Impact of Medieval Textiles and Spices on the Mediterranean

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The Middle Ages was a time of cultural exchange between the Occident and the Orient instigated by the expanding trade networks and the Crusades. The commodities introduced from the East forever changed Europe's daily practices. The merchandise acquired from the East was seen as advancements surpassing Europe's domestic goods. Products arriving from the Orient were highly valued because of their rarity and exotic connotations, and thus appropriated into the Western culture. Eastern textiles and spices were among the prized possessions and were in high demand during the Medieval Period.

Cultural Introductions: Trade Networks and War

Mediterranean trade acted as a node of exchange between Western and Eastern civilizations. Trade networks solidified during the 10th century and became a multi-cultural commercial infrastructure, which brought cultural exchange through experiencing different people, environments, and products (Reyerson, 2002). After the first Crusades in 1099, Venice and Genoa were major port cities, and the Venetian and Genovese merchants earned landing rights in the Levant, making them conduits between the Occident and the Orient (Czarra, 2009). Traders from Europe placed trusted relatives or close kin in residences abroad in cities like Cairo, Tyre, Acre or Aleppo, because the Muslims and Arabs had close-knit trading relationships (Lopez & Raymond, 1955).

Arab, Jewish, and Iranian merchants were the middlemen in the trade network and facilitated the spice trade between the East and West. Merchants spoke a multitude of languages like Arabic, Persian, Greek, Latin, Frankish, Spanish, and Slavic, and French was an

international language (Lopez & Raymond, 1955). It was necessary to speak numerous languages in order to communicate with many groups of people who intended to trade or receive goods. Moreover, products had many points of contact and geographical locations before reaching their final destinations. Furthermore, Muslims had little interest in learning foreign languages and typically traveled to Asia, and Africa more often than Christian Europe (Reyerson, 2002).

As Europeans sojourned overseas, they began experiencing the Eastern quotidian life. The Crusades were an example of this interaction, which brought European military to Jerusalem for what they believed would be the liberation of the Holy Land from the impact of Islam (Czarra, 2009). Crusaders witnessed progress in several domains, including advancements in their numerical system derived from Indian mathematics, astronomy from Babylonian influence, philosophy from the Greeks, and Arab business and nautical knowledge. Furthermore, amongst the Middle Eastern cities like Jerusalem and Acre, Arab cooks entered the Frankish kitchens of high society, which influenced the European palate by introducing new spices (Czarra, 2009). The Crusaders in the Levant enjoyed this luxury; spices showed off their wealth. The Crusaders also observed unfamiliar textiles like silk and sought this fabric to exhibit affluence in addition to spices.

In contrast to the refined goods from the East, goods exported by the West were raw materials found locally. Europe was rich in timber, metals, cloth, animal furs, and slaves (Reyerson, 2002), which were used for exchange for Eastern products. For instance, Flanders and England exported raw materials like copper and woolen cloth. Iron and weaponry was an important seller to the Levant. Germans traded linens and silver after locating silver mines in

Saxony. “From the West they brought eunuchs, female slaves, young boys, brocades, beaver, marten and other furs, and swords” (Czarra, 2009). Some of the Eastern communities such as China and the Indian Ocean coast lands, lacked certain raw materials, such as silver for coinage. The demand for precious metals reinforced the necessity to continue the trading business with the West. These raw materials were often traded for luxurious and exotic products from the Orient.

Wool remained the principal fabric for all classes throughout the Middle Ages. Commercial merchant documents convey that wool fabrics varied extensively in quality and cost and were thus accessible to different social orders. The types of wool varied from coarser wool that was made from fleece or rough undyed cloth to eventually finer wools with longer staples or dense broadcloth that could be dyed vivid colors like reds, greens, golds, and blues. The addition of the horizontal loom allowed for new developments in deluxe fabrics like scarlet, a fine woolen cloth, which was reserved for the elite. Serge was another woolen fabric for common use that had a faint diagonal stripe on the surface. “Textiles found in archaeological excavations show the wide variety of fabrics obtained by this method of weaving, from thick, rough cloth for the working classes to delicate fabrics almost as fine as silk” (Piponnier & Main, 1997).

