

Fashion, Costume, *and* Culture

Clothing, Headwear, Body Decorations, and Footwear through the Ages

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Volume 2:
**Early Cultures
Across the Globe**



SARA PENDERGAST AND TOM PENDERGAST

SARAH HERMSEN, *Project Editor*

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**Fashion, Costume, and Culture: Clothing, Headwear, Body Decorations,
and Footwear through the Ages**

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Cloaks (Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas)	2: 395
Cloche Hat	4: 755
Clutch Purse	4: 827
Coats	3: 616
Coats and Capes	3: 559
Codpiece	3: 474
Coif	2: 314
Collars	4: 673
Collars and Pectorals	1: 38
Converse All-Stars	4: 714
Copotain	3: 489
Cordoba Leather Gloves	3: 496
Corduroy	5: 905
Corsets	3: 560
Costume Jewelry	4: 765
Cote and Cotehardie	2: 301
Cothurnus	1: 200
Cotton	2: 423
Cowboy Boots	5: 1016
Crackowes and Poulaines	2: 326
Cravats	3: 537
Crepida	1: 201
Crew Cut	5: 870
Crinoline	3: 617

■■■ ENTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER

D

Dagging and Slashing	3: 452
Dalmatica (Ancient Rome)	1: 169
Dalmatica (Byzantine Empire)	2: 263
Deerstalker Cap	3: 635
Derby	4: 756
Designer Jeans	5: 985
Dhoti and Lungi	1: 80
Dinner Jacket	3: 619
Ditto Suits	3: 620
Doc Martens	5: 960
Dolman Sleeves	4: 791
Doric Chiton	1: 124
Double Watch Fobs	3: 586
Doublet	3: 453
Down Vests and Jackets	5: 907
Dragon Robes	2: 217
Dresses	3: 622
Driving Clothes	4: 674

E

Earstrings	3: 538
Earth Shoes	5: 962
Electric Shaver	4: 818
Embroidery	2: 270
Engageantes	3: 562
Etruscan Dress	1: 170

F

Falling and Standing Bands	3: 519
Fans (Early Asian Cultures)	2: 240
Fans (Sixteenth Century)	3: 497
Fans (Seventeenth Century)	3: 539
Farrah Fawcett Look	5: 939
Farthingales	3: 476
Fashion <i>à la Victime</i>	3: 563
Fedora	4: 758
Feminalia	1: 172

Fez Cap	2: 430
Fibulae	1: 147
Flatteners	4: 728
Flea Fur	3: 497
The Flip	5: 940
Fobs and Seals	3: 648
Fontange	3: 530
Foot Binding and Lotus Shoes	2: 248
Foot Decorating	1: 96
Forehead Markings	1: 97
Formal Gowns	4: 730
Fragrant Oils and Ointments	1: 39
Fringe (Mesopotamia)	1: 55
Fringe (1961–79)	5: 908
Fur	3: 623
Furs	5: 856

G

Gainsborough Chapeau	3: 636
Gallicae	1: 202
Ganache and Gardcorps	2: 303
Gaucho Pants	5: 909
Geometric Bob Styles	5: 941
Geta	2: 250
Gigot Sleeves	3: 625
Gloves (Europe in the Middle Ages)	2: 322
Gloves (Nineteenth Century)	3: 649
Go-Go Boots	5: 963
Goth Style	5: 987
Gowns (Sixteenth Century)	3: 477
Gowns (Seventeenth Century)	3: 520
Gray Flannel Suit	5: 857
Grunge	5: 988
Gucci Bags	5: 1007

H

Hair Coloring (Ancient Rome)	1: 187
Hair Coloring (Sixteenth Century)	3: 490

■■■ ENTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Hair Coloring (1946–60)	5: 872
Hair Spray	5: 873
Hakama	2: 219
Halter Tops	5: 912
Handkerchiefs	3: 498
Haori	2: 220
Head Flattening (Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas)	2: 403
Head Flattening (African Cultures)	2: 437
Headdresses (Ancient Egypt)	1: 32
Headdresses (Native American Cultures)	2: 374
Headwraps	2: 431
Hemlines	4: 731
Henna Stains	1: 99
High-Heeled Shoes (Seventeenth Century)	3: 547
High-Heeled Shoes (1919–29)	4: 774
High-Top Boots	4: 716
Himation	1: 126
Hip Huggers	5: 913
Ho	2: 221
Hobble Skirts	4: 676
Hoods	2: 315
Hose and Breeches (Europe in the Middle Ages)	2: 304
Hose and Breeches (Sixteenth Century)	3: 479
Hot Pants	5: 915
Houppelande	2: 305
Hunting Outfit	4: 677
Hurly-Burly	3: 531

■ ■ ■ I

Ice Skates	3: 548
Identification Bracelet	4: 829
Ionic Chiton	1: 127

■ ■ ■ J

Jabot	3: 586
Jama	1: 82
Jelly Rolls and Duck Tails	5: 874
Jewelry (Ancient Egypt)	1: 40

Jewelry (India)	1: 100
Jewelry (Ancient Greece)	1: 148
Jewelry (Ancient Rome)	1: 193
Jewelry (Native American Cultures)	2: 378
Jockey Boots	3: 596
Jogging Suits	5: 916
Jumper Gown	4: 679
Justaucorps	3: 522
Jutti	1: 109

K

Kabuki Makeup	2: 241
Kalasisis	1: 24
Kashmir Shawls	3: 626
Kataginu	2: 222
Kente Cloth	2: 424
Khapusa	1: 109
Kimono	2: 223
Kinu	2: 228
Knee Breeches	3: 565
Knickers	4: 680
Kohl	1: 42
Kosode	2: 229
Kuba Cloth	2: 425

L

Leg Bands	2: 306
Leg Warmers	5: 1009
Leggings	2: 365
Leisure Suits	5: 918
Lip Plugs	2: 438
Lipstick	4: 708
Little Black Dress	4: 792
Loin Coverings	1: 129
Loincloth and Loin Skirt	1: 25
Loincloths	2: 396
Long Hair for Men	5: 942
Lovelocks	3: 531

■■■ ENTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER

M

Makeup (Ancient Greece)	1: 150
Makeup (Ancient Rome)	1: 194
Makeup (1919–29)	4: 768
Makeup (1946–60)	5: 880
Mandarin Shirt	2: 230
Mandilion	3: 482
Mantle	2: 307
Mary Janes	5: 1017
Mascara	4: 829
Masks (African Cultures)	2: 439
Masks (Seventeenth Century)	3: 540
Men’s Hats	4: 699
Men’s Suits	4: 794
Metal Girdles	1: 151
Military Boots	4: 835
Military Dress	1: 131
Military Uniforms and Civilian Dress	4: 795
Miniskirt	5: 921
Minoan Dress	1: 132
Mix-and-Match Clothing	5: 859
Moccasins	2: 386
Mohawk	2: 375
Monocle	3: 650
Mood Rings	5: 949
Mud Cloth	2: 426
Mud Hairstyling	2: 431
Muffs	3: 540
Mullet	5: 1000
Mustaches	3: 637

N

Nail Polish	4: 770
Navy Blue Blazer	4: 733
Neckties	5: 950
Nehru Jacket	5: 924
New Look	5: 860
Nosegay	3: 587



Obi	2: 232
Oxford Bags	4: 734
Oxfords	4: 718



Paduka	1: 110
Painter's Pants	5: 925
Pajamas	4: 736
Palisades	3: 491
Palla	1: 174
Paludamentum	2: 264
Panniers	3: 566
Pantsuit	5: 926
Pantyhose	5: 927
Parasols	3: 588
Paste Jewelry	3: 589
Patches	3: 542
Patent Leather Look	4: 759
Patent Leather Shoes	5: 964
Pattens and Pantofles	3: 504
Peasant Look	5: 928
Peek-a-Boo Bang	4: 820
Peep-Toed Shoes	4: 837
Peg-Top Clothing	4: 682
Pelisse	3: 627
Penis Sheath	1: 27
Peplos	1: 134
Perfume	1: 153
Permanent Wave	4: 701
Petticoats	3: 523
Phrygian Cap	1: 139
Piercing	1: 104
Pigtails and Ramillies	3: 579
Pillbox Hats	5: 875
Pilos and Petasos	1: 141
Plastic Shoes	5: 884
Platform Shoes	5: 965
Plus Fours	4: 737
Pocketbook	3: 651

■■■ ENTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Polar Fleece	5: 990
Polo Shirt	4: 797
Polonaise Style	3: 567
Pompadour	4: 821
Pouf	3: 580
Pourpoint	2: 308
Preppy Look	5: 862
Pschent	1: 34
Puka Chokers	5: 952
Pumps	5: 1018
Punjabi Suit	1: 83
Purdah	1: 84
Purses	2: 323

R

Raccoon Coat	4: 739
Rachel Haircut	5: 1001
Ram's Horn Headdress	2: 317
Rationing Fashion in the United States	4: 798
Reticule	3: 590
Robe à la Française	3: 568
Robe en Chemise	3: 570
Rock 'n' Roll Style	5: 863
Rogaine	5: 1002
Ruffs	3: 482

S

Sack Gown	3: 572
Sack Suit	4: 683
Sakkos and Sphendone	1: 142
Sandals (Ancient Egypt)	1: 46
Sandals (Mesopotamia)	1: 66
Sandals (Ancient Greece)	1: 157
Sari	1: 87
Sarongs	4: 801
Scarification (Oceania)	2: 345
Scarification (African Cultures)	2: 440
Schenti	1: 28
Shawl	1: 56

Shingle	4: 760
Shirtwaist	4: 685
Shoe Decoration	3: 549
Short Hair for Women	4: 761
Sideburns	3: 638
Signet Ring	1: 195
Siyala	2: 441
Skirt	2: 366
Sleeves	3: 484
Slippers (Eighteenth Century)	3: 597
Slippers (Nineteenth Century)	3: 656
Snuff Boxes	3: 591
Solea	1: 203
Spandex	5: 992
Spats	4: 775
Spectator Sports Style	4: 741
Spoon Bonnets	3: 639
Sportswear	4: 744
Steeple Headdress	2: 317
Stiletto Heel	5: 885
Stockings	4: 803
Stola (Ancient Rome)	1: 176
Stola (Byzantine Empire)	2: 266
Stomacher	3: 524
Subligaculum	1: 177
Suede Buc	4: 837
Sunless Tanning Lotion	5: 1011
Sweatshirts	5: 994
Swim Trunks for Men	4: 805
Swimwear	4: 745



Tabard	2: 309
Tabis	2: 252
Tailored Suit for Women	4: 747
Tanning	5: 953
Tattooing (Early Asian Cultures)	2: 244
Tattooing (Oceania)	2: 346
Tattooing (Native American Cultures)	2: 381
Tattooing (1980–2003)	5: 1012
Tennis Costume	3: 628

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Tennis Shoes (Nineteenth Century)	3: 657
Tennis Shoes (1961–79)	5: 967
Tie-Dye	5: 930
Titus Cut	3: 580
Toga	1: 178
Tonsure	2: 318
Top Hat	3: 640
Top-Siders	5: 886
Trainer Shoes	5: 1019
Trench Coats	4: 688
Tricorne Hat	3: 532
Trousers	3: 572
Trousers for Women	4: 806
T-Shirt	4: 808
T-Strap Sandal	4: 777
Tunic (Ancient Egypt)	1: 29
Tunic (Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas)	2: 397
Tunica	1: 180
Turbans (Mesopotamia)	1: 60
Turbans (India)	1: 92
Turbans (Byzantine Empire)	2: 268

U

Underwear for Men	4: 690
Usuta	2: 406
Uttariya	1: 89

V

Veils	1: 61
Velour	5: 932

W

Waistcoat	3: 526
Walking Sticks	3: 593
War Paint	2: 382
Watches	4: 709
Waved Hair	4: 822

ENTRIES BY ALPHABETICAL ORDER ■■■

Weejuns	4: 839
Whisk	3: 527
Wigs (Ancient Egypt)	1: 35
Wigs (Ancient Rome)	1: 188
Wigs (Seventeenth Century)	3: 533
Wigs (Nineteenth Century)	3: 642
Wimple	2: 319
Wing Tips	4: 778
Women's Dresses	4: 810
Women's Hats	4: 702
Women's Suits	4: 812
Wonderbra	5: 996
Wrap Dress	5: 933
Wreaths	1: 143

Z

Zippers	4: 691
Zoot Suit	4: 813
Zori	2: 253

Entries by Topic Category



Clothing

Agbada	2: 415
A-Line Skirt	5: 901
American Look	5: 852
Animal Skins	2: 417
Armani Suits	5: 980
Aso Oke Cloth	2: 418
Baggy Jeans	5: 982
Baldric	3: 515
Bark Cloth	2: 419
Bases	3: 473
Bathing Costumes	3: 608
Batik Cloth	2: 420
Bell-Bottoms	5: 902
Berber Dress	2: 421
The Betsy	3: 610
Bikini	5: 853
Blankets	2: 361
Bliaut	2: 300
Bloomers (Nineteenth Century)	3: 611
Bloomers (1900–18)	4: 668
Blue Jeans	3: 612
Bold Look	5: 855
Bombast	3: 473

■■■ ENTRIES BY TOPIC CATEGORY

Boubou	2: 422
Braccae	1: 168
Brassiere	4: 670
Breechclout	2: 362
Breeches	3: 516
Burka	1: 76
Bustle	3: 517
Casual Fridays	5: 983
Casula	1: 169
Catsuit	5: 904
Chadar	1: 78
Cheongsam	2: 216
Chinoiserie	3: 558
Chlaina and Diplax	1: 122
Chlamys	1: 123
Choli	1: 79
Cloaks (Native American Cultures)	2: 364
Cloaks (Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas)	2: 395
Coats	3: 616
Coats and Capes	3: 559
Codpiece	3: 474
Collars	4: 673
Corduroy	5: 905
Corsets	3: 560
Cote and Cotehardie	2: 301
Cotton	2: 423
Crinoline	3: 617
Dagging and Slashing	3: 452
Dalmatica (Ancient Rome)	1: 169
Dalmatica (Byzantine Empire)	2: 263
Designer Jeans	5: 985
Dhoti and Lungi	1: 80
Dinner Jacket	3: 619
Ditto Suits	3: 620
Dolman Sleeves	4: 791
Doric Chiton	1: 124
Doublet	3: 453
Down Vests and Jackets	5: 907
Dragon Robes	2: 217
Dresses	3: 622
Driving Clothes	4: 674
Engageantes	3: 562

Etruscan Dress	1: 170
Falling and Standing Bands	3: 519
Farthingales	3: 476
Fashion <i>à la Victime</i>	3: 563
Feminalia	1: 172
Flatteners	4: 728
Formal Gowns	4: 730
Fringe (Mesopotamia)	1: 55
Fringe (1961–79)	5: 908
Fur	3: 623
Furs	5: 856
Ganache and Gardcorps	2: 303
Gaucho Pants	5: 909
Gigot Sleeves	3: 625
Goth Style	5: 987
Gowns (Sixteenth Century)	3: 477
Gowns (Seventeenth Century)	3: 520
Gray Flannel Suit	5: 857
Grunge	5: 988
Hakama	2: 219
Halter Tops	5: 912
Haori	2: 220
Hemlines	4: 731
Himation	1: 126
Hip Huggers	5: 913
Ho	2: 221
Hobble Skirts	4: 676
Hose and Breeches (Europe in the Middle Ages)	2: 304
Hose and Breeches (Sixteenth Century)	3: 479
Hot Pants	5: 915
Houppelande	2: 305
Hunting Outfit	4: 677
Ionic Chiton	1: 127
Jama	1: 82
Jogging Suits	5: 916
Jumper Gown	4: 679
Justaucorps	3: 522
Kalasiris	1: 24
Kashmir Shawls	3: 626
Kataginu	2: 222
Kente Cloth	2: 424

■■■ ENTRIES BY TOPIC CATEGORY

Kimono	2: 223
Kinu	2: 228
Knee Breeches	3: 565
Knickers	4: 680
Kosode	2: 229
Kuba Cloth	2: 425
Leg Bands	2: 306
Leggings	2: 365
Leisure Suits	5: 918
Little Black Dress	4: 792
Loin Coverings	1: 129
Loincloth and Loin Skirt	1: 25
Loincloths	2: 396
Mandarin Shirt	2: 230
Mandilion	3: 482
Mantle	2: 307
Men's Suits	4: 794
Military Dress	1: 131
Military Uniforms and Civilian Dress	4: 795
Miniskirt	5: 921
Minoan Dress	1: 132
Mix-and-Match Clothing	5: 859
Mud Cloth	2: 426
Navy Blue Blazer	4: 733
Nehru Jacket	5: 924
New Look	5: 860
Obi	2: 232
Oxford Bags	4: 734
Painter's Pants	5: 925
Pajamas	4: 736
Palla	1: 174
Paludamentum	2: 264
Panniers	3: 566
Pantsuit	5: 926
Pantyhose	5: 927
Peasant Look	5: 928
Peg-Top Clothing	4: 682
Pelisse	3: 627
Penis Sheath	1: 27
Peplos	1: 134
Petticoats	3: 523
Plus Fours	4: 737

Polar Fleece	5: 990
Polo Shirt	4: 797
Polonaise Style	3: 567
Pourpoint	2: 308
Preppy Look	5: 862
Punjabi Suit	1: 83
Purdah	1: 84
Raccoon Coat	4: 739
Rationing Fashion in the United States	4: 798
Robe à la Française	3: 568
Robe en Chemise	3: 570
Rock 'n' Roll Style	5: 863
Ruffs	3: 482
Sack Gown	3: 572
Sack Suit	4: 683
Sari	1: 87
Sarongs	4: 801
Schenti	1: 28
Shawl	1: 56
Shirtwaist	4: 685
Skirt	2: 366
Sleeves	3: 484
Spandex	5: 992
Spectator Sports Style	4: 741
Sportswear	4: 744
Stockings	4: 803
Stola (Ancient Rome)	1: 176
Stola (Byzantine Empire)	2: 266
Stomacher	3: 524
Subligaculum	1: 177
Sweatshirts	5: 994
Swim Trunks for Men	4: 805
Swimwear	4: 745
Tabard	2: 309
Tailored Suit for Women	4: 747
Tennis Costume	3: 628
Tie-Dye	5: 930
Toga	1: 178
Trench Coats	4: 688
Trousers	3: 572
Trousers for Women	4: 806
T-Shirt	4: 808

■■■ ENTRIES BY TOPIC CATEGORY

Tunic (Ancient Egypt)	1: 29
Tunic (Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas)	2: 397
Tunica	1: 180
Underwear for Men	4: 690
Uttariya	1: 89
Velour	5: 932
Waistcoat	3: 526
Whisk	3: 527
Women's Dresses	4: 810
Women's Suits	4: 812
Wonderbra	5: 996
Wrap Dress	5: 933
Zippers	4: 691
Zoot Suit	4: 813

 **Headwear**

À la Belle Poule	3: 576
Afro	5: 937
Apollo Knot	3: 632
Bandeau	4: 752
Barbe	3: 459
Barbershops	4: 698
Bear Grease	2: 371
Beards	1: 185
Beehives and Bouffants	5: 869
Beret	2: 312
Bowl Haircut	2: 313
Bowler	3: 633
Braids	2: 373
Braids and Curls	1: 186
Caps	3: 578
Clean-Shaven Men	4: 753
Cloche Hat	4: 755
Coif	2: 314
Copotain	3: 489
Crew Cut	5: 870
Deerstalker Cap	3: 635
Derby	4: 756
Electric Shaver	4: 818
Farrah Fawcett Look	5: 939
Fedora	4: 758

Fez Cap	2: 430
The Flip	5: 940
Fontange	3: 530
Gainsborough Chapeau	3: 636
Geometric Bob Styles	5: 941
Hair Coloring (Ancient Rome)	1: 187
Hair Coloring (Sixteenth Century)	3: 490
Hair Coloring (1946–60)	5: 872
Hair Spray	5: 873
Headdresses (Ancient Egypt)	1: 32
Headdresses (Native American Cultures)	2: 374
Headwraps	2: 431
Hoods	2: 315
Hurly-Burly	3: 531
Jelly Rolls and Duck Tails	5: 874
Long Hair for Men	5: 942
Lovelocks	3: 531
Men’s Hats	4: 699
Mohawk	2: 375
Mud Hairstyling	2: 431
Mullet	5: 1000
Mustaches	3: 637
Palisades	3: 491
Patent Leather Look	4: 759
Peek-a-Boo Bang	4: 820
Permanent Wave	4: 701
Phrygian Cap	1: 139
Pigtails and Ramillies	3: 579
Pillbox Hats	5: 875
Pilos and Petasos	1: 141
Pompadour	4: 821
Pouf	3: 580
Pschent	1: 34
Rachel Haircut	5: 1001
Ram’s Horn Headdress	2: 317
Rogaine	5: 1002
Sakkos and Sphendone	1: 142
Shingle	4: 760
Short Hair for Women	4: 761
Sideburns	3: 638
Spoon Bonnets	3: 639
Steeple Headdress	2: 317

■■■ ENTRIES BY TOPIC CATEGORY

Titus Cut	3: 580
Tonsure	2: 318
Top Hat	3: 640
Tricorne Hat	3: 532
Turbans (Mesopotamia)	1: 60
Turbans (India)	1: 92
Turbans (Byzantine Empire)	2: 268
Veils	1: 61
Waved Hair	4: 822
Wigs (Ancient Egypt)	1: 35
Wigs (Ancient Rome)	1: 188
Wigs (Seventeenth Century)	3: 533
Wigs (Nineteenth Century)	3: 642
Wimple	2: 319
Women's Hats	4: 702
Wreaths	1: 143

 **Body Decorations**

Ascots	3: 646
Backpack Purses	5: 1006
Beaded Handbags	4: 707
Beadwork	2: 435
Body Painting (Oceania)	2: 344
Body Painting (African Cultures)	2: 436
Body Piercing	5: 948
Brooch	3: 647
Bulla	1: 192
Cameo	3: 585
Cameo and Intaglio	1: 146
Canes	3: 536
Chanel No. 5	4: 764
Charm Bracelet (1930–45)	4: 826
Charm Bracelet (1946–60)	5: 879
Clutch Purse	4: 827
Collars and Pectorals	1: 38
Cordoba Leather Gloves	3: 496
Costume Jewelry	4: 765
Cravats	3: 537
Double Watch Fobs	3: 586
Earstrings	3: 538
Embroidery	2: 270

Fans (Early Asian Cultures)	2: 240
Fans (Sixteenth Century)	3: 497
Fans (Seventeenth Century)	3: 539
Fibulae	1: 147
Flea Fur	3: 497
Fobs and Seals	3: 648
Foot Decorating	1: 96
Forehead Markings	1: 97
Fragrant Oils and Ointments	1: 39
Gloves (Europe in the Middle Ages)	2: 322
Gloves (Nineteenth Century)	3: 649
Gucci Bags	5: 1007
Handkerchiefs	3: 498
Head Flattening (Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas)	2: 403
Head Flattening (African Cultures)	2: 437
Henna Stains	1: 99
Identification Bracelet	4: 829
Jabot	3: 586
Jewelry (Ancient Egypt)	1: 40
Jewelry (India)	1: 100
Jewelry (Ancient Greece)	1: 148
Jewelry (Ancient Rome)	1: 193
Jewelry (Native American Cultures)	2: 378
Kabuki Makeup	2: 241
Kohl	1: 42
Leg Warmers	5: 1009
Lip Plugs	2: 438
Lipstick	4: 708
Makeup (Ancient Greece)	1: 150
Makeup (Ancient Rome)	1: 194
Makeup (1919–29)	4: 768
Makeup (1946–60)	5: 880
Mascara	4: 829
Masks (African Cultures)	2: 439
Masks (Seventeenth Century)	3: 540
Metal Girdles	1: 151
Monocle	3: 650
Mood Rings	5: 949
Muffs	3: 540
Nail Polish	4: 770
Neckties	5: 950
Nosegay	3: 587

■■■ ENTRIES BY TOPIC CATEGORY

Parasols	3: 588
Paste Jewelry	3: 589
Patches	3: 542
Perfume	1: 153
Piercing	1: 104
Pocketbook	3: 651
Puka Chokers	5: 952
Purses	2: 323
Reticule	3: 590
Scarification (Oceania)	2: 345
Scarification (African Cultures)	2: 440
Signet Ring	1: 195
Siyala	2: 441
Snuff Boxes	3: 591
Sunless Tanning Lotion	5: 1011
Tanning	5: 953
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Reader's Guide



F*ashion, Costume, and Culture: Clothing, Headwear, Body Decorations, and Footwear through the Ages* provides a broad overview of costume traditions of diverse cultures from prehistoric times to the present day. The five-volume set explores various items of human decoration and adornment, ranging from togas to turbans, necklaces to tennis shoes, and discusses why and how they were created, the people who made them, and their uses. More than just a description of what people wore and why, this set also describes how clothing, headwear, body decorations, and footwear reflect different cultural, religious, and societal beliefs.

Volume 1 covers the ancient world, including prehistoric man and the ancient cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, Greece, and Rome. Key issues covered in this volume include the early use of animal skins as garments, the introduction of fabric as the primary human body covering, and the development of distinct cultural traditions for draped and fitted garments.

Volume 2 looks at the transition from the ancient world to the Middle Ages, focusing on the Asian cultures of China and Japan, the Byzantine Empire, the nomadic and barbarian cultures of early Europe, and Europe in the formative Middle Ages. This volume also highlights several of the ancient cultures of North America, South and Central America, and Africa that were encountered by

Europeans during the Age of Exploration that began in the fifteenth century.

Volumes 3 through 5 offer chronological coverage of the development of costume and fashion in the West. Volume 3 features the costume traditions of the developing European nation-states in the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, and looks at the importance of the royal courts in introducing clothing styles and the shift from home-based garmentmaking to shop-based and then factory-based industry.

Volumes 4 and 5 cover the period of Western history since 1900. These volumes trace the rise of the fashion designer as the primary creator of new clothing styles, chart the impact of technology on costume traditions, and present the innovations made possible by the introduction of new synthetic, or man-made, materials. Perhaps most importantly, Volumes 4 and 5 discuss what is sometimes referred to as the democratization of fashion. At the beginning of the twentieth century, high quality, stylish clothes were designed by and made available to a privileged elite; by the middle to end of the century, well-made clothes were widely available in the West, and new styles came from creative and usually youth-oriented cultural groups as often as they did from designers.

Organization

Fashion, Costume, and Culture is organized into twenty-five chapters, focusing on specific cultural traditions or on a specific chronological period in history. Each of these chapters share the following components:

- A chapter introduction, which discusses the general historical framework for the chapter and highlights the major social and economic factors that relate to the development of costume traditions.
- Four sections that cover Clothing, Headwear, Body Decorations, and Footwear. Each of these sections opens with an overview that discusses general trends within the broader category, and nearly every section contains one or more essays on specific garments or trends that were important during the period.

Each chapter introduction and individual essay in *Fashion, Costume, and Culture* includes a For More Information section list-

ing sources—books, articles, and Web sites—containing additional information on fashion and the people and events it addresses. Some essays also contain *See also* references that direct the reader to other essays within the set that can offer more information on this or related items.

Bringing the text to life are more than 330 color or black-and-white photos and maps, while numerous sidebar boxes offer additional insight into the people, places, and happenings that influenced fashion throughout the years. Other features include tables of contents listing the contents of all five volumes, listing the entries by alphabetical order, and listing entries by category. Rounding out the set are a timeline of important events in fashion history, a words to know section defining terms used throughout the set, a bibliography of general fashion sources, including notable Web sites, and a comprehensive subject index, which provides easy access to the subjects discussed throughout *Fashion, Costume, and Culture*.

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We cannot help but mention the great debt we owe to the costume historians whose works we have consulted, and whose names appear again and again in the bibliographies of the essays. We sincerely hope that this collection pays tribute to and furthers their collective production of knowledge.

—Sara Pendergast and Tom Pendergast

Comments and Suggestions

We welcome your comments on *Fashion, Costume, and Culture* as well as your suggestions for topics to be featured in future editions. Please write to: Editor, *Fashion, Costume, and Culture*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan, 48331-3535; call toll-free: 800-877-4253; fax to 248-414-5043; or send e-mail via <http://www.gale.com>.

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Timeline



THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN LIFE ■ Early humans wrap themselves in animal hides for warmth.

c. 10,000 B.C.E. ■ Tattooing is practiced on the Japanese islands, in the Jomon period (c. 10,000–300 B.C.E.). Similarly scarification, the art of carving designs into the skin, has been practiced since ancient times in Oceania and Africa to make a person's body more beautiful or signify a person's rank in society.

c. 3100 B.C.E. ■ Egyptians weave a plant called flax into a light cloth called linen and made dresses and loincloths from it.

c. 3100 B.C.E. ■ Egyptians shave their heads to keep themselves clean and cool in the desert heat, but covered their heads with wigs of various styles.

c. 10,000 B.C.E.
Humans populated most of
the major landmasses
on Earth



c. 7000 B.C.E.
The first human settlements
were developed in
Mesopotamia



10,000 B.C.E.

7000 B.C.E.

■■■ **TIMELINE**

- c. 3100 B.C.E. ■ Egyptians perfume their bodies by coating their skin in fragrant oils and ointments.
 - c. 3000 B.C.E. ■ Men and women in the Middle East, Africa, and the Far East have wrapped turbans on their heads since ancient times, and the turban continues to be popular with both men and women in many modern cultures.
 - c. 2600 B.C.E. TO 900 C.E. ■ Ancient Mayans, whose civilization flourishes in Belize and on the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, flatten the heads of the children of wealthy and powerful members of society. The children's heads are squeezed between two boards to elongate their skulls into a shape that looks very similar to an ear of corn.
 - c. 2500 B.C.E. ■ Indians wear a wrapped style of trousers called a dhoti and a skirt-like lower body covering called a lungi.
 - c. 2500 B.C.E. ■ Indian women begin to adorn themselves in the wrapped dress style called a sari.
 - c. 1500 B.C.E. ■ Egyptian men adopt the tunic as an upper body covering when Egypt conquers Syria.
 - c. 27 B.C.E.–476 C.E. ■ Roman soldiers, especially horsemen, adopt the trousers, or feminalia, of the nomadic tribes they encounter on the outskirts of the Roman Empire.
- SIXTH AND FIFTH CENTURIES B.C.E.** ■ The doric chiton becomes one of the most popular garments for both men and women in ancient Greece.
- FIFTH CENTURY B.C.E.** ■ The toga, a wrapped garment, is favored by Romans.



- c. 476 ■ Upper-class men, and sometimes women, in the Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.) wear a long, flowing robe-like overgarment called a dalmatica developed from the tunic.

- c. 900 ■ Young Chinese girls tightly bind their feet to keep them small, a sign of beauty for a time in Chinese culture. The practice was outlawed in 1911.

- c. 1100–1500 ■ The cote, a long robe worn by both men and women, and its descendant, the cotehardie, are among the most common garments of the late Middle Ages.

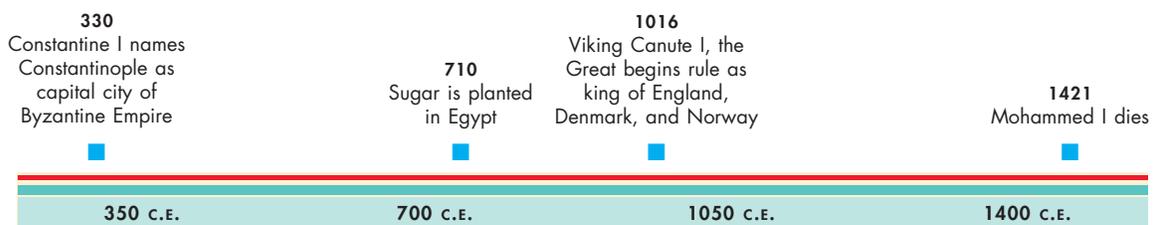
- 1392 ■ Kimonos are first worn in China as an undergarment. The word “kimono” later came to be used to describe the native dress of Japan in the nineteenth century.

- MIDDLE AGES** ■ Hose and breeches, which cover the legs individually, become more common garments for men.

- FOURTEENTH CENTURY TO SIXTEENTH CENTURY** ■ Cuts and openings in garments made from slashing and dagging decorate garments from upper body coverings to shoes.

- 1470 ■ The first farthingales, or hoops worn under a skirt to hold it out away from the body, are worn in Spain and are called vertugados. These farthingales become popular in France and England and are later known as the Spanish farthingale.

- FIFTEENTH CENTURY AND SIXTEENTH CENTURY** ■ The doublet—a slightly padded short overshirt, usually buttoned down the front, with or without sleeves—becomes an essential men’s garment.



■■■ TIMELINE

LATE FIFTEENTH THROUGH THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY ■ The ruff, a wide pleated collar, often stiffened with starch or wire, is worn by wealthy men and women of the time.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY ■ Worn underneath clothing, corsets squeeze and mold women's bodies into the correct shape to fit changing fashions of dress.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY ■ People carry or wear small pieces of animal fur in hopes that biting fleas will be more attracted to the animal's skin than to their own.

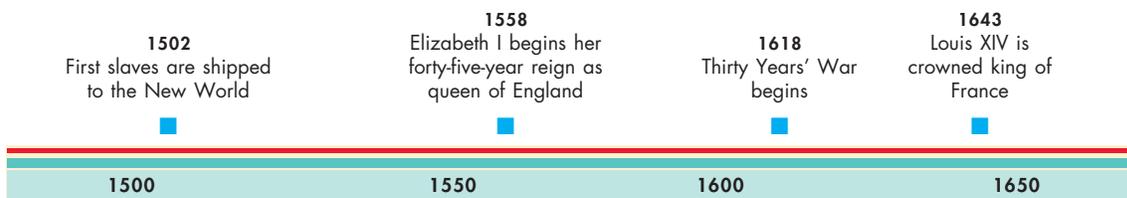
LATE MIDDLE AGES ■ The beret, a soft, brimless wool hat, is the most popular men's hat during the late Middle Ages and into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially in France, Italy, and Spain.

1595 ■ Europeans land on the Marquesas Islands in Oceania and discover native inhabitants covered in tattoos.

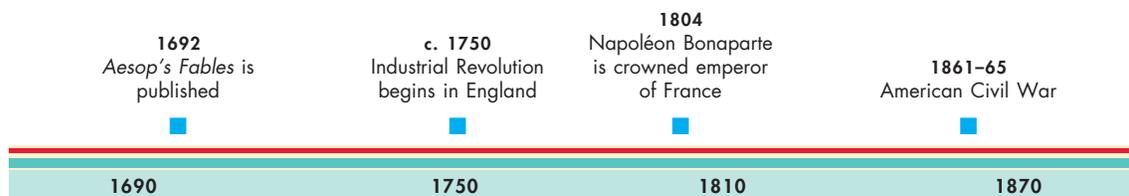
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ■ The Kuba people, living in the present-day nation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, weave a decorative cloth called Kuba cloth. An entire social group of men and women is involved in the production of the cloth, from gathering the fibers, weaving the cloth, and dyeing the decorative strands, to applying the embroidery, appliqué, or patchwork.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ■ Canes become carefully crafted items and are carried by most well-dressed gentleman.

1643 ■ French courtiers begin wearing wigs to copy the long curly hair of the sixteen-year-old king, Louis XIV. The fashion for long wigs continues later when, at the age of thirty-five, Louis begins to cover his thinning hair with wigs to maintain his beloved style.



- EIGHTEENTH CENTURY** ■ French men tuck flowers in the buttonholes of their waistcoats and introduce boutonnières as fashionable nosegays for men.
- EIGHTEENTH CENTURY** ■ The French Revolution (1789–99) destroys the French monarchy and makes ankle-length trousers fashionable attire for all men. Trousers come to symbolize the ideas of the Revolution, an effort to make French people more equal, and soon men of all classes are wearing long trousers.
- 1778** ■ À la Belle Poule, a huge hairstyle commemorating the victory of a French ship over an English ship in 1778, features an enormous pile of curled and powdered hair stretched over a frame affixed to the top of a woman’s head. The hair is decorated with a model of the ship in full sail.
- 1849** ■ Dark blue, heavy-duty cotton pants—known as blue jeans—are created as work pants for the gold miners of the 1849 California gold rush.
- 1868** ■ A sturdy canvas and rubber shoe called a croquet sandal is introduced and sells for six dollars a pair, making it too expensive for all but the very wealthy. The shoe later became known as the tennis shoe.
- 1870** ■ A French hairstylist named Marcel Grateau invents the first long-lasting hair waving technique using a heated iron to give hair curls that lasts for days.
- LATE 1800s TO EARLY 1900s** ■ The feathered war bonnet, traditional to only a small number of Native American tribes, becomes known as a typical Native American headdress with the help of Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show, which features theatrical representations of the Indians and cowboys of the American West and travels throughout America and parts of Europe.



■■■ TIMELINE

- 1900s ■ Loose, floppy, two-legged undergarments for women, bloomers start a trend toward less restrictive clothing for women, including clothing that allows them to ride bicycles, play tennis, and to take part in other sport activities.
- 1915 ■ American inventor T.L. Williams develops a cake of mascara and a brush to darken the lashes and sells them through the mail under the name Maybelline.
- 1920s ■ Advances in paint technology allow the creation of a hard durable paint and fuel an increase in the popularity of colored polish for fingernails and toenails.
- 1920s ■ The navy blue blazer, a jacket with brass buttons, becomes popular for men to wear at sporting events.
- 1920s ■ A fad among women for wearing short, bobbed hairstyles sweeps America and Europe.
- 1930s ■ Popular as a shirt for tennis, golf, and other sport activities for decades, the polo shirt becomes the most popular leisure shirt for men.
- 1939 ■ For the first time, *Vogue*, the respected fashion magazine, pictures women in trousers.
- 1945 ■ Servicemen returning home from World War II (1939–45) continue to wear the T-shirts they had been issued as undershirts during the war and soon the T-shirt becomes an acceptable casual outershirt.
- 1946 ■ The bikini, a two-piece bathing suit, is developed and named after a group of coral islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- 1950s ■ The gray flannel suit becomes the most common outfit worn by men working at desk jobs in office buildings.



