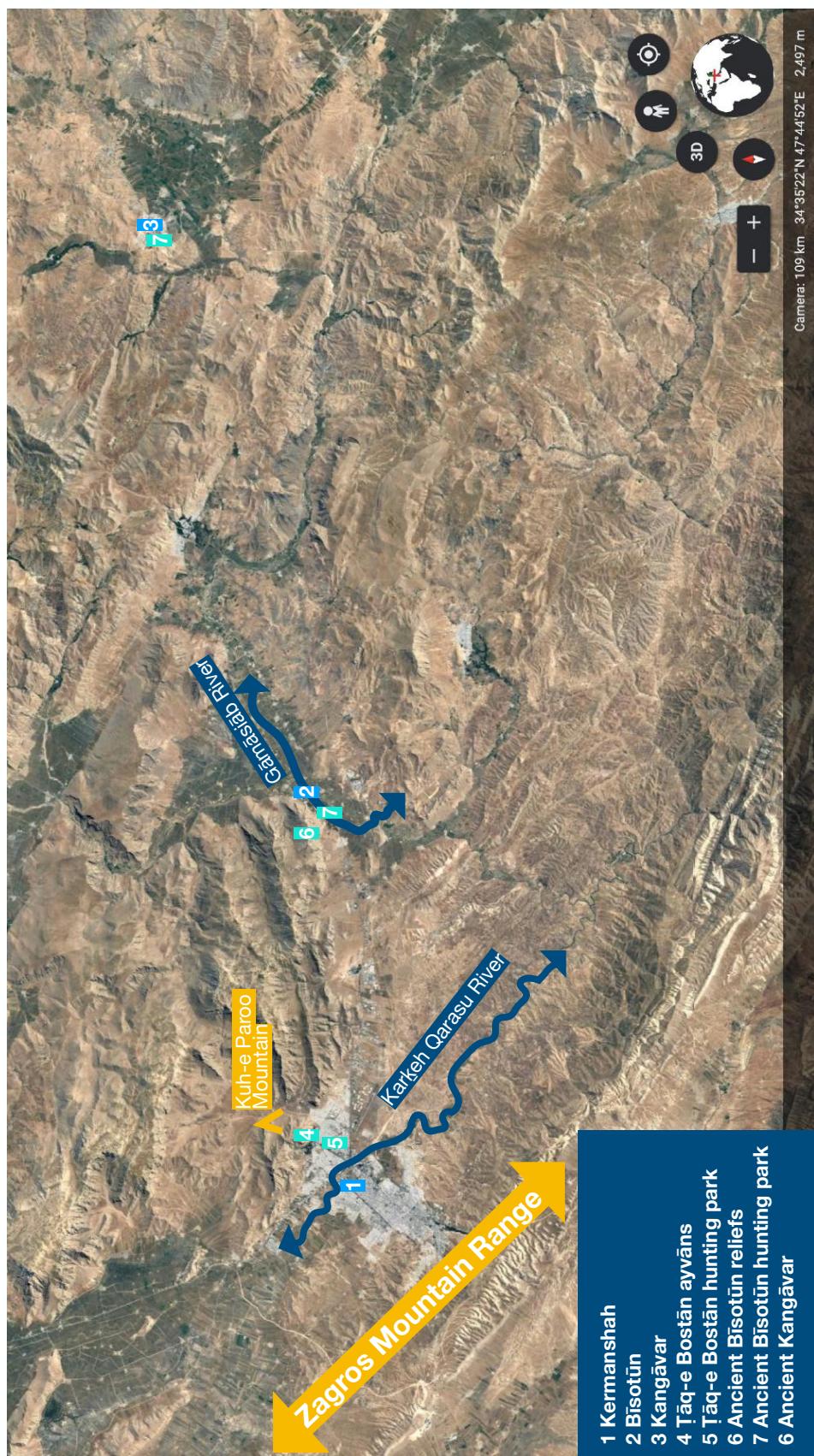
Map 2.6
Floor plan of room 14 at Balalyk Tepe
[image source: drawing by author]