Clothes produced from vegetable fibers include linen, cotton, and hemp. These textiles tended to germinate in the mild and damp European climate in areas around Flanders, Cambria, Brittany, Holland, and Germany. These fabrics were often produced domestically by peasants working in the country where they had the proper equipment to deal with the stocks of fibers. Linen was used for undergarments, short shirts, braies for men, and long shifts for women. It was worn for headdresses like coifs, cauls, and veils by all classes until the 15th-century when it

became a signature of the working-class (Norris, 1999). Coarser linen aided in the fabrication of smocks and pinafores worn as protection for the clothes underneath. Cotton imported from the Levant was used pure or mixed with hemp or linen to create a strong twill-like fabric. It was relatively expensive and used for making doublets and summer wear. Linen was at times accepted by the social elite because there was still a connection to Christ as seen by his linen waistcloth.

Fur and animal skins became fashionable in the medieval period. It rid its reputation as uncivilized and barbaric and became in vogue. Fur was generally treated as linings for garments, like woolen dresses or used as coats, a style of the High Middle Ages (Pipponier & Main, 1997). The animals used for their pelts varied from creatures across western and northern Europe including: beaver, fox, squirrel, marten, and sable. The rich furs reserved for nobility were ermine, vair, and sable, and there was a great desire amongst the courts to have fur. By the end of the 14th century the richest bourgeoisie had obtained these fancy skins. Outside the courts, fur was worn for practical reasons rather than show. For the peasantry, some women managed to wear animal skins such as the leather jerkin lined with its own fur made from lambskin, rabbit, or kid.

Leather was a valuable animal material with numerous uses. It was fabricated into accessories like belts, baldrics, purses, gloves, and shoes. Due to its durability and delicate characteristics it was made into outerwear like coats, leggings, and boots for tradesmen, horsemen, and even princes. An important feature of leather was that it was used to protect the body. Leather was reinforced with ring mail for combat, it was used as aprons for metallurgy and

gloves for falconry. Embellishing leather textiles with decorations like stamped, engraved, cut, embroidered, and painted decorations occurred.

Eastern trade imports focused on several staple items. The raw materials arriving from the West were exchanged for various items like fruits, jewelry, and silks. Spices proved the most lucrative commercially for the East. Forms of spice comprised dried leaves, fruit, bark or resins. Due to vast distances traveled, shipments of spices were required to be in a non-perishable state. Various aromatics like pepper, cinnamon, saffron, nutmeg, ginger, and cloves are samples of merchandise imported to Europe (Czarra, 2009). China, for instance, often exported items such as musk, aloes, wood, camphor, and cinnamon. Silk was a favorite textile import from the East. Spices during the medieval period were also seen as a luxurious and mysterious addition to the bland and common European palette.

The remote origins, unfamiliarity, and high prices reinforced the sophisticated image of products such as textiles and spices arriving from the Orient (Freedman, 2015). Importing foreign luxury products like silk disrupted Western Europe's domestic trade. Foreign textiles bolstered the craze for sumptuous fabrics, which decreased the cultural value of domestic materials (Richardson, 2004). Spices were another form of Eastern valuables because they had many connotations and uses, which promoted their allure and made them in vogue. The prestige and versatility of spices, as used in medicine and cuisine, social and religious overtones, leading to their popularity (Freedman, 2008). The abundant freights of spices shipped from the East proves the cultural importance spices (Ashtor, 1986).

The secrets of silk production, sericulture, was protected by the Chinese for centuries because it was their predominant economic driver. The undisclosed information leaked to the

Levant, where the Byzantine and Islamic communities began to manufacture silk (Richardson, 2004) . Silkworms were received into Sicily and Spain as the Islamic influence brought oriental technology westwards (Piponnier, 1997). The Western communities learned how to weave and dye the material but did not become well-established around the Mediterranean by the beginning until the 15th century. Italians began to successfully compete against the Byzantine and Islamic areas in silk production (Piponnier & Main, 1997).

Silk was seen as a sumptuous fabric and restricted to the elite because it was a pricey import from the Orient. For example, in the 13th century, silk was only worn by monarchs; it was often embroidered with metals and colored with expensive dyes like purple. The application of silk became more common during the 14th century and in the 15th century, Europeans saw regular use of silk within royalty and the bourgeois social classes. To sell silk to commoners, Italian weavers began producing lighter fabrics like samite and taffeta, in plain colors, to supply a cheaper substitute. Ribbons and braids were the styles in which silk was most often distributed. They were popular for ornate belts, girdles, and waistbands in the late Middle Ages.