- 1957 ■ Liquid mascara is sold at retail stores in tubes with a brush inside.
- 1960s AND 1970s ■ The afro, featuring a person’s naturally curly hair trimmed in a full, evenly round shape around the head, is the most popular hairstyle among African Americans.
- c. 1965 ■ Women begin wearing miniskirts with hemlines hitting at mid-thigh or above.
- 1980s ■ Power dressing becomes a trend toward wearing expensive, designer clothing for work.
- 1990s ■ Casual Fridays becomes the name given to the practice of allowing employees to dress informally on the last day of the work week.
- 1990s ■ Grunge, a trend for wearing old, sometimes stained or ripped clothing, becomes a fashion sensation and prompts designers to sell simple flannel shirts for prices in excess of one thousand dollars.
- 2000s ■ Versions of clothing available during the 1960s and 1970s, such as bell-bottom jeans and the peasant look, return to fashion as “retro fashions.”



Words to Know



A

Appliqué: An ornament sewn, embroidered, or glued onto a garment.

B

Bias cut: A fabric cut diagonally across the weave to create a softly draped garment.

Bodice: The part of a woman's garment that covers her torso from neck to waist.

Bombast: Padding used to increase the width or add bulk to the general silhouette of a garment.

Brim: The edge of a hat that projects outward away from the head.

Brocade: A fabric woven with a raised pattern over the entire surface.

■■■ WORDS TO KNOW

C

Collar: The part of a shirt that surrounds the neck.

Crown: The portion of a hat that covers the top of the head; may also refer to the top part of the head.

Cuff: A piece of fabric sewn at the bottom of a sleeve.

D

Double-breasted: A style of jacket in which one side (usually the left) overlaps in the front of the other side, fastens at the waist with a vertical row of buttons, and has another row of buttons on the opposite side that is purely decorative. *See also* Single-breasted.

E

Embroidery: Needlework designs on the surface of a fabric, added for decoration.

G

Garment: Any article of clothing.

H

Hemline: The bottom edge of a skirt, jacket, dress, or other garment.

Hide: The pelt of an animal with the fur intact.

I

Instep: The upper surface of the arched middle portion of the human foot in front of the ankle joint.



Jersey: A knitted fabric usually made of wool or cotton.



Lapel: One of the two flaps that extend down from the collar of a coat or jacket and fold back against the chest.

Lasts: The foot-shaped forms or molds that are used to give shape to shoes in the process of shoemaking.

Leather: The skin or hide of an animal cleaned and treated to soften it and preserve it from decay.

Linen: A fabric woven from the fibers of the flax plant. Linen was one of the first woven fabrics.



Mule: A shoe without a covering or strap around the heel of the foot.

Muslin: A thin cotton fabric.



Patent Leather: Leather varnished and buffed to a high shine.

Placket: A slit in a dress, blouse, or skirt.

Pleat: A decorative feature on a garment in which fabric has been doubled over, pressed, and stitched in place.



Queue: A ponytail of hair gathered at the back of a wig with a band.

R

Ready-to-wear: Clothing manufactured in standard sizes and sold to customers without custom alterations.

S

Silhouette: The general shape or outline of the human body.

Single-breasted: A jacket fastened down the front with a single row of buttons. *See also* Double-breasted.

Sole: The bottom of a shoe, covering the bottom of the foot.

Straights: The forms, or lasts, used to make the soles of shoes without differentiating between the left and right feet.

Suede: Skin from a young goat, called kidskin or calfskin, buffed to a velvet-like finish.

Synthetic: A term used to describe chemically made fabrics, such as nylon, acrylic, polyester, and vinyl.

T

Taffeta: A shiny, smooth fabric woven of silk or other materials.

Textile: A cloth or fabric, especially when woven or knitted.

Throat: The opening of a shoe at the instep.

Twill: A fabric with a diagonal line pattern woven onto the surface.

U

Upper: The parts of a shoe above the sole.

V

Velvet: A fabric with a short, plush pile of silk, cotton, or other material.

W

Wig: A head covering worn to conceal the hair or to cover a bald head.



Early Asian Cultures

The Asian societies that began in modern-day China are among the oldest known human societies on earth. Though they were at least as developed and sophisticated as early civilizations in Mesopotamia (centered in present-day Iraq) and Egypt, these Asian societies have received far less study and attention in the West. In the last century, however, with the modernization of the ancient nations of China and Japan, people in the West have come to know a great deal about early Asian cultures. Many who learn about these ancient cultures have developed a great respect for Asian accomplishments in technology, governance, and the arts, and also gain an understanding of the distinct costume traditions. To appreciate the distinct costume traditions developed in ancient China and Japan, it is first important to understand how these civilizations developed over time.

Early Chinese societies

Evidence of human settlement in China dates back nearly 600,000 years. As in the rest of the world, these early humans were hunters and gatherers, hunting animals for food and clothing and gathering fruits and plants for food and materials. Between 5000 and 4000 B.C.E., however, people began to develop agricultural



Japanese women march in a parade, wearing blue kimonos and holding traditional Asian fans. *Reproduced by permission of © Michael S. Yamashita/CORBIS.*

societies along the banks of the Yellow River in modern-day China. Over the years these societies became more sophisticated, developing technologies and early forms of government. In about 1875 B.C.E. a powerful empire known as Xia began the first Chinese dynasty, the name for a long period of rule by several generations of a family. Our detailed knowledge of Chinese history begins with the dynasty that followed: the Shang dynasty (c. 1550–c. 1050 B.C.E.). It was with this dynasty that people began to keep written records of Chinese history.

Ancient Chinese society was divided by classes. The emperor, who was believed to have descended from the gods, was at the top of society. He, or sometimes she, was surrounded by wealthy kings, warriors, and priests. Most of the other people were farmers and were fairly poor. As is true with most ancient societies, almost all of what we know about culture and dress comes from the wealthy classes.

Though China began as a small empire centered on the Great Bend of the Yellow River, it expanded over time to become quite a

vast kingdom. As the empire expanded, kings of local areas gained more power, and they sometimes fought among themselves. In about 1050 B.C.E. the Zhou king defeated the Shang emperor and started a new dynasty, the Zhou dynasty, which lasted until 256 B.C.E. Under the Zhou, the empire expanded even more and the Chinese came into conflict with other non-Chinese peoples who they called “barbarians.” (Similarly, the ancient Romans also called those people who lived outside their borders barbarians.) The Chinese felt that their culture and clothing was far superior to that of barbarians. The Great Wall of China, a massive stone wall that stretches for nearly 4,500 miles across China, started being built in 221 B.C.E. in order to keep barbarians out of China and was completed nearly one thousand years later.

Stability and change in China

Though dynasties changed over the thousands of years of Chinese history, many of the elements of Chinese life remained the same. The Chinese had a deep respect for tradition, and this respect meant that many of the elements of culture endured throughout history. Respect for elders, the religion of Buddhism, and certain clothing customs lasted for many years. Also enduring was the rule by emperors, aided by a vast bureaucracy that saw that the emperor’s will was followed.

Much of what we know about Chinese costume comes from the Qing dynasty (1644–1911 C.E.). The leaders of the Qing dynasty were not Han Chinese, the majority ethnic group in China, but Manchus, members of people native to Manchuria. The Manchus adopted many of the Han customs and instituted other customs of their own. Their reign lasted several hundred years and featured the first significant contact with the West in Chinese history. They tried to keep Western influence out of China, but increasing trade with European nations brought much change to China. That change culminated in 1911 C.E. with a revolution that brought an end to imperial rule in China. The leader of the revolution, Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925 C.E.), hoped that all Chinese could vote and enjoy access to the country’s riches. His revolution did not entirely succeed, however, and a long period of conflict and civil war ended in 1949 when Communists, lead by Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976 C.E.), took control in China. (Communism is a system of government in which the state controls the economy and

SAMURAI

Samurai (SAM-er-eye) were Japanese warriors who were revered for their skills as warriors, but also for their distinct influence on Japanese fashion. Samurai first appeared in Japan as early as the eighth century C.E., but they truly rose to power in the eleventh century as elite warriors in service to their feudal lords, or daimyos. Other samurai served as guards of the imperial palace. The samurai were accorded special status after about 1600. They alone had the privilege of wearing two swords, they married only among their own class, and they passed their privileges on to their children. The word samurai literally means “to be on one’s guard.”

The samurai, or warrior class, replaced the court nobles who had once surrounded the ruler. These nobles had always worn ceremonial clothing and lived a very formal existence within large castles. The rulers understood that the samurai were strong and wise and capable of forming their own armies and taking control of the country. To keep the power of the samurai in check, the rulers encouraged the samurai to live by elaborate rules about dress and behavior. Samurai lived by a code of honor known as Bushido, the way of the sword. Loyalty, truthfulness, sincerity, and readi-

ness to die for honor were its main attributes. The samurai also became very dedicated to ceremony and to acquiring and displaying meaningful colors, fabrics, and styles.

Samurai were dressed for speed and travel. Their basic uniform had wide hakama trousers, open halfway down the leg and ending above the ankle. The under-kimono of the samurai could be slipped off for a sword battle, while remaining secured at the waist by the hakama’s hard waistband and ties. The overvest had impressive winged shoulders and was sleeveless, so that the samurai looked both grand and dangerous and was able to swing his arms around with his two swords.

Historically, samurai and geishas have been the two greatest influences on Japanese fashion and taste. Both had the status, visibility, and intelligence to cultivate distinctive colors, fabrics, and styles, changing them regularly to keep the public enthralled, much like today’s rock stars or actors and actresses.

Among the fashions that were developed by samurai in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the hakama, or trouser, and kataginu, a ceremonial ensemble with winged shoulders, are the most distinctive. In recent times, samurai fashions

all property and wealth are shared equally by the people.) Chairman Mao, as he was known, brought dramatic changes in Chinese life and again closed his country to the West. He also changed Chinese clothing styles dramatically in an effort to make everyone dress the same. Today, China is still a Communist country, but it is slowly opening to Western influence and fashion.

The rise and opening of Japan

Japan is an island nation that lies to the northeast of China. Though there is evidence of human habitation in Japan dating back thousands of years, it was not until settlers from China and Korea traveled to Japan in the sixth century C.E. that a definable society

have been well represented in Japanese theater, such as No plays and Kabuki, and in film, particularly the historical films of director Akira Kurosawa (1910–1998). (A No, or Noh, play is a classic Japanese dance-drama having a heroic theme, a chorus, and highly stylized action, costuming, and scenery.) The samurai film, in fact, has had a wide influence throughout the world. Akira Kurosawa's legendary movie, *The Seven Samurai* (1954), was the inspiration for the light saber battles in the film *Star Wars* (1977) and its sequels. Samurai suits of armor, made of ceramic plates sewn together, were the inspiration for the military flak jacket developed by the United States Army during World War II (1939–45). Samurai wore distinctive top-knot hairstyles and wore bold crests on their robes.

The samurai disappeared as a distinct class in the nineteenth century. In modern Japan some towns celebrate the history of the samurai by holding annual pageants or parades where participants dress in reproductions of historical samurai styles. The traditional practices of archery, swordsmanship, and martial arts all have their basis in samurai culture. Today, many practitioners of these disciplines are greatly respectful and knowledgeable about their samurai forefathers.



A samurai warrior wearing samurai armor and a horned helmet. *Reproduced by permission of © Sakamoto Photo Research Laboratory/CORBIS.*

took root. Early Japanese society was deeply rooted in Chinese customs and traditions of religion, governance, and costume. The Heian period, which lasted from 794 to 1185 C.E., was the first flowering of a unique Japanese society. The Japanese began to develop distinct clothing traditions that were more formalized and ritualized than those in China.

Following the collapse of the Heian period in 1185 C.E., a number of powerful kings vied for power. Each king surrounded himself with warriors known as samurai. The samurai had a distinct warrior culture of their own, with rules of behavior and dress. The culture had a great influence on fashion in Japan. The most powerful samurai was known as the shogun, and he ruled with the power of an emperor. In 1637 the Tokugawa shogunate (the name for the

government of the shogun), which had assumed power in Japan, closed the country to any exposure to the West. For nearly two hundred years Japan resisted Western influences. It retained its traditional culture, while the world around changed. Eventually powerful British and American governments forced Japan to open to trade.

In 1867 the rule of shoguns ended and an emperor was restored. The emperor, Meiji, believed that Japan must become a modern nation. He allowed the Japanese people to vote, and he developed a modern economy. Japan became a powerful nation, so powerful, in fact, that it opposed the United States and its European allies in World War II (1939–45). Though Japan lost the war, it remains a powerful industrial nation to this day.

Late in the nineteenth century the Japanese people adopted Western dress. Their traditional dress, which dates back to the earliest years of Japanese civilization, is still worn, however, as a way of showing respect and love for ancient traditions. Traditional Japanese dress is reserved primarily for special occasions and ceremonies. Some fear that by the end of the twenty-first century traditional Japanese dress will disappear altogether.

China and Japan are not the only Asian nations with deep roots in the past. Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and many other Asian nations also claim cultural and costume traditions with ancient roots.

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■ Clothing of Early Asian Cultures

Up until very recently, people in the Western world had a very limited understanding of the kinds of clothing worn in Asia. Our pictures of Asian clothing relied on stereotypes of Japanese people wearing kimono, or long robes with wide sleeves, and Chinese people wearing Mao suits, the simply cut, dull-colored outfits favored by the Communist Party. In fact, the peoples of Asia have a clothing tradition every bit as rich and varied as that of the cultures of the West. Understanding of Asian clothing traditions remains rather limited, however, for a number of reasons. Differences in language and culture have made studying Asian cultures difficult for Western historians. China has been closed to Western historians for political reasons for much of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and because of the nation's poverty it has not devoted a great deal of money to its own archeological research. Japanese costume is much better known, thanks to that nation's wealth and great respect for tradition and research. Until early in the twenty-first century, however, the history of fashion was considered unimportant and didn't attract the attention of capable scholars. Today, thanks to growing research and to the translation of Asian works, the basics of the clothing traditions of two major Asian cultures—China and Japan—are better understood.

Ancient Chinese dress

Organized societies emerged in China as early as 5000 B.C.E., or about the same time as they did in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, modern-day Iraq. By about 1875 B.C.E. these societies grew complex enough to organize large areas of land and people into the first of the Chinese dynasties, organized societies ruled by members of a particular family. These dynasties controlled China,

though not without interruption, until 1911 C.E. Beginning with the earliest Xia dynasty (1875–1550 B.C.E.), we can see some of the basic forms of Chinese dress. The majority of the people wore a simple outfit consisting of a tunic or jacket called a san and a pair of loose trousers called a ku. Depending upon the time of year, the tunic might be short, ending at the waist, or much longer, reaching to just above the ankle. The earliest known examples of such an outfit show the use of the characteristic Chinese collar, usually known as the mandarin collar, which stood up from a round neck opening, with a small gap in the front.

The customary garment of the upper classes in ancient China, which included the emperor and his family, a court of nobles, and a wide range of officials, was the robe, a long-sleeved, loose-fitting garment that fastened in the front. The exact cut and style of these robes changed significantly over the course of Chinese history. At times the sleeves were narrow; at other times quite loose and billowing. Sometimes the robes were belted, while at other times they hung loose about the waist. These robes were fastened either down the middle or across the right side of the chest, but never across the left. Fastenings that crossed the left side of the chest were considered barbaric. Most often these robes were made of silk, but some emperors made a show of wearing robes made of other materials, often to demonstrate their frugality or to make a political statement. By the time of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911 C.E.), the highly ornamented dragon robe had become the signature garment of the ruling class.

In the earliest years of China, poorer people used hemp to make their clothing. Hemp was a fiber made from a tall Asian herb and is similar to linen. Beginning in the Song dynasty (960–1279 C.E.), cotton replaced hemp as the primary material used for the garments of common people. Cotton could be dyed more easily and was easier to grow. Padding was added to clothes for cold seasons, but the garments did not change a great deal from season to season. The material preferred by members of the upper classes was silk. Spun by silk worms that lived in mulberry trees, silk was a rich, soft fabric that was treasured for its sheen and its comfort. It could take many different color dyes. One fabric that was traditionally shunned by the Chinese was wool. From the earliest times wool was considered a “barbarian” fabric used only by non-Chinese. The association of wool with hated foreigners was so strong that it lasted until the twentieth century.

Chinese costume has always been characterized by a deep respect for conventions and for the symbolism of certain colors and decorations. The clothing worn by the emperor was considered especially important. According to Valerie Steel and John S. Major, authors of *China Chic: East Meets West*, clothing “was an instrument of the magical aura of power through which the emperor ruled the world; in addition it served to distinguish the civilized from the barbarous, the male from the female, the rich from the poor, the proper from the improper.” From as early as the third century B.C.E. written documents indicate that the emperor wore certain colors of clothing at certain times of the year—yellow for the summer, for example—in order to lead the changing of the seasons. Strict rules insured that clothing showed clear distinctions between the different ranks of society, and it was considered a serious offense for poor people to wear showy or decorative clothes.



A young Asian man working in the fields wearing a red del jacket for warmth. Reproduced by permission of © Dean Conger/CORBIS.

China and modern dress

China maintained its traditional practices in clothing for an unusually long time, right up to the twentieth century. Then, beginning in 1911, China’s clothing styles changed very dramatically. A revolution led by Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) toppled the emperor, Pu Yi, and finally allowed Western dress to enter China. (Western dress had been either forbidden or frowned upon during the nineteenth century.) Many Chinese people adopted Western fashions. The cheongsam dress for women was a combination of Western and Chinese styles, and it became very popular. By 1949, however, a violent civil war brought a Communist government to China. (Communism is a system of government in which the state controls the economy and all property and wealth are shared equally by the people.) Under Communist rule, Western dress was again shunned. The new government, which controls China to this day, favored a basic garment called a Mao suit (named after the Communist leader



A woman wears a bright red kimono, one of the most recognized garments from Japan.

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Mao Tse-tung [1893–1976]), with plain trousers and a tunic with a mandarin collar and two pockets on the chest. People of all classes throughout China wore the Mao suit, and its drab uniformity showed the world that there were no class differences between people. As China modernized in the last twenty years of the twentieth century, some Western dress began to appear, but for many the Mao suit remained the common garment for daily wear.

Japan

Although we know that people lived on the islands that make up the modern nation of Japan from as early as 13,000 B.C.E., our first real knowledge of Japanese culture comes from the period when Chinese influences began to be felt, in about the sixth century C.E. Japan borrowed many Chinese customs, including rule by emperors, growing

rice, the Buddhist religion, and many clothing traditions, including the wearing of robes for the wealthy and trousers and simple tunics for the poor. During the Heian period (794–1185 C.E.), however, the Japanese began to create distinct versions of clothing. While poorer classes continued to wear fairly simple clothing, including loose trousers and a simple linen shirt for men and a loose skirt for women, members of the upper classes and nobility began to develop very distinct clothing traditions.

The basic Japanese garments were the kosode, a short-sleeved shirt that opened in front, and the hakama, or long trousers. The kosode eventually evolved into the garment most associated with Japan, the kimono. The kimono, whose name means “thing to wear,” is the Japanese equivalent of the Chinese robe and is worn by both men and women. It is a long garment tied at the waist with an obi, or sash. The kimono has many variations according to the circumstance in which it is worn. Many other garments form part of the traditional Japanese dress, such as the haori, the ho, the kataginu, and the kinu. A common characteristic of

Japanese dress is the careful attention to detail in the way the garment is cut and the beauty of the fabric.

One of the most important influences on Japanese fashion came from the samurai, a class of elite warriors who helped secure the power of the rulers of Japan's various states. The samurai were a distinct social class, and they developed rules and traditions for clothing that were very complex and linked to ceremonial occasions. Another class of mostly female entertainers, known as geisha, also had a great influence on Japanese dress.

The Japanese were first exposed to Western dress in 1542, when British and Portuguese traders visited the nation, but they did not embrace Western dress until the late nineteenth century. In the twentieth century most Japanese people adopted Western dress, such as trousers and suits for men and skirts and blouses for women, for their everyday wear, but traditional dress remained a very important part of their culture, worn for important events like weddings and funerals.

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■ ■ ■ Cheongsam

Two Chinese women wearing patterned cheongsams, which are considered the national dress of Hong Kong. *Reproduced by permission of © Bettmann/CORBIS.*



The cheongsam (CHONG-sahm) is the dress that most westerners associate with China. It is a long, close-fitting dress with short sleeves, a slit up one side, a mandarin collar (a round, stand-up collar that is worn close to the neck), and a fastening across the right side of the upper chest. The cheongsam, also known as the qi-pao or the cheung sam, is considered the national dress of Hong Kong, a major island off the coast of China. Though outsiders see the cheongsam as typically Chinese, in fact the dress represents a mixing of Chinese and Western clothing styles.

The cheongsam first appeared shortly after the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, which had ruled China since 1644. China, which had been isolated from the rest of the world during the Qing dynasty, began to modernize fairly quickly, both in its politics and its economy. Women especially began to have more freedom and wanted to modernize their clothing to allow more freedom of movement and comfort. But they didn't want to just adopt Western dress. The cheongsam represented a compromise. It used traditional Chinese fabrics like silk and included a traditional collar and fastening across the right side. But the form-fitting cut and the lack of binding ties were distinctly Western.

The cheongsam soon came to represent the politics of a modernizing China. It was advertised heavily and worn by famous actresses, often with high heels popular in the West. However, when the Communist Party took control of mainland China in 1949, the cheongsam quickly went out of

style. (Communism is a system of government in which the state controls the economy and all property and wealth are shared equally by the people.) By 1966 it was banned by the ruling party. In Hong Kong, on the southeast coast of China, however, which until 1997 was a crown colony of Great Britain with a majority Chinese population, the cheongsam never went out of style. The dress was particularly popular during the 1950s and 1960s, for it marked Hong Kong's resistance to the changes being brought to China by the Communists, who severely restricted what the Chinese people could wear.

Since the 1960s the cheongsam has been adopted as a uniform of sorts in the service industry in Hong Kong, but in the 1990s the dress had a new boom in popularity, in part because China and Hong Kong were reunified in 1997. Western designers offered their own versions of the cheongsam, and women in Hong Kong wore the dress to celebrate their cultural identity. As a sign of the importance of the dress, the Mattel toy company issued a special collectible Barbie doll, the Golden Qi-Pao Barbie, for the occasion.

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■ ■ ■ Dragon Robes

The dragon is one of the most ancient and powerful symbols in Chinese culture. A composite of many animals, including a snake, an eagle, a tiger, and a devil, the dragon symbolized the natural world and transformation. It was associated with Chinese emperors from at least the first century B.C.E. Beginning late in the Song dynasty (960–1279 C.E.), emperors began to wear luxurious robes decorated with figures of dragons. By the time of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the dragon robe, in its many varieties, was

an important garment worn by the emperor and his ruling circle. Many Qing dynasty dragon robes have survived, and they give us a rare glimpse of the richness of early Chinese garments.

The basic form of the dragon robe was simple. It was a long robe, reaching to the ankles, with long sleeves and a circular opening for the neck. A large front panel on the wearer's left side of the garment was wrapped and fastened at the right side, in the traditional Chinese style. But the simplicity in construction was more than made up for in the intricacy and richness of the fabric and decoration. The key element on a dragon robe was, of course, the dragon. Most dragon robes had one large dragon in the center of the garment, with smaller dragons on the sleeves and lower down the hem. The dragons swam on a sea of intricately patterned material, with geometric designs, natural scenes, waves, or other brightly colored figures adorning the lower half of the garment and the sleeves. The robes were made of rich silk, sometimes in several layers or with silk padding to add warmth. Occasionally the robes would include embroidery at the neck fastening or the cuffs.

The various dragon robes worn in the Qing court sent signals about the rank and distinction of the wearer. Robes featuring the five-clawed dragon, called a long, could be worn by the emperor and his sons and selected court members of high distinction. Certain princes and lower nobles could wear a robe featuring the mang, or four-clawed dragon. And even lower ranking officials could wear a robe with three-clawed dragons. The presence of additional ornamentation—such as an embroidered border picturing the sacred Mount Kunlun, in western China, which was believed to be the center of the universe, or images of the “twelve sacred symbols” (the sun, moon, stars, dragon, pheasant, mountains, sacrificial cups, waterweed, grains of millet, flames, sacrificial axe, and the fu symbol, an emblem associated with the power of the emperor)—was also used to signify the wearer's place in society.

The end of the Qing dynasty in 1911 meant the end of the dragon robe, since the revolution that brought more representative government to China forever ended the customs of the imperial court. While the dragon continues to be an important symbol in China, the dragon robe is an emblem of the past.

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■ ■ ■ Hakama

The hakama is a pleated, two-part lower garment usually referred to as either full-cut trousers or a divided skirt. It began as a long trailing garment in ancient times and in more recent times has been worn as a standard part of male ceremonial attire and by martial artists.

Originally, the hakama was worn as an outer garment to protect the samurai warriors’ legs as they rode their horses, like a cowboy’s leather leggings called chaps. As the samurai used horses less, they continued the practice of wearing hakama as a kind of identifying uniform.

The hakama has seven pleats, five in the front and two in the back. The pleats each have a name and a symbolic meaning: the first pleat, Yuki, symbolizes courage, valor, and bravery; Jin stands for humanity, charity, benevolence; Gi stands for justice, righteousness, and integrity; Rei stands for etiquette, courtesy, and civility; Makoto symbolizes sincerity, honesty, and reality; Chugi stands for loyalty, fidelity, and devotion; and the last pleat, Meiyo, symbolizes honor, dignity, and prestige.

The hakama tie over the top of the kimono and are most often made in solid

Three Japanese men wearing traditional samurai clothing, including a hakama, or pleated lower garment. *Reproduced by permission of © National Archives and Records Administration.*



colors, depending on the occasion, or in very fine patterns in men's formal wear. Some women wear hakama, especially since the late nineteenth century, and generally it is to demonstrate scholarship or mastery. For example, hakama are often worn when a woman graduates from college or when she performs traditional music.

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[See also Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Kataginu; Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Kimono]

■ ■ ■ Haori

The outer garment worn over the kosode (a sort of robe) by both men and women, the haori is cut like a kimono but is shorter, varying in length from mid thigh to mid calf. The haori has one layer of silk, like a kimono, and is lined with another layer of silk or cotton. It is loose-fitting and T-shaped. Unlike the kimono, the haori front does not overlap and is not secured by an obi, a type of sash. It is fastened at the center front by means of braided silk cords.

Geisha, professional hostesses and entertainers, were the first women to wear haori over their kimonos. During the seventeenth century geisha in the Fukagawa neighborhood of Edo, as Tokyo was then called, started to wear haori to assert their mastery and skill in the arts “like men.” At first a radical fashion statement, within a century it was common to see women wear either haori under their kimono or hakama (full-cut trousers or a divided skirt) over their kimono, but not both. By this time the geishas were the only Japanese who would not wear the haori.

During the nineteenth century the haori became the chief garment for displaying the mon, or family crests, at occasions such as weddings and funerals. The mon are small, usually white logos that

are simple decorative designs of natural symbols that families have adopted.

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[See also Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Kosode; Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Geisha box on p. 231]

Ho

The ho is the outermost robe of the ceremonial form of dress called sokutai, the Japanese equivalent of the Western man's formal suit. Noblemen, or those of the upper class, were wearing sokutai back in the Heian period (794–1185 C.E.), and today the crown prince of Japan wears this costume in official ceremonies. The ho robe is made of a finely woven silk that is transparent and extremely stiff from having been starched. It has large open sleeves that reveal the layers below.

The ho is especially beautiful in its color and how it coordinates with the colors of the rest of the clothing ensemble, especially the layer beneath it. The Japanese term for this color sense is *kasaneno irome*. It means that the colors of each item of the sokutai are carefully mixed and carry messages about the occasion and the season, as well as the tradition of the imperial, or royal, household and history.

Many Japanese believe that fashion was at its greatest level of sophistication during the Heian period and that is why the sokutai has been preserved to the present day for the most important ceremonies. The clothing ideals of the time were to combine a love of beauty with an appreciation of nature. All of the patterns, textures, and colors of the various elements of the outfit were derived from the experience of the natural world.

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■ ■ ■ Kataginu

Two Kabuki actors. The man on the left wears a kataginu, a vest with broad shoulders designed for maximum mobility in swordplay or the martial arts. Reproduced by permission of © Michael Maslan Historic Photographs/CORBIS.

Kataginu are men's vests with broad, wing-like shoulders, worn with hakama, or trousers, to form a kamishimo, or complementary outfit. The hakama are worn in a contrasting color or fabric from the kataginu. Also worn are naga-bakama, trousers in the same fabric as the kataginu, giving the impression of an elegant coverall called naga-gamishimo.



The costume is designed for maximum mobility in swordplay or the martial arts. It was historically worn for combat by samurai warriors. It combined elegant design with the flexibility essential for spontaneous combat. The colors and patterns of the outfit indicated the clan that the samurai served.

The kataginu is built like a big shawl or collar, with a flat panel in back tapering into lapels in the front and eventually two streamers that are tucked into the hakama to secure them. The fabric is usually very stiff silk, linen, or hemp, with a stiff lining.

Kataginu are some of the most ancient forms of Japanese dress, dating from before the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.). They are now seen only in ceremonial costumes worn by Japan's imperial family or in Kabuki theater costumes. In theater the garment always represents the role of any samurai serving the daimyo, or ruler.

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[See also Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Samurai box on p. 208; Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Hakama]

■ ■ ■ Kimono

The kimono is the most basic term for traditional Japanese dress. The term literally translates as “thing to wear.” The word kimono came into use in the late nineteenth century as a way to distinguish native clothing from Western clothing, and thereafter became more common in Japan. Kimono refers to the principal outer garment of Japanese dress, a long robe with wide sleeves, made of various materials and in many patterns. It is generally unlined in summer, lined in autumn and spring, and padded in winter.

The history of the kimono

The kimono's form was first introduced from China as an undergarment. Its use as a normal form of dress for men and women dates from the Muromachi period (1392–1568). At that time the samurai, or warrior class, replaced the court nobles who always wore ceremonial clothing and lived in castle towns. Clothing increasingly needed to be wearable for travel and urban outdoor life and the kimono was the foundation of these trends. Women's kimonos became very decorative from the middle of the Edo period (1600–1868), in spite of bans on luxurious living imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate, the rulers of Japan at the time.

Japanese schoolgirls dressed in traditional Japanese kimonos which, in the past, could indicate the social rank, occupation, or age of the wearer. *Reproduced by permission of © Michael Maslan Historic Photographs/CORBIS.*

Japanese clothing was not traditionally accented with costly or decorative accessories, particularly jewelry, hats, or gloves, as Western dress traditionally is. Instead, all of the expression of taste and elegance was focused upon the kimono, the central and key garment in Japanese dress, particularly in the case of women. Thus developments in the kimono as the principal garment for men and



women of all social classes revolved around patterns and colors. At first the only patterning used was in the weaving of the fabric, but, given that the expansive robe was a great canvas for the artist, distinctive designs stretching across the whole garment were created in tie-dye, resist-dye, embroidery, and other methods, particularly for wealthy customers. The wealthy could also layer more kimonos and coordinated the colors that peeked out at the neckline and cuffs. Some kimonos were painted upon with ink, like a brush painting on paper.

The kimono is a comfortable garment for people to wear who sit on the floor or on a tatami mat, a straw floor covering common in Japanese homes, as is done in Japanese culture. Its length can be adjusted by how much it is folded over when the obi, or sash, is tied; its width can vary depending on how much it is wrapped and how tightly the obi is tied; and it can be layered for changes in climate.

There have been few fundamental changes in the shape of the kimono since the eighteenth century, except for minor changes in hem length and sleeve or collar shape. The kimono can be either formal or relatively casual, depending on its materials, pattern, and the accessories worn with it. Since its beginning, the kimono has denoted social rank and occupation, especially for men, and age, particularly for women. Today, people are less knowledgeable about the specific rules of dress and tend to choose a kimono based on its appearance.

Kimonos in contemporary Japan

Though Western dress is now the norm in contemporary Japan, the kimono is still worn on special occasions. There are schools in modern Japanese cities that train native Japanese on the finer points of wearing the kimono. They instruct in the complicated ways to tie the obi, as well as the subtle ways of draping the kimono, walking in it, and selecting and combining the colors and patterns. The kimono still expresses the wearer's good taste as well as sense of propriety or social understanding.

Although the modern kimono is generally a T-shaped robe, there are a variety of subtle variations for different wearers and different occasions. The furisode, which literally means "swinging sleeves," is worn by young unmarried women. The sleeves of the

SILK

● One of the strongest and most luxurious fabrics in the world, silk has a long history. The cocoons, or casings, of the silk moth have been used for weaving fine fabric in China for almost five thousand years. The philosopher Confucius (551–c. 479 B.C.E.) told the story of Empress Xi Ling-Shi, who had a silk cocoon drop from a mulberry tree into her cup of hot tea and discovered the cocoon's strong and very long silk filaments. It was the empress who, around 2640 B.C.E., organized the harvesting and weaving of these long strands into silk. (Most historians believe that this story about the origins of silk production is not based in fact, but they do not know the exact origins.)

At first the Chinese carefully confined production to their own use, but demand for the lustrous fabric of China's imperial court spread. Traders seeking silk soon created an overland route to China that became known as the "Silk Road." By 139 B.C.E. the Silk Road had become the world's longest highway, stretching from eastern China to the Mediterranean. For years it was the principal east-west trade route for goods and ideas.

The Chinese were careful to protect their secret methods, searching travelers at the borders for cocoons or eggs. By 200 C.E., however, Chinese immigrants established silk industries in Korea and Japan. About one hundred years later silk began to be produced in the Indian subcontinent. Later the silk moth was secretly exported to the Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.)

in the Middle East by Persian monks, from present-day Iran, who smuggled the cocoons out in their hollow canes. They established a new silk industry in Constantinople, modern-day Istanbul, Turkey, under the protection of the emperor Justinian (483–565 C.E.). The silk worm was only introduced to Europe in the thirteenth century when Christian crusaders (those who fought to gain control of the Holy Land from the Muslims) traveling in the Middle East brought silk weavers from Constantinople to Italy.

The silkworm is actually not a worm at all but a caterpillar. Although it is thought to be a native species of China, there are no longer any silk moths living in the wild anywhere in the world. All that exist are raised to make silk.

After the domesticated silkworms are born, they eat exclusively mulberry leaves and constantly for about a month, increasing their weight by ten thousand times and shedding their skin four times. When they have eaten enough, they begin to produce a jelly-like substance made of protein that hardens when it comes into contact with air. At the same time they produce a gum called sericin to hold the filament together. After three or four days they have spun the cocoon, which looks like a puffy white ball. In eight or nine days the cocoons are killed by steam or baking, placed in water to loosen the sericin, and unwound. The filaments average 650 to 1,000 yards long. Between five and eight of them are twisted together to make one thread.

Today China and Japan produce over half of the world's silk. Silk is known for its resiliency, elasticity, and strength.

furisode average about eighteen inches long or more, although a variation called chu-furisode can have more practical sleeves of about fifteen inches. This type of kimono can also sometimes have three-foot-long sleeves that sweep the ground, but that is usually for theatrical or ceremonial effect, such as those worn by maiko, the novice geishas, a special group of female entertainers. The armholes of the

furisode are long slits, allowing for ease of movement and ventilation. Wearing the furisode is an announcement that the woman is eligible for marriage.

The houmongi is the formal kimono worn by women once they are married. It might be worn to weddings or to tea ceremonies. It often has a pattern called eba, which spreads over the kimono without appearing to be disturbed by the seams through a special method of dyeing. The tomesode, sometimes called the edozuma, is another formal kimono, worn by married women only to the weddings of close relatives. This kimono has a pattern on the lower front of the garment from around the knees to the hem. The bride in a traditional Japanese wedding wears the most formal kimono, called a uchikake. It is a long kimono coat with a padded hem, which is made either from stiff, thickly woven brocade or satin. The kimono trails the ground on all sides, and because of the length and stiffness of the kimono the bride must be assisted in walking.

Kimonos for men are usually made in subdued colors and patterns of black, gray, brown, and shades of dark blue. If they are decorated, the usual patterns are fine checks, polka dots, or bird's-eye designs. The formal kimonos for men are called monsuke, which means "with crests." They are made of plain black silk with five crests and are worn with a white under-kimono called a juban and with hakama, or trousers, in gray or brown. The Mofuku kimono is the most somber of modern ceremonial kimonos, and it is worn only for funerals and mostly by men. The Mofuku is usually made of black silk, with family crests at key places. It is worn with a long white undergarment called a naga-juban, black accessories, and black fabric zori, or sandals.

Kimonos are worn tightly wrapped around the body from left to right. (Only the kimonos of the dead are wrapped right over left). The actual garment is five inches longer than its wearing length, and it is drawn up and tied with a slim silk cord under the obi so that the hem is at the wearer's heels. The obi adds padding to the middle so that the body is tubular looking, the preferred silhouette in Japan. Worn with the kimono is an undergarment called a shitagi, which is simply a thin under-kimono. The juban is another undergarment, worn short by men and long for women. Its neckband, or eri, is black silk for men and made of crepe or plain silk for women.

Kimonos are not usually purchased ready-made. They are sold in a length of cloth called a tan, which is usually about sixteen feet long and one foot eight inches wide. Each kimono is cut from this single piece of fabric, with no fabric wasted. They are very simple to make, and all are made in much the same dimensions. In order to be cleaned, the kimonos are usually ripped apart and cleaned as flat fabric.

Today there are kimono artists who are considered by the Japanese government to be national treasures and who preserve historic techniques for the decoration of the kimono. Their masterpieces are unique and can be more expensive than a magnificent painting. Some have been sold for upwards of one hundred thousand dollars.

Most modern-day Japanese people have never owned or worn a kimono. Some may rent one for the several occasions in their life that call for them. Nevertheless, the kimono is the instantly recognizable symbol of Japanese fashion.

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[See also Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Obi]

■ ■ ■ Kinu

The word kinu (KEE-nu) literally means “silk” in Japanese but was the term for a short coat worn in ancient Japan. It is one of the earliest clothing forms identified as Japanese, and it can be

seen on haniwa figurines, sculptured pottery placed in burial mounds, from the Nara period (710–794 C.E.). Its round neckline and tubular sleeves were derived from ancient Chinese dress forms.

The early form of the kinu was more complicated to construct and wear than the kosode, which later became the basic Japanese garment. The kinu was more broadly Asian, having close cousins in the shirts still worn in Korea and Southeast Asia. Its round neckline was fastened closed with a knot, and it had an opening running down the right side of the chest. The front and back of the garment were straight, like bibs, and had long sleeves with open armpits. Although it shares a name with silk, the garment came to Japan before the arrival of silk. The earliest kinu were made of hemp, a fiber made from a tall Asian herb and similar to linen, or other plant fibers.