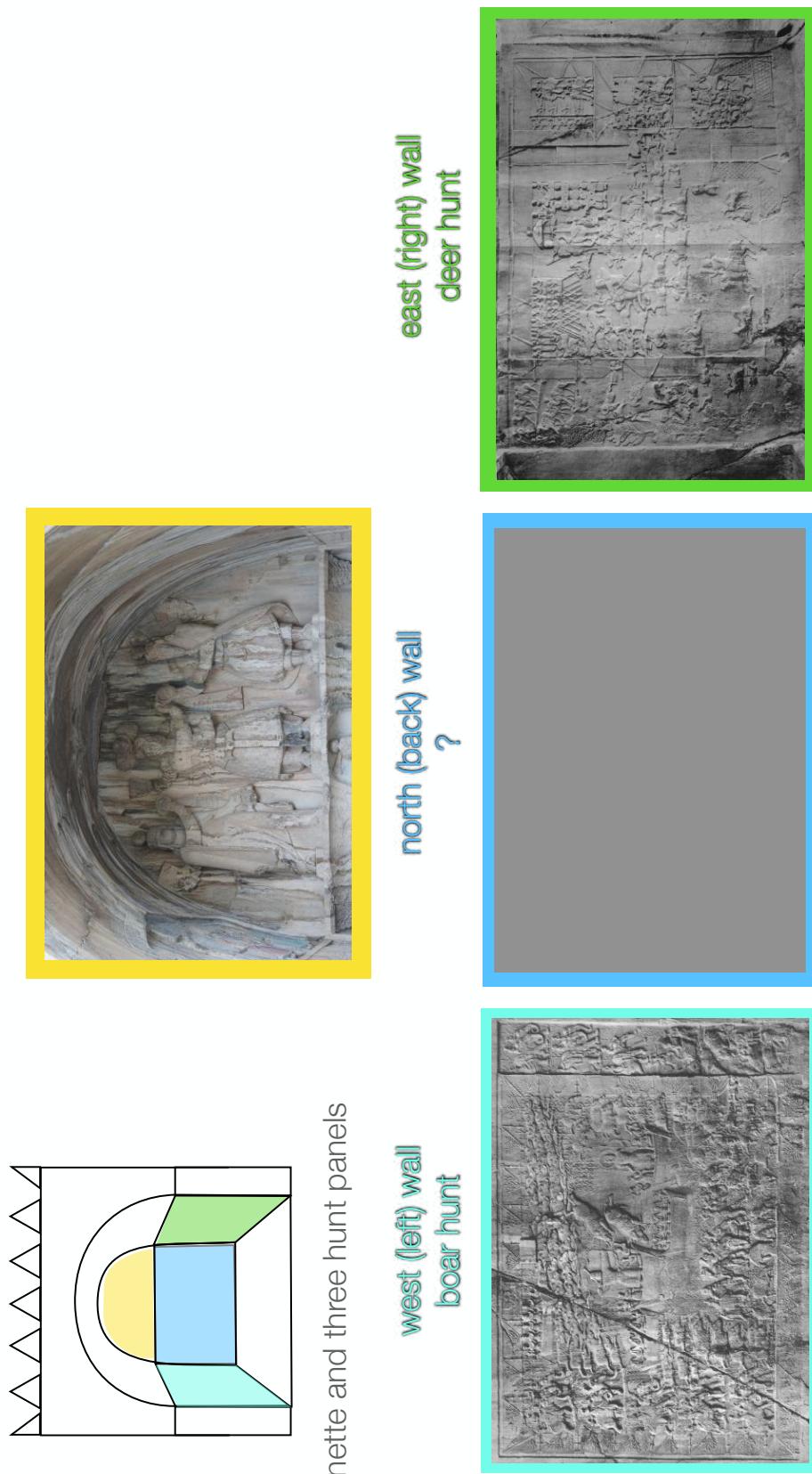
Map 3.1

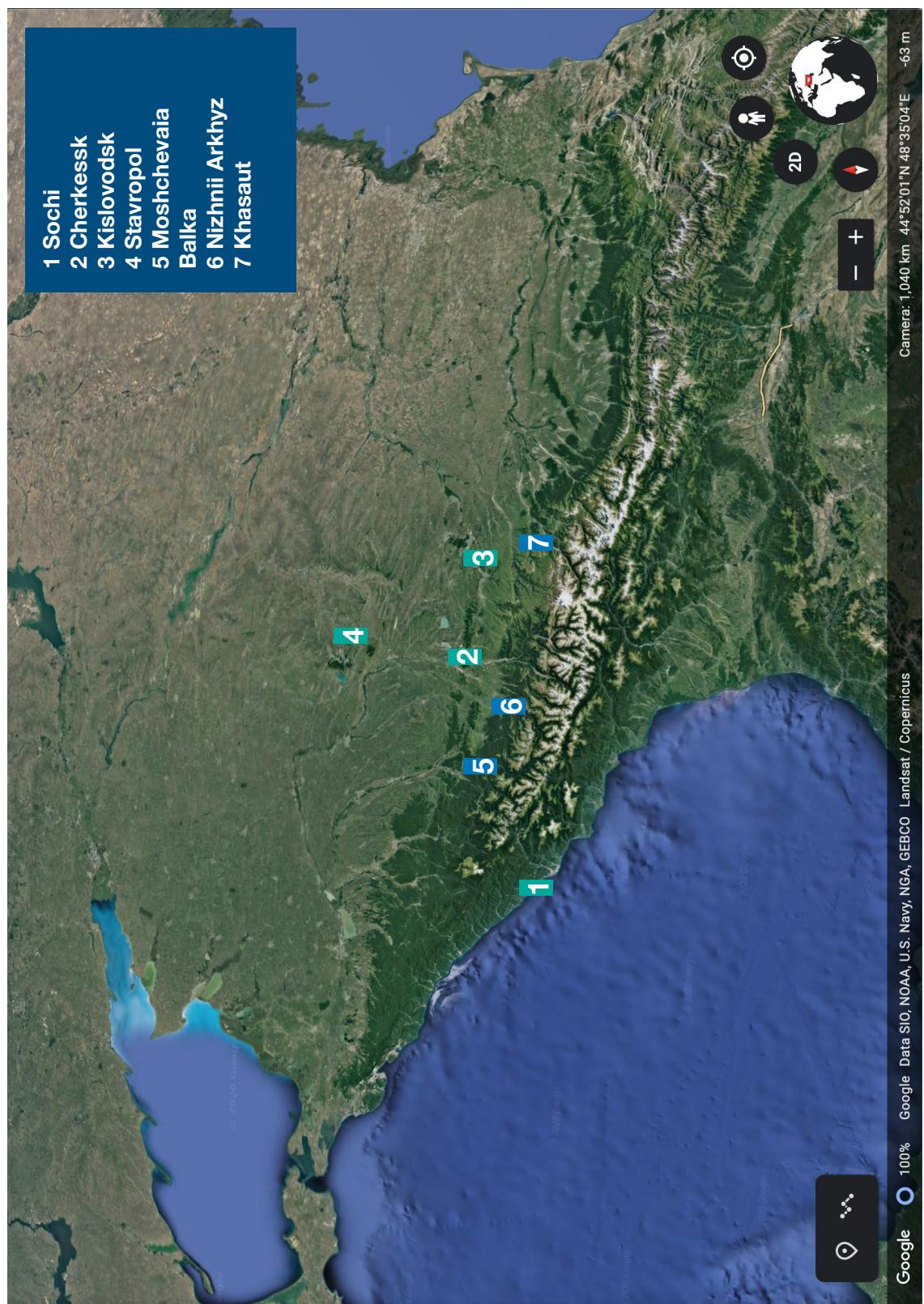
View of Sasanian-era hunting park in Kermanshah in 2018

[image source: google maps]



Map 3.2
Archaeological sites (blue), and modern cities and villages (teal) around Tāq-e Bostān (Chapter III)
[image source: google earth, author's markings]