Social Status

Much like today, boasting of fashionable and expensive goods was a social norm. What changes with time is the type of goods. Both expensive textiles and spices were treasured items from the East. Another way people could show off their status was to flaunt their spices. Displaying vanity through materialism was a powerful trend during the Middle Ages as seen by the desire of luxury textiles (Richardson, 2004).

Clothing functioned as a visible marker regarding one's culture, social status, and religion. The materials, decorations, colors, and motifs helped distinguish medieval values

through their symbolic attributes as it divided social classes and identified alien cultures and beliefs (Piponnier & Main, 1997). For example, this can be seen in medieval literature like *The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer. The author goes into great detail about the characters' appearance and garb reflecting their role or rank in society.

Types of cloth determined hierarchy within the medieval social structure. The working class had a distinct dress code throughout the Middle Ages. Poorer citizens of the country and town wore outfits derived from Frankish and Roman models and were shabbier overall (Piponnier & Main, 1997). Prominent modes of dress included tunics and shifts with sleeves, calf-length for women and around the knee for men along with saies, a short cape worn in the earlier centuries of the Medieval period (Norris, 1999). In the earlier years, men often wore braies, a type of trouser/undergarment, either long and full or short and tight-fitting until hose-stockings entered the wardrobe of the peasantry at a late period (Piponnier & Main, 1997).

The working class wore lower-quality fabrics from hemp, linen, and coarse wool. Peasants tended to sport homemade outfits composed of rough and uncomfortable fabrics (Norris, 1999). Outer garments used the cheapest fabrics, including undyed wools, such as: frieze, a term for a coarse woollen, plain weave cloth with a nap on one side; beige, a term for natural wool that has not been bleached or dyed; and rough serge (Piponnier & Main, 1997). Part of the reason for this was that the materials needed to endure arduous work conditions. It was also commonplace for lower-ranking individuals to own only one outfit, to lack undergarments, and wear clothes until they deteriorated. "The Burgundian village in the fourteenth century possessed no change of gown" (Piponnier & Main, 1997).

For the laboring activities of the working class, the wardrobes required slits in tunics or alternate fastening to allow for free movement. Women leading up to the 14th century wore veils over tunics to cover head and shoulders. Headgear was a sign of personal honor and materialized as wide-brimmed straw caps or bonnets made or lined with linen (Norris, 1999). Shoes were not readily worn in the early Middle Ages by the lower-classes but evolved from short lace-up boots to the late medieval peasants in wooden-soled shoes (Piponnier & Main, 1997).

The middle class engaged in finer dress than the poorer classes (Norris, 1999). At this time, the middle class included professions like merchants, tradesmen, and artisans, who lived as urban-dwellers. They were able to afford fancier goods from distant locations, which were deemed luxury items. "As prosperity grew in the 15th century, the urban middle classes, including skilled workers, began to wear more complex clothes that followed, at a distance, the fashions set by the elites" (Piponnier & Main, 1997).

Medieval royalty required extravagant, flamboyant, and expensive outfits donned in vibrant colors. Aristocrats could afford exotic materials from abroad and buy the finest dyes. The point of this gaudy dressing technique was to demonstrate their authority, grandeur, and wealth over others. Typically, the most wealthy acquired jewelry or clothing adorned with jewelery and accessories made from precious metals and stones like brooches and ornamental weapons (Norris, 1999). The upper class used embroidery to further distinguish themselves. Moreover, nobles could wear longer tunics, unlike their peasant counterpart, because their lifestyles were not quite as active.

Starting in the 1200s, sumptuary laws arose to regulate the consumption of luxury goods in order to maintain societal positions reflected in the symbolic nature of materials, food, and

dress. Sumptuary laws were placed to discriminate against less valued citizens. This frequently involved restricting commoners, and in the late Middle Ages, the bourgeoisie from replicating the appearance of the nobility. Preposterous dress codes can be seen at the Castilian court in the 13th and 14th centuries. The court prohibited all members of the court, with the exception of the sovereign and the highest-ranking officials, from wearing garments made of escarlata and decreed that silks be reserved for state occasions. Alfonso III ruled that only the King and his family were allowed to be buried with gold and silver.