After the twelfth century C.E., the kinu was worn by warriors as the shirt under a big round-collared robe called a kariginu, literally “hunting robe,” which was the informal dress of nobles, the upper class. They were worn for archery and swordsmanship, as well as riding on horseback.

In modern Japan the kinu only exists as a historical reproduction in ceremonial or theatrical usage, but close descendants of the kinu are still worn elsewhere in Asia and the Pacific Islands.

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■ ■ ■ Kosode

The kosode (KOH-so-da) is a basic item of Japanese dress for both men and women. It was once worn as an undergarment, and is what most people imagine when using the much broader term kimono. The literal meaning of the term kosode is “small sleeve,” which refers to the sleeve opening. Kosode are T-shaped and roomy in cut and more than full-length. They evolved from the original

Japanese robe, called the hirosode, which flowed with many colored fabrics layered one on top of another.

When Japan changed from a medieval castle-centered society in the late fourteenth century, women in the royal court changed from wearing fourteen unlined hirosodes to wearing the scant kosode with red hakama, or trousers, on top. Soon the hakama were set aside by women and the kosode became a full-length garment in its own right. However, since the hakama had held the garment closed, when the kosode became the basic female garment women needed a sash, a band about the waist, to customize the kosode to the wearer's size. Thus the simple obi sash was invented.

Over time kosode gradually developed into a wide variety of styles, with patterns and fabrics designed with the wearer's shape in mind. Kosode making has long been a thriving industry at the very heart of Japanese culture, and today, although most of the population wear Western-style clothing for ordinary dress, it is still very important to the Japanese identity.

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■ ■ ■ Mandarin Shirt

What westerners now call a mandarin shirt is actually a form of dress that dates back to the ancient Han dynasty (207 B.C.E.–200 C.E.) in China. At that time it was called the ju and was characterized by its high round neckline that was fastened off center. It was characteristically worn with a pleated skirt called a chun that was also fastened off center.

Ancient and modern mandarin shirts are very fitted to the body and are closed on the right side of the neckline and shoulder. They

GEISHA

In their lifetimes, most Japanese people never meet a geisha (GAY-shah), a woman trained to provide lighthearted company and entertainment to men. Yet to many outsiders, the geisha is a symbol of Japanese culture. Today, in fact, there are fewer than two thousand geishas, and they live mostly in Tokyo, Kyoto, and a few resort areas in Japan. They charge men as much as one thousand dollars an hour for their company. Geisha are not prostitutes, as many westerners believe, but classical artists whose art involves entertaining men. While prostitution has been illegal in Japan since 1957, being a geisha is a legal profession because it is presumed to be an important cultural practice.

The arts, or “*gei*,” that the geisha practice are classical Japanese dance, called “*Nihon buyo*,” and music. Art is life for the geisha and to polish one’s life into a work of art is the geisha’s ideal. Their practices are called “*shikitari*” and are a very specific kind of custom and method for poised living and communication. Many in Japan consider geishas to be the opposite of wives. They are artistic rather than practical, sexy rather than proper, and witty rather than serious.

The separate society of the geisha is called the “flower and willow world.” The rules of the flower and willow world demand proper conduct, a sense of obligation to the men served, duty, and discipline. These strict rules keep most

modern Japanese women from pursuing it as a career. A third of geishas are the daughters of geishas. Their training includes years of “*minari*,” or learning by observation. Geishas work from a “*ryotei*,” a teahouse licensed to provide geisha entertainment. Men who go to *ryotei* are usually very wealthy and also very culturally refined and educated to appreciate classical arts.

The first geishas were actually men. From about 1600, customers who frequented geishas were actually visiting prostitutes, but they also went to parties that included sociable conversation, eating, drinking, and dance and music performed by male geishas, or “*otoko geisha*.” By 1780, however, the female geishas, or “*onna geisha*,” greatly outnumbered male geishas and by 1800 a geisha was presumed to be a female.

The geishas have long been known as fashion leaders. Among the fashion innovations of geisha are the wide band *obi*, or sash, and the customs of women wearing either *hakama* (loose trousers or split skirt) and *haori* (an outer garment) over the base *kimono*. Over the years many of the conventions of feminine fashion were invented in the flower and willow world, and then abandoned by the geisha society when they entered the mainstream. The profession of the geisha has survived into the twenty-first century by evolving into something quite different than what it had once been. Once cultural innovators, today geisha are caretakers of traditions of Japanese classical music, dance, manners, and fashion.

can have either long or short sleeves but generally have short sleeves. Their edges are often finished with a fabric binding of a contrasting color.

The *chun-ju* garment combination can be seen in figurines of the Han era and was the characteristic basic dress for many centuries in China. During the seventh to tenth centuries C.E., the Sui and Tang dynasties spread Chinese culture, particularly dress, throughout all of Asia and beyond. That is why the mandarin shirt, and

variations on it, are native dress in many areas of Southeast Asia, Indonesia, and beyond.

Mandarin shirts evolved throughout Chinese history and are now the national form of dress. The shirt is sold in patterned silk to westerners. They are generally based on eighteenth-century styles of silk brocade fabric and today have metal buttons that duplicate the shape of the original knotted silk ones.

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■ ■ ■ Obi

The obi (OH-bee) is the waist wrapper that is always worn with the kimono and is essential to Japanese dress. The kimono, a long robe with wide sleeves worn as an outer garment, has no fastenings of its own. A kimono's length can be adjusted by how much it is folded over when the obi is tied and its width can be varied by how much it is wrapped and how tightly the obi is tied. The obi adds padding to the middle so that the body is tubular looking, the preferred silhouette in Japan.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the obi was merely a narrow strip of plain cloth, wrapped around the waist and tied securely. The wider and more decorated obi became fashionable in the eighteenth century. The women's kimono became even more elaborate during the Edo period, later in the eighteenth century, and the obi developed along with the kimono. Women's obi became wide decorative bands made from stiff, luxurious material and were made in a variety of styles. With each elaboration, the obi became more symbolic. Obi for men's kimonos have tended to re-

main practical and less ornamental. They are usually made of unsewn bands of crepe or other soft fabric.

The methods of tying the obi varied with fashion, and the elaborate fabrics and patterns made obi both costly gift items and collectibles. Among the accessories for a properly tied obi are the obijime, a sash of braided ribbon or stuffed fabric that holds the wider obi in place, and the obiage, a shawl tied around the top edge of the obi to hide the inner support.

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[See also Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: [Kimono](#)]



This geisha, or female entertainer, wears a bright red obi at her waist and plays the drum.
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■ Headwear of Early Asian Cultures

Over thousands of years of Chinese and later Japanese history, many different forms of headwear and hairstyles were worn, depending both upon fashion and upon the restrictions that were placed on fashions at any given time. In this brief accounting, just a few of the most distinctive of those styles will be discussed. One thing that should be remembered is that both the Chinese and Japanese people have deep black hair. Hair coloring was not used in either of these Asian cultures.

Chinese customs

As best is known, men in early Chinese societies wore their hair long but tied it up in a knot that they wore close to the top of their head. This custom changed dramatically in 1644 C.E. when the Manchu people took control of the throne, founding the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). The Manchus were of a different ethnic group than the majority of the Chinese people, who were known as Han Chinese. Upon taking power the Manchus established a law that required that all Han Chinese men shave the front of their heads and wear their hair in a single long braid that hung down the center of the back of the neck. This braid of hair was called a queue. The queue remained in style until the revolution of 1911, which brought an end to imperial rule in China, after which Chinese men tended to wear their hair shorter and cut in various styles similar to those in the West.



Japanese hairstyles often relied on pins, combs, and other forms of fasteners to keep hair in place.

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Chinese men wore a variety of hats over the many years of their civilization, but two are especially distinctive. The first, known as the summer hat, was conical in shape and made out of rattan, a type of palm, sometimes covered in silk. Its sloping sides extended to the ears and provided protection from the sun. The winter hat was equally distinctive. This hat had a close fitting crown and a long brim that was turned straight up all the way around the head. Extending from the center of the crown was an ornament or a feather, depending on the rank of the wearer. These winter hats could be made of silk, fur, or velvet.

Chinese women tended not to wear hats, but their hairstyles were very important. The hair of Chinese women was naturally straight, and they wore it long. It was well suited to styling. Women used a sticky oil made from wood shavings as a kind of gel and sculpted their hair into styles that wound or piled the hair at the back of the head and the sides. Hair pins and combs were used to hold the hair in place, and flowers and ribbons were used as ornaments.

Japanese customs

Japanese women's hair and headwear customs resembled those of the Chinese in many ways. They used their beautiful dark hair as their primary ornament and developed a variety of complex coiled and wrapped hairstyles. As with so many areas of Japanese life, hairstyles had specific names and were worn for different occasions. The dominant formal hairdo was called a shimada. With this style a woman's long hair is wrapped up from the crown of the head, secured around a small bar, and then spread into a chignon, or a knot of hair tied at the back of the neck. Informal hairstyles also relied on pins, combs, and other forms of hair fasteners.

For much of their early history, Japanese men wore their hair long and tied back into a queue. They also wore long beards and mustaches. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Japanese men began to shave off all their facial hair. This is a custom that has continued to this day.

Changes in the twentieth century

As both China and Japan modernized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most people adopted Western cus-

toms in headwear and hairstyles. Following the rise of communism in China after 1949, however, hairstyles became much simpler. (Communism is a system of government in which the state controls the economy and all property and wealth are shared equally by the people.) The Communists wanted to strip away the differences between people, and they discouraged women from wearing expensive decorative items in their hair. Women's hairstyles became much simpler and less adorned.

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■ ■ Body Decorations of Early Asian Cultures

While both Chinese and Japanese cultures have some interesting and even spectacular traditions of body decoration, what is perhaps most striking is how little these early Asian cultures depended upon ornament. Both cultures valued simplicity. They did not wear large amounts of jewelry, nor did they have complicated ways of painting their faces with makeup. They did, however, have particular items of their overall costume that allowed for more display. Most of their body decoration customs are difficult to date and are assumed to have begun in ancient times. Many still exist to this day, showing the stability of Asian decorative traditions.

Chinese and Japanese women both used their long, black hair as a primary means of expressing their sense of style. For example, they might wear any number of hair accessories, including stickpins, bars, combs, and bands. These items might be made of ivory, wood, tortoiseshell, silver, or other materials. Flowers were also commonly worn in the hair, with bright colors chosen to contrast with the wearer's black hair.

Both Chinese and Japanese men and women valued clean, pale faces and a carefully groomed appearance. White pancake makeup was spread all over the face, sometimes quite thickly. For many years this white makeup contained lead, a chemical that caused real damage to the complexion over time. Women plucked and shaped their eyebrows and used red makeup on their lips. Lip painting was aimed at making the mouth look very small, the preferred style. In Japan, female entertainers known as geishas were especially concerned with their makeup.

Dramatic makeup was an important component of the national theater traditions of both China and Japan. In China members of the Peking Opera painted their faces in distinct patterns according to historical custom. These patterns, along with elaborate costumes,

informed the audience about the actors' characters. In Japan similar makeup and costumed traditions were used in the traditional Kabuki theater. Many of these traditions continue in the present day.

Though there is no evidence that the ancient Chinese practiced tattooing, members of the Japanese lower classes have long practiced a dramatic and colorful form of tattooing. At its most extensive, these tattoos may cover almost the entire body.

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■ Fans

The fan, a simple device by which a person can wave air at his or her body in order to cool it, has been one of the most basic fashion accessories for thousands of years. There is evidence that some type of flat paddle used to move air had been used in ancient Mesopotamia (the region centered in present-day Iraq), Egypt, Greece, and Rome, but the Chinese are widely believed to have been the first to use the fan as a decorative item. Credit for the invention of the fan is disputed, but it is widely believed that the emperor Hsein Yüan, who ruled China beginning in 2699 B.C.E., first introduced the fan.

The first Chinese fans were made of pheasant or peacock feathers mounted on a handle. Soon they developed several varieties of stiff, flat fans, made out of solid materials like palm or bamboo, or of silk stretched over a frame. As with many other Chinese costume traditions, fans were introduced to Japan in the sixth century C.E. The Japanese adapted the fan into the folding fan, which has since become the most popular form of fan. Folding fans have rigid sticks on the outer edges that provide a frame for a series of thin pleated

or folded materials, such as silk or paper. The fan materials are attached at one end of the sticks, allowing the entire fan to be gently folded into a thin shaft. People could easily carry a folding fan and open it to provide a breeze when needed. Japan exported the folding fan back to China, where the Chinese made versions of their own.

Both Chinese and Japanese fans were and are highly decorated. Artists painted complex scenes that were revealed when the fan was unfolded, or calligraphers, who specialized in delicate handwriting, wrote messages across the unfolding blades. In both China and Japan, different styles of fan were used for different occasions. Special fans might be used for dancing or for a tea ceremony, for example.

Fans have remained a popular fashion accessory in Asia to this day. Europeans adopted fans beginning in the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.), and they were especially popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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[See also Volume 3, Sixteenth Century: Fans; Volume 3, Seventeenth Century: Fans]



A Japanese dancer holding a traditional Japanese fan, which was often extravagantly decorated, usually with various nature scenes or written messages. Reproduced by permission of © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS.

■ ■ ■ Kabuki Makeup

Kabuki is a style of traditional Japanese theater that includes music, dance, and drama. First performed by females, after 1629

■■■ KABUKI MAKEUP

only male actors could take part in Kabuki, and they played both the male and female characters. Kabuki characters are often drawn from Japanese folklore, and a major part of the Kabuki performance is the dramatic makeup worn by the actors. This makeup is applied heavily to create a brightly painted mask that uses colors in symbolic ways to indicate the age, gender, and class of each character, as well as their moods and personalities.

Japanese Kabuki actors. Kabuki makeup is applied heavily to create a brightly painted mask that uses colors to indicate age, gender, and the moods of each character. *Reproduced by permission of AP/Wide World Photos.*



FACE PAINTING AT THE PEKING OPERA

The oldest and most important theatrical tradition in China is the Peking Opera. Its roots go back to religious pantomime dances performed as early as 3000 B.C.E. By the Han dynasty (207 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) the religious elements of the dance had disappeared, and the performances included dancers, singers, acrobats, and storytellers. The art form was refined after 1790 into the present Peking Opera, which combines various theatrical forms, from tragedy to comedy, ballet to acrobatics. One of the most important components of the storytelling in the Peking Opera is the tradition of painting the actors' faces to tell key parts of the story. In the Peking Opera, painted faces and elaborate costumes are crucial parts of the overall performance.

In the Peking Opera, different actors play specific roles and the meaning of those roles is con-

veyed by specific colors and patterns of face painting and costume. A mostly red face, for example, stands for courage and loyalty. White represents brutality and cruelty, yellow represents fearfulness, and gold indicates godliness. Other colors also have specific meanings when they are the primary color. Pattern is also extremely important. The specific combination of color and pattern is especially important in pantomime, where the actors use no words.

Both the actors and the makeup artists involved in the Peking Opera take their positions very seriously. Actors begin studying for their parts in the opera when they are still children, and they must master a complex language of body movements and gestures if they are to obtain the best roles. Makeup artists are similarly trained in a school known as "the garden of the eternal spring." The Peking Opera still exists today, with the best known company being the Peking Opera of Beijing, which has toured the world.

Kabuki theater began when female attendants at religious shrines began performing a mixture of folk dance and religious dance. These dance performances became very popular with all classes of Japanese people, but the performances often became rowdy and sexually suggestive. This led the government to try to control the effects of the dances on the public, and in 1629 a law was passed banning female performers. Soon, the all-male dances that resulted were combined with elements from a popular puppet theater called bunraku and became Kabuki, a form of traditional folk art that is still popular in Japan today.

Makeup is one of the most important parts of Kabuki theater. Each actor applies his own makeup, with the process of applying makeup allowing the actor to get to know the character he plays. First, the actor applies oils and waxes on his face to help the makeup stick to the skin. Then a thick coat of white makeup called oshiroi is put on to cover the whole face. The white face creates a dramatic look onstage, and many historians believe that the white faces were more easily seen in the centuries before stages were lit

with electricity. The oshiroi is made of rice powder, and different shades of white are used depending on the age, class, and gender of the character. On this white face, red and black lines are used to outline the eyes and mouth, which are also shaped differently for male and female characters.

For supernatural heroes and villains, which appear frequently in Kabuki plays, there is a special style of makeup called kumadori. Kumadori is made up of dramatic lines and shapes applied in different colors, each representing different qualities. The most commonly used colors are dark red, which represents anger, passion, or cruelty, and dark blue, which represents sadness or depression. Other common colors are pink, representing youth or cheerfulness; light blue or green, representing calm; purple for nobility; brown for selfishness; and black for fear. There are about a hundred different mask-like styles of kumadori makeup.

The makeup of Kabuki actors is considered such an important aspect of the performance that it is common for actors to press a silk cloth to their faces to make a print of their makeup when the play is over. These cloth face-prints become valued souvenirs of the Kabuki performance.

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■ ■ ■ Tattooing

The Japanese have developed one of the most beautiful and intricate systems of tattooing in the entire world. Tattooing is thought to date to the earliest evidence of human life on the Japanese islands, in the Jomon period (c. 10,000–300 B.C.E.). Clay figurines from this period reveal detailed patterns of lines and dots that were either tattoos or body painting. Small clay figurines from the Yayoi

period (c. 300 B.C.E.–300 C.E.) called haniwa also show people decorated with symmetrical patterns of what look like tattoos. Little is known about these early forms of body decoration, but they provide evidence that tattooing has been practiced on the Japanese islands for thousands of years.

The Ainu people from the island of Hokkaido practice a distinctive form of tattooing. The Ainu are an ancient people who have retained many of their traditional ways, much like Native Americans in North America and Aborigines in Australia. The most striking element of Ainu tattooing was the mouth tattoo, which was worn only by women once they married to show their role in society. Over a period of years, a tattoo specialist would make cuts around the woman's mouth and dye them blue-black with powdered charcoal. At the end of the tattooing period the woman would have what looked like a large, black pair of lips that extended to a point on either cheek. Their eyebrows were also decorated with wavy lines, and some women would receive tattoos over their entire body. These ancient practices were ended by the Japanese government in the twentieth century, but they continue in traditional ceremonies with paint instead of tattoos.

As early as the sixth century C.E., tattooing was used as a form of punishment in Japan and China. Criminals received tattoos on their foreheads and arms so that they could be easily recognized by others in society.

Modern tattooing customs started in Japan in about the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries among the lower classes. Prostitutes wore tattoos on the insides of their thighs, and grave-diggers and laborers also wore tattoos. Soon, however, members of the lower classes began to get more elaborate tattoos as a sign of fellowship with their fellow workers. These tattoos might cover the entire back, legs, and arms—in fact, everything but the face, hands, and feet. The designs were very complex, often featuring dragons, demons, or mythological creatures sprawling across the flesh, with flowers and leaves providing surrounding decoration. The primary colors were blue-black, green, and red. For a time in the nineteenth century the Japanese government banned such tattoos because they were considered barbaric, but the ban had little effect and was soon lifted.

Today, full-body tattooing, or zenshin-bori, continues to be practiced in Japan. People have been known to have even their head tattooed. Getting a full-body tattoo can take as long as a year, with

■■■ TATTOOING

one session per week. Modern inks allow for the introduction of even more color to these tattoos. Japanese designs, especially dragons, became popular in the West during the 1990s.

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[See also **Volume 5, 1980–2003: Tattooing**]

■ Footwear of Early Asian Cultures

The Chinese were one of the first ancient peoples to develop a wide range of footwear. Shoes made from woven and stitched straw have been dated to about 5000 B.C.E. and tanned leather footwear with stitching has been dated to about 2000 B.C.E. Given the wide ranges of climate found in China, the types of shoes worn varied considerably by region. People in the warmer coastal areas wore straw sandals, while those in the colder mountainous regions wore thick leather shoes and knee-length boots.

Over time the Chinese developed a complex form of etiquette associated with footwear. Shoes were worn only outdoors and taken off when entering any house. For some occasions socks could remain on the feet, but others required that the person go barefoot indoors. The Chinese developed several other distinct footwear traditions.

During the Qing dynasty (1644–1911 C.E.), women favored Manchu shoes, which consisted of a silk slipper attached to a tall wooden sole that narrowed to a small base in the middle of the foot. The small base of the shoe and its height—as high as four inches—required women to walk very carefully. These shoes remained in use into the twentieth century and were considered a distinctly Chinese alternative to Western high heels.

Perhaps the best-known Chinese footwear custom is foot binding. The custom of foot binding began late in the Tang dynasty



A woman wearing traditional platform shoes. *Reproduced by permission of © Royalty-Free/CORBIS.*

(618–907 C.E.) and lasted for more than a thousand years. It involved constricting the feet of young girls with very tight bandages, forcing the heel and toe to be drawn together. At its worst, foot binding broke the bones in the feet. In every case it permanently deformed the feet. Yet it allowed women to wear the coveted lotus shoes, and many believed that it made women’s feet beautiful. The custom finally ended in part because westerners scorned the practice as barbaric when they encountered it in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Japanese adopted the Chinese custom of not wearing shoes indoors, and in turn they developed several specific shoe styles of their own. For indoor use, Japanese of all classes wore tabis, socks specially made to fit the distinctive shoes of the Japanese. For outdoor use the Japanese wore geta, sandals with two raised platforms for the heels, and zori, simple sandals with flat soles.

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■ ■ ■ Foot Binding and Lotus Shoes

For over a thousand years, tiny feet were symbols of feminine beauty, elegance, and sexuality in China. In order to achieve the goal of tiny three-inch “lotus feet” (the lotus was a kind of flower), most young Chinese girls had their feet bound tightly with strips of cloth to prevent growth. Once the process was completed, the deformed feet were placed into beautiful, embroidered lotus shoes, tiny pointed slippers that were made especially for bound feet. Though no one knows exactly when foot binding began, the practice dates back at least to 900 C.E. and continued in remote areas until the twentieth century.

There are many legends about the origins of binding women's feet. Some say that noblewomen, those of the wealthy classes, began to imitate one of the emperor's mistresses who had very tiny feet. Others say that the emperor forced his mistress to bind her feet and dance for him on the tops of lotus flowers. However it began, by the tenth century the practice had become widespread among the upper classes of China. Foot binding began when a girl was between three and seven years old and was usually done by her mother. The four smaller toes were bent back, and often broken, to rest against the sole of the foot. A strip of cloth, about ten feet long and two inches wide, was wrapped around the foot tightly, forcing it to become both narrower and shorter. As the foot became shorter, the heel and toes were pulled closer together, making the foot into a curved arc. After two years of constantly tighter binding, the foot was the perfect size: three to four inches long. This broken foot was given the romantic name of lotus or lily foot.

At first foot binding was a symbol of wealth and luxury. Because the bound foot was very painful and likely to become infected, bound feet required constant care. Also, women with bound feet were almost helpless. They could hardly walk without help, much less work or help around the house. Therefore, bound feet were reserved at first for those families who could afford to support such a woman. However, by the 1600s the lower classes had begun to imitate the rich, and foot binding had spread to all classes except the extremely poor. Among the working class, girls who needed to work might not get their feet bound until later in their childhood, and the binding might be somewhat looser than that of the upper classes. Many women did not want to bind their young daughters' feet because they knew how much pain it would cause them. Small feet were almost a requirement for a good marriage, however, and almost all women had some form of the disabling binding.

Foot binding damaged women's feet and limited their ability to move freely. Many people believe this was the real reason behind the practice. Much like the Indian practice of *purdah*, or covering the entire body in clothes, foot binding prevented women from leaving the house very often and therefore kept them under their husband's control. In the late 1800s some women formed an Anti-Foot Binding Society. Members of the society agreed not to bind their daughters' feet and not to allow their sons to marry women with bound feet.

Though they could do little work, women with bound feet could sew and embroider, and many spent long hours making special richly embroidered lotus shoes. Because the bound feet were unattractive and often foul smelling from infection, they were never exposed to public view. Perfume, socks, leggings, and lotus shoes were worn at all times, even in bed, to cover the damaged feet with beauty and delicacy.

Many historians estimate that over a billion Chinese women endured foot binding. Though the Chinese Republic outlawed the practice in 1911, it continued in many remote rural areas until the People's Republic of China began in 1949. Many older Chinese women still have bound feet, though the last factory that made lotus shoes stopped manufacturing them during the 1990s. The practice still arouses feelings of horror among women of all nationalities. In 1995 Gump's department store in San Francisco, California, offered antique lotus shoes for sale for \$975 a pair but was forced to remove the display due to a storm of customer complaints.

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Geta (GAY-tah) are the traditional footwear of all kimono-wearers in modern and traditional Japan. They are raised clogs (shoes with a heavy, often wooden sole) and are closely related to the low, wedge-shaped sandals called zori.

Geta are usually made of plain wood with a V-shaped padded fabric thong into which the wearer slips his or her foot, inserting

the point of the V between the big toe and the next toe. They are raised off the ground by two wooden pieces under the sole, their height depending upon the weather and the use of the geta.

The design of geta and zori are in keeping with the practice of removing the footwear at the entrance of all buildings. They are easily slipped on and off and are protective of the tabis, or fabric socks, that are worn indoors. The height of geta also take into account the fact that kimonos often have trailing hemlines and that road conditions are not necessarily good for walking.

Special geta for ceremonial wear by dancers, Kabuki (traditional Japanese theater) actors, and geishas (professional hostesses or entertainers) are brightly lacquered and painted and contain, hidden inside of their soles, bells to make a tinkling sound while the wearer walks or dances. Like the kimono, geta were developed in coordination with Buddhist Japan's lack of interest in using animal skins, particularly leather, as a material for clothing because of their religion's warnings against killing animals.



A young boy wearing geta, raised clogs that are the traditional footwear of all kimono-wearers in modern and traditional Japan. Reproduced by permission of © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS.

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[See also Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Kimono; Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Zori]

■ ■ ■ Tabis

The Japanese footwear known as tabis (TAH-bees), literally translated as “footbag,” are commonly worn on the feet inside the traditional Japanese house. Yet it is more than just a pair of socks. Generally made of either white cotton or silk, they fasten at the ankle

by means of a flat hook. They have reinforced soles called unsai-ori that prevent slipping on wood floors and help them stand up to heavy use.

Tabis are specially designed to accommodate the traditional Japanese shoes, geta (clogs) and zori (flip-flops), both of which have a thong that fits between the big toe and the second toe. They are almost always white or dark blue and, until recently, were almost always made of cotton twill, especially for martial arts and performances of traditional music or dance.

Tabis work in harmony with the Japanese environment, both natural and archi-

tectural, while providing a cushion for the thongs in the sandals. They coordinate with geta and zori to protect the clean, tatami mat floors of the home and keep the kimono hem above the street. They also continue the Buddhist tradition of avoiding leather for items of dress because of Buddha’s disapproval of killing animals.



Tabis are Japanese socks, usually white, specifically designed to fit traditional Japanese shoes like the zori, or flip-flop like sandal shown here. Reproduced by permission of © Ric Ergenbright/CORBIS.

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[See also Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Geta; Volume 2, Early Asian Cultures: Zori]

■ ■ ■ Zori

Zori are sandals similar to what are known as flip-flops in the West. They are the most ancient form of footwear in Japan. Flat straw sandals with a thong held between the toes were already being worn in the Heian period (794–1185). Today zori are often made of lacquered lightweight wood, plastic, or rubber, and the thongs are made of cotton or velvet.

Zori are worn over tabis, which are cotton socks designed to accommodate the thong by having the big toe in a separate compartment. The zori can be easily slipped off before entering the house, with its woven floors, in keeping with the Japanese tradition of removing footwear.

During World War II (1939–45), American soldiers fighting in the Orient were told that they could tell the difference between Korean people who spoke Japanese and native Japanese by looking at the feet: the native Japanese person would have a larger space between the first two toes, for the zori worn from a young age have a marked effect on the foot, pushing the big toe and the toe next to it farther apart.

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The Byzantine Empire

The people who we know today as the Byzantines called themselves Romans, spoke Greek, and lived in modern-day Turkey. (The name Byzantine came from the founder of the empire's capital, a Greek man named Byzas, who may have existed only in legend.) While the areas that were once ruled by the Roman Empire fell into disorder as conflicting tribes fought for control of their territory, the Byzantines maintained a legacy of learning and a civilization inherited from the Greeks and Romans for more than a thousand years. In the meantime they developed extensive trading relationships with the Middle East and the Orient, including India and China. From 476 C.E. until the collapse of the empire in 1453 C.E., the Byzantine Empire was the most powerful and developed civilization in the Western world.

From the ashes of the Roman Empire

The Roman Empire had been founded in 27 B.C.E. following the fall of the Roman Republic (509–27 B.C.E.). By the fourth century C.E. the Roman Empire had grown very large, extending east into Asia Minor (which included modern-day Turkey) and northern Africa, including Egypt. In 395 C.E., following the death of the Roman emperor Theodosius (347–395 C.E.), the vast empire was divided into two halves, with the Eastern Roman Empire having the

city of Constantinople, once known as Byzantium, as its capital. The Western Roman Empire, centered in Rome, came under increasing attacks from barbarian (people from foreign lands) tribes, and in 476 C.E. the Roman emperor was killed, leading to the downfall of Rome. Only the Eastern Roman Empire, known now as the Byzantine Empire, survived.

The Byzantine Empire that survived the fall of Rome was no minor civilization. Its capital, Constantinople, was one of the great early cities, with a population of nearly one million people, several imperial palaces, and a vast system of roads, shops, and public spaces. It also included the major cities of Alexandria in Egypt and Antioch in Syria. While most of western Europe failed to develop during the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.), the Byzantine Empire established powerful armies, a complex system of government and church officials, and trading networks that spanned the Middle East and Asia.

Byzantine society

Byzantine society was very hierarchical, which meant that people lived at different levels of rank and status. At the top of the society was the emperor, who made the major decisions affecting the empire. He was aided by an inner circle of advisers and bureaucrats. There was also a Byzantine senate, which prepared laws for approval by the emperor. Emperors usually chose their successor, either a son or a trusted adviser. The emperors ruled with the help of a strong and well-trained army that had as many as 120,000 members. Surrounding the emperor was an aristocracy of very wealthy people; the major cities also had a small middle class, made up of shop owners and traders. The majority of the population, however, was poor and either labored in the city or grew their own food on small plots of land that were controlled by wealthy landlords.

The center of Byzantine culture was the Christian church, and it was headed by the emperor. Christian rituals and holidays organized Byzantine life. Byzantine Christians held beliefs similar to Roman Catholics: they believed that Jesus was the son of God, and they believed in the Trinity, which consisted of God the father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. But Byzantines and later Italians, who were Roman Catholic, fought over who held the highest authority: with Italians favoring the pope in Rome and the Byzantines prefer-

ring the bishop of Constantinople. In 1054 the two parts of the church would split, into the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, in what is known as the Great Schism.

Between East and West

The influence of Roman customs was very great in the early years of the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine people called themselves Romans, they spoke Latin like Romans, and they dressed in Roman clothes. They inherited the Greek and Roman love of learning and preserved many documents from these civilizations in their libraries. (Much of what we know about ancient Greece and Rome comes from Byzantine libraries, which were not destroyed by barbarian invaders.)

Yet the influence of Rome slowly faded. In the seventh century C.E. the official language of the empire was changed to Greek. The church was less involved in creating rules for people than it had

The Church of Hagia Sophia was built in Constantinople by Byzantine emperor Justinian in the sixth century. It still stands in Istanbul, Turkey. Reproduced by permission of Getty Images.



been in Rome. And people began to develop tastes in clothing and decoration that owed much to civilizations to the east, rather than the west.

Byzantines were great traders. They opened trade routes throughout the Middle East and into Asia and soon were exposed to Eastern styles of clothing, jewels, and decoration. Byzantine costume thus became a mix of Roman garments, such as the tunic (shirt) and the stola (a type of long dress), mixed with Eastern ornament and pattern. It was this mix that made Byzantine culture distinct.

The mixture of Eastern and Western influences also could be seen in the many churches and monasteries built during the years of the Byzantine Empire. Such religious structures were built throughout the empire, but none was greater than the Church of Hagia Sophia (also known as Saint Sophia), built in Constantinople by the emperor Justinian (483–565) in the sixth century C.E. The massive church, with its huge central dome and many spires, took ten thousand workers five years to build. It still stands in the modern Turkish city of Istanbul, the new name for the old capital. This and other churches have led scholars to claim that the Byzantine Empire's greatest achievements were in architecture.

The end of the empire

Like the Roman Empire before it, the Byzantine Empire experienced a number of challenges to its rule. Efforts to expand Byzantine rule under Emperor Justinian led to conflicts with Persians, North Africans, and the Ostrogoths living in Italy. Over the thousand years of Byzantine rule, battles with these and other surrounding peoples led to the expansion and contraction of the empire. Beginning in the eleventh century C.E. Christian armies from western Europe began to travel through the Byzantine Empire to reclaim “holy lands” from Turks and Arabs in the Middle East. These armies, known as crusaders, sparked a series of wars with Turks and Arabs that brought great conflict to the empire. Byzantines argued with the crusaders, and both sides fought against their non-Christian enemies. These conflicts, extended over a period of hundreds of years, exhausted the size and strength of the empire. In 1453 a Turkish army led by Mehmed II (1432–1481) captured the city of Constantinople and ended the Byzantine Empire.

The great city of Constantinople survived and was renamed Istanbul, part of the Ottoman Empire that ruled in Turkey and the surrounding area until the end of World War I (1914–18). In the West, the same crusades that helped end the Byzantine Empire sparked the end of the Middle Ages and led to a period of cultural and intellectual growth in western Europe that paved the way for modern societies to develop as we know them. The Byzantine Empire, then, served as a bridge between the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome and the modern kingdoms and later nation-states of Europe.

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■ Clothing of the Byzantine Empire

 The Byzantine costume tradition took its form from the Roman Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.) and its color and decorative tradition from the Orient and the Middle East. The Roman roots are easy to understand. After all, the Byzantine Empire began in the fourth century C.E. as the Eastern Roman Empire; its capital, Constantinople, was for a short time the capital of the entire Roman Empire. From the Romans the Byzantines inherited their basic clothing forms, the tunic and toga for men, and the stola, a type of long dress, for women, as well as their shoes and their hairstyles. These basic garments had become more ornate and luxurious late in the Roman Empire, yet it was not long after the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 C.E. that the Byzantines began to modify and extend the Roman costume tradition to become something uniquely their own.

Changing styles

By the end of the Roman Empire the toga, which had once been required wear for Romans, was worn only on ceremonial occasions. The Byzantines, who tended to prefer simple flowing clothes to the winding and draping of the toga, did away with the toga altogether. They chose as their most basic of garments the dalmatica, a long, flowing men's tunic, or shirt, with wide sleeves and hem, and the stola for women. Unlike the Romans, the Byzantines tended to be very modest about any display of flesh. Their garments were worn close about the neck, sleeves extended all the way to the wrist, and the hemline, or bottom edge, of their outer garments extended all the way to the ground. They layered their clothing, with men wearing a tunic and trousers under the dalmatica, and women wearing a long undergarment beneath their stola and an outer garment called a paludamentum, or long cloak.



A Byzantine embroidered dalmatica. Variations on the Byzantine dalmatica later took on specified roles in religious practice among the clergy. *Reproduced by permission of Art Resource.*

One of the key features of the Byzantine Empire was its history of trade with the Middle East and the Orient. Traders brought exotic fabrics and patterns into the capital city of Constantinople from these regions, and rich Byzantines eagerly adopted the colors, patterns, and fabrics of the East into their costume tradition. Over time Byzantine clothing became ever richer in color and ornamentation, thanks largely to these influences. Deep reds, blues, greens, and yellows became common on the garments of wealthy people, but the richest color, purple, was reserved for royalty. When Byzantine emperors received foreign visitors, they costumed themselves in rich purple robes, glittering with gold embroidery and jewels sewn onto the fabric.

Among the more distinctive garments developed by the Byzantines were those worn by the clergy in the Christian church. Variations on normal Byzantine garments

like the dalmatica, for example, took on specified roles in religious practice among the clergy. Garments originated by the Byzantines are still worn today by members of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the influence of the Byzantines can be seen in the robes and headwear of leaders in the Roman Catholic Church, which split from the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1054.

Silk, the richest fabric

One fabric, silk, was especially beloved by the Byzantines. Silk first came to the West in about 139 B.C.E. via the long trade route that crossed the Middle East and reached China, and the supply was limited. In 552 C.E., however, two Persian monks, from what is modern-day Iran, smuggled silkworms out of China and began to produce silk within the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantines wove their silk into a strong fabric called samite, which sometimes had gold thread woven into the material. Silk was highly treasured by wealthy Byzantines to make a variety of garments as well as for embroidery.

Unlike in Rome, where strict sumptuary laws determined what people of different social classes could wear, the quality of Byzantine clothing was limited only by the ability of the wearer to pay for it. But this was a severe limit indeed, for only those at the very top of Byzantine society could afford the rich silks, jewels, and embroidery that distinguished Byzantine clothing. Most Byzantines likely wore much simpler versions of the common garments. However, as in many ancient cultures, little is known about what was worn by the poorer members of society because they were unable to afford the expensive things that would have survived many hundreds or thousands of years. The surviving remnants of Byzantine culture—tile mosaics, statues, and paintings—tend to depict the very wealthy or members of the church.

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■ ■ ■ Dalmatica

The standard overgarment of upper-class men, and sometimes women, in the Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.) was the dalmatica. The basic form of the dalmatica, like the tunica, or shirt, from which it descended, was simple: it was made from a single long piece of fabric, stitched together along the sides and up the sleeves, with a hole cut for the head. The Byzantines added two changes to this basic form. They enlarged the sleeves, making them large, draping bell shapes, and they broadened the hem dramatically, also into a bell shape, allowing the garment to hang in folds about the legs.

The basic Byzantine dalmatica was made from fairly simple cloth, usually linen, wool, or cotton. Depending on the wearer's wealth, however, dalmatica could become quite ornate. Decorative trim could be added to the hem, sleeves, and neckline, and woven or embroidered patches could be sewn on to different parts of the garment. Dalmatica might have clavi, vertical stripes that ran down from either shoulder, or segmentae, stripes on the edge of the sleeves or hem. The dalmatica worn by the very wealthy or the emperors might be made of rich silk brocade, with its raised patterns of silver and gold, and could be ornamented with pearls, gemstones, and even enameled metal panels. Like other Byzantine clothes, the quality of the cloth and the richer levels of ornament indicated the social status of the wearer.

