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Patricia Blessing, Elizabeth Dospěl Williams, Eiren L. Shea
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Cambridge Elements

Elements in the Global Middle Ages

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MEDIEVAL TEXTILES ACROSS EURASIA, C. 300–1400

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Abstract: This Element considers the textiles made, traded, and exchanged across Eurasia from late antiquity to the late Middle Ages with special attention to the sociopolitical and cultural aspects of this universal medium. It presents a wide range of textiles used in both sacred and secular settings, as dress and furnishings, and for elite and ordinary owners. The introduction presents historiographical background to the study of textiles and explains the conditions of their survival in archaeological contexts and museums. A section on the materials and techniques used to produce textiles is followed by those outlining textile production, industry, and trade across Eurasia. Further sections examine the uses for dress and furnishing textiles and the appearance of imported fabrics in European contexts, addressing textiles' functions and uses in medieval societies. Finally, a concluding section on textile aesthetics connects fabrics to their broader visual and material context.

Keywords: textiles, dress, costume history, medieval Eurasia, weaving techniques

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