Similar sumptuary laws were also used as "preventatives" to demarcate non-Christians, such as Jews and Muslims, who were forced to wear distinctive marks on their clothing that varied by region but usually appeared in the shape of a circle. For example, in 14th century Portugal, Jews were forced to wear six-pointed red star and for Muslims, they wore half-moon cloth. Furthermore, in the 1415 papal bull, Bull of the Antipope Benedict XIII, commanded that Jewish women should wear the identifying circle on their forehead (Piponnier & Main, 1997). Certain types of clothing were forbidden to Jews such as the great cloak, the cloak worn by the aristocracy and members of the clergy.

Stripes embodied negative connotations and inferiority throughout the Middle Ages. Medieval documents throughout Europe confirm the distaste for and discrimination against stripes. For instance, there were statutes that prohibited clerks for provincial assemblies, diocesan synods, and ubiquitous councils from wearing bi-color clothing, whether striped or checkered (Pastoureau, 2001). These regulations against stripes had harsh penalties, yet texts suggest these laws were not always obeyed. Decrees enforced outcasts and other low-ranking citizens to dress in two-colored cloth as to "not to be confused with honest citizens" (Pastoureau,

2001). The stripes had to appear somewhere on their garments (e.g. hoods, scarf, dresses, breeches, hats). The deviants comprised a variety of people: lepers, prostitutes, jugglers, serfs, bastards, clowns, cripples, bohemians, hangmen, and the condemned. Medieval literature samples evil characters dressed in stripes and can be found in chansons de gestes and courtly romances (Pastoureau, 2001).

Colors marked social hierarchical values. Richer and darker color demanded more dye, which was costlier and thus more prized. Thereby, anyone possessing more brightly colored gowns -- reds, greens, purples -- belonged to a higher social class (Piponnier & Main, 1997). Blue was one of the original colors to appear and was so popular that the king of France selected this hue for his cloak and coat of arms. The use of Kermes to create red dye employed the dried bodies of female scale insects originating in Mediterranean region (Piponnier & Main, 1997). It was an important tint. Yellow was not appreciated in the West, while green was envied. Brunette is the name of a high quality dark fabric dyed first with woad, a flowering plant found in the Occident and the Orient, then Kermes (Piponnier & Main, 1997).

The skillful art of dyeing developed excellent quality during the 12th and 13th centuries (Piponnier & Main, 1997). Colors became more diverse and dye saturation improved, producing the fashionable deep shades popularized in late Middle Ages: blues, dark greens, violet, and especially black. Purple was once the most expensive dye known from Byzantium, but then black apparel was a la mode after the end of the 14th century, created by multiple dyeings with woad and indigo.

By the 14th century, the procurement of colored garments was easier for lower classes. During the High Middle Ages, the art of dyeing had advanced, with more options for coloring.

For example, vegetable, animal and mineral local and imported substances were used for dyeing, including natural sources like tree bark, nuts, iron oxide, lichen, and roots to achieve almost any color. Woad was used to dye cloth blue (Norris, 1999).

In the Medieval Period, the affluent and nobility were accustomed to vaingloriously demonstrating their wealth in the form of flaunting spices. Spices were a mark of status and success. At meals for the wealthy, spices were passed around on gold or silver trays, often partitioned for different spices. Spices were often consumed in public in order for people to convey affluence to others (Czarra, 2009). The wealthy would add spices to everything, even when superfluous. For instance, thick layers of spices were added to meals that were already seasoned. Spices were put into wine, and nutmeg was popular to insert into beer as well (Czarra, 2009). Spices were not a necessity but a desire (Freedman, 2008).

Spices were presented at ceremonies, given a s gifts, and collected as valued objects. It was customary to flaunt spices at weddings. These special occasions frequently served a plethora of spices to guests to celebrate and to signify prestige. In 1467, the wedding between Duke Georg of Bavaria and the princess Jadwiga of Poland as complemented with 205 pounds of cinnamon, 85 pounds of nutmeg, 105 pounds of cloves, 286 pounds of ginger, 207 pounds of saffron, and 386 pounds of pepper (Freedman, 2008). Textiles and spices from the Orient were culturally important and influenced stature.