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[See also **Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Dalmatica**; **Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Tunica**]

■ ■ ■ Paludamentum

Paludamentum was a broad term referring to several varieties of cloaks that were worn during the time of the Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.). Worn by both men and women, these cloaks were worn over the standard garments of the day: the tunic and dalmatica worn by men, and the stola, or long dress, and palla worn by women. There were actually several different kinds of paludamentum. The most common was a large semicircle of fabric, pinned at the right shoulder and reaching to about the hips. Another very common paludamentum was shaped like a trapezoid and was also pinned at the right shoulder. A variant on the paludamentum, called a paenula, was a large circle with a hole cut in the center for the head.



All forms of the paludamentum were variations of garments worn by the Romans, but they were adapted to Byzantine customs. For example, paludamentum were sometimes made of rich Byzantine silk and were highly decorated, sometimes with embroidered borders. A common form of decoration was a square- or diamond-shaped pattern called a tablion, which was sewn on the front of the garment. Tablions were symbols of rank and could only be worn by members of the upper class.

Byzantine empress Theodora and her attendants wearing a variety of paludamentums, or cloaks.

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[See also Volume 2, Byzantine Empire: Dalmatica; Volume 2, Byzantine Empire: Stola]

■ ■ Stola

The stola was the basic garment worn by women during the years of the Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.). The stola was a long dress, sewn along both sides from the hem at the bottom all the way to the arms. The stola was usually worn with a belt placed just below the bustline. Typically made of linen or light wool, the stola also could be made of silk, the fabric preferred by the very wealthy. Like many Byzantine garments, the stola was based on the women’s stola worn in the Roman Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.).

The stola was part of a layered outfit. It was worn over the top of a long underdress and a shorter tunic, either of which might have had long sleeves. Byzantine women, in keeping with their culture’s modesty, never appeared in public with bare arms.

The Byzantine stola became more complex and ornamented over time. Early stolas were sleeveless, but by the seventh or eighth century C.E. stolas began to appear with long sleeves, with later varieties having bell-shaped or flared sleeves. By about the eleventh century C.E., stolas were commonly made of thick silk brocades with raised patterns in silver and gold, and they were decorated with a variety of patterns and embroidery. Members of the royal family commonly wore stolas of rich purple and gold. Stolas worn by other women might be deep blue, red, or white.

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[See also Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Stola]

■ ■ Headwear of the Byzantine Empire

 Like so much of their costume tradition, the Byzantines inherited their basic hairstyles and forms of headwear from the Romans who preceded them in ruling the Mediterranean world. Men tended to wear their hair short and cut straight across the forehead in what is today known as the Caesar cut, named after the Roman general and statesman Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.E.). Women wore their hair quite long and tended to braid or pile it on top of their head in a variety of different fashions. They might use pins or a ribbon to hold their hair in place. There wasn't one typical Byzantine hairstyle for women, but instead a variety of ways of curling, twisting, and molding hair in pleasing ways.

Byzantines did not have a strong preference for specific forms of headwear, though there are several hats and crowns that appear to have been in use. Several hats inherited from the Greeks were worn, including the Phrygian cap and the petasos. Both male and female members of the Byzantine court, including the emperor, did wear a variety of crowns, usually heavily laden with jewels. Perhaps the most distinctive headwear worn in the Byzantine era was that worn by members of the Christian clergy. Clergymen often wore a round skullcap called a zucchetto, with the color depending upon whether they were a bishop, a cardinal, or a monk. A similar hat is worn by notable figures in the Roman Catholic Church to this day, with the pope's white zucchetto being the most famous example. Finally, monks might wear a kind of paludamentum, or cloak, with a hood pulled up over their head to keep them warm.

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■ ■ ■ Turbans

A headdress with ancient roots, the turban is made from a long strip of cloth, most often cotton or silk, which is wrapped around the head, usually in a specific pattern. The turban frequently covers the whole head, concealing the hair from view, and

sometimes the cloth is wrapped around a turban cap rather than directly around the head. Some experts believe that the turban originated in Persia, modern-day Iran, while others think that it was invented by the Egyptians. However, the use of the turban first became widespread during the years of the Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.), and since that time turbans have been strongly identified with Eastern cultures and religions.

The Byzantine Empire was characterized by a blend of Eastern and Western cultures, and one symbol of this blending was the adoption of the Persian turban by Emperor Constantine (c. 285–337 C.E.). The turban was worn by both Byzantine men and women, and in 1453, when the Byzantine Empire was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, the Turks, too, began to wear the turban. Though turbans often have great religious or political meaning in the cultures in which they are worn, during

various periods certain Westernized turbans have become popular as women’s fashion accessories.



Ottoman Turk Osman I wearing a turban. The turban was worn by both Byzantine men and women, and when the Byzantine Empire was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, the Turks too began wearing the turban.

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■ ■ Body Decorations of the Byzantine Empire

At the beginning of the Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.), Byzantine customs surrounding body decoration and accessories closely resembled those of their fellow Roman countrymen. Byzantines in the capital city of Constantinople developed public baths similar to those found in Rome, and public bathing was a daily ritual for many. Byzantines also enjoyed wearing a wide variety of jewelry, including earrings, rings for the fingers and toes, bracelets, anklets, necklaces, and fibulae, clasps to fasten their clothing. Gold and silver were the favored metals for jewelry, although the Byzantines came to use gold plate—a thin plate of gold on top of another material—more than solid gold, perhaps because of a shortage of gold.

As the Byzantine Empire developed, it absorbed more and more elements of its costume tradition from the Middle East and the Orient. For example, unlike the Romans, who used a lot of makeup and cosmetics, the Byzantines avoided heavy preparations for their skin. Instead, they developed rich perfumes using ingredients obtained in trade from China, India, and Persia,



Byzantine emperor Justinian I, with crown, displays the intricately jeweled clasp that fastens his cloak. *Reproduced by permission of the Granger Collection.*

modern-day Iran. Perfume making was developed as an esteemed trade.

The Byzantines also developed several distinct forms of jewelry. A favorite technique was enameling, in which a glassy coating was baked onto a surface, usually in a decorative pattern or figure. Cloisonné enameling featured small panels of enameled figures separated by raised gold borders and could be found on distinctive Byzantine armlets and on squares that could be fastened to clothing. Byzantines were also particularly fond of rings, which they devised in many shapes and styles. Men as well as women wore jewelry, and the display of abundant jewelry was a primary means of showing off wealth.

The Byzantines were extremely fond of patterns, and they sought ways to use patterns on nearly all of their clothing. They developed a special form of silk fabric called samite, which they used for their thickly patterned brocades (a type of fabric with raised patterns). They also used embroidery to create decorative trim that could be sewn onto garments. This embroidery might be done with thread made from precious metals such as gold, and could include pearls and other jewels.

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■ ■ ■ Embroidery

The most important method the Byzantines used for decorating their clothing was embroidery. Embroidery is the decoration of fabric with patterns of stitching or needlework, in which thread is pushed through the fabric to make a raised pattern and tied off in back. Forms of embroidery have been found in ancient Egypt and ancient China and were developed several thousand years ago. The art of embroidery was fully realized during the time of the

Byzantine Empire (476–1453 B.C.E.), when embroidered fabric, trim pieces, and decorative patches became essential to Byzantine costume.

The Byzantines generally wore plain fabric garments that were heavily decorated. Some might have elaborate patterns of embroidery sewn directly on, while others used strips or panels of embroidered fabric sewn at the hem, the waist, or on the sleeves. They were especially fond of geometric patterns, such as repeating squares, circles, or diamonds, and they also used flowers and leaves for ornament. Often birds or mythological creatures were embroidered within the patterns as well. One form of ornament favored by the very wealthy was the tablion, a square piece of heavily embroidered fabric, six to twelve inches wide, attached to the front of a dalmatica (a type of overgarment) or a cloak. Embroiderers used many rich and colorful types of thread to make their work stand out. They might use silk or gold thread, and they favored bright colors, especially purples, golds, reds, blues, and yellows. The rich and beautiful nature of so much Byzantine clothing owes much to the art of the embroiderer. Byzantine embroidery was a great influence on the embroidery of clothing throughout the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.) and beyond in Europe and Russia in particular.

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■ ■ Footwear of the Byzantine Empire

Painting, sculptures, jewelry, and ornaments from the Byzantine Empire, which stretched across much of present-day Greece and Turkey from 476 to 1453 C.E., leave us with a rich record of the clothing and decorative traditions of this powerful empire. Very little is known about Byzantine footwear since the long draped clothing of the Byzantines, which reached to the floor, tended to hide the feet. The sculptures and paintings that have survived offer us just fleeting glimpses of Byzantine footwear.

Much of what we do know about Byzantine footwear is dependent on educated guesses based on other areas of Byzantine life. We know that the Byzantine Empire began as the Eastern Roman Empire in 395 C.E. and that most clothing customs are based on Roman garments, so probably Byzantine footwear was similar to the sandals (*solea*) and covered shoes (*calceus*) worn by the Romans. But we also know that the Byzantines were deeply influenced by their trade in the Middle East and the Orient, so it would not be surprising to see, in the rare glimpses of Byzantine footwear, shoes made of embroidered silk and covered with jewels.

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Nomads and Barbarians

Beyond the borders of the great early empires—the Roman Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.), the Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.), and early empires in India and China—lived bands of people whose level of civilization lagged well behind that of the powerful empires. Within the borders of empires were farmers, traders, institutions of learning, government, laws, and order; outside the borders of empires, at least according to those within, were “barbarians,” crude people who lived without order or law. Barbarians, of course, is a negative term often implying ignorance and heathenism, but it was widely used by civilized people in Rome and China to describe outsiders. Today outsiders are called “nomads,” which describes the lifestyle of those once known as barbarians. Nomads organized themselves in small bands, not larger cities; they hunted and gathered their food rather than farmed; they roamed the land in search of resources instead of making permanent settlements. And, in the case of some of the different groups of nomads—the Celts, Huns, Vandals, Goths, and Franks—they learned to fight and plunder in order to survive. These groups populated the vast unsettled continents of Europe and central Asia from several thousand years B.C.E., up until they were absorbed into civilized Europe in the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.).

Historians do not know a great deal about the life and culture of the various barbarian peoples of Europe. These people did not

have a written language, so they left no literary record. (Some, such as the Celts, did have a strong oral tradition, and through this storytelling from generation to generation, their epics survived and were eventually recorded.) Because they were constantly on the move, these nomadic groups left no large cities or settlements. Few of the physical remnants of their culture have survived, with the exception of some widely scattered pieces of pottery, metal belt buckles, and bones. The vast majority of what is known of these people was recorded by early historians from Rome, the Byzantine Empire, and China. The Romans, Byzantines, and Chinese hated and feared the barbarians, who were fierce fighters, but they could not help but admire their military success.

The first inhabitants of western and central Europe were known as the Celts (pronounced Kelts). The Celts were the most organized and civilized of the groups encountered by the Romans. They had a complex religion that was the center of their culture and a social organization that was headed by kings and nobles. They were skilled in ironworking, creating swords and armor for battles. Their society first flourished around 700 B.C.E. and reached its peak around 500 B.C.E. Celts resisted Roman rule when the Romans first began to move into the area known as Gaul (present-day France) in the first century B.C.E., but later they adopted the Catholic religion which was prevalent throughout Rome.

Barbarian attacks and the collapse of the Roman Empire

By the second century C.E. Rome had extended its rule across much of present-day Europe, including Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania). But their control of this area was soon challenged by the invasion of barbarian tribes from the north and the east. The first of the barbarian tribes to launch attacks on the Roman Empire were the Visigoths, or western Goths, who attacked in present-day Turkey from the north in the fourth century C.E. (The Goths were loosely organized Germanic tribes; most of what is known about them comes from their battles with the Romans.) Bands of Visigoth warriors, first led by King Alaric I (c. 370-410 C.E.), moved from east to west across the empire, capturing Rome in 410 and eventually moving into Spain and then France. Another



group, the Ostrogoths, or eastern Goths, followed with a series of attacks in Italy. These groups and others, like the Vandals, Sueves, and Alans, eventually formed crude settlements.

The long string of attacks in the fourth century greatly disrupted Roman rule, but worse was yet to come. Beginning in about 440, a new group of barbarians from the east began to attack both Romans and other now-settled barbarians. This most feared and despised of all the invading groups were known as the Huns. The Roman historian Ammianus (c. 330–395 C.E.), quoted in E. A. Thompson’s *The Huns*, wrote that the Huns were “so prodigiously ugly and bent that they might be taken for two-legged animals or the figures crudely carved from stumps.” Their “terrifying appearance,” wrote Jordanes, another historian quoted by Thompson, “inspired fear because of its swarthiness, and they had . . . a sort of shapeless lump, not a head.” Riding on powerful horses and carrying heavy war axes, these fierce and utterly fearless Huns scattered Roman and barbarian forces alike. Under their most powerful leader, Attila (c. 406–453), they established control over large parts of the

Map of Western Europe showing movements of various tribes across the continent around 500 C.E. *Reproduced by permission of the Gale Group.*

VIKINGS: THE LAST BARBARIANS

Long after plundering hordes of Huns and Goths had brought the Roman Empire to its knees in 476 C.E., and long after these same barbarian tribes had been absorbed into the emerging kingdoms of Europe, a new band of people from the north swept down into Europe, looting and pillaging and terrorizing the people of northern Britain and northern France. These new barbarians came from Scandinavia and are known to us as the Vikings.

Viking conquerors first began to descend upon Europe at the end of the eighth century. Historians believe that they ventured south because of the difficulties of providing food for their growing population in the extreme climate of Scandinavia. Unlike the earlier barbarians, who were primarily small bands of nomads, the Vikings had already developed a fairly complex agricultural society. Most of the people were farmers, and the Vikings had developed extensive trading networks in eastern Europe that brought goods from as far away as the Orient. Viking men, however, joined together for voy-

ages of plunder. Venturing out in their well-made ships, they attacked lightly defended seaside towns and stole what they could.

Beginning in the late eighth century, and proceeding for several hundred years, Vikings ransacked coastal towns in Britain and France and established settlements. They were so powerful that for a time they conquered all of England, establishing the Danish king Canute (d. 1035) briefly as king of England. They also voyaged as far as North America, briefly landing in present-day Canada in about the year 1000. Eventually the Vikings were converted to Christianity and absorbed into their respective societies.

Viking clothing was much like that of other Europeans from the same time period. Men wore trousers, a tunic, and perhaps a coat or a large cloak. Women dressed similarly, though their tunic was long, reaching all the way to the feet. Viking clothing was made primarily of wool, and sometimes of linen, and was often brightly colored, with purples, blues, and greens. Like other clothing from this period, however, few actual garments have survived, leaving much of what is known to secondhand accounts from other societies.

northern Roman Empire. Their attacks and their continued warfare with the Visigoths, Franks, Celts, and other groups eventually contributed to the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476.

The origins and culture of the Barbarians

We know little about the life of the barbarians before they knocked down the doors of civilization. Some scholars have speculated that the Huns and the Goths originated in Asia and were related to the Mongols who caused so much trouble for the early Chinese (and were known as the Moguls in India). They believe that these groups had overhunted their traditional hunting grounds and first began to travel east in search of food. When they encountered the wealthy and civilized Roman settlements, they quickly rec-

ognized that these were a source of both food and wealth like they had never known.

It is likely that the barbarians generally organized themselves in small tribes. They kept their groups small so that they could travel quickly in search of food, and they built crude temporary housing to suit their needs. The men in these tribes engaged in hunting for food and fighting other tribes to gain control of hunting grounds. They became superior warriors. Men from various tribes did band together to fight the Romans, but they were not a well-organized and equipped army.

As these barbarian tribes crossed Europe, they found a climate and geography that allowed them to give up their nomadic ways. They no longer needed to travel constantly to find food, and they learned agriculture from those who already lived in the area. Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476, barbarians settled into permanent communities. Celts, Angles, and Saxons settled in what would become Great Britain; Franks settled in Germany and France; Visigoths settled in Spain; and other groups scattered in places throughout Europe. As the Middle Ages began, Europe was influenced by a mix of Roman and barbarian customs.

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■ Clothing of Nomads and Barbarians



Our first records of the groups we know as nomads and barbarians are provided by Romans from as early as about 100 B.C.E. The people who lived in Gaul, present-day France, and the Celts in Britain had a much less developed culture than the Romans, though they had been settled in Europe from as early as about 700 B.C.E. They tended to wear rough garments made of wool, which they gathered from native sheep. These garments included thick wool tunics, crudely sewn at the sides, and heavy wool capes that were draped over the shoulders. The Celts developed some wool garments with a plaid pattern and are known to have liked vivid colors. The garments that seemed strangest to the early Romans were the leg coverings worn by Gauls and Celts: loose leg coverings, called *braccae* by the Romans, were like modern-day trousers and the snug-fitting, knee-length pants worn by the Gauls were called *feminalia*. The Romans considered both types of leg covering barbaric, and the garments were even banned for a time in Rome. But Roman soldiers traveling in the colder northern climate soon adopted these clothes as part of Roman costume because of their practicality.

Far stranger than the clothes worn by the Celts and the Gauls were those worn by the bands of Huns, Goths, and other barbarian groups who invaded Roman territory beginning in the fourth century C.E. These and other barbarian groups came out of northern Europe and perhaps central Asia, and they disrupted the patterns of civilization put in place in Europe by the Romans. While Romans wore carefully tended tunics and togas, these barbarians were clad in wildly flapping fragments of fur. The crude dress of the barbarians, along with their fearlessness in battle, terrified the Romans. It is from the Roman descriptions of this clothing that our understanding of barbarian clothing comes from, since the garments worn by barbarians have not survived. Barbarians did not use bur-



Danish king Canute and his soldiers all wearing detailed armor as Viking ships anchor in the background. *Reproduced by permission of the New York Public Library Picture Collection.*

ial customs that preserved garments, and they left no written records, paintings, or sculptures.

The primary material used for barbarian clothing was animal fur. Observers commented that barbarians often wore the skins of a large rodent called a marmot, but deer, ibex (a wild goat), and sheepskin were also mentioned. These furs seemed to have been loosely tied or stitched together to make overcoats, sleeveless shirts, and leggings, which were held to the legs with bands of hide, or animal skin. Huns were reported to have worn a single set of clothes until it fell apart. Some barbarians

also had the ability to make clothes out of wool, though it was not the finer woven wool of the Celts and Gauls but a crude form of felt, which was made from wool that had been beaten or pounded into a thick fabric.

Over the several hundred years of their contact with Europeans, barbarian garments became more refined. As they conquered people with more advanced fabric-making techniques, barbarians adopted woven wool and even linen garments. Still, the form of the garments remained quite simple and consisted of trousers, tunic, and overcoat or cloak for men, and a long tunic worn with a belt for women.

The crude garments worn by the early barbarians bear a close resemblance to what is known about the clothing worn by prehistoric humans. In fact, with their dependence on hunting and gathering for food and clothing, the nomads and barbarians resembled prehistoric humans more than they did the advanced peoples of Rome and its empire. Though Europeans in the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.) adopted the woolen clothing of the Gauls and the Celts,

the crude clothing of the barbarians largely disappeared from human use. Perhaps all that remains of their clothing customs is the love of fur that has continued in Western dress up to the present day.

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[See also **Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Braccae**; **Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Feminalia**]

■ ■ Headwear of Nomads and Barbarians



One of the things that most shocked the Romans about the barbarian tribes who attacked the outposts of the Roman Empire in the fourth century C.E. was the wildness of the barbarians' hair. Since we have no written records, paintings, or sculptures of these early peoples, we must rely on the accounts of outside observers, who were often the victims of attacks. Nearly every account emphasizes that barbarians wore their hair long. Women wore their hair very long and often braided it and let it hang down their back. Barbarian men often pushed their long hair straight back over the crown of their head and let it hang down their back. They also had long beards and mustaches. One Roman historian, describing the hairstyles of the Gauls (from modern-day France), is quoted in Richard Corson's *Fashions in Hair: The First Five Thousand Years*: "They indeed allow [their hair] to grow so thick that it scarce differs from a horse's mane. The nobility . . . wear moustaches, which hang down so as to cover their mouths, so that when they eat and drink, these brush their victuals [food] or dip into their liquids."

Not all barbarian men adopted a full head of hair, beard, and mustache, however. Some shaved their beard but wore a long mustache. Among the Goths, from the area that is today Germany, some priests shaved the front and sides of their head but left a long mane of hair growing from the top and back of the head. Warriors from Gaul were sometimes known to dye their hair bright red, and Anglo-Saxons sometimes dyed their hair shades of green, orange, and deep blue. Throughout the barbarian tribes, short hair for men was generally thought of as a sign of disgrace.

Little is known about barbarian headwear, though some accounts of these tribes do mention that they wore hats. Some early physical evidence from northern Europe indicates that peoples like the Goths and the Franks (from present-day Germany) may have

■■■ HEADWEAR OF NOMADS AND BARBARIANS

worn a thick felt cap. There were also accounts of Franks wearing battle headdresses made with bison horns.

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■ ■ Body Decorations of Nomads and Barbarians

■ ■ Our lack of knowledge about the costume traditions of nomads and barbarians is especially severe in the area of body decoration and accessories. While even prehistoric humans left wall paintings and carvings and small statues that indicated that they wore tattoos and painted their bodies, we have no such records from the barbarian tribes that ransacked Europe in the last years of the Roman Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.). It is simply not known whether such groups as the Huns and the Goths had body decoration traditions.

Historians and archeologists, scientists who study the fossil and material remnants of past life, have uncovered some physical evidence that indicates that barbarians may have worn simple bracelets and necklaces made of bone. They have also found fragments of combs made out of animal horn and bone. We do know that Vikings, from present-day Scandinavia, wore jewelry, and that Viking men especially wore bracelets as a symbol of their victories in battle. Viking men also wore belt buckles that were made out of bronze or bone.

The only other evidence we have of barbarian ornament comes from the ac-

Three Goths, a group of barbarians, stand at the left wearing furs and elaborate headdresses. *Reproduced by permission of © Bettmann/CORBIS.*



■■■ BODY DECORATIONS OF NOMADS AND BARBARIANS

counts of enemy societies. In the fifth century C.E. Gauls in the Roman Empire reported that marauding tribes of Franks decorated their bodies with seaweed and wore bison-horn headdresses into battle. Similarly, early reports of Celts indicate that they wore bracelets on their arms and wrists and metal collars on their necks.

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■ ■ Footwear of Nomads and Barbarians

As with their clothing, the footwear of nomads and barbarians was made out of the skins of the animals that they hunted and, in some cases, herded. Though we have very little physical evidence about the footwear worn by such peoples as the Gauls, Celts, Huns, and Goths, we do know that their animal hide footwear came in two basic styles. The first style, which was similar to primitive footwear worn by prehistoric humans, consisted of a single piece of animal hide wrapped up over the top of the foot and secured by some form of hide strap or tie. More common was a multipart hide shoe, in which hide uppers were stitched to a sole of thicker leather.

Huns and Goths, who had migrated to central and southern Europe from colder regions to the north and east, likely used animal skins with the fur still attached for extra warmth. They also appear to have worn high boots that reached to just below the knee. It is believed that the Roman cothurnus, a high boot, was modeled after a boot worn by Celts and Gauls from present-day Britain and France.

A Viking in traditional barbarian dress, including a fur cape, helmet with horns, and footwear made out of animal hide. *Reproduced by permission of the New York Public Library Picture Collection.*



■■■ FOOTWEAR OF NOMADS AND BARBARIANS

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[See also **Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Cothurnus**]



Europe in the Middle Ages

From as early as 100 B.C.E., administrators of the Roman Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.) had brought parts of Europe under the control and governance of Rome. By the second century C.E., Rome's influence spread throughout most of western Europe, from Spain north to Britain, and Germany south to Italy. When the Roman Empire collapsed in 476 C.E. after years of attacks by hordes of raiding barbarians from the north, including Goths, Huns, Franks, Angles, Saxons, and Vandals, much of the civilization that the Romans had developed collapsed as well. Well-built cities were destroyed, centers of learning were ruined, and trade routes were disrupted. The tribes who took power kept their control local and were constantly at war with each other. The disorder they brought ushered in an era in European history that some historians call the Dark Ages, part of the larger historical period called the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.).

For several hundred years following the collapse of the Roman Empire people in Europe lived meagerly. Some of the glory of the empire was restored under the reign of a Germanic king named Charlemagne (742–814). Charlemagne ruled over a revived Roman Empire from 800 to 814, and his rule was characterized by some renewed trade among the emerging states of France, Italy, and Spain. But upon Charlemagne's death the empire fell apart again. The only



Various armor of the Middle Ages. *Reproduced by permission of Getty Images.*

things uniting the various peoples of Europe were the Catholic religion, the Latin language, and the emerging feudal system of social organization.

The feudal system develops

Under the feudal system a local king sat at the top of the social order. He was supported by nobles, who swore their loyalty to the king and provided him with soldiers, called knights, for protection. Knights developed customs all their own, with complex rules about how to treat women and intricate and sophisticated systems of armor. The nobles controlled the land, which was worked by peasants and other members of the lower classes. Life was not easy under the feudal system. People had to work very hard just to get by, and there were few diversions for those outside the king's immediate court. Living conditions were dirty and difficult, and people lived very short lives. According to Michael and Ariane

Batterberry in their book *Fashion: The Mirror of History*, “monotony was the cornerstone of feudal life.”

As the feudal system developed, life became better for some people. Kingdoms grew larger, and the king’s castle soon became the center of a vigorous town life. Kings made alliances with, or conquered, their neighbors, and larger kingdoms developed, complete with extended royal families and systems of nobility. These new societies included the monarchies, or kingdoms, of France, England, and Spain, as well as various small states in Germany. The development of these societies was a slow process but was quite recognizable by the eleventh century. These monarchies provided the basis for present-day European nations.

A religious society

The center of life throughout Europe in the Middle Ages was the Roman Catholic Church. For the better part of the period the church was the most powerful institution in all of Europe and the only one to span the separate kingdoms. The church was the keeper of knowledge and learning, maintaining books and literacy at a time when most people could not read. The church was also a powerful economic institution. It collected taxes from all citizens, and it built enormous churches, monasteries, and cathedrals throughout Europe. It is from church statuary, records, and tapestries that most of our knowledge about the Middle Ages comes.

The church was also important for the role it played in the Crusades, a campaign of religious wars that lasted from about 1090 to 1300. Heeding the call of the church, kings sent their knights and soldiers on long journeys to the Middle East to attempt to reclaim the Holy Lands from Muslim nations. (The Holy Lands were special to the Catholics because they were the birthplace of Jesus Christ, and remain a source of conflict into the twenty-first century.) These crusaders crossed vast distances and learned a great deal about foreign lands, including the Byzantine Empire (476–1453), which was at its peak of development. They brought back with them new ideas, access to new trading partners, and new styles in clothing.

The Black Death

Just as Europe was beginning to develop more rapidly, a terrible disease known as the plague struck the continent. Called the



Depiction of a battle with William the Conqueror on *The Bayeux Tapestry*, one of the most famous artifacts from the Middle Ages.

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Black Death, the plague wiped out nearly one-third of western Europe's population between 1348 and 1350. The plague had a huge impact on all areas of society. It made many people question the authority of the Catholic Church, which had been unable to protect victims from the plague. It also brought some real changes in the clothing people wore. During and after the plague people sought out fancier, more highly ornamented clothing. Historians believe that they did so because they realized that, with life seeming so short and easily lost, they may as well enjoy the little things and spent what they had rather than saved.

On the eve of the Renaissance

By the fourteenth century life in the larger towns had become highly developed. Workers began to organize themselves in guilds, or organizations of people with similar trades, to practice certain trades and a small middle class of shopkeepers opened up stores. The royal family and their courts were still at the top of social life,

but many more people had access to money than ever before. These developing societies began to rediscover learning, and they established the first universities to support education. These changes ushered in a new era in history called the Renaissance, so named because of the rebirth of learning and civil society.

The costume traditions of Europe followed the broad trends of history. Clothing started out crude and became ever more highly developed throughout the period. By the fourteenth century skilled tailors were proving capable of making very finely cut and fitted garments. Their ability to make custom clothing and to change clothing styles to fit the ever-changing tastes of wealthy royals and nobles ushered in the beginnings of modern fashion, where tastes in clothes change constantly. France emerged as the fashion capital of Europe and the West, a status that it retains into the twenty-first century.

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■ Clothing of the Middle Ages

 **T**he Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500) was, as its name implies, a great age of transition. The Roman Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.), which had provided the structures of civilization across Europe for nearly five hundred years, collapsed in 476, and bands of nomadic people who the Romans had called barbarians—Goths, Huns, Vandals, Franks, and others—took control of much of western Europe. Roman trading networks, civil administration, and learning disappeared, to be replaced by the cruder social structures of the barbarians. These new Europeans retained the Catholic Church and the Latin language, yet most every other area of culture changed. Nowhere were these cultural changes more apparent than in the area of clothing. The fine linen and silk togas and draped robes of the Romans disappeared and were replaced by crude wool leggings and fur-lined tunics, or shirts. Over the course of the next one thousand years, however, the emerging kingdoms of Europe began to develop more refined costume traditions of their own. Clothing traditions in Europe developed slowly at first, with only minor changes in basic costume until about the eleventh century. After the eleventh century, trade, travel, and wealth increased, and clothing became more sophisticated. By the end of the Middle Ages, Europe was developing distinctive and refined costume traditions of its own.

Simple wool garments of the early Middle Ages

The different tribes of nomads who defeated the Roman Empire and populated Europe had developed their clothing amid a very different climate than ancient Rome's. Cool weather and sheep herding traditions led them to rely on wool as their primary fabric, and most of their garments were made from wool. The tunic, made of a long rectangle of wool with a hole in the center for the head



Women of the Middle Ages often wore long flowing garments and head decorations such as veils and hennin. Reproduced by permission of © Gianni Dagli Orti/CORBIS.

and crude stitching at the sides, was the basic garment for both men and women throughout the Middle Ages. People would typically wear a thin undertunic and a heavier overtunic. These varied in length, with women's tunics falling all the way to the ground throughout the period, and men's tunics gradually rising so that by the end of the period they looked much like a modern shirt. Both sexes wore a belt around their tunics. Men typically wore leg coverings, ranging from simple trousers early in the period to a combination of hose and breeches, or short pants, later in the period. Both sexes also wore a tunic made of fur when the weather was cold. Fur was widely used by people of all classes, with the richer people being able to afford softer furs such as ermine, or weasels, and mink.

One of the real problems historians have in understanding clothing in the early Middle Ages is that so little of it has survived. Unlike ancient Egyptians, who preserved the bodies of the dead and left many items of clothing in their protected tombs, early Europeans simply buried their dead in the ground, where their burial clothes quickly rotted and disintegrated. Early Europeans also did not value paintings that recorded daily life in a realistic way. Most of their art—primarily paintings, tapestries, and sculptures in churches—was about religious subjects. Luckily, they depicted religious figures wearing clothing from the Middle Ages, so we do have some record of what people wore. Records for the period improved from about the eleventh century onward.

Medieval fashion and the rise of the tailor

The turning point in medieval fashion came in the eleventh century. Emerging monarchies in France, England, and Spain created courts with real wealth to spend on fashionable clothes. These monarchies sent knights and soldiers on religious crusades to the Middle East beginning in 1090, and the returning crusaders brought with them ideas and clothes from the developed societies of the



Byzantine Empire (476–1453 C.E.) and beyond in present-day Turkey. These influences brought a revolution in fashion. Wealthy people could afford to have their servants modify their clothing, and they helped invent several new fashions, including hose for men's legs, houpelandes (a long, tailored outer robe), and other decorative wraps.

One of the real innovations in medieval fashion was that men's and women's clothing began to develop in completely different directions. Women continued to wear long robes, but the robes were now made in separate pieces of fabric, with a snug-fitting top or bodice matched to a flowing, bountiful skirt. Men's tunics, which had once reached to the ankle, got much shorter, until by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they ended at the waist. Men also wore tight-fitting hose that showed off the shape of their legs.

One of the primary causes of this fashion revolution was the emergence of the professional tailor. In the past, people had made their own clothes or, if they were wealthy, they had servants make

Medieval men and women often wore cloak-like garments and robes over their clothing, such as the cyclas worn by the man on the left. *Reproduced by permission of © Leonard de Selva/CORBIS.*

clothes for them. For most this meant clothes were fairly simple. In the developing kingdoms of Europe, however, skilled craftsmen began to organize themselves into guilds, or organizations of people with similar trades. One such trade was tailoring, making, repairing, and altering garments. These tailors developed their skills and soon made tailoring a job for men instead of women. By 1300 there were seven hundred tailors working in Paris, France. Tailors across Europe developed new methods of cutting and sewing that allowed for closer fitting, more intricately tailored clothing. The impact of professional tailoring can be seen in the clothes of the late Middle Ages but really became pronounced during the Renaissance of the fifteenth century and beyond.

The Middle Ages was perhaps the last period in European history when clothing was primarily a simple matter of necessity rather than extravagant, ever-changing fashion.

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■ ■ ■ Bliaut

The bliaut was a long gown worn by wealthy men and women beginning in the 1100s. Along with the houppelande, a long, full, outer garment, the bliaut was one of the long garments most associated with the late Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500). One of the most striking things about the bliaut was the sheer amount of fabric used in its construction. Bliauts had many, many folds and drapes, and

thus used twice as much fabric as might be needed for a flat skirt. Women's bliauts often had hundreds of pleats.

Men's bliauts fit fairly loosely, often reaching to the ankle, and their sleeves widened at the wrist. Women's bliauts were usually close-fitting in the shoulders, torso, and upper arms, but the sleeves widened greatly from the elbow to the wrist. Women's bliauts reached all the way to the ground. Both men and women wore belts or some form of sash with their bliauts. Bliauts might have been made from fine wool or linen, but those worn by the wealthiest people were likely to have been made of silk.

It is thought that the bliaut originated in France, but it was worn by wealthy people throughout Europe. None of the actual garments have survived to the present day, so almost all that is known about the garment comes from statues that have been preserved from the Middle Ages at the Chartres Cathedral of Notre Dame in France.

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■ ■ ■ Cote and Cotehardie

Among the most common garments from late in the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500) were the cote and its descendant, the cotehardie. Likely a variation of the long Byzantine tunic known as the dalmatica, the cote was a long robe worn by both men and women. The loose-fitting garment was pulled on over the head, and its close-fitting neck and sleeves were likely fastened at the back of the neck and the wrist with either buttons or laces. Men wore their cotes with a wide belt, and they sometimes bloused the fabric out across the chest. The men's cote generally reached to the ankle. Women's cotes were slightly longer, reaching to the ground, and women wore their belts much higher, just under the breasts. The garments were



Three medieval knights wearing cotehardies, hip-length jackets fit snugly to the torso and arms.
 Reproduced by permission of © Christel Gerstenberg/CORBIS.

likely made of wool, or perhaps silk, and evidence shows that they were usually dyed a single color. The wealthiest people might wear some embroidery or fringe on the hem of their cote.

The biggest overall trend in fashion from about 1100 to 1500 was that garments became more closely fitting. It was this trend that transformed the cote into the cotehardie. The cotehardie began as a short version of the cote worn by men. The men's cotehardie was a hip-length jacket that fit snugly in the torso and the arms. It might be worn with a skirt and hose. But the women's cotehardie was a truly dramatic garment. The snugly-fitting bodice and sleeves of the women's cotehardie was attached to a long, very wide skirt that might have had many folds. The skirt began just below the woman's breasts, and its bulk gave the wearer the pregnant profile that is so often seen in paintings and tapestries from the period. Some cotehardie skirts had slits cut in them, and women gathered up the front part of the skirt and carried it before her, adding to the bulk. It was a custom of women to cut off the sleeves

of their cotehardies to give as a prize to a favored knight in a jousting tournament.

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[See also Volume 2, Byzantine Empire: Dalmatica]

■ ■ ■ Ganache and Gardcorps

Ganaches, also spelled garnaches, and gardcorps were overcoats worn by men of all social classes during the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500). Most likely made of thicker wool, the primary purpose of these garments was to protect the wearer from inclement weather and provide warmth. They might even be lined with fur for extra warmth. They were worn from about 1200 on.

Ganaches and gardcorps were very similar. Both garments were pulled over the head and hung down past the waist, perhaps as far as the knees. The sleeves of the ganache were formed from extended fabric at the shoulders; they were open at the underarm and the sleeves were generally no longer than the elbow. The gardcorps had separately attached sleeves and thus was better for cold weather. Both garments could have a hood that attached at the back of the neck that was draped over the back when not in use.

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Hose and Breeches

The Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500) are best known for the long, flowing tunics, mantles (types of overgarment), cotehardies (short robes), and other garments that covered not only the upper body but much of the legs as well. While women’s garments remained long, over the course of time men’s tunics and overcoats grew shorter, allowing them to display more and more of their legs. Men generally wore two different garments on their legs, hose and breeches, and the length and fit of these garments changed a great deal between around 1000 and 1400 C.E.

Since the early Middle Ages, European men had worn breeches, loose-fitting trousers that were held at the waist with a belt or a drawstring. These might have a stirrup to secure the hem of the breeches inside a shoe, or they could be loose at the ankle. Like most clothes of the time, these breeches were usually made out of wool. Many men bound these breeches close to their legs with leg bands. As the hemlines of outer garments rose, men sought more attractive ways to display their legs. They followed the emerging fashion of the day in wanting to display the form of the body, and not cloak it in loose fabric. They thus began to wear close-fitting hose that reached to the upper calf or even above the knee. These hose, made from a clingy, bias-cut wool (cut diagonally to the grain of the fabric), were as skin-tight as the fabric would allow and were held in place by a garter, or small belt. Slowly, hose extended further and further up the leg, and breeches diminished in size. By the thirteenth century some breeches were no more than baggy short pants, and hose had been joined together at the waist to form what we think of today as tights.

This transformation in men’s legwear, with hose chasing breeches up the leg, was complete by the end of the thirteenth century. Hose were now common and many were made with feet sewn on. In some cases it appears that the foot sections of the hose had leather heels sewn on to the bottom so that shoes were not required. Most hose were made of wool, though very wealthy men might have hose made of silk or velvet.

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[See also Volume 2, *Europe in the Middle Ages: Leg Bands*; Volume 3, *Sixteenth Century: Hose and Breeches*]

■ ■ ■ HouppeLANde

The houppeLANde was a long, very full outer garment from late in the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500). First appearing in Europe in about 1350, the houppeLANde was worn by men over the top of a tunic and hose, or by women over a long underrobe. The houppeLANde was close-fitting in the shoulders but then billowed outward from there in many folds of fabric. By the late fifteenth century these folds were organized into long, tubular pleats.