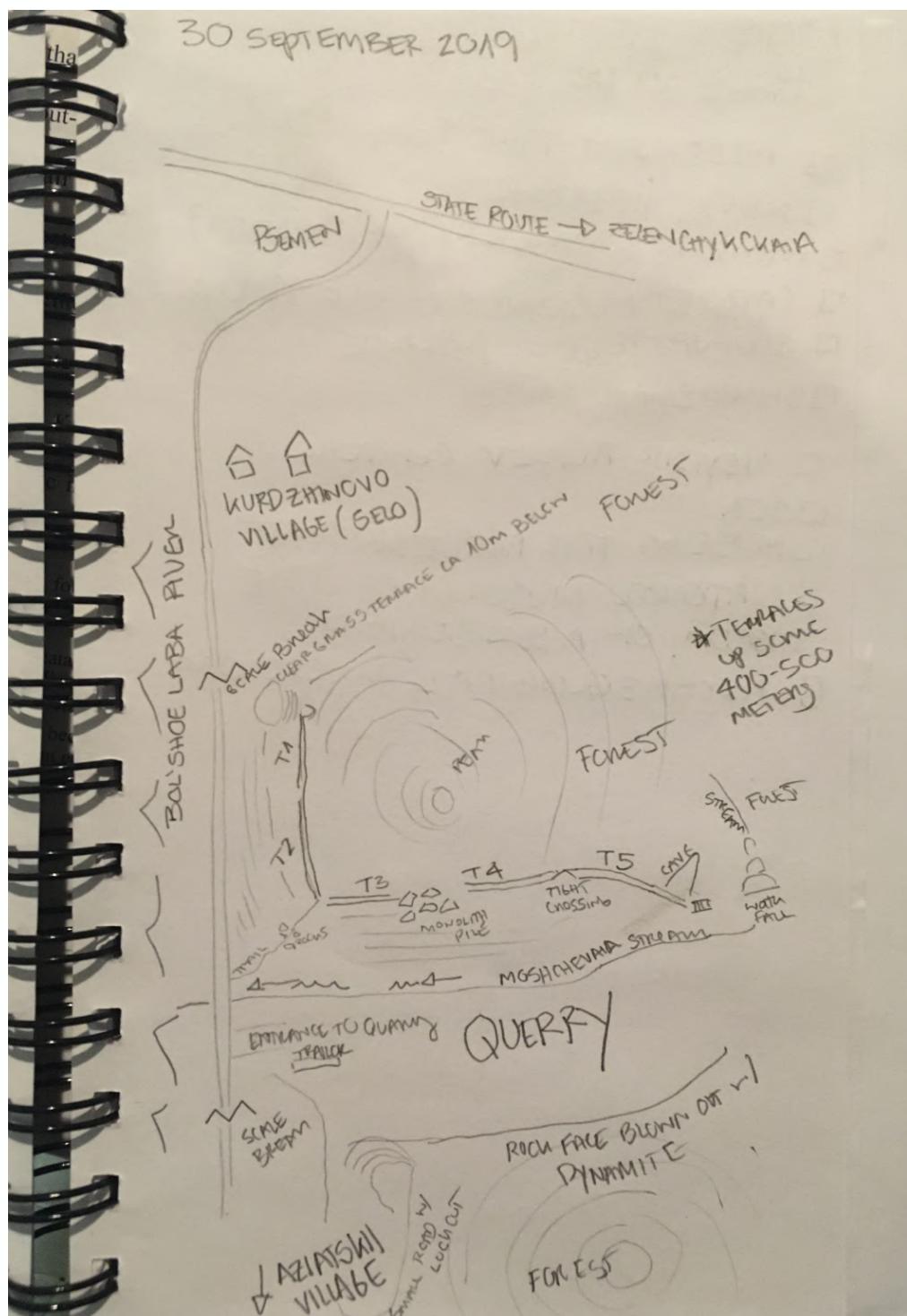




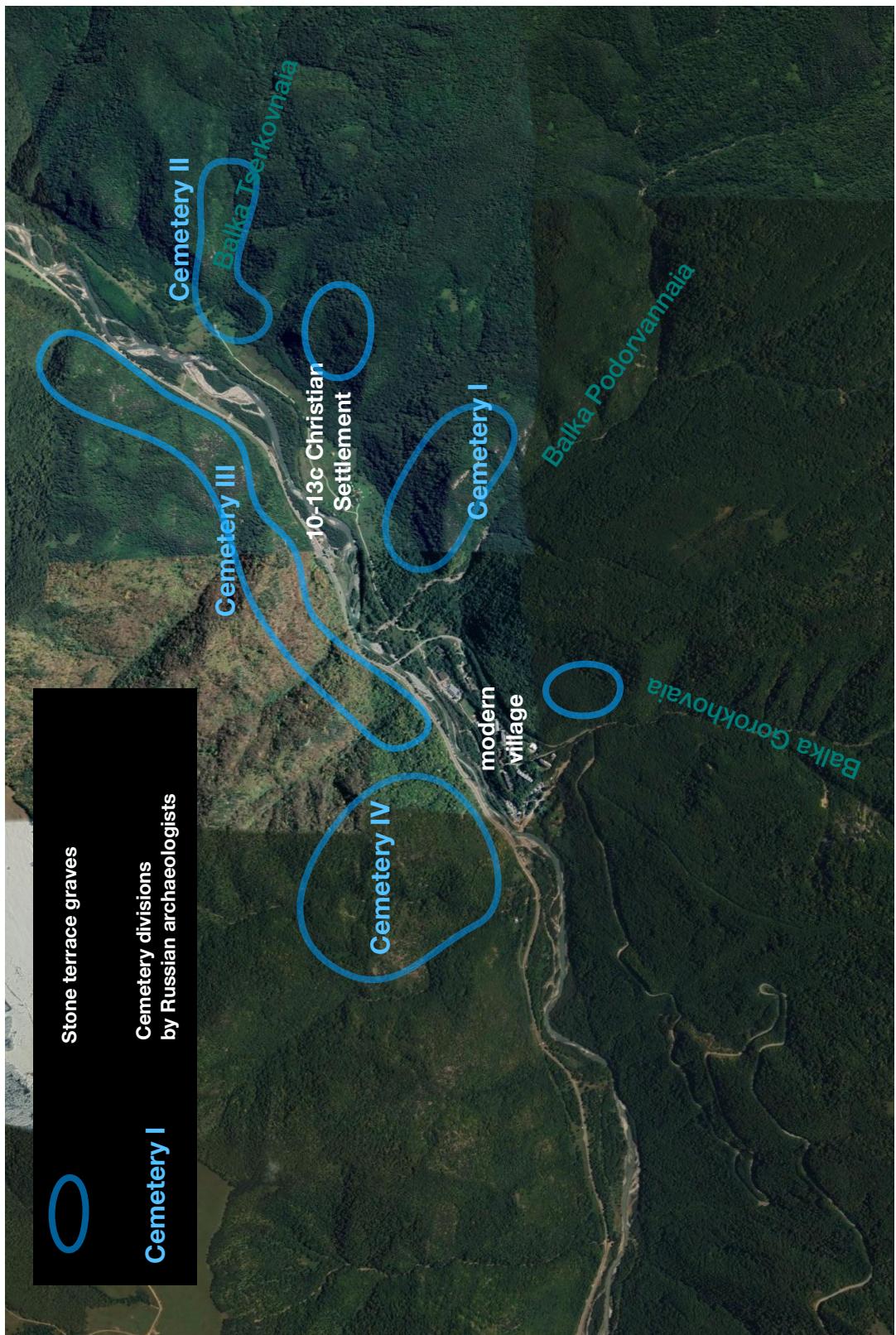
Map 4.1
Archaeological sites (blue) and modern cities (teal) mentioned in chapter IV
[image source: google earth; author's markings]



Map 4.2
Location of Moshchevaya Balka
[image source: google maps; author's markings]



Map 4.3
Moshchevaia Balka cemetery terraces
[image source: author's drawing]



Map 4.4
Nizhni Arkhyz Stone terrace cemeteries
[image source: google earth; author's drawing (based on N. A. Tikhonov and O. V. Orfinskaya, "Mogil'niki v raione Nizhne-Arkhyzskogo gorodishche," *Istoriko-arkheologicheskii al'manakh* 3 (1997): fig. 1)].