Superstitions and Common Beliefs of Spices

Perceptions of the exotic East, filtered through the acquired spices emerging from these areas were fantastic. Preceding the Crusades, European representations of the Orient were based on tales and hearsay. The mysteries of the East coupled disconcerting scenes with cherished

objects. There were stories of India with dog-headed men, Pygmies with stretched ears that fell to their shoulders, and headless people with their faces appearing in their chests.

Even into the High Middle Ages, Western cultures were unaware of what the spices looked like before processing. Europeans attempted to describe and illustrate the foreign places and spices, but their portrayals of them were frequently erroneous and fanciful (Czarra, 2009). This can be seen in the medieval drug manuals called "Herbals." "The historian Paul Freedman notes that, as far back as the seventh century, Europeans believed that pepper in India grew on trees 'guarded' by serpents that would bite and poison anyone who attempted to gather the spice. This also helped to explain the misperception that peppercorns were black as a result of burning trees (Czarra, 2009). Leading up to 1500, Europeans thought that white and black pepper came from separate plants. The image on the right is a depiction from a 15th-century Italian manuscript of a cinnamon merchant. One can see that the Western interpretation of cinnamon is inaccurate from the fabricated size of the cinnamon sticks. The dossier of Eastern wonders, which always included spices, took a significant turn with the 14th-century reports by European travelers who actually visited India, beginning with Marco Polo in the 13th century (Freedman, 2008). Despite further experience overseas, European imaginative narratives did not cease because they fueled the economic profits and preserved the marvel surrounding spices. Economic thinking depended on the fanciful stories. By

the late Middle Ages it was obvious that some were profiting from these illusions of Asiatics as marvelous, often unworthy, people as seen from a Northern European perspective.

Many superstitions surrounded spices and their projected qualities. The myths derived from spices often dealt with health, fertility, and thwarting evil forces. For example, it was postulated that whoever received a nutmeg on New Year's Day and carried it in their pocket for a year could not fall ill or break a bone (Czarra, 2009). Cloves had strong health associations as well. Traditional herbal books noted that a man could reclaim his potency if he drank sweetened milk blended with three grams of crushed clove. Moluccans still plant a clove tree at the birth of a child because it was believed that if the tree flourishes, the child will as well. "In recent times in the East Indies some native inhabitants put cloves in their nostrils and between their lips so that demons would not enter their bodies" (Czarra, 2009).

Associations of spices at times reflected sexism. In the 1500s, Levinus Lemnius, a Dutch physician and author, wrote in his book, *Nature's Secret Powers* that when a man carried nutmeg, the nutmeg would swell and become more fragrant and beautiful while when a woman carried the spice it would dry up, become dark, dirty, and ugly (Czarra, 2009). This was thought to reveal that men are superior to women.

Many used spices for medicinal and pharmaceutical purposes. They were used as drugs, cures, and disease preventives. Medieval pharmacies reveal records that show pepper, cinnamon, and ginger were used in many medical prescriptions. Spices were sometimes used as intoxicants or to provide psychoactive qualities. Common spices have different effects when used in larger quantities. Frankincense was given as an anesthetic for those who were to face violent forms of execution like flogging (Freedman, 2015).

Balancing humors was a health benefit of spices during the Middle Ages. A “humor” was the term for the body’s internal fluids that affected both the mind, temperament, and wellness of the body. “The method by which food was cooked, the properties of the basic ingredients and how they were seasoned, were thought to affect the health of the consumer and, ideally, were supposed to be adjusted to each person's unique temperament (Czarra, 2009). Temperament was an individual trait resulting from the inevitable imbalance of the humors. [...] It was believed that a serious imbalance would lead to disease” (Czarra, 2009).

It was thought that matching opposing humors would create the body’s equilibrium, which would sustain health. Humors were divided into four categories: dry, wet, hot, and cold. Spices could be consumed in edible form or breathed as perfume or incense. Spices were considered either hot or dry. Pepper was deemed the hottest spice at the time (Czarra, 2009). One instance of cooking to create balance with humors is combining meat, which was considered to contain ‘wet’ qualities,and pairing it with hot or dry qualities (i.e. spices). Spices, on the other hand, soothed and cheered, creating a refined environment of taste and comfort.