The houppeLANde was a very dramatic garment. Both its hemline and its sleeves could reach to or trail on the ground. The sleeves were extremely wide and hung down to the side when the arms were extended. Both hemline and sleeve cuffs were often trimmed or scalloped into decorative patterns. Fabric flourishes, looking something like small wings, were sometimes added at the shoulders. The houppeLANde was usually worn with a decorative belt, with women wearing the belt just below the line of the bust.

HouppeLANdes were made in a variety of rich fabrics, including silk, brocade, and velvet. They were sometimes trimmed with contrasting linings to add color or with fur

Richard II and his patron saints. The men are wearing billowing robes called houppeLANdes, which could be visually dramatic and were extremely popular in the late Middle Ages. *Reproduced by permission of © National Gallery Collection/CORBIS.*



to add warmth. Wearers could choose from a variety of rich colors, and later in the period they could choose from vibrant patterns as well.

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■ Leg Bands

Leg bands were a form of legwear for men that marked a transition from the clothing habits of ancient Rome to those of Europe in the later years of the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500). When the Middle Ages began following the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476, many people in the colder parts of Europe wore the crude breeches or trousers of the Gauls, from the area that is today France, called feminalia by the Romans. Wanting to keep the fabric of these breeches from hanging loose about the legs, men began to tie leather or woolen bands about their lower legs. Over time these bands became more than just a solution to a problem. They became a garment of their own.

By the seventh and eighth centuries, men wrapped their leg bands in regular patterns around their breeches, and the rising hemline of their outer garments allowed others to see these bands. People soon preferred the close-cut look the bands gave the legs, and this helped encourage the creation of hose, which were very snug fitting. After 1000, breeches with leg bands slowly gave way to hose as the primary form of leg covering for men.

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[See also Volume 2, Europe in the Middle Ages: Hose and Breeches]

■ ■ ■ Mantle

The mantle was an all-purpose overgarment that was worn consistently throughout the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500). Mantles were extremely simple: they consisted of a large piece of cloth, rectangular, semicircular, or circular, that was wrapped across the shoulders and fastened. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the mantle was typically fastened at the right shoulder with a small metal clasp or brooch. By the late twelfth century, however, people began to drape the man-

The mantle, worn by the two men on the left, was a medieval all-purpose overgarment that resembles the modern-day cape.

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tle over both shoulders and fasten it at the center of the chest. New fastenings included cords that tied or a button and loop.

The simplicity of the mantle made it very adaptable. Poor people might wear a mantle of undyed wool with a crude clasp. But wealthy people could wear mantles made of rich silk, trimmed with soft fur, and fastened with an expensive jeweled brooch. Some form of the mantle has been worn throughout the history of human dress: the basic form had been worn in ancient Greece and Rome, and were called chlaina, diplax, and chlamys, and people still wear capes to this day.

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[See also **Volume 1, Ancient Greece: Chlaina and Diplax**; **Volume 1, Ancient Greece: Chlamys**]

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■ **Pourpoint**

As knights came to wear increasingly heavy metal armor in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they needed some form of comfortable undergarment to provide padding for their body. The pourpoint was that garment. Heavily quilted and padded in key places where sharp parts of the armor contacted the skin, the pourpoint was a close-fitting, long-sleeved shirt that buttoned down the front. It had carefully tailored arm sockets to allow complete range of movement for the arms which was key in battle.

The pourpoint was designed to make the wearer comfortable beneath his armor, but it was when the knight took off his armor that the pourpoint made a fashion statement. Like several other forms of medieval clothing, the pourpoint was tailored close to the torso. The hose that knights wore on their legs had ties that secured directly to anchors on the pourpoint, called points. The unarmed knight in snug-fitting hose and pourpoint became one of the first images of strength and masculinity to influence fashion, for this image was widely copied in paintings and tapestries of the day.

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■ ■ ■ Tabard

The tabard, a decorated, open-sided smock, had its origins in the Holy Wars known as the Crusades. Beginning in the late eleventh century, knights from western Europe began to journey to the Middle East to try to “reclaim” the Christian Holy Lands from the Muslims who lived in present-day Israel. Dressed in heavy chain mail (flexible armor made of intertwining metal chains), and metal armor, the knights found themselves roasting under the Middle Eastern sun. Seeking to keep the sun from heating the metal, they invented a simple smock to wear over their armor. Called a surcote, this was a long rectangular piece of fabric with a hole cut in the middle for the head. It was belted about the waist. When these knights returned home, their utilitarian garments were adopted for use as everyday wear and were re-named tabards.

The tabard retained the basic form of the surcote, and it was worn on top of other clothes, but the resemblance ended there. The tabard was shorter, ending at the waist. It was often trimmed out with fur at the hem and armholes. It was often parti-colored, which meant it had sides made in fabrics of contrasting color. Finally, tabards were often decorated with a coat of

A traditional medieval tabard adorned with decorative trimming.
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 CORBIS.



■■■ TABARD

arms, emblems that featured different symbols and which were claimed as a kind of family seal. A typical coat of arms might have a shield background, a family motto, and an animal, all surrounded by decorative flourishes. Tabards were typically worn for ceremonies and survived into the late Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500).

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■ ■ Headwear of the Middle Ages

People living in Europe during the long period of history known as the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500) wore a variety of different hairstyles and headwear. As with other elements of medieval costume, these styles were fairly simple up until about the twelfth century, when increasing wealth and changes in social life brought an upsurge in decoration, especially in headwear.

Less is known about hairstyles in the Middle Ages than in many other eras, in part because of people's fondness for headwear. We do know, mainly from painting and tapestries, that men's hairstyles went from long and shaggy with beards and mustaches in the early medieval period, to short and clean shaven later in the period. The bowl haircut was especially popular after the twelfth century. Perhaps the most distinctive haircut of the Middle Ages was the tonsure, a large round spot that monks and other religious figures shaved on the top of their heads to show their religious devotion. Throughout the Middle Ages women tended to wear their hair quite long, and they either left it natural and flowing or they braided it into two long plaits that hung to either side of the head.

Hats and other forms of headwear were worn throughout the Middle Ages. Culture as a whole was dominated by the Catholic Church, and the church favored modesty and complete coverage of the body in clothing. The two most common everyday forms of



James I, the King of Scotland, displaying common hair trends of the Middle Ages. *Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

headwear were the coif, a light fabric cap held close to the head with a string under the chin, and a wool felt beret, a durable all-purpose cap worn mostly by men. The wimple, a veil that completely covered a woman's neck and chin, was often worn with a veil over the top of the head.

By late in the Middle Ages, especially after the twelfth century, women's headwear became very elaborate. Two of the most dramatic headdresses were the steeple headdress, which was shaped like a tall dunce cap and adorned with a veil, and the ram's horn headdress, which featured two conical horns that stuck off the side of the head. Wealthy women competed with each other to see whose headdress was the most extravagant. Perhaps the most extravagant of all was the butterfly headdress, a steeple headdress that was adorned with starched and ironed linen wings in the shape of a multi-winged butterfly. The size and bulk of these headdresses made any activity difficult, but then little activity was expected of women during this period in history.

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■ ■ ■ Beret

A soft, brimless cap, round in shape, the useful beret (from the Latin *birretum*, meaning “cap”) has been worn by many different peoples from ancient times into the twenty-first century. Usually made from sturdy wool felt, a strong fabric that prevents the passage of wind and water, the beret is designed with a tight-fitting crown that helps hold the hat on the head without the use of elastic. Simple in design, yet offering excellent protection from cold,

wind, and rain, the beret has been traced back as far as early cultures on the Greek island of Crete, around 1500 B.C.E.. The beret was the most popular men's hat during the late Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.) and into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially in France, Italy, and Spain.

French legend credits the biblical hero Noah with the creation of the beret, holding that Noah discovered that the wool used to waterproof the ark had been trampled by the animals into a tough felt fabric, which he then made into a weatherproof hat. Another story says that it was medieval shepherds who invented the hat by exposing knitted wool to the weather until it swelled and became solid felt. The real origin of the beret style is lost in history, but the hat became popular headgear during the Middle Ages. It was not only warm but practical too, because it kept the hair out of the face and stayed firmly on the head, yet it had no brim to get in the way of a shooter's aim. For these reasons, the beret is still a popular choice for special military uniforms.

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■ ■ ■ Bowl Haircut

The bowl haircut, especially popular among European men from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries, is one of the simplest of styles to create. It is a plain short haircut, with straight bangs on the forehead, and the rest of the hair left the same length all the way around. The cut got its name because it was originally done by actually placing a bowl on the head as a cutting guide. Most medieval men who wore the bowl haircut style also shaved the backs of their heads and shaved their sideburns.

The length of men's hair varied considerably during the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500), with long curls being popular during some decades and shorter lengths coming into style during others. The Crusades, a long campaign of religious wars that lasted from

1090 through 1300, had brought both military and religious styles into popular culture, and the modest bowl haircut had elements of the shorter hairstyles of both soldiers and religious leaders. However, men of the Middle Ages did manage to add their own personal style to bowl-cropped hair by wearing fashionable hats and head coverings, which were quite complex and ornate during that era.

Though the bowl cut has an ancient history, it has reappeared throughout the centuries, often among poor people in rural areas who could not afford barbers. During the 1960s the popular British rock group the Beatles introduced a modern version of bowl-cropped hair, which became so popular it changed men's hairstyles around the world.

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■ ■ Coif

Worn by women, men, and children throughout the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500), the coif was a simple fabric cap that covered all or most of the hair and tied under the chin. Coifs could be worn under another hat for extra warmth, but they were frequently worn alone. They were usually made of plain linen or wool, although soldiers often wore a coif made of chain mail (flexible armor made of intertwining metal chains) under their helmets. Coifs were most often black or white, and some had embroidered designs.

Coifs first appeared as common European headgear during the 900s, and they were widely worn until the 1700s. Before 1500, a simple two-piece coif was popular, with a seam down the middle of the head. After 1500, a more tailored three-piece coif was fashionable, with two seams allowing it to fit the head more closely. Rich and poor alike wore the caps, which provided warmth and modesty. Many priests and monks wore simple linen coifs, and travelers wore them under felt caps. Married women wore coifs alone or under veils to cover their heads for modesty.

By the beginning of the Renaissance around 1450, many different shapes of coifs had been developed. Most of these were worn by women, and the shape and size of the coif could be used to show the wealth and class of the wearer. English women wore coifs that came to one or several points at the top, while French and Flemish women commonly wore round coifs that sat on top of the head and tied under the chin.

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■ ■ ■ Hoods

One of the most distinctive forms of headwear worn in the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.) was the hood. Ever since the time of the Roman Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.), Europeans had pulled a section of their outer cloaks up over the head to form a hood. In the Middle Ages, however, the hood was detached from the cloak and became a separate form of headwear. By the end of the twelfth century, the hood was the most common form of headwear in all of Europe.

The medieval hood came in many forms. At its most basic it was a tube of woolen material with an opening left for the face. Most hoods, however, were not so simple. Many had a broad band of material that spread from the neck out across the shoulders. This band was called a chaperon. It was common for the fabric around the face opening to extend outward from the face; this excess fabric was then rolled backward to frame the face.

The most interesting addition to the common hood was the liripipe. Extending from the back top of the hood, a liripipe was a



The women in the right of the ship wear medieval hoods, which protected the wearer from the cold and rain. Reproduced by permission of © Archivio Iconografico, S.A./CORBIS.

long, narrow tube of material that tapered to a point at the end. It could range from one foot to several feet in length. Longer liripipes could hang down the back or be wrapped around the neck like a scarf, but the primary purpose was ornamental.

A hood was a very versatile garment. It protected the wearer from cold and rain. In some cases, people placed the face hole of the hood over the crown of their head and then wrapped and tied the chaperon and liripipe into a kind of turban.

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[See also Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Casula]

■ ■ ■ Ram's Horn Headdress

Wealthy Europeans in the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500) loved headwear. They wore coverings on their head almost all the time, and over time they developed styles of headwear that were large and sculpted. Along with the steeple headdress, the ram's horn headdress, also known as the horned hennin, was one of the more extravagant headdresses from late in the Middle Ages.

The ram's horn headdress got its name from the two sculpted “horns” that stuck out from either side of the temple. These horns, or curved cones, were constructed of wire mesh that was secured to a snug-fitting skullcap. The horns were covered with fabric and most often had thin, gauzy veils that either hung from the ends or were draped between the horns. The tips of the horns might also be adorned with small flags or other ornaments. The horns themselves could reach up to three feet in length, though they were usually shorter. They must have been very difficult to wear and the largest of them were probably only worn for ceremonial occasions. The ram's horn headdress and other horn- and cone-shaped headdresses were often called hennin. First seen in the late 1300s, they soon went out of fashion.

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[See also Volume 2, Europe in the Middle Ages: Steeple Headdress]

■ ■ ■ Steeple Headdress

The steeple headdress, which became popular among women in France and then throughout Europe in the fourteenth century, was one of the most distinctive forms of headwear worn in human



Mary of Burgundy, standing center, wears a tall steeple headdress draped in a long veil.

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history. The steeple headdress began simply as a stiff cone whose wide end sat on the crown of the head, with the point jutting up and slightly back. The first steeple headdresses were covered with black velvet or silk.

From its modest beginnings the steeple headdress grew to great heights. Over time the length of the cone got longer and longer, reaching heights of up to four feet. Patterned fabric covered the cone, or strips of fabric were used as decoration. Often a sheer veil was attached to the point of the steeple, and the veil either hung down from the back or was draped to cover the woman's shoulders.

Keeping the steeple headdress on the head was no easy matter. At first it was pinned to a simple cloth cap that tied beneath the chin. But as the steeples grew taller, women developed more substantial undercaps with sturdy anchors. It soon became fashionable to show no hair beneath the steeple headdress, so women plucked

their hair up to the line of the headdress. This and other bulky, pointed hats like the ram's horn headdress were called hennin.

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[See also [Volume 2, Europe in the Middle Ages: Ram's Horn Headdress](#)]

■ ■ ■ Tonsure

One of the most mysterious and striking of medieval hairstyles was the tonsure (TON-shur). Beginning in the seventh and

eighth centuries, members of Christian religious orders began to shave the top of their head in order to show their purity and chastity. The size and shape of the tonsure could vary. Some wore a semi-circle tonsure, others a full circle. Some shaved just above the ears and left a full head of hair below. In some Catholic orders monks shaved all but a narrow piece of hair, leaving a fringe that looked like a crown.

The origins of the tonsure are something of a mystery. Early Celts, a people based in northern Britain, were thought to have worn the tonsure prior to their contact with the Roman Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.) and with no relation to religion. Members of both the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church wore the tonsure, and both claim that its origins go back to the time of Jesus Christ (c. 6 B.C.E.–c. 30 C.E.). The tonsure was still worn by members of some Catholic religious orders until its abolition in 1972.

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■ ■ ■ Wimple

The wimple, also spelled whimple, was a very common head covering for women of the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500). Popular from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries, wimples were light veils, usually made of linen or silk, which were fastened all the way around the neck, up to the chin. Sometimes the bottom edge of the wimple was tucked into the collar of the dress. The wimple provided both protection from the weather and modesty. A wimple was often worn with a veil called a *couvrechef*, which covered the top of the head and flowed down over the shoulders.

In the Europe of the Middle Ages, it was customary for married women to cover their hair as a sign of modesty. The wimple and veil combination was an excellent headdress for demonstrating modest respectability, since it covered everything except a

■ ■ ■ WIMPLE



A medieval woman wearing a wimple. Wimples offer both protection from the weather and modesty and a form of them is still worn by some nuns.

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woman's face. However, wealthy women sometimes used the wimple to display their riches as well, by attaching jewels to the cloth before placing it on their heads. Sometimes a circle of fabric or metal was placed on the head like a crown to hold the wimple in place.

The modesty and plainness of the wimple made it a popular choice for nuns, female members of Catholic religious orders. Nuns choose lives of religious service and usually live and dress simply. During the Middle Ages many nuns adopted the wimple as part of their uniform dress, and many nuns continue to wear the wimple in the twenty-first century.

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■ ■ Body Decorations of the Middle Ages

 **T**he Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500) were a time when people in Europe did less to adorn themselves than at any period in history. The civilizations that developed in Europe following the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 C.E. inherited their decorative traditions not from the Romans, who had loved jewelry and decoration, but from the crude barbarian groups, or tribes, that had helped bring about the downfall of Rome. The Catholic religion that developed in Europe also frowned on excessive decoration, and people, early in the Middle Ages especially, simply did not have the wealth to purchase jewelry. Jewelry did exist in the period, in the form of bracelets, necklaces, and rings. Although jewelry was commonly made of gold, the standards of jewelry construction were not high. It was only in the late Middle Ages, when the monarchies, or royal families, in France, Britain, Germany, and Spain began to build up real wealth, that jewelry became common in royal courts.

The lack of decorative jewelry did not mean, however, that people did not care about their appearances. Europeans did inherit the tradition of public baths from the Romans, though they did not bathe as frequently. In fact, one king claimed that he only bathed once every three weeks, and his subjects far less.

Well before the development of modern makeup and hair treatments, women used a variety of concoctions to improve their appearance. Blood-sucking leeches were applied to the skin to make it pale, and a caustic powder called quicklime was used to remove unwanted body hair. Women used mixtures of ingredients to lighten their hair, and they perfumed their bodies with dried roses, spices, and vinegar. Women across Europe used makeup to paint their faces, with the preferred colors varying from pink in Germany to white in Britain to red rouge in Spain. The use of eye makeup was seen

in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, including different shades of eyeliner and eye shadow. A notable innovation was the shaping of eyebrows through plucking.

Though Europeans in the Middle Ages did not wear much jewelry, they did have several distinctive accessories. Early in the period men began to use small satchels or purses to carry belongings. These were usually tied to or tucked into a belt. The art of tailoring developed rapidly late in the medieval era, allowing for the creation of close-fitting gloves. New techniques allowed gloves to become a fashion accessory by the twelfth or thirteenth century.

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■ ■ ■ Gloves

Gloves as a fashion accessory, rather than as a necessity to keep the hands warm, date to about the twelfth or thirteenth century, late in the Middle Ages (c. 500-c. 1500). For years people had worn crude mittens, perhaps lined with fur, when working outdoors, but sewing techniques were not developed enough to allow for the delicate stitches that were needed between fingers. In fact, most people kept the hands warm by wrapping them in the excess fabric of their baggy sleeves. Beginning in the Middle Ages, however, advances in tailoring made gloves a desirable fashion accessory.

The first people to wear gloves in medieval Europe were members of royalty and dignitaries in the Roman Catholic Church, the dominant church in Europe. For church dignitaries, or notable figures, gloves were a symbol of purity. Rich people wore gloves for such aristocratic pursuits as falconry, which involved training falcons to land on one's hand. Early gloves were made from deerskin

or sheepskin. By the time of the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, gloves were so popular that whole communities were known for their glove making. Since then, gloves have been worn for warmth and with fancy attire throughout the remainder of Western history.

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■ ■ ■ Purses

One of the most used fashion accessories in history traces its beginnings to the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500). It was sometime during this period that men began to wear small leather bags with their garments. These bags either fastened directly to the belts that were worn with most medieval garments, or they were tied to the belt with a loop of string or a leather strap that was fastened to the purse.

What is known about purses is depicted on the tapestries and statues from the period as there is little information regarding what medieval men carried in their purses. Purses later became a woman's accessory, and men became more inclined to carry their belongings in their wallets or pockets.

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■ ■ Footwear of the Middle Ages

 **T**he footwear worn in the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500) follows the trend of fashion in general over this period, moving from very crude in the early years to highly refined and even frivolous by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In fact, the evolution of footwear tracks very nicely the larger social changes that marked this fascinating period in European history.

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 C.E., Europe was without any form of unifying order. Isolated communities of European barbarians (the name originally used by the Romans to describe foreigners) began to develop permanent settlements, but frequent warfare and little trade kept these communities isolated. For several hundred years, European footwear showed the influence of both the early Romans' and Europeans' former nomadic lifestyle. Shoes were generally made of stiff pieces of leather, stitched together and tied at the ankle. In the north, such as Britain, these shoes might have fur inside and reach up the leg. Such simple styles held up until the twelfth century.

As isolated European communities consolidated into more powerful kingdoms, technology and trade expanded, and so did the range of footwear styles. Beginning late in the eleventh century, Christian kings sent knights and soldiers on the Crusades, holy wars fought to reclaim Holy Lands in the Middle East. These crusaders were exposed to new footwear fashions in the Byzantine Empire (476–1453) and beyond, and they brought those styles back with them. One of the most popular styles brought back from the Middle East involved shoes with long points, called crackowes or poulaines. These were popular throughout Europe from the twelfth to the fifteenth century.

Several trends characterize footwear from the twelfth century onward. Leather cutting and stitching became more intricate,

allowing closer fitting shoes. Straps extended from shoes up the shins, and buckles or buttons were sometimes used to fasten the shoes. More and more men wore hose. When these hose had soles sewn on to the foot-bottoms, shoes were not even needed. Interestingly, much less is known about women's shoes during this long period in history. Their dresses came all the way to the ground, completely hiding their footwear from view in the paintings and tapestries left from this time.

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■ ■ ■ Crackowes and Poulaines

Crackowes and poulaines are two different names for decorated leather shoes with very long, pointed toes, which were very popular among fashionable young men of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. At their most extreme, crackowes or poulaines (also sometimes called pistachios) had toes that extended twenty-four inches beyond the wearer's feet and had to be supported by thin chains that connected the toe to the knee.

Shoes with pointed, upturned toes had been introduced to Europe by the soldiers of the Crusades, a long campaign of religious wars that lasted from 1090 through 1300. The crusaders had traveled from Europe to Palestine (modern-day Israel and the Palestinian territories), in the Middle East. When they returned home, they brought back to Europe with them many things they had discovered in the East, such as spices, fine fabrics, and styles of clothing that were quite foreign to westerners. The Oriental-style pointed slipper became popular among both men and women. As fashionable dressers began to extend the style, the points on their shoes grew longer and longer.

Many extreme fashions became popular during the last half of the fourteenth century. At that time Europe was just beginning to recover from the devastation of the Black Death, an epidemic of a disease called bubonic plague that had killed millions of people across the continent between 1347 and 1350. Those who survived those grim years wanted to feel hope and joy in life, and they sought frivolous fashions that would cheer them. The long, delicately pointed shoes fit right in. By the end of the 1300s the shoes had come to be called crackowes and poulaines after the city of Krakow, Poland, because they were introduced in England by Polish nobles who came to visit Anne, the Polish wife of the British king Richard II (1367–1400). The long, pointed shoes worn by Polish noblemen were the first that had been seen in the British court, and soon they were widely imitated.

The pointed toes of crackowes or poulaines varied in length from six inches to twenty-four inches, and gentlemen often stuffed the toes with hay or inserted whalebone supports to hold up the long ends. As well as showing that the wearer was at the height of fashion, crackowes also showed that those who wore them belonged to a wealthy leisure class, since little work could be done while wearing the long-toed shoes. Many conservatives, or those who emphasize traditional institutions and resist change, as well as church leaders and political rulers, considered the new fashion ridiculous and disgraceful, calling the long, pointed toes “devil’s fingers.” Edward III (1312–1377), who ruled England from 1327 to 1377, even made a law that limited shoe length based on social class: common people could only wear a six-inch toe, while gentlemen could wear a fifteen-inch toe, and nobility even longer. However, laws can



Both of these medieval men are wearing poulaines, a type of shoe with very long, pointed toes.

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■■■ CRACKOWES AND POULAINES

seldom defeat a popular fashion fad, and the extremely long-toed crackowes remained in style until 1410. The shoes then became slightly more conservative, but long, pointed toes remained fashionable for wealthy young men into the 1480s.

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The Costume of the Discovered Peoples

There is a great deal of information known about the costume traditions of many of the ancient cultures. The clothing, hairstyles, and decorative customs of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China, Japan, and other societies, for example, have all been written about in many books. And from about midway through the Middle Ages (c. 500–c. 1500 C.E.) onward there are vast sources of information about the costume worn in Europe. Artwork, monuments and buildings, and written documents are all records, which historians call evidence, that help us better understand different cultures. Yet the knowledge about other cultures that are just as old and that may once have been just as sophisticated is very limited. The costume traditions of most of the continent of Africa are little known, and our knowledge about the traditions of the native peoples of North, Central, and South America, and of Oceania, is very limited. These cultures are named the cultures of the “discovered peoples” because they first became known to Europeans after contact was made within the last six hundred years.

The age of exploration

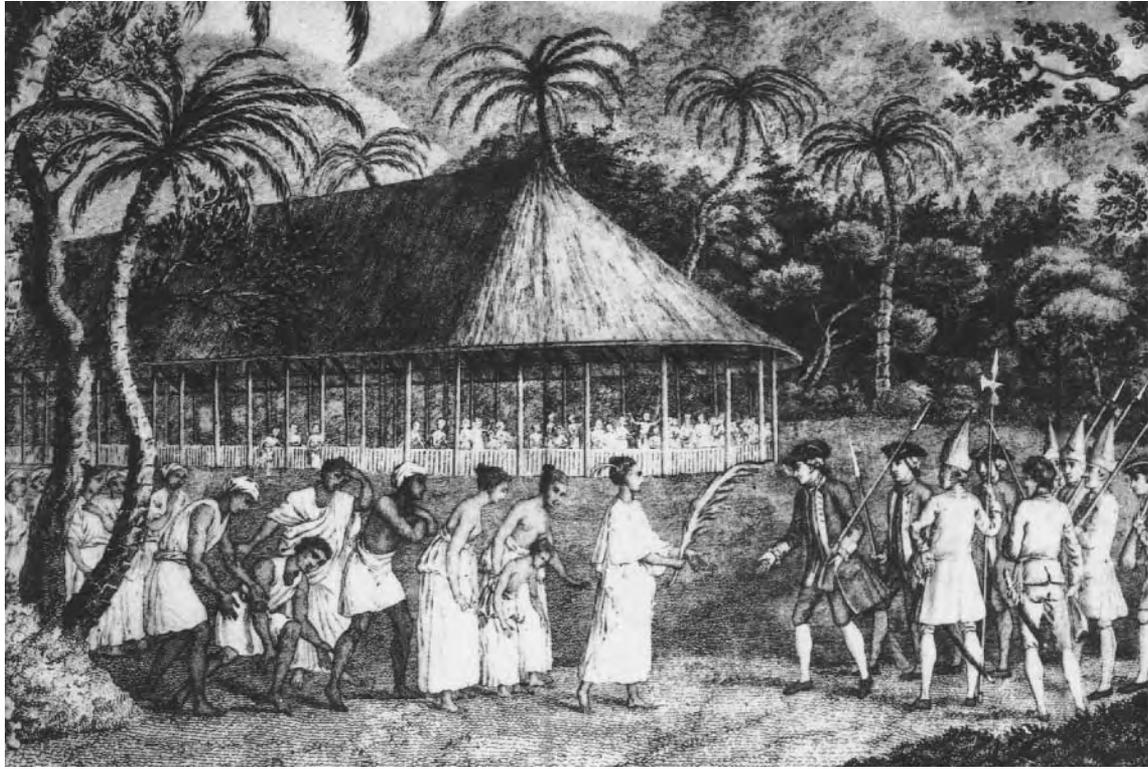
As the cultures of Europe grew more sophisticated after the twelfth century, they developed the ability and the desire to explore the larger world. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, countries

such as Spain, France, Portugal, and England sent ships across the oceans to look for new trading routes and establish colonies, or outposts of the country that had sent them there. This period is known as the age of exploration. Explorers from these countries traveled throughout the world. They “discovered” lands that they had not known to exist, such as the Americas and Oceania, and explored parts of Africa that had been completely unknown to Europeans before. These explorers’ discoveries provide us with the first information about the costume traditions of the discovered peoples.

The people who were discovered by the Europeans during the age of exploration had a long history. Human life is believed to have begun in Africa about one million years ago, and to have spread from Africa throughout the world. Humans had begun to settle in North America by 10,000 B.C.E. or earlier, and they spread from there south into Central and South America. Humans reached the major islands of Oceania, spanning from Hawaii in the north to New Zealand in the south, about the same time, though they didn’t reach the most distant of the islands until about 1300 C.E. In places, such as Central and South America, they built large and well-organized empires of millions; in other places, such as Oceania, Africa, and North America, humans banded together in small groups or tribes and had simple social lives based on hunting and gathering. Each of these cultures undoubtedly had distinct and notable costume traditions, but we don’t possess complete knowledge about the history of these traditions.

Costume traditions of the discovered peoples

The earliest information that we have about the costume traditions of the discovered peoples comes from descriptions about them from European explorers and colonizers. These Europeans, however, did not seek to preserve, record, or maintain the costume traditions of the people they discovered. For the most part they believed that Western culture was superior and that the dress worn by the people they encountered showed that they were uncivilized, primitive, and barbarian. European contact led to mass extermination as bloody warfare and disease wiped out a majority of the native populations. Those who remained were urged to give up what were considered barbaric costumes and adopt Western dress. Most did, and thus there were many parts of their own costume tradition that simply didn’t survive.



European dominance and disregard for the traditions of the discovered peoples were not the only reasons so many of those traditions have been lost. Many of the discovered peoples did not possess written languages, so they left no records that described their dress or decoration traditions. Many, with the exceptions of the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas, did not record details of their costume habits in paintings or sculptures or architectural detail, so there is little physical evidence of what they wore.

Native people from the island of Tahiti greeting European explorers and colonizers. *Reproduced by permission of The Granger Collection Ltd.*

Ancient practices to the present day

Each group of discovered peoples experienced a different path from the time of discovery to the present. In North America, Native Americans were slowly overwhelmed by the gradual populating of the continent by white people; in Africa, the slave trade provided the dominant exposure to Europeans for many years; in Oceania, contact with Europeans was irregular and generally peaceful; in Central and South America, the ancient empires disappeared as

■■■ THE COSTUME OF THE DISCOVERED PEOPLES

Spain began to conquer the region in the 1500s. As all these cultures developed, people continued to wear the garments and decorations of ancient times, but few records were kept about their construction and their meaning. These cultures thus came into the modern age with a fragmented costume tradition.

Many of the countries of Africa and Oceania are very poor, and there simply has never been enough money to conduct archeological research into the costume traditions of the past. In many of these areas, the tropical climate tends to erase evidence of the past anyway, so there may be little to recover. Still, there is some hope that the meaning locked in the clothing of the past is not lost. Historians and archeologists, scientists who study the physical remains of past cultures, are still determined to forge ahead and learn what they can about the pasts of these cultures.

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Oceania: Island Culture

 Oceania encompasses more than thirty thousand islands in the Pacific Ocean, spanning from Hawaii in the north to New Zealand in the south. To most geographers the lands that make up Oceania include Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, New Zealand, and often Australia and the Malay Archipelago. These islands are home to a wide range of cultures, and today many of the island nations recognize more than one language. For example, in Papua New Guinea alone, a part of the island region known as Melanesia, at least 846 different languages are spoken. Some of these languages are spoken by as few as fifty people.

Life in Oceania can be traced back thousands of years, but it took many years for all the islands of Oceania to be populated. Evidence of human settlement in the Philippines dates to at least 2000 B.C.E. and on the Solomon Islands to at least 1000 B.C.E.. The first settlers of Aotearoa (modern-day New Zealand), however, didn't arrive from Polynesia until 1300 C.E. Despite this long history of human life on the islands, information about these island cultures has been recorded only since European explorers began landing on the islands in the early 1500s C.E. Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan (c. 1480–1521) sighted the Marquesas Islands and docked on the Island of Mactan in the Philippines in 1521. Portuguese navigators landed on islands in Micronesia in 1525, and



A couple dressed in clothing from one of the islands of Oceania.

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Spanish explorer Don Jorge de Meneses named the largest island of Papua New Guinea “Papua” in 1526. Virtually all that we know about the customs of Oceania comes from the accounts of Europeans, for the peoples of Oceania left no written record of their early culture.

Seen through the eyes of European explorers, the island cultures were strange and exotic. Although practicing separate and distinct traditions, islanders led strikingly similar lives in the eyes of foreigners because of the similar environments on the islands. Small groups banded together and lived off fishing, the produce from their own farming, or hunting and gathering. Explorers often described life in the South Pacific as pleasant and idyllic. John Fearn, captain of a British whaling ship, dubbed the island of Nauru “Pleasant Island” when he visited it in 1798. The majority of information recorded was about islanders living nearest

the coasts. Some groups living in the remote, rugged inland areas were largely unknown to the rest of the world until the 1970s, when further exploration introduced these groups to the westerners.

The traditional cultures on the islands of Oceania have become largely westernized. Not long after the first Europeans “discovered” the islands, European nations claimed sovereignty over particular islands. Micronesia, for instance, was under Spanish rule from 1526 until 1899, when Germany bought the islands. German administration of Micronesia lasted until 1914, when Japan claimed possession of the territory. In 1947 the United States began administering Micronesia, and this rule lasted until 1970, when Micronesia declared its independence. Other regions of Oceania were under similar European, Japanese, and later American, control.

Under foreign control, the peoples of Oceania were introduced to different lifestyles. Many left their subsistence farms, for example, where they grew just enough food to survive, and began working in European-owned mines that extracted the islands’ valuable

resources. Changing their way of life also encouraged indigenous, or native, people to change their clothing styles. Many adopted Western-style clothes and abandoned their traditional costume and body decoration except for ceremonial purposes.

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■ Clothing of Oceania

 **T**he sunny climate of Oceania did not require people to wear bulky clothing for warmth. The inhabitants of the more than thirty thousand islands exposed most, or all, of their bodies. Men and boys went about naked, and women often wore only a skirt made of plant fibers or grasses around their waists. Instead of clothes, the peoples of Oceania developed intricate and meaningful body decoration traditions.

Weaving developed in the Philippines and other parts of Oceania in 2000 B.C.E. Although none of the early cloth has survived, definite evidence of woven cloth garments was found dating back to the fourteenth century. The most common garments were loincloths for men and wraparound skirts for women, with blankets to cover the shoulders of both genders. The cloth was woven out of a variety of different materials, including pounded bark, palm, hemp, flax, or cotton. The cloth was decorated with geometric patterns and stripes woven into the cloth. Islanders favored brightly colored threads of blue, green, yellow, and red, among others. The finished cloth was also embellished with paint, embroidery, mother-of-pearl or other beads, brass wire, or fringe.

Just as many cultures in Oceania developed beliefs surrounding the application of body decoration, similar traditional beliefs developed around fabrics and garments. Certain types of garments could only be worn by people with power or high social rank, such as the feather cloak, or the kahu huruhuru, of the Maori of New Zealand, for example. In addition, other cultures developed belief systems that linked sickness, luck, and honor to the type of fabric and decorative ornamentation worn. For example, some cultures believed that if fabric was sold before the weaving was finished or if a man wore a certain outfit before earning a particular distinction, illness or tragedy might befall the wearer.



Oceanic women wearing long dresses made of grass and flowers or of printed material and flower headbands. *Reproduced by permission of © Michael Maslan Historic Photographs/CORBIS.*

Some parts of Oceania were colder than others. New Zealand, for example, could get very cold in the winter. When ancestors of the Maori arrived in New Zealand from the Philippines, they began to develop weaving techniques to make warmer clothes. They used plant fibers, especially flax, to create cloaks to which they attached feathers, tufts of grass, bundles of plant material, or dog hair for extra warmth and protection against the rain. In the late nineteenth century C.E., wool began to be used to weave fine cloaks for warmth. The tradition of cloak weaving among the Maori was almost lost after World War II (1939–45) when many Maori people abandoned their flax plantations and moved to urban areas when Europeans built prison camps near their villages.

As westerners infiltrated societies in Oceania starting in the sixteenth century, some native people began to adopt Western clothing styles. Men began wearing stitched shirts, jackets, and knee-length trousers, and women began to cover their breasts with blouses or dresses. Christian missionaries in Hawaii, for example, introduced cloth dresses for women. These loose fitting dresses have come to

be called muumuus. Other women in Polynesia used imported European cloth to create sarongs or pareos, which are skirts made of fabric tied around the waist. Men also began wearing Western-style short-sleeved shirts, nicknamed aloha shirts. While traditional island clothing was made out of grasses, flowers, and other natural substances, this new fabric clothing came to feature floral designs of the native ginger blossoms, plumeria, hibiscus, orchids, and birds-of-paradise. These Western-style clothes had become so associated with Hawaii and Polynesia by the 1930s that Western tourists began a demand for them that has yet to fade. Today the Hawaiian shirt, with its brightly colored floral design, is a favorite Hawaiian souvenir and often a symbol that the wearer is on vacation.

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■ ■ Headwear of Oceania

Little information about the traditional hairstyles of the peoples of Oceania exists. Descriptions from early explorers and early photographs show that most women of Oceania wore their hair long and that men were clean-shaven. No history of the specific styles worn by either men or women has been recorded. However, the decorations added to the hair were quite beautiful. Carved combs, feathers, and flowers were known to decorate the hair of some groups. In Polynesia feathered headdresses were a sign of nobility, and in the Philippines flowers were worn behind the ears of men who had participated in a battle. For everyday protection from the sun, some people also wore wide-brimmed hats woven out of grasses.

After the introduction of Christianity and Islam on the islands between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries, some men and women began to cover their hair with head cloths to show their obedience to their religion. Rectangular fabrics were wrapped around the head into turbans. These head cloths were decorated with woven patterns or with added details of embroidery or beaded accents. The hairstyles and

Native women of Samoa, an island in the southern Pacific Ocean that is part of Oceania. Oceanic women often wore their hair long and decorated it with items from nature, such as flowers and feathers. Reproduced by permission of © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS.



■■■ HEADWEAR OF OCEANIA

headwear worn in Oceania now frequently follow the trends set in the Western world.

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their civilization, a part of social traditions that are thought to be thousands of years old.

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■ Body Painting

The peoples of Oceania used paint to adorn their bodies for ceremonies and festive occasions. Body paint was more than a way to beautify the body; the designs and colors signified a person's sex, age, social status, and wealth, among other things. Designs had religious, social, and diplomatic meanings. Special designs were worn for festivals honoring the dead, initiation ceremonies for young people to become full members of a group, and peace-making meetings with other groups after battles.

Colors held special meanings for each different culture. Red was the most important color. Many considered it to have magical powers. Some groups painted red ocher clay, from a type of iron ore, on the skin of a sick person, believing that it could help in healing. Men in Papua New Guinea still mark themselves with red coloring because they believe it will make them prosperous.

