

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Spring 2018
Art on the Move Across Asia and Beyond – Part II
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

East Meets West under the Mongols

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People

Travelers: Geoffrey of Langley

Marco Polo

William of Rubruck

Rabban Sauma

Ibn Battuta

Yuan: Khubilai (r. 1260-94) and his wife Chabi

Ilkhanids: Rashid al-Din (vizier and editor/author of the *Compendium of Chronicles*)

Hulagu (r. 1256-65)

Uljaytu (r. 1304-16)

Abu Sa'id (r. 1317-35)

Places

Herat

Tabriz

Mosul

Karakorum

Jingdezhen

Ardabil

Kashan (Qamsar)

Takht-i Sulayman

Sultaniyya

Commodities

lampas: a complex weave with supplementary wefts; likely invented in the 11th century, this sturdy yet pliable surface could be woven with patterns with metallic threads, more colors, and –most importantly—faster.

nasij: the Arabic term for such cloth of gold; the Persian is *nakh*; the Italian *panni tartarici* (“Tartar cloth”)

boghtaq: a tall Mongol lady’s headdress with a hollow bark core covered with a silk cloth and extended at the top with feathers

paiza: safe-conduct pass

cloud collar: design with curving sides used to decorate the necks of robes but then applied to other media

Motifs

dragon

phoenix
peony
lotus
pseudo-kufic (style of angular writing)

Further readings:

- Allsen, Thomas, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge University Press 1997). Groundbreaking account of textiles, especially cloth of gold, transmitted during the Mongol period.
- Blair, Sheila, "Tabriz: International Entrepôt under the Mongols," in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th – 15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer (Brill, 2014): 321-56. Essay on the transmission of art and ideas in the Mongol period.
- Blair, Sheila and Shane McCausland, "The Visual World" in *Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire*, ed. Michal Biran and Kim Hodong (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). Essay on the arts of the Mongols for a new 2-volume encyclopedia of the Mongols.
- Komaroff, Linda and Stefano Carboni (eds), *The Legacy of Genghis Khan. Courtly Art and Culture in West Asia, 1256–1353* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2002). Exhibition catalog with superb illustrations of the arts of the Ilkhanids.
- Morgan, David, *The Mongols* (Blackwell, 1986). Readable account of the Mongols by a preeminent historian.
- Pope, John A., *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine* (Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, 1956). Complete catalog of all the Chinese porcelains in the Ardabil collection.
- Quette, Béatrice, ed., *Cloisonné: Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties* (Bard Graduate Center, 2011). Latest exhibition of cloisonné redating some objects to the Yuan period.
- Watt, James, *The World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010). Superb catalog of Chinese art in the Yuan dynasty.
- Watt, James and Anne Wardwell, *When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles* (Metropolitan Museum, 1997). Splendid exhibition of luxury silks and embroideries produced in the region from the 8th to the early 15th century.