Fragrances correlated to health and spirit of the mind. Perfumes were valued and often came in the form of spices during the Middle Ages. Medicines had physical traits such as aromas and colors. Scents had a mental and spiritual significance. Medicinal perfumes were generated from plants and animals, with animal products being more revered. The four main animal aromas used for healing were ambergris (a wax-like substance that originates as a secretion in the intestines of the sperm whale, found floating in tropical seas and used in perfume manufacture), castoreum (the exudate from the castor sacs of certain beavers), musk (glandular secretions from

small Tibetan deer), and civet (glandular secretions from the several civet mammal species of wildcats) (Freedman, 2008).

Religion

Spices' mystical qualities created spiritual associations, which could be seen by the religious aspect to perfumes. Hell was believed to be noxious and smelled of pollution. In an account of *Tundale's Vision*, written in 1149 by an Irish monk, the odor of hell was described as disgusting and surpassed the classic tortures involving fire and pitchforks (Freedman, 2008). By contrast, heaven featured flowery fragrances, and spices were prominent specifications. Saints were supposed to emanate perfume from their sepulchers, which contradicted the stench of corpses and death. Moreover, the Garden of Eden was allegedly scented with spices and the root of of these aromatics (Pollmer, 2000). According to medieval legends, the Three Magi that visited the baby Jesus were kings of the Orient and brought with them sacred gifts of frankincense, and myrrh, and gold (Pollmer, 2000).

Churches often used spices in celebration of Christian liturgy and employed spices for religious rituals as incense. The Church advertised the consumption of Eastern products because the spices had a heavenly connection as aforementioned (Freedman, 2015). Balsam, a resin originating from an Arabian plant, was considered to have healing properties and high spiritual powers. Thus, balsam was used for anointing at rites of passage including baptism, ordination of priests, and the consecration of bishops (Freedman, 2015). Frankincense is also an Arabian resin used in both Roman and Orthodox church's censing rituals.

Textiles also had religious affiliations. Astronomical motifs had symbolic implications and occasionally adorned religious garments during the Middle Ages. The Star Mantle of Henry

II (1019-1020) appeared during the Ottonian period (circa 951–1024) (Dimitrova & Goehring, 2014). Having 32 constellations, zodiac symbols, and heavenly depictions, the cloak represents a textile artwork. The pictorial embroideries displayed two astronomical spheres. The images were embroidered with gold thread and applied to electric blue and pomegranate-patterned silk damask.

Christian concepts did not escape the materialistic world. There were many liturgical textiles that presented images of scripture, holy figures, and even Christ himself. It was popular for clergymen to wear wardrobes showing Christ at half-length making a gesture of blessing with both hands (Dimitrova & Goehring, 2014). This feature signified self-referentiality as a mimetic association of clergy to Christ. Christ was presented upon liturgical vestments worn by the priests as a high priest through iconography, dress, and gesture. Thus these vestments symbolized that the clergy were not simply representatives of Christ, but rather representations of Christ (Dimitrova, & Goehring). Self-referentiality was extremely powerful for the Orthodox empire and appeared in areas ranging from Greece, Russia, and Armenia, to Turkey during the Ottoman rule.

During the eleventh century, liturgical garments evolved to display new emblems in order to distinguish between clerical orders according to their rank, such as deacon, priest, or bishop (Martin, 1985). Other ceremonial paraphernalia used during the Middle Ages were liturgical cuffs called *Epimanika* and epigonation, an embroidered lozenge of fabric worn hanging from the belt, as special regalia of bishops and archbishops (Dimitrova & Goehring, 2014). Insignia originally exclusive to patriarchs and archbishops, were adopted by lower ranks of clergy; the highest prelates in turn donned still more distinguishing vestments (Martin, 1985_.

Medieval textiles promoted the papacy. The garments enhanced the importance of the papal court, papal liturgy, and ceremony, especially during the pope's travels (Dimitrova, 2014). Often the papal textiles were donated for liturgical foundations or in memoriam after his death. Donation items, like liturgical vestments and fabrics used during ceremonies, belonged to the papal treasury prior to gifting. Between 1295-1311, papal treasury inventories documented many fabrics exhibiting white and red weft-faced compound twill, which are now part of *opus cyprense* (Dimitrova & Goehring, 2014). The garment fragments have gold-embroidered mighty animals like griffins, double eagles, and parrots (Dimitrova & Goehring, 2014).