Charcoal made a black paint, which was often used on men's faces. Clay or chalk made white paint; white was often painted on boys during circumcision ceremonies. Certain clays were wrapped in leaves and burned to intensify their natural colors. To make body paint, ingredients were ground into a powder and mixed with water or tree oils. As the peoples of Oceania encountered more Europeans, they began to use imported synthetic, or man-made, paints instead of their traditional paints because they preferred the brighter colors of the imported paints. By the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Western-style clothing began to dominate fashion in Oceania and body painting traditions began to disappear, except for ceremonial uses.

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Scarification

Scarification was one of the many ways the people of Oceania adorned their bodies. Like tattooing, scarification permanently marked the body. Designs were cut into the skin and, when healed, the design remained as a deep or raised scar. To raise a scar, the skin at the bottom of the cut was scratched or irritated with charcoal or some other substance.

To the peoples of Oceania, scarification marked a person's ability to endure pain and symbolized their membership in society. Both men and women could be scarred. Scars given to girls at puberty, for example, signified their ability to bear the pain of childbirth. Because scarring was such a painful process, designs were made in small increments over many years, starting at puberty. Although Europeans regarded scarification as a sign of savagery, the peoples who practiced it considered it to be one of the ultimate symbols of civilization. In Oceania scars beautified a person.

The exact origins of scarification in Oceania have yet to be discovered. However, the practice has gradually declined as the peoples of Oceania have had more contact with Europeans, especially Christian missionaries who criticized and eventually forbade the practice, since the sixteenth century.

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■ ■ ■ Tattooing

The inhabitants of the Marquesas Islands appeared to be wearing lace outfits when Europeans first set eyes on them in 1595. On closer inspection, the lace outfits turned out to be tattoos. Practiced on both men and women, tattooing was especially significant to men. Tattooing was an important body decoration throughout Oceania, but especially in the eastern part of Polynesia and the Marquesas Islands. The Tahitian word *tatau*, meaning to inflict wounds, is the basis for the English word “tattoo.”



Tattoos in Oceania, etched forever in the skin, signified a person's position in society, helped ward off evil spirits, and were a way to beautify and decorate the body.

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Tattoos are permanent colorings inserted into the skin. In most of Oceania tattoos were applied by pricking the skin with bone or metal combs with sharp, needle-like teeth that had been dipped in dye. The sharp needles of the comb inserted the dye under the skin and left permanent designs. In New Zealand the Maori made distinctive swirl designs by using sharp chisels to carve deep grooves into the skin. Applied by a skilled master in small sections at significant moments throughout the course of a person's life, it took many decades to cover a person's entire body. Tattoos indicated sex, age, wealth, and social status. They had religious significance among some groups, but in other groups tattoos were purely ornamental,

though extremely important. In Samoa, for example, men would be severely criticized and have a hard time finding a wife without tattoos covering his lower body.

All the boys of a social group received their first tattoo at the same time the chief's son received his first tattoo, usually between the ages of twelve and eighteen. Girls were tattooed at puberty. Tattoos were applied on almost every available body part, including the tops of hands and even the tongue. In general, grown men were more heavily tattooed than women. Some men could be com-

pletely covered in decoration whereas women had smaller designs mainly on their faces and limbs. Considering red lips ugly, Maori women tattooed their lips a blue color. Because tattooing was very expensive, only the upper classes in a social group could receive tattoos. Slaves were forbidden from wearing tattoos.

No two people wore tattoos of the same design. Among the Maoris, facial tattoos, called ta moko, were a man's emblem of his identity. Copies of their facial tattoos were used as their signatures during early exchanges with Europeans. By the early twentieth century, after years of contact between Europeans and the peoples of Oceania, tattoo designs were no longer limited to traditional designs but incorporated European patterns as well. Some tattoos even mimicked European clothing designs.

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■ ■ Footwear of Oceania

Descriptions from early explorers and early photographs show that most of the peoples of Oceania went barefoot. No information about the development of traditional footwear in Oceania is known. Although many people in the island countries now wear Western-style sandals and shoes, especially in the urban areas, those living in the most remote areas continue to go barefoot.

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Native American Cultures

Native American tribes of the North American continent and the peoples of the Subarctic and Arctic have a long and rich history. Archaeologists, scientists who study past civilizations, believe that people have lived in North America from about 13,000 B.C.E. Our knowledge of Native American cultures begins with the first European contact in the tenth century C.E. between the Vikings and the Arctic Inuit, or Eskimo peoples, but becomes much more detailed in the early 1500s and 1600s when first the Spanish, then the French, the British, and the Dutch, began arriving on the shores of the continent. The Europeans set up trading centers from which our first documentation of Native American customs and costumes came. Traders would write about the native people they met and describe their clothing and lifestyles. More information came from missionaries who came to convert the natives to Christianity, and from white settlers who began establishing farms and towns across the continent.

The information gathered about Native Americans by Europeans is incomplete, however. Without a written language of their own, Native Americans offered oral histories of their peoples and practiced methods of producing garments, housing, weapons, and other necessities that had been passed on by their ancestors for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. These sources paint a picture

of Native American life that differs greatly from one region of the continent to the next. Yet strikingly similar among natives is the common belief that humans must try to live in balance with their natural world, an idea that was quite foreign to whites.

Grouping native peoples by region

More than three hundred different tribes lived across North America. Each tribe had distinct cultures, clothing styles, social organization, and language dialects. Because similarities did exist between tribes living in similar regions, anthropologists, those who study cultures, often group tribes into regional categories. The regions most concentrated on are: the Southeast, the Northeast, the Plains, the Southwest, the Great Basin, the Plateau, California, the Northwest, the Subarctic, and the Arctic. The tribes of the Southeast lived in the modern-day states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and parts of Texas. These tribes included the Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Potomac, and Powhatan, among many others. The tribes of the Northeast lived in parts of Ontario and Quebec in Canada and in the modern-day states of Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, and included the Sauk, Fox, Shawnee, and the Potawatomi tribes, among others. The Plains tribes ranged over the Great Plains of North America, an area stretching from the Mississippi River in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west and from Texas in the south into Canada in the north. Plains Indians included the Blackfoot, Crow, Dakota Sioux, Kiowa, Pawnee, and the Omaha, among others. The tribes of the Southwest lived in the deserts of modern-day Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. Peoples of the Southwest were the Apache, Hopi, Navajo, and Pueblo, among others. The Great Basin lay between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada Mountains, in the present-day states of Colorado, Utah, and Nevada. Tribes of the Great Basin included the Shoshone, Northern and Southern Paiute, and Ute, among others. The Plateau runs from British Columbia, Canada, south to Washington and Oregon states between the Rocky Mountains and the Cascades. The Cayuse, Nez Perce, Palouse, and Yakima tribes lived on the Plateau. The tribes of California lived within the area now considered the state of California and included the Hupa, Pomo, Mojave, and Yuma tribes, among others. The tribes of the Northwest lived along the Pacific

Northwest coast from the present-day state of Oregon in the south to Alaska in the north. The Northwest tribes included the Chinook, Haida, and Quinault, among others. The Subarctic is a region that includes the interior of Canada and Alaska. The Beaver, Chipewyan, Kolchan, and Mississauga tribes, among others, lived in the Subarctic. The Arctic is the coldest region and includes the land from Aleutian Island to Greenland. Eskimos have lived for thousands of years in the Arctic. Unlike the Native Americans living further south, the Eskimos are one people, not a group of separate tribes. Eskimos are organized into many different social and political groups, but they speak the same language and share the same culture.

Native American diversity

All parts of Native American life were affected by the climate and geography in which the Native Americans lived. The weather, the fertility of the soil, access to water, and the height of mountains all contributed to how a particular Indian tribe organized its social and political systems. Each was unique. Tribes lived by farming, fishing, hunting, gathering, and later, trading, depending on their particular region and amount of contact with others. The Arapaho of the Plains, for example, were nomads and built no permanent settlements. However, other tribes joined together to form larger, stronger groups. The Iroquois confederacy of the Northeast united six tribes to protect each other from war and invasion. Tribes and confederacies developed systems of social status, or rank, and their clothing and adornment reflected these systems. Generally, the higher a person's status was within the tribe, the more ornate their costume.

Native American tribes and Arctic peoples developed rich cultures that respected the land around them. For thousands of years Native Americans prospered on the North American continent, but the arrival of white Europeans changed everything. The changes to Native American life were devastating. Huge numbers of natives died from diseases introduced by Europeans. Between 1769 and 1869 diseases introduced by European traders, missionaries, and settlers decreased the native population of California from three hundred thousand to twenty thousand. In addition, Europeans' outlook on life was fundamentally different from that of Native Americans.



Blackfoot Indians wearing custom Native American clothing, including garments with detailed embroidery. *Reproduced by permission of National Archives and Records Administration.*

Europeans did not consider the balance of the natural world as carefully as did Native Americans and often exploited and pillaged the land rather than nourishing or sustaining it. Europeans' desire for goods from the North American continent created a system of trade that soon changed Native American lives forever. European traders encouraged the near destruction of many animals for their hides, including the beaver and the buffalo, leaving natives without the animals they once depended on for survival. Moreover, Native Americans could not continue to live in the same places. White settlers began building farms, ranches, and towns on land used by Native Americans. Whites pushed Indians off their land until, in the mid-1800s, the U.S. government demanded that all Native Americans live on reservations, land designated for Indian use. Decades of struggle between Native Americans and whites ensued. The result was the near destruction of Native American life and culture by the early twentieth century.

Native Americans today live very differently from their ancestors, but many continue to appreciate the traditions of their diverse

ancestry. Although Native Americans no longer dress daily in the ways of their ancestors, they do continue to wear traditional clothing for ceremonial purposes.

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■ Clothing of Native American Cultures

 **T**he clothing of Native Americans was closely related to the environment in which they lived and their religious beliefs. Ranging from tropical and desert regions, to woodlands and mountains, to Arctic tundra, Native Americans developed diverse styles of clothing. In the warmest regions, little clothing was worn. Among the peoples of California, for example, men were normally naked, but women wore simple knee-length skirts. In the cooler regions, more clothing styles developed. Among the tribes of the Plains, breechcloths, or loincloths, leggings, tunic shirts for men, and skirts and dresses for women were created. But in the coldest areas of the Subarctic and Arctic, warm trousers, hooded anoraks, or jackets, and mittens protected people from freezing temperatures. Despite the vast differences in climate and clothing styles, Native Americans had in common the basic notion of living in harmony with nature. This idea influenced the materials and designs they used for clothing.

Animal skins

Before the European colonization of the Americas that began in the seventeenth century C.E., most Native American people lived close to nature, making their living from the resources that were plentiful in the world around them. They largely survived by fishing, hunting, and gathering edible plants, though some tribes, such as the Navajo in the southwestern United States and the Oneida of northern New York, tended flocks of sheep or grew crops to add to what they found in nature. Almost all of these tribes used the skins of the animals they hunted or raised. They developed methods of tanning the skins to make soft leather, and from this leather they made clothing and shoes. Leather clothing was soft and strong, and,

ADOPTION OF WESTERN DRESS

Prior to the first arrival of Europeans in North America in the sixteenth century, Native Americans had traded with neighboring tribes for centuries. Their cultures valued unusual items brought from afar. Often these items, such as coastal shells traded in the landlocked Northeast, were used in the prized garments of the wealthy. When Europeans arrived on the coasts of the continent, Native Americans began to adopt European items into their clothing styles. Some of the first European, or Western, items used by Native Americans were glass beads and stroud cloth, a cheap heavy wool fabric dyed blue, red, or green and made in Stroudwater, England. By the early 1800s calico and gingham cotton cloth was also popular among Native Americans. At first, Native Americans used Western items as raw material to craft clothing in their traditional styles. Later they would embellish Western styles with beaded decoration or silver ornaments, or use Western styles in their own ways, by cutting the seat out of trousers to make leggings or sewing buttons on a garment for decoration instead of

as fasteners, for example. But as more white settlers encroached on their homelands and eventually forced tribes onto reservations (public land set aside for Native Americans to live), Native Americans slowly discontinued their traditional dress for ready-made Western style clothes.

The tribes of the Southeast were among the first to adopt Western clothing. Beginning in the sixteenth century, Spanish, French, and English explorers brought items for trade. By the early 1800s the tribes of the Southeast wore jackets, shirts, cravats, or ties, cotton cloth skirts, and shoes purchased in stores or at trading posts. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Huron of the Northeast, who had a long history of trading with whites, had discontinued wearing all of their traditional tribal dress. By the mid-nineteenth century most Native Americans in the regions of the present-day United States wore commercially produced Western style clothes, except for a few ceremonial garments. However, many of the isolated peoples of the Subarctic and the Arctic continued wearing some of their traditional clothes. Although many adopted Western style trousers and jackets, some preferred the warmth of their traditional fur anoraks, or parkas.

if the animal's fur was left on the skin, it was also very warm. Some native people, like the Apaches of the western plains and the Algonquin of southern Canada, even used leather to make the walls of their dwelling places.

The religious beliefs of many Indian people included the idea that all of nature, including animals and plants, had spiritual power. Many also believed that by wearing parts of an animal a person could gain some of that animal's power and strength. In this way, the wearing of animal skins became more than just putting on a form of comfortable and durable clothing. It became a part of Native Americans' religious practice and a way to improve oneself by literally "putting on" some of the desirable qualities of the animals.

Plant fibers

Before the arrival of great numbers of Europeans in the seventeenth century, Native Americans also used the animals and plants they found around them to make food, shelter, and clothing. One of the most plentiful resources in many areas was the bark of trees, which was stripped, dried, and shredded to make fibers. These fibers were used to weave soft, comfortable clothing. Typical shredded bark



A young girl dressed in a cedar bark costume. Native Americans often used bark to weave skirts, aprons, capes, and hats.

Reproduced by permission of the Smithsonian Institution.

■■■ CLOTHING OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES

clothing included skirts, aprons, shirts, belts, hats, capes, and even raincoats.

Many tribes made bark clothing, using the trees that grew close by. In the southeastern United States, the Cherokee used mulberry bark to make soft shirts. The Pomo living along the West Coast used shredded redwood bark to make wraparound skirts, while the Paiute and Washoe of the deserts further east shredded the plentiful bark of the sagebrush. Tribes of the rainy Northwest coast of North America, such as the Tlingit and the Suquamish, wove rainhats and raincoats from the bark of the cedar tree.

Most clothing was made by Indian women, who also prepared the fibers for weaving. Bark was stripped from small trees and then dried in the sun before being pounded into a flexible mass and shredded into thin, strong fibers. These fibers were woven into fabric and made into clothing that was both comfortable and protective. Native Americans loved to bring beauty into their lives by decorating even everyday items, so sometimes bark clothing was decorated with fringe, painted pictures, porcupine quills, or animal teeth and claws. Bark clothing was difficult to clean, but bark was an abundant resource, so most bark clothing was simply discarded when it became too dirty to wear.

Woven cloth

Although many tribes used handmade methods of weaving, natives of the American Southwest were the first group to develop a loom, or weaving device, for weaving cloth. In 1200 C.E., well before the arrival of the first Europeans, Indians in the Southwest grew cotton and wove it into cloth. They also wove yucca, wool, feathers, and even human hair into cloth. Their breechclouts, leggings, and skirts were often made of woven fibers.

As Native Americans had continued contact with Europeans and white settlers, their ability to continue making clothing according to their traditional ways was destroyed. Native Americans had eagerly incorporated new items, such as glass beads and silver ornaments, into their wardrobes when they first started trading with whites. But continued contact with whites made it impossible for Native Americans to maintain their traditional ways of clothing themselves. Pushed off their homelands and onto reservations, government land set aside for them to live, in the late 1800s, Native

Americans lost the ability to hunt for or gather the necessary materials for their clothes. Their new circumstances forced them to buy clothing from whites, which drastically changed the way Native Americans dressed.

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Blankets

For Native Americans, blankets have not only been garments worn for warmth, but also a source of artistic expression and a valuable trading commodity that provided economic self-sufficiency. Blankets were worn most commonly draped around the shoulders much like a cloak.

Blanket making has been found in virtually all native North American tribes. Even before cotton production was developed in the thirteenth century C.E., Native Americans in the Southwest made blankets from the feathers of domesticated turkeys. In ancient times mastery of blanket weaving was often transmitted from one neighboring tribe to another. In the 1500s the Navajo tribe of the Southwest learned blanket weaving from the Pueblos, who made blankets from the wool of Spanish sheep. Navajo blankets became known for their bright colors, geometric patterns, and depiction of animals. Made according to the custom of the Tlingit tribe of Alaska, a fringe blanket of cedar bark fiber and goat wool required six months to finish.

Native Americans used blankets for many purposes. Nez Perce mothers living in the Northwest, for example, carried their infants by slinging them over their shoulders in a blanket. Women in the

Pueblo tribe of the Southwest wore black blankets, or mantas, and left their left shoulders bare during rite of spring ceremonies. Pueblos also used embroidered blankets to display animals killed by hunters. Additionally, the Navajos of the Southwest weaved blankets for horses as well as riders with symbols meant to protect them on their journeys.

Indian blankets were precious trade commodities. A blanket with three beavers pictured on it, for example, meant the blanket was worth three beaver pelts. The Hudson's Bay Company, founded in Canada in the late 1600s, traded North American Indian blankets to Europeans. The establishment of frontier trading posts by white settlers in the 1800s allowed tribes to exchange their products to European Americans for other goods. Although a source of income for Native Americans, blankets retained a deeper meaning. For many tribes blankets were a symbol of wealth and status.

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■ Breechclout

A breechclout was a garment designed to cover the genitals. Although breechclouts were worn by some women in the Southeast and by young girls before puberty in many tribes, they were an important male garment that symbolized male sexuality and power in many tribes. Breechclouts were worn by men in every Native American tribe, with the exception of those living in climates warm enough to wear nothing at all. Breechclouts could be made out of bark fiber, grasses, feathers, tanned beaver, rabbit, raccoon, deer, buffalo, or other animal skin, or woven cloth. (When made of cloth, breechclouts are referred to as breechcloths.)

There were many different styles and sizes of breechclouts. The Kiowa Indians of the Plains wore breechclouts of tanned leather with flaps that hung to the knees in both the front and back. Sauk Indian men of the Northeast often wore only a painted red, snugly-fitting breechclout, fastened with a belt. Both male and female Eskimos wore a fitted breechclout indoors; they looked much like modern-day underwear. The Pueblos of the Southwest wore beautifully embroidered breechclouts made of tanned leather or woven cotton.



A Native American man wearing several items of traditional Indian clothing, including a breechclout.
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■■■ CLOAKS

Breechclouts could be very simple unadorned strips of hide or elaborately decorated with paint, beads, fringe, or embroidery.

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A man wearing a cloak made out of animal skin. Cloaks could be made of antelope, buffalo, deer, rabbit, or other animal skin.

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■ Cloaks

A cloak, or outer draped garment that looks like a cape, was used by almost every Native American tribe since the beginning of their civilizations. Made of a square, circular, or rectangular piece of cloth, a cloak was most often pinned at the neck and draped over the shoulders and hung down the back to the ankles. Another style of cloak was made out of a piece of cloth with a hole cut in the center for the head and looked like a modern poncho. Cloaks could be made of antelope, buffalo, caribou, deer, rabbit, whale, or other animal skin, mulberry bark, or of woven buffalo or coyote hair. During the earliest years of civilization on the North American continent, inhabitants often wore no covering on their upper bodies except for cloaks on cold or rainy days. By the seventeenth century cloaks continued to be used as outer garments. However, cloaks were no longer the only covering for the upper body. Men wore tunics, or shirts, and women wore dresses to cover their upper bodies.

Cloaks could be simple outerwear for both women and men, but they could also

be prized status symbols for some. Buffalo cloaks, or robes, were worn by many tribes but were prized possessions of those in the Great Basin (a desert region in the western United States), and on the Plains and the Plateau. The Cheyenne of the Plains especially valued cloaks made of white buffalo. Sioux Indians of the Plains decorated their buffalo robes with painted symbols to indicate their age, sex, marital status, and tribal status, among other things. Sioux men trying to find a wife wore buffalo robes with horizontal strips that featured four medallions; they also painted red handprints on their cloaks if they had been wounded in battle or black handprints if they had killed an enemy. In California only very wealthy men wore cloaks made of feathers, and waterproof turkey feather cloaks were highly prized among the Delaware Indians of the Northeast.

As Native Americans began trading with Europeans, they slowly began adopting Western styles of dress. Cloaks were soon replaced with blankets and then sewn jackets.

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■ Leggings

In cool weather or rough terrain men and women of nearly every Native American tribe wore leggings to protect their legs. Leggings were snug or loose-fitting tubes of animal hide that covered each leg individually. Men's leggings covered the leg from waist or thigh to ankle. The top of the leggings was tied to a string, belt, or sash wrapped around the waist, and sometimes the leggings were gartered, or tied, at the knee. The leggings resembled crotchless pants and men wore them with breechclouts, or loincloths.

Women's leggings were similarly made of animal skin, but they only covered the leg from the knee to the ankle. Garters or ties at

the knee held women's leggings in place under their long skirts. In the winter the leggings of both men and women were often made with attached feet, or moccasins. Only the peoples of the Arctic did not wear some form of legging, instead wearing a full pair of trousers to protect against the cold.

The most common hide for making leggings was deer, although beaver, buffalo, skunk, and wolf were also used. Northwest tribes even used the skin of salmon. In hotter regions and in the summertime in the north, leggings were made of finely tanned hide. For winter, leggings were made of animal skins with the fur turned toward the leg. The bottoms and edges of leggings were sometimes fringed or decorated with ornaments, such as beadwork, painted designs, or ribbons. Leggings were often striped or designed to signify spirits or war victories. As contact with Europeans became more common in the seventeenth century, Native Americans began to make leggings out of purchased wool cloth. Soon full trousers replaced leggings.

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■ ■ ■ Skirt

While the most common garment for Native American men was a breechclout, or loincloth, for women it was the skirt. Although Native American women did throw a cloak around their shoulders for warmth, the skirt was often worn without any covering for the upper body. Skirts were commonly knee-length or longer. The simplest skirts were made of grasses tied to a waist string; these were worn mostly by Indian tribes along the coasts of North America. Other styles included a wraparound leather skirt, an apron tied at the back, two aprons tied to cover both the front and the back, and

woven and sewn patchwork skirts. Made of leather, grasses, feathers, bark, and later, woven cotton or other fabric, skirts were embellished with fringe, embroidery, beadwork, tassels, and other ornaments. As Native Americans had more contact with Europeans, their skirt styles changed to mimic the flowing European styles, and many women began wearing leather or cloth dresses that covered their breasts. Before long, purchased fabric skirts replaced handmade leather or woven skirts for many.

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■ ■ Headwear of Native American Cultures

 The hairstyles and headwear of the Native American tribes and the indigenous peoples of the Subarctic and Arctic are many and varied. Styles differed from tribe to tribe, and within tribes due to gender, age, and social status. There were several thousands of specific styles of hair or headwear but also some general trends that could be found throughout different tribes across the continent.

General hair care

Hairdressing was very important among most Native American tribes since the beginning of their civilization. Men and women washed their hair with plants such as soapwort or yucca. Hair was shined with animal grease, or fat, and was sometimes colored or decorated with colored clay. Brushes were carved out of wood or made of bundled grasses, stiff horsehair, or porcupine hair. Men often plucked their facial hair, although the men of the Aleuts in the Arctic and the tribes of the Northwest, as well as some others, did wear beards and mustaches to keep their faces warm.

Although many tribes favored long hair, hair was cut short in some tribes, especially when mourning the death of a loved one. The hair cut from one person was often woven to the hair of another, making their hair even longer. Buffalo and horsehair was also used to lengthen a person's hair. Long hair was worn loose or twisted and braided into many different styles.

In general, men had more elaborate hairstyles than women. Among the Plains Indians, for example, women wore their hair loose or in two long braids, but men had many more options, wearing their hair long, in braids, or shaving the sides to leave a ridge of hair in the middle to create a style called a Mohawk, or roach. Men of the Omaha tribe shaved their heads to create a va-

riety of different styles. Some of these styles included a single tuft of hair on the top of the head, several tufts of hair in spots on the top, sides, and back of the head, and long hair on one side of the head but shaved bald on the other. To create specific styles, such as the uplifted pompadour style worn by the Crow men of the Plains, Native Americans stiffened their hair with a variety of plant extracts, animal grease, or mud. For the pompadour style Crow men slicked sticky plant extracts on the front portion of their hair and combed it into a tall arch on top of their head. In the Southwest men often cut their hair to shoulder length, but both men and women twisted their hair into a bun at the back of their head called a chongo. This bun was shaped like a figure eight and held in place by string tied around the center of the eight. Young women of the Hopi tribe in the Southwest twisted their hair around circular bands to create a style that resembled butterfly wings on the side of their heads.

A variety of hair ornaments were added to styled hair. The Plains Indians attached beaded bands, bull's tails, feathers, and

rawhide strips wrapped with brass wire and decorated with dentalium shells, or long tubular shaped white shells, and beads. Sometimes otter, mink, beaver, or buffalo fur was wrapped around long braids.

Covering the head

For the most part, Native Americans went bareheaded. Most often their elaborate hairstyles were decorated with simple headbands or ornaments. However, headgear was important for ceremonies and cold or rainy weather. Both men and women in the Northwest wore large woven hats to protect them from the rain. These hats were often painted with designs or woven in shapes to identify the social status of the wearer. Men of the Haida tribe, for example, would wear tall, wide-brimmed hats woven of spruce tree roots with rings added to the top for gifts given at ceremonial feasts called potlatches. In the winter many Native American tribes, and especially those living in the Subarctic and Arctic, wore fur caps.

The most recognized headgear of Native Americans was the feathered headdress. Originally worn by warriors of the Plains tribes, the headdress became popular among other tribes as well.

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■ ■ ■ Bear Grease

Indians across North America smeared bear grease, or bear fat, and other oils on their hair to make it shine. Similar substances for smoothing and shining the hair were raccoon fat and deer marrow, a material found inside bones. Both men and women of the

Delaware, Huron, and Sauk tribes of the Northeast smoothed bear grease onto their hair daily. The Plains Indians also shined their hair with bear grease and used other oils soaked with herbs to perfume the hair. The Crow Indians of the Plains took special pride in their long hair. They used bear grease or buffalo dung to stiffen curls they made with a heated stick, and they also applied cactus pulp to make their hair shine. Men of the Dakota Sioux shaved their heads bald with the exception of a tuft left on top of their head, which they coated with a mixture of red ocher (a type of reddish clay) dye and bear grease to stand the hair on end. The Pawnee stiffened their roach, or Mohawk (a ridge of hair sticking straight up, running down the center of the head from the forehead to the nape of the neck), with grease and red paint. Of all the Plateau Indians, only the Kutenai men stiffened their hair to stand on end with bear grease or buffalo dung. The tribes of the Northwest, including the Bella Coola, Kwakiutl, and Nootka tribes, used so much bear grease and red ocher on their hair that it was hard to see the hair's original black color. In the Southeast as well as in the Subarctic and Arctic, many peoples, including the Pacific Eskimo, slathered their hair with grease and oil and painted it red for special occasions.

Bear grease was not used among tribes in the Southwest or California, but these Indians did other things to beautify their hair. Some blackened their hair with various recipes, painted their hair with red paint at the part or the ends, painted white horizontal stripes on their hair, or wrapped their locks into elaborate styles with ties, including the figure-eight shaped bun called the chongo, which was a popular style among the Indians of the Southwest.

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[See also **Volume 2, Native American Cultures: Mohawk**]

■ Braids

Next to long, flowing hair, braids are perhaps the most common hairstyle of Native Americans throughout history. Braiding, also known as plaiting, is a hair weaving technique that involves crossing three or more bunches of hair over each other. Both men and women of every North American tribe wore braids, with the exception of some in the tribes of the American Southeast, California, and the peoples of the Subarctic and Arctic Regions. There were many styles of braiding, but two long braids hanging on either side of the head was the most popular with both men and women. Braided hair was sometimes ornamented with beads, feathers, or wrapped with animal skins or fur for extra decoration. Sometimes braids were worn in a specific way to indicate social status. Among the Plains Indians, for example, married women wore their two braids hanging against their chests, while unmarried women tossed their braids over their shoulders. In many tribes men wore a special braid called a scalplock that hung from the crown of their head; warriors tried to cut off each other's scalplocks with the attached skin in battle in an act called scalping.



A Native American woman with traditional braids. There were many styles of braiding, but two long braids hanging on either side of the head was the most popular with both men and women. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

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Headdresses

The tall, feathered headdress has come to be one of the most recognizable symbols of the Native American people of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Books and movies about Indians often picture them wearing the large feathered headdresses that white people called “war bonnets,” and many children around the world have toy versions of the feathered headdress that they use to “play Indian.” In reality there were hundreds of Indian nations throughout the Americas and only a few tribes who lived in the western plains of the United States wore that type of elaborate headdress. The feathered headdress, once a badge of honor and power, has become a stereotype of all Indians.



A Chippewa headdress. Headdresses were usually made from the fur and feathers of sacred animals and were thought to give the power of the animals to the person wearing the headdress. *Reproduced by permission of © Bowers Museum of Cultural Art/CORBIS.*

Many Native American people wore some kind of decorative headdress. These headdresses were usually only worn for special ceremonies. The right to wear a headdress had to be earned, and the type of headdress showed the rank of the wearer. Chiefs and high-ranking warriors might wear a special headdress, as might the medicine healer of the tribe. Though most headdresses were worn by men, some women wore them as well. Headdresses were usually made from the fur and feathers

of especially sacred animals and were thought to give the power of the animals to the person wearing the headdress. The Iroquois who lived around northern New York wore a kind of flat hat that was covered with feathers, while their neighbors the Algonquin wore only one feather, which either stood up or hung down from the top of the head. The Mohegana of New England wore two feathers in their headdress, and the Nootka and Haida people of the Pacific Northwest wore carved wooden headdresses or hats woven out of grasses, spruce tree roots, and cedar bark.

The widely recognized headdress of the Plains Indians was usually made of eagle feathers, sometimes with the fur and horns of the buffalo, which were so important to the survival of the tribe. Feathers and fur were attached to a leather band that was decorated with beads in sacred shapes and designs. Even among the Indians of the plains, styles of headdress varied from tribe to tribe. The eagle feathers stood straight up on the headdresses worn by the Blackfoot tribe, while the Crow headdresses lay flatter along the top of the head. The Sioux wore the biggest and most colorful headdresses with geometric designs beaded into the headband.

The tall headdresses may have become so strongly identified with all Indian people because of “Wild West” shows, such as the one produced by the famous Buffalo Bill Cody (1846–1917). These shows, which were popular in the United States and Europe during the late 1800s and early 1900s, featured real Indians who were dressed in elaborate colorful costumes and performed ceremonial dances and feats of marksmanship and horsemanship. To many people, these theatrical Indians became the symbol of the “real” Indian, even though they only represented a small part of the Native American population and way of life.

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■ ■ ■ Mohawk

The Mohawk hairstyle is distinguished by a ridge of hair sticking straight up, running down the center of the head from the forehead to the nape of the neck, with the rest of the head shaved. It originated among Native American tribes in North America and Canada and was often not made of human hair but rather of a “deer roach,” a piece of deer tail with skin and fur attached and worn atop the head.

French explorer Samuel de Champlain (c. 1567–1635) first noted the hairstyle among the Hurons of southwestern Ontario in the early 1600s. The name Huron, in fact, comes from the old French word *hure*, meaning “boar’s head,” after the stiff ridge of hair bristles along the head of a boar. Other Native American tribes wore their hair in this fashion as well. There is even a tribe called the Mohawk tribe, though there is no evidence to suggest that the Mohawk tribe originated the style. The first time the Mohawk hairstyle was identified with the Mohawk tribe was in a book written in 1656 by a Dutch Reform minister named Johannes Megatolensis. The illustration of a Mohawk hairstyle included in his book was of a Long Island Algonquin, not a Mohawk.

In the 1970s the Mohawk became a popular hairstyle among punk rockers, fans of punk rock music, who liked its menacing look. The actor Mr. T sported a variation of the Mohawk on his 1980s action TV series *The A-Team*.

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■ Body Decorations of Native American Cultures

Native Americans across the North American continent adorned their bodies in a variety of different ways. From designs applied directly to the skin to elaborate ornaments crafted of symbolic materials, Native American body decoration was very important to the religious and social life of tribal members.

In many tribes the skin was considered a canvas on which to paint or tattoo designs. Although warriors used paint to prepare for battle, body painting was not only used for war paint. Painted de-

Representatives of several North American tribes, many wearing bear claw necklaces. Native Americans wore jewelry and other body decorations to honor spirits, to gain strength, or to indicate social status.



signs on the body, or the permanent markings of tattoos, signified a person's age, social or marital status, or, for men, their level of skill as a warrior.

Native American jewelry had social and religious significance, as well as decorative qualities. Jewelry was worn to honor spirits, to gain strength, to indicate social status, or to add beauty.

Although Native American body decoration practices and jewelry designs were practiced for many hundreds and even thousands of years, these traditional ways of adorning the body changed as Native Americans had more contact with European traders and white settlers. Modern-day Native American jewelry, for example, reflects the influence of this contact. Silver jewelry, for example, has become identified with southwestern tribes, such as the Navajo. However, the Navajo did not use silver until around 1870. The increase of silver jewelry among the Navajo at that time reflects the adaptation of these peoples to life as herders and silversmiths on the then newly established reservations, or land granted to Native Americans by the U.S. government. Silver Navajo jewelry continues to be a popular item among tourists in the Southwest and a symbol of wealth among the Navajo.

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■ ■ ■ Jewelry

Documentation of Native American ornament dates back several thousands of years. Although styles and designs for jewelry differed among different peoples, all Native Americans held in common the belief that ornament had spiritual meaning. Native American jewelry reflects the religious and social customs of each unique group. Traditional styles of tribal jewelry were considered a type of medicine, or contact with helpful spirits. Styles common to

many tribes include necklaces, armlets, earrings, nose rings, and other ornamentation.

Spiritual decoration

When making jewelry, Native Americans selected materials for their spiritual or magical qualities. Animal claws, crystals, shells, sticks, cornhusks, beads made of grass seed, dried rose hips, silverberries from silverberry shrubs, and later metal and glass beads, among other things, were used to create necklaces, bracelets, armlets, and earrings, as well as many other unique adornments worn by both men and women. Hunters of northeastern and other tribes would adorn themselves with animal parts, wearing antlers, hooves, fur, and bones to gain strength and protection from the animal's spirit. Among the Plains Indians, for example, a necklace made of grizzly bear claws was worn by a man to honor his killing of the great bear. Bear claw necklaces, sometimes strung alternately with human finger bones, were also prized among the tribes of the Great Basin, a desert region in the western United States that comprises parts of Colorado, Utah, and Nevada.

While the materials were selected carefully, the design or type of the jewelry also had special significance. Along the coast of the modern state of Alaska, Eskimo men wore labrets, or pierced ornaments, at the corners of their mouths that looked like small walrus tusks to signify the importance of the animal to their survival. Pierced ears among the tribes of the Great Basin were believed to enable people to live long lives and allow them to enter the spirit world after death. Nose ornaments of bone or metal were similarly important for men in the Southeast. Arapaho warriors created necklaces for themselves patterned after dreams or visions they had had. The Iroquois nation of the Northeast placed great importance on wampum, a belt beaded with purple and white shells in designs of particular meaning. The designs on wampum recorded important events, and the length and width of the belt indicated the importance of the event. Wampum was used as money for trading, as treaties to solve disputes between tribes, and as a courting item between young women and eligible men. Among the tribes of the Southwest, including the Navajo and Pueblo Indians, turquoise, a blue and green mineral, has had special meaning since as early as 300 C.E. Native Americans of the Southwest adorned themselves with turquoise earrings, necklaces, and other jewelry. The mineral

was also central to religious ceremonies, especially Navajo prayers for rain.

A symbol of wealth

Although most jewelry had spiritual meaning, some indicated social status or was worn simply for decoration. For example, pearls could only be worn by the children of noblemen in the Natchez

A Navajo woman displays her turquoise jewelry. Native Americans of the Southwest adorned themselves with turquoise earrings, necklaces, and other jewelry. *Reproduced by permission of © Nevada Wier/CORBIS.*



tribe of the Southeast. While women of the Iroquois nation typically wore many beaded necklaces, for ceremonies they showed off their collections, wearing as much as ten pounds of beaded jewelry at once. Men of the Plateau region wore multiple strands of shell and glass bead loop necklaces with chokers made of dentalium, long thin white tubular shells from the Pacific coast. After 1850 some Plains Indians began to wear breastplates, once worn as armor, simply for decoration. Breastplates, or chest coverings made of horizontally strung long shells called hair pipes, became so popular that people from other tribes began to wear them as well, and European Americans on the East Coast began to manufacture glass and metal beads to make decorative breastplates. Trade with Europeans and white settlers, as well as the changes to Native American culture due to the movement of white settlers into their homelands, introduced new materials, designs, and uses for jewelry among various tribes.

The living members of many tribes throughout the modern-day North American continent continue these jewelry traditions. For some, such as the Navajo of the Southwest, the sale of their jewelry provides a significant amount of their income.

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■ ■ ■ Tattooing

Tattooing was practiced among members of Native American tribes for thousands of years. Native Americans tattooed themselves by cutting their skin with sharp objects and rubbing dye into the cuts. Cactus needles, fish bones, pine needles, bird bones, sharp stones, or other sharp objects pricked the skin and pigments such as charcoal, cedar-leaf ashes, or other materials were used to make red, blue, or green tattoos on the skin. People, especially men, would often tattoo themselves, though some, such as children, would be tattooed by someone else.

The Aleut people of the Arctic used soot to tattoo lines on their face and hands. Tattooing was common among Eskimo men and women, who marked their faces with short thick lines. Eskimo children were also tattooed. Boys were tattooed on their wrists after their first kill, and girls were tattooed after their first menstruation. Among the tribes of California and the Pacific Northwest, women tattooed their chins with at least three lines but sometimes included other lines at the corners of their mouth or on their nose, which served as a type of spiritual protection for them. The men of some tribes, such as the Seminole of the Southeast, covered their bodies in tattoos. Seminole boys received their first tattoo when they were given their first name and earned more tattoos as they learned the art of war. By the time a Seminole man reached old age, he could be covered from head to toe with tattoos. Members of tribes throughout the Great Basin (a desert region in the western United States that comprises parts of many western states), Northeast, Plains, Plateau, Southeast, and Southwest also tattooed themselves with a variety of designs all over their bodies. Even though the practice was widespread, tattooing faded from practice in the early nineteenth century.

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 ■ **War Paint**

Native American tribes have used body paint from their first appearance in North America in about 10,000 B.C.E., both to psychologically prepare for war as well as for visual purposes.

Two major ingredients in body paint were charcoal and ocher, a reddish clay. Other natural ingredients, including bird excrement, plant leaves, and fruits, were mixed with animal fat and hot water



to make paint. Tree branches and animal bones were used as paintbrushes. Indians painted in various shapes, often stripes, circles, triangles, and dots.

Given the high availability of red ochre throughout North America, red became the most used body paint color for indigenous tribes. The Beothuks of what is now Canada, for example, painted their entire bodies red to protect themselves from insects. Some theorize that this appearance is what led to the general derogatory term “redskin” for Native Americans. Other colors were also used and when Europeans and Americans opened trading posts in the nineteenth century, they introduced more colors for paints.

Colors had specific connotations for Indians. Historian Karl Gröning observed in *Body Decoration: A World Survey of Body Art* that “The combination of colour and motif was very important to the individual, who saw it as his ‘medicine’, his personal tutelary spirit.” In the Blackfoot tribe of the Plains, for example, warriors who had performed heroically had their faces painted black.

Illustration of an Ojibwa war dance performed by Ojibwa Native Americans wearing war paint. Indians used war paint to rally themselves for battle and frighten enemies. Reproduced by permission of © Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS.

Similarly, the Teton Sioux of the Plains used black paint for victory and white for mourning.

Indians used war paint to rally themselves for battle and frighten enemies, in the way sports teams wear the same uniforms. The Catawbas of the Southeast painted one eye in a white circle and another eye in a black circle. Louis Capron observed in the *National Geographic Magazine* article “Florida’s ‘Wild’ Indians, the Seminole” that for the Seminoles, red paint “signifies blood,” green paint near the eyes helps a person “see better at night,” and yellow paint is “the color of death” and “means a man has lived his life and will fight to the finish.”

Generally, tribal elders wore different paints than their inferiors. Members of the Assiniboine tribe in what is now the state of Montana painted their faces red and black, but the chief painted his face yellow. Different tribes had different gender rules about painting themselves; while the Seminole tribe in Florida forbade women from face paint, the neighboring Timucuan allowed both men and women to use body paint.

Body paint in all its variations was one of the most recognized elements of Indian life for Europeans and Americans of the 1700s and 1800s. The nineteenth-century Leatherstocking novels about life in the wilderness by James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) popularized the phrase “war paint.” In Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s (1807–1882) 1855 epic poem “The Song of Hiawatha,” the Great Spirit Gitche Menito commands Indian warriors to “Bathe now in the stream before you / Wash the war-paint from your faces.” And George Catlin (1796–1872), the first American portrait painter to document the American West, detailed the face painting of forty-eight tribes in some five hundred portraits.

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■ ■ Footwear of Native American Cultures

 **T**he North American continent has been occupied since 10,000 B.C.E. and active civilizations have been recorded across the continent as far back as 3,000 B.C.E. The continent's wide variety of climates required the people living in different regions to wear different footwear. For the most part, the inhabitants of the southern regions and the temperate regions of the north preferred to go barefoot, even in the snow. Footwear was used, however, especially for traveling. Crude sandals made from yucca plants or grasses were made by Native Americans living in California and the Southwest. The Iroquois of the Northeast made light shoes out of cornhusks to wear in the summertime.

More durable shoes also came to be used throughout the continent. Called moccasins, these shoes were fashioned out of soft tanned leather. Tribes of different regions designed different styles of moccasin and often decorated them with elaborate designs. The moccasin is the footwear style most associated with Native Americans.

In addition to moccasins and sandals, Native Americans in some regions designed snowshoes to be worn with or without moccasins to make winter hunting easier. The northernmost peoples living in the Subarctic and Arctic, including the Eskimos, created the warmest type of footwear, a tall moccasin boot, which came to be called a mukluk.

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Moccasins

While many Native Americans went barefoot, even in the snow, most tribes developed a favorite style of shoe called a moccasin. Made out of tanned animal skins, or sometimes plant fiber, moccasins protected men, women, and children's feet from rough terrain. Many were plain leather, but others were elaborately decorated with fringe, beadwork, or painted designs. Each tribe created its own distinctive moccasin style, ranging in height from ankle to knee. A sampling of moccasin styles from several tribes gives an idea of the range of moccasins used by Native Americans.

Micmac beaded moccasins. Made out of animal skins, or sometimes plant fiber, moccasins protected men, women, and children's feet from rough terrain. Reproduced by permission of © Christie's Images/CORBIS.

The Northern Paiute of the Great Basin (a desert region in the western United States that comprises parts of many western states) fashioned "hock" moccasins out of buffalo legs. Removing the skin of the animal's hock, or lower leg joint, as an intact tube, the Northern Paiute would stitch one end closed, slip their foot in,



and tie leather thongs, or straps, around their ankle to hold the moccasin on their foot. The Nez Perce Indians of the Plateau made soft leather moccasins by wrapping a piece of leather around their foot and sewing a seam up the top. The Nez Perce beautified their moccasins with intricate beadwork and porcupine quillwork, a process of applying designs to garments by dipping porcupine quills in dye. The Mojave wrapped fibers from the mescal cactus with strings to make moccasins for traveling. Wealthy Tsimshian of the Northwest wore seal or bear skin moccasins, but the less fortunate wrapped their feet in cedar bark. The natives of the Southeast wore “swamp” moccasins to protect their feet from the soggy swamplands throughout Florida and the surrounding areas. Swamp moccasins were made out of a single piece of animal skin that wrapped under the foot and up to cover the ankle. Crude stitching at the front of the shoe and at the heel formed a boot shape.

The Navajo of the Southwest made moccasins with rawhide soles stitched to red stained leather uppers that reached the top of the ankle. Navajo moccasins were often fastened with two or three silver buttons. In the coldest regions of the Subarctic and the Arctic, moccasins evolved into calf-high mukluks, or boots, made of moose skin soles with caribou skin uppers trimmed with beaver fur. As American settlers continued to encroach upon their lives, Native Americans eventually abandoned their everyday moccasins for shoes purchased from whites, although moccasins continue to be worn for ceremonies. In the modern world, moccasins similar to those developed by Native Americans remain a popular form of footwear for informal and indoor use for people throughout the world.

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Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas

Several cultures flourished in Central and South America from about 300 C.E. in the modern-day nations of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Of the many early civilizations first living in this area, the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas are the best known and offer a broad understanding of early life in these areas.

The Mayans

The Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico and Belize in Central America were home to the ancient Mayan civilization, which originated in about 2600 B.C.E., rose to prominence in about 300 C.E., and collapsed around 900 C.E. Although often studied as an empire, the Mayan civilization was not a unified society but rather a group of twenty culturally similar, independent states. Mayans created a highly developed culture with systems of writing, calendars, mathematics, astronomy, art, architecture, and religious, political, and military order. Mayans constructed beautiful stone cities and religious temples without the use of metal tools or the wheel, since these tools had not yet been discovered by their culture. Much about Mayan culture is lost forever. The tropical climate of Mexico did not preserve the tree bark books buried with priests, and the Spanish conquerors and missionaries of the 1500s burned or destroyed the

■ ■ ■ MAYANS, AZTECS, AND INCAS

remnants of Mayan culture that they found. Nevertheless, archaeologists, people who study the physical remains of past cultures, continue to reveal new aspects of this ancient civilization through present-day excavations or scientific digs.

The Aztecs

The Aztec empire reigned in present-day central Mexico for nearly one century until 1519 when disease and brutality brought by Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) destroyed it. Originating from a small group of poverty-stricken wanderers, the Aztec empire developed into one of the largest empires in the Americas. At its height the Aztec empire consisted of a ruling class of Aztecs with nearly fifteen million subjects of different cultures living in five hundred different cities and towns. The Aztecs followed a demanding religion that required human sacrifices, wrote poetry, engineered huge stone temples, devised two calendars—one for the days of the year and another for religious events—and de-

An aerial view of Machu Pichu, an Incan city built in the Andes Mountains in Peru. Incas developed trade, built roads, and created stone architecture. *Reproduced by permission of Mr. John Barth.*



veloped a system of strict laws that covered all aspects of life, including what clothes a person could wear. The Aztec culture was swiftly overcome in the 1500s when the Spanish conquerors, with thousands of Mexican allies who wished to destroy the Aztecs, began battles that, along with the spread of smallpox, an often fatal highly infectious viral disease, would ruin the Aztec empire by 1521.

The Incas

The Inca empire spanned a large portion of South America by the late 1400s C.E. Although many different cultures prospered in the South American Andes Mountains before 3000 B.C.E., the Incas developed their distinctive culture beginning in 1200 C.E. and by 1471 became the largest empire in South America, reigning over a region that stretched from modern-day Ecuador to Chile. Incas built roads, developed trade, created stone architecture, made beautifully worked gold art and jewelry, became skillful potters, and wove lovely fabrics. Much like the Aztecs, the Incas suffered from the attacks of Spanish conquerors and the spread of smallpox. In 1532 Spaniard Francisco Pizarro (c. 1475–1541) conquered the Incas and the territory soon became a colony of Spain. The last Inca emperor remained in power until 1572, when Spaniards killed him.

While the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas each had distinct clothing traditions and costumes, many similarities exist. In the broadest terms these cultures wore the same types of clothing styles. But the different ways they decorated their skin, adorned their hair, and patterned their fabric, among other daily habits, made them quite distinct.

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■ Clothing of Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas

 Though the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas were separated in time and in geography, their clothing closely resembled each other. In general, children were naked, and men wore loincloths, adding tunics, or shirts, and cloaks in colder weather. The dress of women was more variable. Mayan women wore skirts with or without a scarf tied to cover their breasts, and Aztec and Inca women wore dresses made from a wrapped piece of fabric, or ankle-length tunic dresses. None of the clothing was cut to fit the body. Any holes needed for the head were left during the weaving process, and cloth was ready to wear straight off the loom, a weaving device.

The fabric used for clothing held great importance among the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas. In each culture the type of cloth and the decoration applied to garments signaled the wearer's status in society. The Aztecs passed a law that forbade poor people from wearing cotton, and among the Incas only the wealthy could wear a specially woven cloth called cumbi, a fine, soft cloth often made of baby alpaca wool that was valued as highly as gold. Similarly, the clothes of the poorest members of society were quite plain. Poor men, for example, would wear simple loincloths and cloaks woven from plant fiber with little or no added decoration, while wealthy men dressed in brightly colored and intricately patterned clothes embellished with embroidery, feathers, or golden or shell beads.

Among the Inca, woven fabric was as precious as gold was to the Spaniards who invaded in the 1500s. Their tradition of fabric making involved all but the wealthiest members of society. Cotton was grown by farmers, and wool was gathered from tended herds of alpacas and llamas. Women of the poorer classes wove the cloth needed to dress their family, but some men and religious women became weavers for the noble classes. These professional weavers created an intricate cloth called cumbi cloth, which was tightly woven



A Mayan Indian woman weaving on a loom. Mayan, Aztec, and Incan clothing were often ready to wear straight off the loom.

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with geometric designs of many colors. Cumbi cloth was used as a tax payment to the emperor and for ceremonial clothing. It was so important that it was worn by the emperor himself and his family.

The infiltration of foreigners into the cultures of the Mayans, Incas, and Aztecs eventually altered the traditional clothing styles of these three cultures. The Mayan culture began to collapse, for reasons yet to be discovered, starting in 900 C.E. when another native group called the Toltecs came to power. Mayan clothing history has been pieced together from oral histories and archaeological

excavations, or scientific digs to uncover past cultures. The Aztecs, who rose to power in about 1200 C.E. in the Valley of Mexico, which surrounds modern-day Mexico City, abruptly changed their culture in 1521 when Spaniards began to force Aztecs to adopt a Spanish way of life. For the Inca in South America, the Spanish also introduced great change, conquering the Inca empire in the 1530s and finally overrunning it in 1572 by killing the last Inca emperor.

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■ Cloaks

Cloaks are among the most common garment in human clothing history; cultures across time and the globe have used cloaks to keep warm. Blanket-like cloaks were worn by both men and women of the Mayan, Aztec, and Inca empires. Each empire used a different name for their cloaks, and often cloaks worn by men had different names than those worn by women.

Mayan men wore cloaks called *pati*, which were cloths tied around the shoulders. The *pati* of poor Mayans were plain cotton cloaks, but the highest-ranking Mayan men draped elegant *pati* of jaguar skin or feathers from a quetzal (a bird with brilliant blue-green feathers that reach three feet in length) around their shoulders. The cloaks of Aztecs, for which no specific name is known, were designed differently for people of different rank as well. The poorest people wore cloaks woven from the fiber of maguey, a spiny-leaved plant. Their cloaks reached no further than their knees. The wealthiest people wore extravagantly decorated cotton cloaks that swept the ground. Cloaks were such a symbol of wealth among the Aztecs that people sometimes wore more than one cloak at a time if they could afford it. However, each year Aztec emperors did grant poor people gifts of cloaks that had been given to the emperors from conquered peoples.

Inca men called their cloaks *yacolla*. Worn while dancing or working, *yacolla* were tied over the left shoulder to secure them if needed. Inca women fastened their cloaks, called *lliclla*, with pins in front of their chests. The poorest Incas wore simple cloaks, but the wealthiest wore cloaks made of specially woven fabric called *cumbi* cloth, which had designs indicating a person's rank woven into the fabric.

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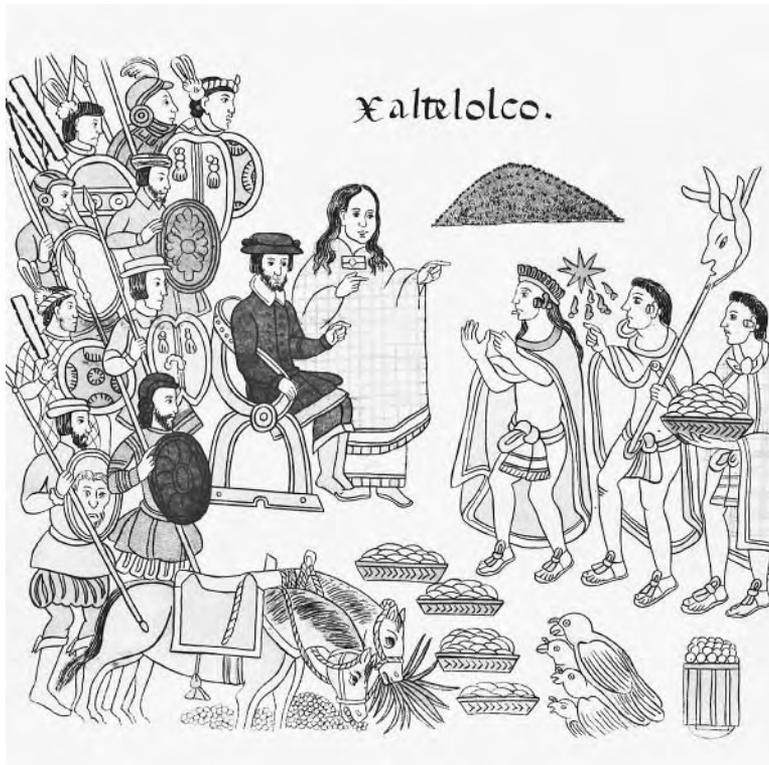
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[See also Volume 1, Ancient Greece: Chlaina and Diplax; Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Casula; Volume 2, Europe in the Middle Ages: Mantle; Volume 2, Native American Cultures: Cloaks]

■ ■ ■ Loincloths

Aztec emissaries delivering offerings to Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés. The Aztecs are wearing traditional Indian cloaks and loincloths. *Reproduced by permission of © Bettmann/CORBIS.*



Men in the Mayan, Aztec, and Inca empires all wore loincloths, the most basic form of male clothing in many ancient cultures. Loincloths were made out of strips of fabric wound around the waist and between the legs, leaving flaps hanging in the front and back. The climate of Central and South America was so warm that sometimes a loincloth was the only garment men would wear.

The loincloths worn in each empire ranged from simple and plain to beautifully decorated garments. Mayans called the loincloth an *ex* and made it out of an eight- to ten-foot length of cotton cloth. The poorest Mayan men would wear a plain *ex*, but wealthier men would wear an *ex* made from patterned cloth and adorned with embroidery, feathers, or fringe. Aztec men wore loincloths, for which no specific name is known, starting at age four. Aztec society enforced strict laws about which men could wear certain types of

loincloths. Those wearing the wrong type of loincloth would be severely punished. Men of wealth and power could wear cotton, but poorer men were forced to wear loincloths made of maguey fiber, a fleshy-leaved plant fiber. From age fourteen or fifteen Inca men wore a loincloth called a guara, which was made out of a long cloth about four inches wide. The highest ranking men could wear guara with special designs woven into the fabric.

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■ ■ ■ Tunic

Tunics were sometimes worn by the men of Mayan, Aztec, and Inca cultures. Made of a woven rectangle of cotton, wool, or plant fiber fabric with a hole in the center for the head, tunics resembled loose, sleeveless pullover shirts that hung from the shoulders to within a few inches above or below the knee. Tunics were either left open at the sides or sewn leaving holes near the top fold for the arms to slip through. Tunics could hang freely or be wrapped at the waist with a sash. Most often worn by men with loincloths, longer, ankle-length versions of the tunic were also worn by some Inca women. Like loincloths and cloaks, a tunic signaled a person's social status by the quality of its fabric and richness of its decoration.

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■ Headwear of Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas

Early Central and South Americans cared for their hair by washing, combing, and styling it. Atop their carefully styled hair, Mayan, Aztec, and Inca men and women wore hats and headdresses of many different styles.

Elite Mayan men and women styled their hair to show off their pointed heads, crafted through the careful head flattening they experienced as children. Women gathered their long hair on top of their heads in flowing ponytails. For special occasions they braided their ponytails and decorated them with ornaments and ribbons. Mayan men grew their hair long but burnt the hair off their foreheads to accentuate their elongated profiles. They would bind their hair into one or many ponytails or tie it in a bundle on top of their head. Mayan slaves had their hair cut short as one visible mark of their inferior status. In addition to their carefully styled hair, wealthy Mayan men added elaborate feathered headdresses. Some of these headdresses were crafted to look like the head of a jaguar, snake, or bird and were covered with animal skin, teeth, and carved jade.

Aztecs cut their hair in different styles according to their rank in society. Most Aztec men wore their hair with bangs over their forehead and cut at shoulder length in the back. They plucked their sparse facial hair. Most Aztec women wore their hair long and loose, but did braid it with ribbons for special occasions. However, war-



Montezuma II, Emperor of Mexico, wearing an elaborate feathered headdress. Some of these headdresses were crafted to look like the head of a jaguar, snake, or bird. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

■■■ HEADWEAR OF MAYANS, AZTECS, AND INCAS

riors wore their hair in ponytails and often grew scalplocks, long locks of hair that were singled out in a decorated braid or ponytail. Courtesans, or women who were companions to warriors, wore their hair cut short at the nose level, dyed with black mud, and shined with an indigo dye.

Both Inca men and women valued long hair. Long hair was so important in Inca society that cutting the hair was considered a punishment for some crimes. Inca women rarely cut their hair and wore it neatly combed, parted it in the middle, and sometimes twisted it into two long braids secured with brightly colored woolen bands. Some women tied colorful bands around their foreheads. Wealthy Inca women covered their heads with cumbi cloth, a richly woven fabric, folded in a specific way to sit on top of the head. Inca men wore their dark hair long in the back with a fringe of bangs across their foreheads.

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■ ■ Body Decorations of Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas



The early civilizations of Central and South America paid careful attention to their personal cleanliness and created many different ornaments to beautify the body. Decoration among all Central and South American groups indicated social rank. The Aztecs took this idea very seriously and punished anyone wearing an article of clothing or decoration above his birthright or honorary right with death.

Before adorning themselves, the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas all cleaned themselves thoroughly. Evidence suggests that Mayans used a steam bath to cleanse themselves. Aztecs washed themselves daily, and some bathed twice each day in cold rivers and streams. Aztecs also enjoyed a steam bath in a bathhouse, a domed building heated with a fireplace. The Incas also bathed frequently, and the wealthiest soaked in steaming mineral water piped into their own private bathhouses from hot springs. Once clean, these early Americans adorned themselves in a variety of different ways.

Permanent decorations

Some body decorations were permanent. The Mayans squeezed the skulls of the most privileged infants between two boards to elongate and flatten their heads and tried to promote crossed eyes by hanging a ball from children's bangs in the center of their forehead. Mayan kings and noblemen, or aristocrats, bored holes in their front teeth and inserted decorative pieces of stone, especially green jade and glossy black obsidian, which comes from hardened molten lava. All Mayans filed points on their teeth to make their mouths look more appealing. After marriage, some Mayans applied tattoos to their face and body. Some Aztec women stained their teeth red with the crushed bodies of cochineal insects, a native bug, to make

■ ■ ■ BODY DECORATIONS OF MAYANS, AZTECS, AND INCAS



Map of the Americas showing the Mesoamerican civilizations of the Middle Ages: Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas. *Reproduced by permission of the Gale Group.*

themselves more sexually appealing. Aztec warriors signaled their success with the size and shape of the lip plugs that they inserted into a slit made in their lip. The most successful Aztec warriors inserted plugs shaped like animals and plants, while less skilled warriors inserted plainer shells and simple disks into their lips. Wealthy and honored Inca men earned the nickname *orejones*, or “big ears,” from Spaniards for the large disks made of gold, silver, or wood they inserted into stretched slits in their earlobes.

Body painting

Less permanent decorations, such as body paint, were donned for special occasions to mark the status of the wearer. Mayan warriors painted their faces and bodies with black and red colors, and priests painted themselves blue. Although many Aztec women just emphasized keeping themselves clean, others, such as the most fashion-conscious women and the companions of warriors, smoothed yellow earth or a yellow wax on their faces, dyed their feet, and painted their hands and neck with intricate designs. Inca women did not paint themselves, but, much like the Mayans, Inca warriors and priests used paint on their face, arms, and legs to indicate their status.

Jewelry

The jewelry worn by the Mayan, Aztec, and Inca people was rich in variety and quite beautiful. Without metalworking skills, Mayans made jewelry from many other materials. Mayan men wore nose ornaments, earplugs, and lip plugs made of bone, wood, shells, and stones, including jade, topaz, and obsidian. Necklaces, bracelets,

anklets, and headgear were made with jaguar and crocodile teeth, jaguar claws, and feathers. Mayan women and children wore less elaborate necklaces and earrings of similar materials.

Aztecs and Incas perfected metalworking to a great art. Gold and silver jewelry was worn alongside ornaments made of feathers, shells, leather, and stones. Among the Aztecs, laws about which ornaments could be worn were strictly enforced. Only royalty could wear headdresses with gold and quetzal (a bird with brilliant blue-green feathers that reach three feet in length) feathers, for example. The weaving tradition, so important to Incas, helped create beautiful woven headdresses. Inca emperors wore woven hats trimmed with gold and wool tassels or topped with plumes, or showy feathers. Incas also created elaborate feather decorations for men: headbands made into crowns of feathers, collars around the neck, and chest coverings. In addition, wealthy Inca men wore large gold and silver pendants hung on their chests, disks attached to their hair and shoes, and bands around their arms and wrists. Inca women adorned themselves simply with a metal fastening for their cloak called a tupu. The head of their tupu was decorated with paint or silver, gold, or copper bells.

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■ ■ ■ Head Flattening

Ancient peoples in the Americas practiced head flattening as a mark of social status. Head flattening is the practice of shaping

■■■ HEAD FLATTENING

the skull by binding an infant's head. Typically the skull would be wrapped or bound between two boards to form an elongated conical shape. Mayans shaped the heads of the highest ranking children, those of priests and nobles, between two boards for several days after birth. Some Incas also shaped the heads of male infants by wrapping their heads with braided wool straps for more than a year. One recovered Incan skull was formed into two peaks. Head flattening was also practiced by Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest, and by the ancient peoples of Oceania, Africa, and Europe.

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[See also Volume 2, African Cultures: Head Flattening]

■ ■ Footwear of Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas

People in Central and South America went barefoot most of the time. The warm climate did not require clothing for warmth. However, foot coverings did make the rugged terrain easier to manage. Mayan, Aztec, and Inca royalty and soldiers wore various styles of sandals. Typically these sandals were made of leather from a goat, llama, or sheep, or from plant fibers and tied to the foot with leather or woven fabric straps. The Incas wore an unusual type of sandal called usuta, which had a short sole. As with other garments worn by these cultures, the decoration of footwear indicated a person's social status. The wealthiest members of society could wear sandals dyed bright colors and adorned with beads of gold or silver.

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Aztec emperor Montezuma wearing traditional Indian dress, including sandals. Sandals were typically made of leather from a goat, llama, or sheep or from plant fibers. Reproduced by permission of © Bettmann/CORBIS.



■ ■ ■ Usuta

Usuta, the unique footwear of the Incas, were a type of sandal worn by both men and women. The soles of usuta covered the bottom of the foot but ended at the balls of the foot. This left the toes exposed to help grip the ground of the mountainous terrain where the Incas lived. The soles of usuta were made from the untanned, or untreated, skin from the necks of sheep. Because the untanned usuta soles became soft in water, Incas removed their usuta in wet weather. Usuta were attached to the foot with thick, soft, tufted wool ties, which were dyed bright colors and sometimes patterned. These ties were secured around the instep, or top of the foot, and then wrapped around the ankle in decorative patterns.

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Africa: From the Birth of Civilization

The earliest stages of human evolution are believed to have begun in Africa about seven million years ago as a population of African apes evolved into three different species: gorillas, chimpanzees, and humans. Protohumans, as early humans are known, evolved about 2.5 million years ago and had larger brains and stood nearly upright. From prehistoric Africa, humans spread to populate much of the world by 10,000 B.C.E. Some of the world's first great empires originated in northern Africa around 4000 B.C.E., when Egypt began to develop. As Egyptian society began to decline around 1000 B.C.E., people living further south along the Nile River started building a culturally independent society. This society developed into the first black African empire: the Kushite/Meröe empire, which lasted roughly from 800 B.C.E. to 400 C.E. Although the Kushite/Meröe civilization was influenced by Egypt, it developed its own culture, with unique art practices and a writing system. Little is known about the lifestyles and habits of these early African cultures. Some research has been conducted into these past cultures but more is ongoing.

Small independent social groups developed throughout the African continent. However, little is known about the lifestyles and habits of these early African cultures. Hopefully ongoing research into these past cultures will provide a clearer picture of

■■■ AFRICA: FROM THE BIRTH OF CIVILIZATION

ancient African life sometime in the future. Many early African groups had contact with other cultures and records from these cultures provide much of the known information about early African life. However, contact with these other cultures influenced life in Africa and there is no complete picture of African culture before other cultures began to influence it. Arabic cultures infiltrated Ethiopia in northeast Africa by the seventh century B.C.E. and helped establish the Axum empire (100–400 C.E.). The first Christians arrived from Syria in the fourth century C.E. and the religion quickly took root. Northern Africa was invaded by Muslims and later by nomads, who brought more cultural changes, including the adoption of the Muslim religion in many parts of Africa. (Nomads are peoples who have no fixed place of residence and wander from place to place usually with the seasons or as food sources become scarce.)

The first black African states formed between 500 and 1500 C.E. From these early states, African culture began to thrive. Trade routes, established during the Greek and Roman times, were increased across the Sahara desert when the camel was introduced in 100 C.E. from Arabia. By 800 C.E. the West African Soninke people had created the Ghanaian empire and controlled the area between the Sénégal and Upper Niger Rivers. Ghana was rich in gold and developed extensive trading routes with northern Africans. As the Ghanaian empire continued to flourish, many smaller groups developed communities in southern Africa. One of these, the Mali empire, became a large and powerful empire after the fall of the Ghanaian empire in the eleventh century C.E. The Mali empire converted many living in western Sudan to Islam, the Muslim religion, and developed the famous city of Timbuktu, which became a center for trade, Muslim religion, and education. Other smaller states and dynasties, including Berber, Songhay, Hausa, and Kanem-Bornu, rose and flourished in different parts of Africa. The first of these, the Berber dynasties of the north, began in the eleventh century C.E., and the later Songhay empire began in the fifteenth century C.E. The history of Africa is filled with these shifts of power from group to group, yet our knowledge of life among these early groups is very limited.

In general, hundreds of different African groups throughout the continent developed tribal cultures based either on nomadic hunting and gathering practices or on more permanent farming tech-

niques. These groups developed distinct systems of trade, religion, and politics. But the presence of Europeans quickly disrupted many Africans' traditional ways of life. Some groups fled to remote areas to escape the foreigners; others developed fruitful trading practices with the Europeans. Because these early African cultures did not keep written records, little information is known about their life before contact with other groups.



A Ndebele warrior, left, and his wife in full ceremonial dress.
*Reproduced by permission of
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More extensive recording

Our knowledge and understanding of African civilization began to expand in the mid-fifteenth century, when Europeans first landed on the west coast of the continent. The Portuguese, followed by the Dutch, British, French, and others, established links between Africa and Europe. Although they had first come in search of gold and other precious trading commodities, Europeans quickly started developing the slave trade, which involved the export of captured Africans. The first shipment of humans was made in 1482 and by 1870, when the slave trade was abolished, more than ten million Africans had been transported to European colonies and new nations in the Americas. Arabs also exported slaves in the slave trade, but the Europeans had a much larger hand in the destructive trading practice that created one of the largest migrations in history. Much of our knowledge of early Africans comes from slave traders' contact with Africans from west and central Africa who began capturing other Africans to supply Europeans with slaves.

During the time that some western and central African tribes developed brutal systems to prey upon weaker tribes in order to round up slaves for sale to Europeans, peoples in eastern and southern Africa were developing societies of their own. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, when more white Europeans traveled to Africa as missionaries, explorers, colonizers, and tourists, these civilizations' traditions came to the attention of the rest of the world. But the arrival of Europeans to all of Africa brought new troubles.

During the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, almost the whole African continent was divided into colonies among seven European countries: Britain, France, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Italy, and Belgium. These colonies divided established African communities, created political institutions to run the colonies, and imposed many new ways of living on Africans. In addition, Europeans built railways throughout the continent that quickly destroyed traditional trading routes. No longer able to follow their old ways of life, native Africans became laborers in European-run plantations and mines. Many Europeans considered colonization as a way to "civilize" African people. Traditional African cultures blended with European customs in the colonies to make new cultures. Although many fiercely resisted European domination, Africans were forced to adapt to colonial rule. Along with new jobs, schooling, and food, Africans also incorporated many European fashions into their daily

ADOPTION OF WESTERN DRESS

Clothing styles change over time for a variety of reasons. Although environmental changes can have drastic effects, trade causes the quickest shifts in a culture's clothing styles. Trade between the hundreds of different African groups throughout the continent had occurred for years but the most dramatic effect of trade came from the West. Western style clothing, including shoes, pants, shirts, dresses, and business suits, became increasingly common in Africa in the twentieth century, especially in urban cities. Many Africans wear whole Western style outfits, while others combine traditional African styles with Western styles. Only Africans living in the most remote regions of the continent continue to wear clothes reflecting limited European contact.

The prevalence of Western styles throughout Africa indicates the dominance of European trade on the continent since the fifteenth century. The first Africans to trade with Europeans used European goods to create their own unique clothing styles. Intricate beaded clothing was created from imported glass beads, for example. But as Europeans tried to colonize the African continent, many Africans were forced to abandon their traditional ways of living. Without access to their old ways of making clothing, many began to wear ready-made clothes imported from Europe. Indeed, by the twenty-first century, Africans not only wore imported Western style clothing but also Western style clothing made in African factories. Today traditional African dress is most often worn for ceremonial purposes, much like the kimono in Japan or elements of traditional dress among Native Americans.



Masai natives display their T-shirts, showing new Western influence on African style. *Reproduced by permission of © Stephen Frink/CORBIS.*

■■■ AFRICA: FROM THE BIRTH OF CIVILIZATION

costumes. Only Ethiopia and Liberia remained independent states by 1914. However, small isolated groups of Africans living in remote areas of central Africa remained untouched by the influence of European colonialism and continued to practice their traditional ways of life.

By the 1950s many African colonies began seeking independence. Africans rebelled against colonial rule and soon won their freedom, either in swift battles or long, bloody wars. Most African colonies were independent by 1960. Freed from European rule, these newly formed nation states began to establish new, African-run countries. However, many retained the general lifestyles set up under colonial rule. Western influence continues to penetrate Africa through trade and charitable organizations. The clothing worn in these newly independent African nations is a blend of traditional African styles and patterns and Western clothing.

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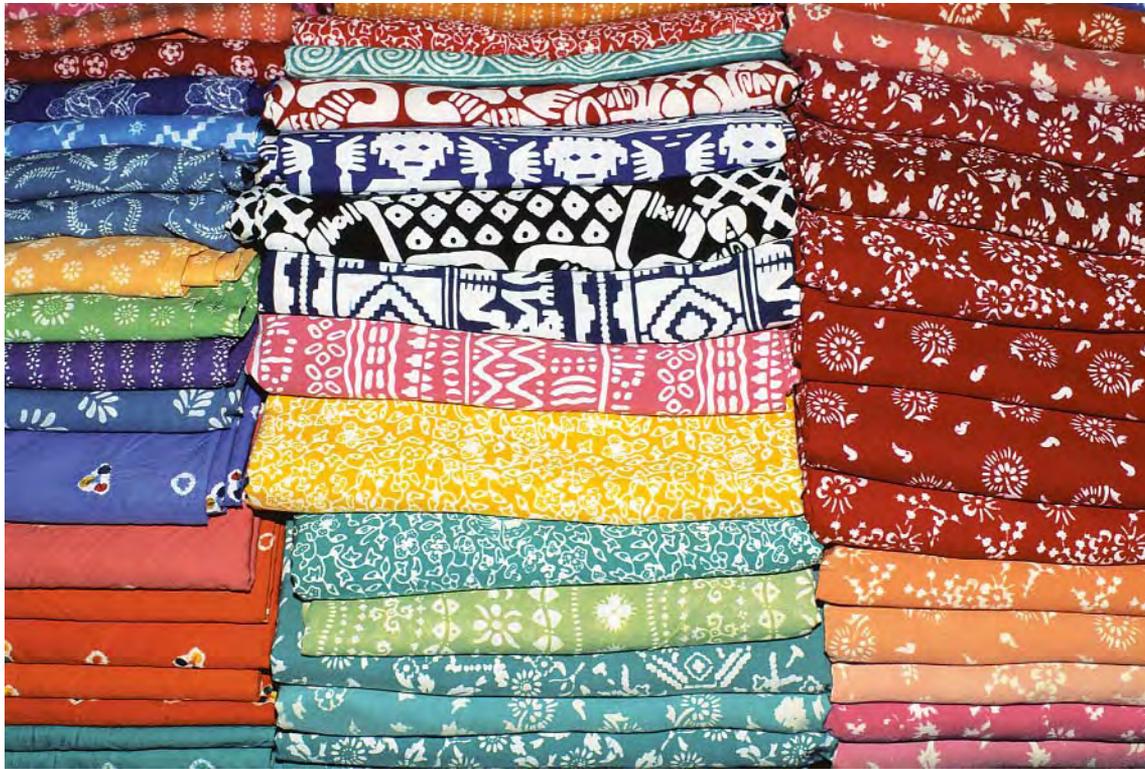
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■ Clothing of African Cultures

 **T**he evolution of African clothing is difficult to trace because of the lack of historical evidence. Although artifacts from Egyptian culture date back to before 3000 B.C.E., no similar evidence is available for the majority of the African continent until the mid-twentieth century. Sources from Arab culture refer to the people of northern Africa by the eighth century C.E., but much of early African clothing history has been pieced together from art, oral histories, and traditions that are continued by present-day tribal members. When Europeans began trading and later developed colonies in Africa starting in the thirteenth century C.E., more information about how Africans dressed was recorded and continues to this day. The spotty information available, combined with the huge number of different cultures living in Africa, however, provides only a very general history of the clothing trends on the continent.

Clothing was not a necessity for warmth or protection throughout much of the African continent because of the consistently warm weather. Many people, especially men, did not wear any clothing at all and instead decorated their bodies with paint or scars. When Africans did wear clothing, evidence suggests that animal skins and bark cloth were the first materials used. It is unknown when these readily available materials were first utilized, but they were used to make simple aprons to cover the genitals or large robes to drape around the body.

Later many cultures developed weaving techniques to produce beautiful cloth. Raffia, the fiber of a palm plant, and cotton were common materials used to weave fabric. At first cloth was woven by hand, and later looms (weaving devices) were created to make more complicated fabrics. Men and women worked together to produce fabric for clothing, with men weaving the fabric and women decorating it in many cultures. Perhaps the most well known fabrics were



Folded batik cloth. Some Africans used their fabric to create elaborate wrapped clothing styles, while others cut and sewed their fabrics into shirts, dresses, and trousers. *Reproduced by permission of © Wolfgang Kaehler/CORBIS.*

the intricately woven cotton or silk Kente cloth of Ghana; the mud cloth of Mali, with its distinctive brown and beige patterns; and the tufted Kuba cloth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other types of cloth were also woven by other groups; each culture using its distinctive cloth to create clothing. Some used their fabric to create elaborate wrapped clothing styles, similar to the toga worn by ancient Romans. Others cut and sewed their fabric into skirts, shirts, dresses, and loose trousers. Different versions of loose-fitting robes are worn in many different regions of Africa. In Nigeria and Senegal a robe called a boubou for men and a m'boubou for women is popular. Other similar robes include the agbada and riga in Nigeria, the gandoura or leppi in Cameroon, and the dansiki in West Africa. Styles in northern Africa reflect the strong influence Muslims have had on the cultures, especially the Berbers of Morocco and other Saharan desert countries.