Fabric was a factor at funerals. A catafalque is a precious cloth used to cover the coffin during funerals or used in memorials masses for the dead (Martin, 1985). Catafalques were often fabricated in luxurious materials such as silk with gold and silver threads, and various colors and images were embroidered or woven into the material such as silk or linen (Dimitrova & Goehring, 2014). Materials, colors, and iconography used for the cloths represented social and political power of the departed as well as those honoring the deceased (Dimitrova & Goehring, 2014). Emblems illustrated on the cloth depicted dragons, lions, crowned eagles; a phoenix could be applied to the fabric as a medallion of resurrection to commemorate the deceased.

Casket textiles occasionally depicted lineage by illustrating haloed and crowned figures amongst rows of kings and queens (Dimitrova & Goehring, 2014). This succession of the crowned figures symbolizes a rich lineage extending to the heavens, kings, and strong dynasties emulating the genealogy of Christ. In accordance with the Bible, portraying rows of Old Testament kings, as seen in some French cathedrals like the western exterior of Saint-Denis or Charlemagne's grave at the Cathedral of Aachen, France, completed in 1215 (Dimitrova &

Goehring, 2014). Some used the lineage motif to strengthen their political power and family name, asserting an identity that was not necessarily true.

Due to the increased trading and networking between the Occident and the Orient, manuals were created to advise buyers how to select satisfactory products (Lopez & Raymond, 1955). Merchants were becoming better at distinguishing satisfactory products, but counterfeiting also became a prevalent activity. Manuals such as the 1458 book, *The Book of Ware and Usages of Diverse Countries*, by Ragusa Dubrovnik, such manuals provided users with many tips on identifying specific characteristics. “Hepatic aloe ought to be clear of leathery substance, and it ought to be the color of liver; and there are some who say it ought to be like pitch, black inside, glistening, bitter, and strong” (Lopez & Raymond, 1955). There was also a 1310 copy of *Practice of Commerce,* authored by Francesco di Balduccio Pegolotti, that gave details on how to manage merchandise (Lopez & Raymond, 1955).

Spices were frequently counterfeited because they were expensive and profitable. Therefore, adulteration of spices evolved into many forms for counterfeiters to make money (Pollmer, 2000). There were some adulterated substances that were poisonous and could injure one’s health. Counterfeiters would add cayenne pepper, which contained lead which would induce paralysis (Pollmer, 2000). Some swindlers tried to feign peppercorns by using residue of linseed oil extractions mixed with clay and cayenne pepper. To raise their value, certain individuals would soak cloves in water, while ground pepper was mixed with dust and dirt to increase product weight (Czarra, 2009). Saffron was "loaded" with boiled-down apple pomace, litharge (lead monoxide), or minium (lead tetroxide) (Lopez & Raymond, 1955). Fraudulent saffron remains a common practice (Pollmer, 2000).

Preventative measures were taken to try to prevent or recuperate counterfeited spices. In the mid to late Middle Ages, higher standards were issued for the importation of spices to counteract adulterated or counterfeit items. Pepper was inspected by the Guild of Pepperers in 14th-century England (Pollmer, 2000). The Guild even established the right to enter places of business and seize inferior spices. Germany had laws and checks to counter the counterfeits. By 1440, the death penalty was introduced, which permitted counterfeiters to be burned at the stake or buried alive (Pollmer, 2000).

International contracts were created throughout the Mediterranean to regulate trade. It was dangerous task for traders during maritime travels to ship merchandise (Pryor, 1987). For example, the Commenda contract was established to insure against fire or evil men such as pirates, robbers, bandits, to help retrieve lost goods (Lopez & Raymond, 1955). Societas were organized to facilitate trading rules and settle disputes amongst merchants. The contracts shows that complexities of the trade network between the East and West.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the interaction between the Western and Eastern communities grew during the Middle Ages. The convergence of cultures introduced new spices and textiles to Europe. Cultural significance was placed on Eastern spices and textiles and became an integral part of the medieval daily life as Europeans began appropriating portions of Eastern culture. One can see the value placed on Eastern products because spices and textiles became status symbols for elite social circles. The exotic perceptions, rarity of acquiring these foreign products, and religious associations promoted their prestigious reputation. This eastern influence was so powerful that it

forever changed the European cultural landscape, so much so, that many of the popular medieval spices and textiles are still used today.

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