The clothing styles already discussed are considered traditional African dress, but there is a great deal we don't know about them and other forms of African dress. We know nothing about the ori-

gins of these styles, for example, nor do we know the precise ways that they changed over time. It is almost certain, however, that African clothing styles, like the styles of all other long-enduring cultures, have evolved over time. In ancient times, when different African groups would meet and trade with each other, exotic items, such as shell beads in inland communities, would become prized status symbols and be incorporated into different tribal clothing styles. One prime example of how trade changed African clothing is the popularity of the tiny glass beads brought to Africa from Europe in the fifteenth century. Africans coveted the beads and soon created elaborate beaded skirts, capes, headdresses, and even shoes. The colors and patterns of the beadwork distinguished tribes from one another, and the styles of beaded clothing differentiated people by sex, age, and social status. These beaded items are now identified as traditional among many different groups in Africa. Further contact with Europeans introduced other Western items, namely Western clothing styles. Although these items were first combined with older African styles, by the twenty-first century it was not uncommon to see people in Africa wearing jeans, T-shirts, and tennis shoes, or other Western style outfits.

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Loose-fitting robes are worn in many different regions of Africa, especially in West Africa. These robes reach to the ankles

AFRICAN AMERICANS' DRESS DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

The slave trade spread Africans far from their homeland, mostly into the colonies that would become the United States of America. After slaves were freed in the United States in 1863, blacks continued to dress in styles similar to others living in the United States, but during the 1950s and 1960s many black people in the United States began to protest the prejudice and injustice they experienced in much of American society, especially in the southern states. They held protest marches and other demonstrations in order to force changes in laws that unfairly favored white citizens over black citizens. This civil rights movement did change many of those laws and brought about many other changes in the lives of African Americans. Among these changes was an increased pride in black identity, which was expressed in many ways, one of which was an appreciation of African heritage. By the mid-1960s a new style of dress and hairstyle, which emphasized African clothing and African physical characteristics, had become popular among American blacks.

In the decades before the civil rights movement, white European standards of beauty had dominated the fashion world, and white European hair and facial characteristics were considered "normal" and desirable. African Americans had often tried to imitate those characteristics, by

straightening their tightly curled hair and minimizing their African features. However, as American blacks began to speak out and demand their rights, they also began to look differently at their own bodies. "Black is Beautiful" became a popular slogan, and many blacks began to appreciate their African looks. Instead of using hair straighteners, which were often painful and damaging to the hair, many black people let their curly hair go naturally into large round afros or "naturals." African features such as flat noses and thick lips began to be viewed as beauty advantages rather than defects. Many black Americans changed their names to African names. In 1965 an African American woman named Flori Roberts started a company to make cosmetics designed especially for black skin, and in 1969 *Essence* magazine was founded as a fashion journal for professional black women.

Along with this increased appreciation of African features went a growth in the popularity of traditional African clothing styles and fabrics. Both African American men and women began to wear loose, flowing shirts and robes called dashikis and caftans made of brightly colored African fabrics. Many wore turbans or brimless caps of the same bright materials. These traditional fabrics, woven and dyed in Africa, became prized symbols of the heritage of American blacks. The interest in African fashion soon spread into the mainstream, as French designer Yves St. Laurent (1936–), who was born in northern Africa, introduced fashion lines of African and Moroccan clothing.

and are either open at the sides or stitched closed along the edges. In West Nigeria a loose-fitting robe is called an agbada. An agbada has sleeves that hang loosely over the shoulders and an opening at the front. A similar garment, called a gandoura or leppi, is worn in Cameroon, and the Hausa of Nigeria call their loose-fitting robes riga. The same garment is called a dansiki in West Africa.

Most often made of cotton, agbada and other robes are typically highly patterned. These patterns may be woven into, dyed,

painted, or appliquéd onto the robe. Men wear the agbada alone with trousers or as a type of coat over a shirt. As Africans have had increased contact with other cultures, traditional methods of producing cloth have declined, and many modern agbada are made from imported cloth and worn with Western pants.

A related garment, called the dashiki, became quite popular in the West during the rise of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which saw African Americans protesting to secure their rights. Wearing a dashiki was a way of making a political statement about the value of African heritage.

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Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.



A Nigerian man wearing a green agbada. This loose-fitting robe was often highly patterned.

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■ ■ ■ Animal Skins

Animal hides have been a traditional clothing material used by many cultures in Africa, likely since the dawn of human history. Animal hide clothing was made most often from the skins of domesticated animals. Both farming and nomadic societies prized livestock, and they cared for their animals carefully. Their cattle, goats, sheep, and camels were sources of food and clothing, as well as great symbols of wealth. Other groups hunted wild animals for their meat and hides.

To prepare an animal skin, Africans would scrape off all the fur or hair, beat the cleaned skin to soften it, and tan it, a process that softened the hide and turned it into leather. Finally, they would

coat it with red ocher, a type of iron-rich clay pigment, and oil. Leather clothing could be as simple as a small apron or as elaborate as a large cloak made of several hides sewn together. Some garments were left unadorned, while others were decorated with shells, beads, or metal ornaments. Leather was also used to make useful items such as shields and slings to carry babies.

As more and more Africans abandon their traditional lifestyles, animal skin clothing is worn less and less frequently. In many places Africans have adopted store-bought clothing made in Western styles. However, animal skins continue to be worn by the oldest members of some rural tribes in Kenya. Likewise, the peoples living in the remotest regions of the continent, such as the San, or Bushmen, of South Africa, who are the oldest surviving culture on the continent, continue to wear animal skins.

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Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

■ ■ ■ Aso Oke Cloth

Aso oke cloth is an intricately woven cloth used for ceremonial garments. Made by the Yoruba men of Nigeria, Aso oke cloth is decorated with elaborate patterns made from dyed strands of fabric that are woven into strips of cloth. These strips of cloth are sewn together to form larger pieces. Some Aso oke cloth, called “prestige cloth,” has a lace-like appearance with intricate open patterns. Patterns and colors used for Aso oke cloth have special meanings. A purplish-red colored dye called allure is prized among the Yoruba. Some designs are specifically for women’s garments and some are for men’s. The cloth is used to make numerous garment styles, including skirts, shirts, and trousers. Many of the outfits made from Aso oke cloth reflect the strong influence of the Muslim religion in the area since the early nineteenth century, with headwraps and modest gowns being prevalent. The amount of fabric and the patterns used indicate the wealth of the wearer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Blauer, Ettagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

■ ■ ■ Bark Cloth

Bark cloth was one of the first cloths known to be made on the African continent, though its exact origins are lost to history. Bark cloth was made by peeling the inner bark off trees and beating it until it was soft. The first peoples known to use bark cloth were the Kuba, living in the present-day nation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The peoples living in the forested regions of Africa, including the Congo Basin and West Africa, used bark cloth extensively. Bark cloth was fashioned into skirts and robes long enough to drape around the entire body. The inner bark of the ficus tree was one of the most often used for bark cloth. Patterned bark cloth garments were made from the different colored bark of various trees, which were combined to create geometric designs, and sometimes the bark cloth was painted.

Many other Africans used bark cloth, but some nomadic herders, who moved place to place as seasons changed or food grew scarce, replaced it with animal skins and others began weaving fabrics. Woven fabric has now replaced garments made of bark cloth or animal skins, but the Buganda people of Uganda did create bark cloth garments into the 1950s.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Blauer, Ettagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

A traditional Zambian costume, made from bark cloth. *Reproduced by permission of © David Reed/ CORBIS.*



■ ■ ■ Batik Cloth

Batik cloth has been important in Africa for nearly two thousand years. Batik is a method of applying pattern to fabric. A resist-dyeing technique, batik involves coating fabric with a dye-resistant substance and submerging the fabric in colored dye. Typically the

A man soaking clothing in indigo dye, which is the most common dye used to produce batik cloth.

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dye-resistant substance is made of the cassava root or rice flour and the chemicals alum, a type of salt found in the earth, or copper sulfate, a naturally occurring mineral. The substance is boiled with water to make a thick paste. Women paint the paste on the fabric by hand to make flowing designs or men press the paste into stencils to make accurate repeated patterns. The patterns and methods for applying designs have been handed down through families for generations. Once the paste is dry, the fabric is submerged in dye in large clay pots or pits dug in the earth. When the dyed fabric is dry, the paste is scraped off to reveal a white or pale blue design. Indigo is the most common dye used to produce batik cloth. Indigo is made from a plant that grows in Africa. Most often cotton is used for the base fabric.

The popularity of batik patterns as an item for trade has encouraged factories to produce masses of machine-made batik cloths for sale. These fabrics are made in Europe and in some African countries. However, the best examples of traditional African batik cloth are made by the Yoruba in Nigeria. Batik cloth is made into a variety of wrapped clothing, as well as stitched tunics, robes, and trousers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Blauer, Ettagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

■ ■ ■ Berber Dress

The nomadic Berber people trace their African roots back to 2000 B.C.E. (Nomads are peoples who have no fixed place of residence and wander from place to place usually with the seasons or as food sources become scarce.) Over the years since then their dress has changed with the influences of invading cultures. Influenced by the past colonization of ancient Romans, whose power was felt in the region from about 509 B.C.E. to 476 C.E., many Berbers continue to wear a haik, a large cloth wrapped around the body in a fashion similar to a Roman toga. When Arabs conquered their ter-

ritory in the twelfth century C.E., the Berbers were forced to accept the Muslim religion and the strict dress codes of that religion. Arab influence is still present among Berbers today. On their heads men wear wrapped cloth turbans, and women cover their hair with scarves and their faces with veils called mandeels. Under their haiks, many Berbers wear ankle-length tunics or loose trousers called chalwar. In general, the Muslim influence is stronger among the Berbers of the north, where women wear plainer clothes in public than at home. In the south, Berber women's clothes are notably colorful and decorative. Although the clothes worn today by many Berbers have ancient origins, some Berbers, especially those living in cities, wear Western style clothes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

[See also Volume 1, India: Modern Islamic Dress box on p. 85; Volume 1, Ancient Rome: Toga]

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■ Boubou

A sleeveless robe is called a boubou in Nigeria and Senegal. A boubou is worn by men over the top of long sleeved gowns or alone with loose trousers. Generally, boubou are long rectangular cloths with holes in the center. The boubou is worn with the head through the hole and the fabric draped to about mid-thigh level. Boubou can be dyed bright colors and decorated with embroidery, appliquéd patterns, or beadwork.

Women wear a version of the boubou called a m'boubou. A m'boubou is a flowing dress that reaches to just about the ankle; its sewn side seams distinguish it from the male garment. Women wear m'boubous over wrapped skirts and shirts.

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Blauer, Ettagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

■ Cotton

Cotton was woven in West Africa as early as the thirteenth century. Unlike the earlier handwoven cloths, cotton was woven on looms, frames used to interlace individual threads into fabric. These looms produced narrow strips of cloth that would be stitched together to form larger pieces of cloth. Typically, six to eight strips would be sewn together to form a dress or other garment. Like other cloths used by Africans, cotton was wrapped around the body to create many different styles of clothing, from toga-like dresses to turban headdresses.

An African man weaving cotton cloth with a wooden loom. Cotton cloth can be used to create different styles of clothing, from dresses to turbans. *Reproduced by permission of © Earl & Nazima Kowall/CORBIS.*



■■■ KENTE CLOTH

Patterns were applied to cotton in a variety of different ways. Finished cotton fabric was dyed with natural pigments to create bold whole color clothing, or individual threads were dyed before weaving so that geometric patterns could be woven directly into the fabric. People living in different regions preferred different colored dyes. Those living near the Gold Coast, along the shores of Ghana, preferred blue, while those in West Africa favored red. Mud and soap were also used to make patterns on cotton fabric.

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Blauer, Erttagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

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A young boy wearing a robe made from the traditional bright-colored Kente cloth. Reproduced by permission of © Margaret Courtney-Clarke/CORBIS.



■ ■ Kente Cloth

Richly woven Kente cloth is among the most famous woven cloths of Africa. Made originally for Ashanti tribal royalty in the seventeenth century, the cloth is derived from an ancient type of weaving practiced since the eleventh century. In the past, Kente cloth was woven by hand on looms, or weaving devices, in a tightly formed basket weave. The dense fabric was very difficult to weave, and weavers who devised new patterns were revered. Traditionally, each new pattern is named to commemorate an important event during the reign of an Ashanti king and becomes a document of the history of the people. Kente cloth is bright and is woven from dyed yarns of predominately yellow, orange, blue, and red. Originally the colorful cloth was made from

raffia fibers, from the raffia palm, but later was created from silk unraveled from imported cloth.

Although once only worn by royalty, Kente cloth continues to be worn by wealthy Africans, especially by the Ashanti of Ghana. The cloth is used to make a variety of garments draped around the body. The continued popularity of the cloth is based on its beauty as well as a belief system that some follow. Many people believe that Kente cloth can tell more than the history of a community. Some “read” the designs in the cloth for signs of the future. The cloth’s appeal is so great that its popularity is now filled by cloth woven on power looms.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

■ ■ ■ Kuba Cloth

In the present-day nation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo the Kuba people weave a decorative cloth called Kuba cloth. Although this tradition is believed to be ancient, the oldest surviving examples of the cloth are dated back to the seventeenth century. Men weave the fabric out of raffia fibers, from a palm plant, and women apply colorful tufts in bold geometric designs. An entire social group is involved in the production of the cloth, from gathering the fibers, weaving the cloth, dyeing the decorative strands, to applying the embroidery, appliqué, or patchwork. Natural dyes were traditionally used, but man-made dyes are now used.

The embroidery on Kuba cloth look like tufts of velvet. The designs are stitched to the cloth and snipped to make a dense pile. There are hundreds of designs for Kuba cloth that have been handed down through the generations. However, each design can be embellished by the individual weaver. Appliqués are pieces of raffia cloth embroidered over the top of the base cloth. Patchwork involves stitching together smaller pieces of raffia cloth to create a whole garment. Appliqué and patchwork designs may have been created as a decorative method for patching holes.

Kuba cloth is fashioned into ceremonial garments and is most often worn for funerals. Mourners often wear large skirts made of Kuba cloth, and people are buried wearing Kuba cloth garments. Ceremonial garments include skirts for both men and women and overskirts for women. Women's skirts are often twenty-five feet long and men's skirts are longer than thirty feet. Kuba cloth skirts are wound around the body and held in place with a belt. Commercially made Kuba cloth of inferior quality is also created for export.

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■ ■ ■ Mud Cloth

Among African fabrics, the mud cloth of Mali in West Africa is as well-known as the Kente cloth of Ghana. Mud cloth is made of cotton strips woven by men and stitched together to form a larger cloth. Women then decorate the cloth with mud from the seasonal rivers in Mali. Mud cloth patterns are rich with meaning for the Bamana people of Mali; they symbolize the use of the cloth or convey messages to the wearer.

Applying patterns to mud cloth is labor intensive and time consuming. First women soak the rough cotton cloth in leaves that have a natural softening agent called tannin. When they apply clay in bands, diamonds, and other geometric shapes, the clay reacts with the tannin and a dark brown design is left on the fabric. The background of the fabric is then bleached white or cream to improve the contrast of the design.

Mud cloth is worn for ceremonial purposes in Mali. The cloth serves as a celebratory outfit during young girls' initiation rituals and as a shroud during funerals. Although mainly worn by women, mud cloth is also worn proudly by hunters to signal their status in their



social group. The beauty of the fabric has prompted the creation of variations on the basic design. A lighter weight version of the cloth is used for tablecloths and sheets. Men make stenciled cloth for tourists and some mud cloth is commercially made for export.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

Cloth being decorated with mud. Mud cloth patterns symbolize the use of the cloth or convey messages to the wearer.

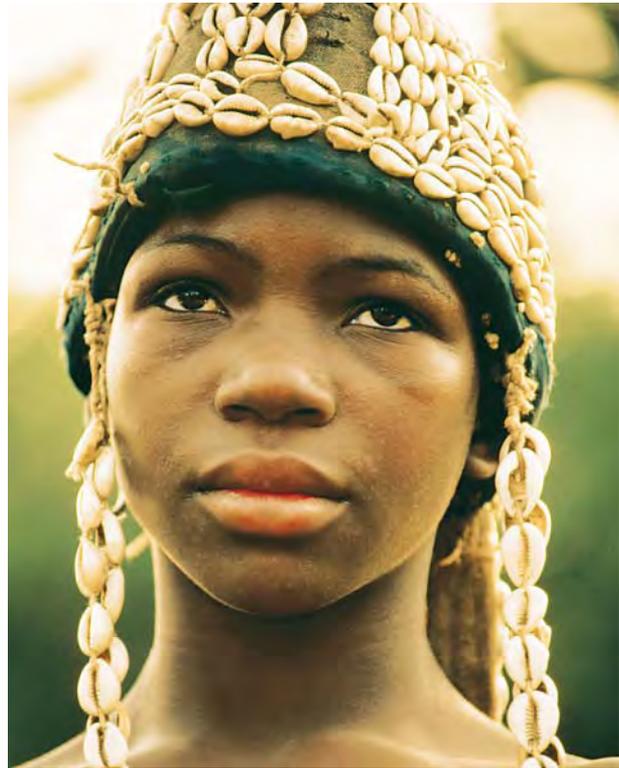
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■ Headwear of African Cultures

The variety of hairstyles and headwear in Africa matches the diversity of the people who live on the continent. Different cultures have used hairstyles and headwear to show tribal association, gender, religion, job, and social status. In addition, the various cultures have created wigs, hats, hair ornaments, razors, and combs to aid in adorning the head. The importance of headwear to African culture is witnessed by the many statues and masks of ancient Africa that show detailed hair ornamentation.

In Africa braided hair has been transformed into an art form. Africans have developed a unique tradition of weaving both men's and women's hair into complex and intricate designs of braids, twists, and coils to express the wearer's social and cultural identity. The head might be adorned with rows of tiny braids resting tightly against the scalp, or crowned with intricate coiled braids. Braids are beautified with beads, clay, or oil. Many of these styles require help to create. The Hamar people of Ethiopia and the Himba of Namibia are among the many Africans who style their hair with braids.

Some groups cut their hair very short or shave their heads completely. In these societies, the head is decorated in other elaborate ways; the ears and neck are often heavily ornamented, and the facial skin is painted or scarred. The Samburu women of Kenya wear headdresses of many colored beads on their shaved heads. !Kung



A young woman on the Ivory Coast wearing a hat made with cowry shells. Headwear was often decorated with natural elements such as shells and feathers.

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women of Namibia tie bead pendants onto the ends of their short hair.

Other groups completely cover the head. Many women throughout Africa, including the Xhosa of South Africa, wrap scarves around their heads. Berber women in North Africa and other followers of Islam cover their heads and faces with scarves and veils. Married Zulu women of South Africa wear large flat woven hats decorated with beads. The Turkana of Kenya and the Karamojong of Uganda coat their hair in clay to create elaborate hairdos, some of which are adorned with feathered plumes.

Hairdressing continues to be important in African societies. Many traditional hairstyles continue to be worn by groups living in remote regions and by others for ceremonies and special occasions. However, many Africans living in cities have adopted Western hairstyles and hats.

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Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

A soldier in the Ghanaian presidential guard wearing a red fez cap. Reproduced by permission of © Paul Almasyl/CORBIS.



■ ■ Fez Cap

The fez cap is popular among northern Africans, especially men, of various nationalities, religions, and tribal affiliations. The cap is a small, brimless, flat-topped cap that fits above the ears on the top of the head. The cap was named for the city of Fez, Morocco, and a red fez, or tarbouch, has become a national symbol of that country. By the early nineteenth century,

the fez cap was also an official part of the military or national costume in Turkey and Zanzibar, now Tanzania.

Historically, the fez cap had been worn mostly by Muslims. Although still popular among men of this religion, the fez cap has also been adopted for fashionable wear by people of many other religions. Fezzes of many different colors are worn throughout northern Africa.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Blauer, Ettagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

■ ■ ■ Headwraps

Head decoration is an important part of everyday African dress. Headwraps are common cloth adornments for covering the hair. They beautify the wearer and protect against the sun. In a typical African headwrap, a length of plain or patterned cotton cloth is wound around the head to create a variety of different looking styles. Some styles are intended to provide padding to make it easier to carry heavy items on top of the head. Headwraps are most commonly worn by women in the south and west of Africa, but men in some regions also wear headwraps.

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Blauer, Ettagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

■ ■ ■ Mud Hairstyling

Men and women throughout Africa have smoothed clay or mud on their heads as decoration for thousands of years. Clay and

■■■ MUD HAIRSTYLING



The hair of a young Masai minister is covered with mud. Hardened mud is used to hold hair stiffly in place, sometimes mounded into helmets. *Reproduced by permission of © Charles & Josette Lenars/CORBIS.*

mud is used to hold their hair stiffly in place or mounded into helmets that can be painted with colorful designs. Clay is also used on longer hair, which is wound or woven into elaborate styles, or as complete coverings for shorter cuts. The Kuria, Masai, and Turukana peoples of Kenya weave their hair into sculptures supported by wire or sticks and held in place with sheep fat and red clay. The Bumi and Karo peoples of Ethiopia cover their closely cropped hair with clay to create helmet-like headgear that hold macramé bands, which they use to secure peacock or other bird feathers. Clay and mud hairstyles crack or break easily so people sleep with their heads resting on special wooden boxes that keep their hairstyles intact.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

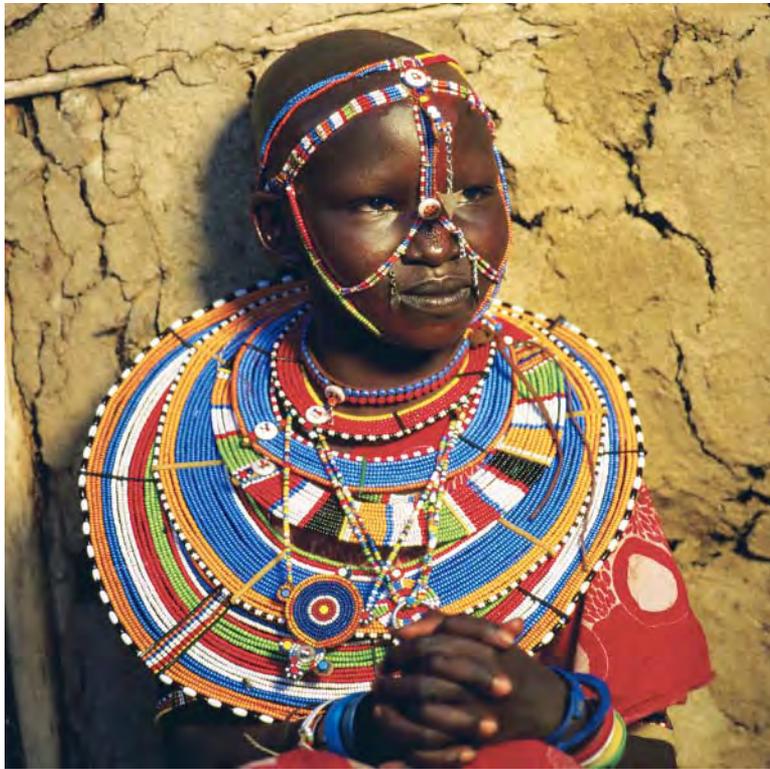
Gröning, Karl. *Body Decoration: A World Survey of Body Art*. New York: Vendome Press, 1998.

■ ■ Body Decorations of African Cultures

Africans have ancient traditions for decorating and accessorizing the body in rich and varied ways. Traditionally, many African peoples wore little to cover their bodies, leaving their skin exposed and available for decoration. Africans adorned themselves in four general ways: scarification, body painting, beadwork, and jewelry.

Scarification involves deliberately cutting the skin in decorative patterns that leave permanent scars. Scarification can be in the form of grooves cut down in the skin or welts that stick up above the skin in raised designs. Tribes living in present-day Chad, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Zaire, among other places, practice scarification. Scarred designs mark important moments in a person's life, including puberty and childbirth. Some designs, such as the raised dots across the foreheads of the Shilluk in the Sudan, indicate a person's tribal heritage. Archeologists, people who study the physical remains of past cultures, have uncovered ancient African statues that depict humans with scar patterns similar to those seen on modern tribal members, leading them to believe that the practice is hundreds, if not thousands, of years old.

Body painting is a colorful art used by various African cultures to celebrate, protect, and mourn. Traditionally, body paint was mixed from natural ingredients and smoothed on the skin with fingers, sticks, or grasses. Oil, clay, and chalk were the most common paint ingredients, but the Dinka of southern Sudan have in the past used ash, cattle dung, and urine to make their face paint. Specific colors are used to indicate certain periods in a person's life, such as puberty, courting, and marriage, among other things. Berber women in northern Africa paint their hands and feet with intricate henna designs called *siyala* for their weddings. (Henna is a reddish powder or paste made from the dried leaves of the henna bush.) But



A Masai girl in costume with beaded jewelry. Jewelry is both an ornament to beautify and, in some cases, a protective guard against evil spirits. *Reproduced by permission of © Jim Zuckerman/ CORBIS.*

body painting is used not only for special occasions among some African groups. For example, Nuba men between the ages of seventeen and thirty living in southern Sudan wear body paint to indicate their age and apply full body decorations as a kind of daily outfit.

Jewelry of many sorts is worn throughout the African continent. Both women and men wear necklaces, bracelets, anklets, earrings, nose rings, and other jewelry. Jewelry serves as both an ornament to beautify and, in some cases, a protective guard against evil spirits. Ndebele women of Zimbabwe beautify themselves by stretching their

necks with tight rings of brass called dzilla. The Berbers of northern Africa wear silver ornaments to protect themselves from illness and evil spirits. Along the Ivory Coast in West Africa, where gold is plentiful, people wear large gold jewelry that serves as both decoration and currency.

African jewelry is made from such readily available items as horsehair, wood, and metals, but the most prized jewelry is made from rare items. Coral necklaces were traditionally prized in the landlocked nation of Nigeria, for example, because coral could only be obtained through trade. Cowry shells were once so coveted that they were used as money in many parts of Africa. Rare items, such as coral and cowry shells, were added to jewelry pieces for the wealthiest members of a tribe.

By the sixteenth century tiny glass beads from Italy had become so popular with Africans that they were as valuable as gold and would sometimes be traded for slaves. Africans of many tribes incorporated these tiny beads into elaborate beaded jewelry, clothing, hats, and footwear. Although the tradition of using shells, ivory,

and even fish vertebrae as beads traces its roots back thousands of years, these colorful glass beads soon became the preferred beads among many peoples. Those living in Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa all developed beadwork designs that distinguished their tribes from one another. In some tribes all people wore beadwork and in others only royalty wore beads. Some tribes created certain beaded items to be worn at specific times of life. For example, married Ndebele women of South Africa wear beaded blankets draped over their shoulders, but unmarried women wear beaded aprons. Both men and women wear beadwork, and beadwork has become a sought-after item among tourists to Africa.

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Blauer, Ettagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

A Masai man wearing detailed beadwork. Both men and women wear beadwork, and it has become a sought-after item among tourists to Africa.

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■ ■ ■ Beadwork

Beadwork has been a common decorative tradition for many years in Africa. The earliest beads were made from grass seeds, shells, clay, stone, and wood. These were strung to create necklaces, headgear, bracelets, and anklets, or sewn to blankets or other cloth to make beaded garments. Beginning in the fifteenth century, Europeans brought glass beads to Africa. Africans were attracted to these new beads, which came in bright, shiny colors. The Zulu of southern Africa traded extensively for glass beads and made intricately designed beadwork. Beadwork was also popular among wealthy Africans. The kings of Ghana, Songhai, Mali, and Nigeria, for example, wore such heavy beaded regalia that they required support from attendants



when rising from their thrones to move about in the course of their duties.

Aside from its visual beauty, beadwork has been used for social and religious reasons, as well as for an elaborate system of communication. Beadwork was designed and worn to distinguish young girls from elder women of a tribe, to identify girls engaged to be married, or to adorn brides and young mothers after the birth of their first children, among other things. Young unmarried Ndebele women of South Africa wear beaded aprons, resembling skirts, called *isiphephetu*, while married women identify themselves with beaded blankets worn as traditional outer garments. Zulu beadwork was designed following a set of codes by which certain colors, shapes, and designs contained messages. These messages conveyed ideas, feelings, and facts related to behavior and relations between the sexes among the Zulu of southern Africa. Modern beadwork has become popular among tourists, but some traditional uses for the beautiful designs still remain in African societies.

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Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.

■ ■ ■ Body Painting

Across the continent of Africa, the skin was, and still is, regarded as a blank canvas to be decorated in a variety of different ways. Body painting was traditionally used in many societies to signify a person's social status and religious beliefs. A temporary decoration, body paint lasted only a few days. In some cultures both men and women painted their bodies only for important social occasions, while in other cultures people wore body paint every day as a uniform to show their social status.

Body paints were traditionally made from readily available ingredients. Clay, minerals, and plants were common sources of pig-

ment or color. The intense colors offered by commercial paints, which became available in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, prompted many cultures to prefer industrial paints over traditionally made paints. Similarly, the oil used as a base for body paint was once made from animals or plants, but now much of the oil is commercially made.

The colors and designs used in body painting were chosen according to strict social and religious guidelines. White was often applied to both boys and girls for rituals that initiated them into society. A young man living in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, for example, was allowed to paint himself with red and white paint from age eight, but he had to wait until he was a bit older to wear yellow, and he could not use black until he was initiated into the group. Young women of the Nuba Mountains coated their bodies with oil and red ocher, a reddish type of clay, between puberty and their first pregnancy. Ethiopians also used specific types of body painting to celebrate each stage of life, from childhood to old age. The meanings associated with colors and patterns differed from culture to culture. Red, for example, represented blood in many cultures, but blood could symbolize life and happiness in some tribes, or death and sadness in others.

Africans have painted their bodies for thousands of years, and many societies continue to practice traditional body painting. Some African groups, however, have abandoned body painting altogether or discarded the traditional meanings of their body painting rituals and turned the practice into an activity done purely to attract tourists.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Gröning, Karl. *Body Decoration: A World Survey of Body Art*. New York: Vendome Press, 1998.

■ ■ ■ Head Flattening

Head flattening is the practice of permanently elongating the skull by wrapping young children's heads while their skulls are

still forming. African cultures reshaped the skulls of their members to increase an individual's beauty and to improve social status. Among the people who practiced head flattening, an elongated head indicated a person's intelligence and spirituality. The Mangbetu people of the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo wrapped their babies' heads with cloth to elongate their skulls. Once the desired shape became permanent, the cloth was removed, and a woven basket frame was attached to the head at an angle, and the hair was styled over the frame to exaggerate the look of elongation.

Head elongation was also practiced in Oceania, especially on the islands of Vanuatu and Borneo, and in some parts of France. Between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century, the practice of head elongation fell out of favor among many of the peoples who had traditionally practiced it.

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[See also Volume 2, *Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas: Head Flattening*]

■
■
■ Lip Plugs

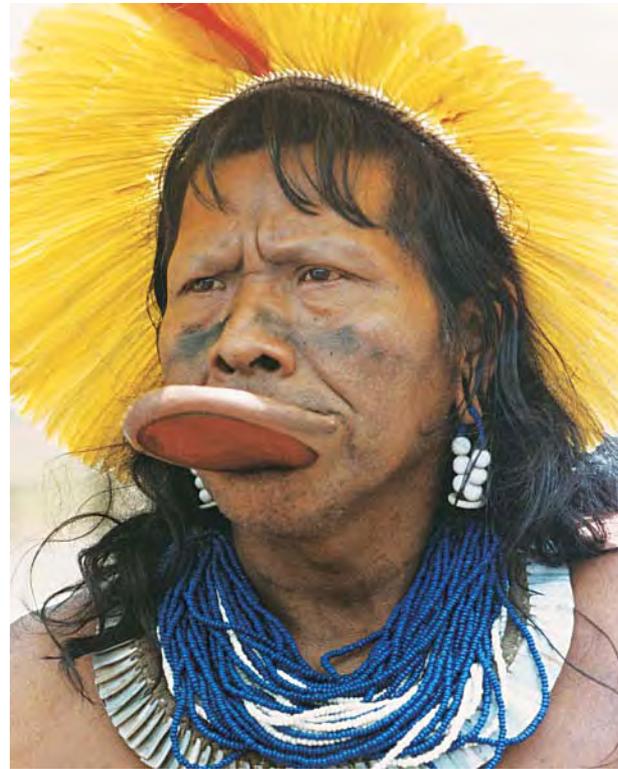
Lip plugs, also known as labrets, have been worn for thousands of years by the women of several different African social groups. Lip plugs are considered essential to the beauty of some African women and are viewed as having protective value to others. To prepare for marriage, young women in Ethiopia insert a flat, circular plug or disk into a slit in their lower lip. The women make their lip plugs out of clay and color it with charcoal or red ocher, a reddish type of clay. Clay lip plugs are hardened in a fire in much the same way as pottery. Women in northern Kenya wear coiled brass wire lip plugs decorated with red beads. Others wear wooden lip plugs. Makololo women of Malawi slit their upper lip and insert plates called *pelele* as a mark of beauty.

To accommodate a large lip plug, women insert successively larger disks to stretch the slit in their lip over the course of about six months. The larger the lip plug a woman's lip can hold, the larger the dowry, or traditional gifts, her family expects to receive for her hand in marriage. Because lip plugs make talking difficult, women only wear their lip plugs in the company of men, but they remove them to eat and sleep or when they are only in the company of women.

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Blauer, Ettagale. *African Elegance*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999.

Kennett, Frances, and Caroline MacDonald-Haig. *Ethnic Dress*. New York: Facts on File, 1994.



An Indian man wearing a lip plate similar to those worn in African cultures. Reproduced by permission of © Reuters NewMedia Inc./CORBIS.

■ ■ ■ Masks

Decorative masks were an important part of the ceremonies practiced by people living throughout Africa. Such ceremonies included initiation rituals for young people to become members of a social group, rituals to enforce a society's rules, and religious occasions. Masks covered a person's face and were designed to represent ancestors or to symbolize mythical beings. Masks were only one element of ceremonial garb, however. With masks, dancers or performers would also wear whole costumes to assume the identity and powers of the spirit, ancestor, or deity represented.

Carved from wood and decorated with grasses, feathers, or animal skins, masks were painted with intricate designs of many colors. Unlike body painting, tattooing, and scarification, masks were designed not to beautify but to look dramatic and imposing. The faces carved on masks often have distorted features. Among the Pende people in the present-day country of the Democratic Republic

of the Congo, the bulging eyes, giant ears, and long nose of the Kipoko mask symbolized the chief's ability to see, hear, and smell sorcery and evil doings. The mask's small mouth represented the chief's ability to hold his tongue to keep hasty words from leading him into trouble. Although many in Africa have converted to religions such as Christianity, which do not use masked ceremonies, some social groups continue to use masks that resemble those worn by their ancestors thousands of years ago.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Gröning, Karl. *Body Decoration: A World Survey of Body Art*. New York: Vendome Press, 1998.

■ ■ ■ Scarification

Scarification, the art of carving decorative scars into the skin, is an ancient practice on the continent of Africa that is now fading from use. The first Europeans to encounter Africans commented upon the patterns of scars that decorated the bodies of many of the people. They learned that scarification was practiced according to strict social rules that dictated the time a scar could be made and the designs used. In African cultures that practiced scarification, scars indicated a person's rank in society and were considered to improve a person's physical beauty.

Each social group defined its own rules about scarification. Typically the scars were made into repeated patterns that covered most of the skin. Among some peoples, children received their first scars upon birth. Among the Nuba of Sudan and the Karo of Ethiopia, women's bodies were scarred at certain times throughout their life. The torso was scarred with certain patterns at about the age of ten. More scars were created under the breasts when a girl reached puberty. A woman's arms, back, and legs received additional scars after the birth of her children. Beginning at age five, young Ga'anda girls, in Nigeria, received their first scars. By the time they reached adulthood, their bodies were covered with eight different patterns. Without a completed scar pattern, called hleeta, Ga'anda

women were not considered suitable to marry. Among the Mursi and Bumi of Ethiopia, scars were applied to the faces, arms, and bodies of men as records of personal accomplishments in war or hunting.

Scarification was a painful, expensive process. Because many of the scar patterns were made with raised scars, the wounds had to be irritated with scratching or charcoal, which increased the pain of the process. Scar patterns were made by skilled practitioners. Both men and women subjected themselves to these costly incisions because their societies placed such importance on the display of scar patterns. Scars indicated a person's rank and age in society, but most importantly scars were essential for a person to attract the opposite sex. Without scars a person was often considered ugly, antisocial, cowardly, or poor. Even though many modern-day African governments have banned scarification, many societies continue to practice this ancient tradition.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Gröning, Karl. *Body Decoration: A World Survey of Body Art*. New York: Vendome Press, 1998.



Scars on a man's back. The scars indicated a person's rank and age in society and were essential for attracting those of the opposite sex. Reproduced by permission of © Bojan Brecljil/CORBIS.

■ ■ ■ Siyala

The Berbers living in northern Africa used body decoration not only as a way to beautify themselves but also as potent protection against illness and evil spirits. One of their most unique forms of decoration was known as siyala. Siyala was a type of body decorating that could be applied as tattoos or as body paint, and it was made of intricate patterns of lines, dots, crosses, and palm branches

that varied from group to group. Siyala was applied to women in particular because it was believed to enhance a woman's fertility and to be especially protective against harm. At puberty, girls were often decorated with siyala to promote their ability to have healthy children.

Believing that evil spirits entered the body through bodily orifices, Berbers used siyala to protect their faces in particular but also the parts of the body that clothing did not cover. The eyes were considered the most vulnerable opening on the body. Berbers applied siyala around the eyes and hung silver jewelry on the forehead and the neck as the greatest protection against evil spirits. Siyala on the feet and the backs of the hands also protected a person. Women traditionally applied siyala on their hands before their weddings. Siyala look similar to the mendhi patterns that are stained in henna on Indian women.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Gröning, Karl. *Body Decoration: A World Survey of Body Art*. New York: Vendome Press, 1998.

[See also Volume 1, India: Henna Stains]

■ ■ Footwear of African Cultures

 The available evidence about ancient African cultures suggests that most Africans did not wear shoes for much of their early history. Although many northern tribes had contact with people who wore sandals and shoes, including the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, and later Arabs and Persians (from present-day Iran), a complete record of when or how Africans adopted foot coverings does not exist. The most common depictions of Africans from statues, artwork, and examples of traditional dress still worn by groups throughout the continent suggest that bare feet were most common.

Footwear is now worn in Africa. When Europeans established trade routes with Africa in the fifteenth century, European products, including shoes, entered Africa and many Africans began wearing Western style foot coverings. Africans also created their own slippers and leather sandals modeled on Western examples. But whether imported or made nearby, shoes were available mainly to the wealthiest Africans. Although many present-day Africans wear Western style shoes, sandals, and boots, not all Africans wear or can afford shoes and several aid organizations ship shoes, among other things, to Africa.

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