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INTRODUCTION

Text and Textile: Connecting the Local and the Global

Preserved between—or hidden within, or even enwrapping—the covers of books, textiles offer a remarkable glimpse into how the local production of books was connected to vibrant global trade networks from late antiquity through the early modern period. Textiles appear in manuscripts in many forms: as a delicate overlay used to adorn or protect a precious painted illumination; as the sturdy fabric that supports an intricately sewn binding; as a repurposed bit of silk, taken from a vestment or liturgical cloth, concealed within the volume to convey sacrality; as a wrapping that clothes the volume as one would clothe a body. They provide invaluable information for dating the production of texts and offer compelling evidence for understanding the practical and ritual uses of books, as well as their connection to networks of exchange that span faith traditions. This volume takes an interdisciplinary approach to examining the widespread use of textiles in books and manuscripts, ranging from practical uses to the ornamental and beyond. Practical uses include textiles as binding supports, as wrappers or enclosures, and as protective coverings. Yet textiles used to protect images—a practical consideration—can simultaneously be both ornamental and deeply meaningful. Similarly, textiles tucked into the binding, their beautiful detail hidden from the human eye, may convey spiritual or talismanic qualities. Finally, some manuscripts include painted depictions of textiles alongside actual textiles bound within the volume. How to take stock of these complex and dynamic patterns of usage, while also respecting the specific histories of each bookmaking tradition? This volume brings together a range of experts, many of them working in collaborative teams, to unpack the vivid and surprising history of textiles in manuscripts.

The historical account they offer is both local and global: local, in that each chapter is tightly focused on a single tradition, or even a single book; global, in that together these chapters illuminate the rich web of interconnections that link the cultural and craft centers of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Book historians, textile scholars, conservators, art historians, and codicologists come together to explore the use of textiles in Chinese, Mongolian, Ethiopian, Armenian, Syriac, Byzantine, Islamic, and

Detail (0.3)

Hebrew manuscripts from late antiquity through the early modern period. In some chapters, such as those on Syriac and Mongolian traditions, the authors focus on a specific case study of a particular book. In others, such as the chapter on Ethiopic manuscripts, the reader is offered an overview of large datasets comprising hundreds of manuscripts with textiles. Together, these chapters offer a scaled analysis, moving from the most intensely local focus to a broadly comparative global perspective. In this way, the volume as a whole opens up a deeper understanding of trade, patronage, craft production, religious and cultural networks. More importantly, it connects many strands of Silk Road craft production and reshapes an understanding of how books and their makers were intricately connected to systems of production, trade, and exchange—both locally and globally.

Textiles in Manuscripts: A Local and Global History of the Book emerges from a set of collaborations that began in 2020, developing in small research clusters that resulted in a set of seven videos. These videos in turn formed the basis for further discussions that took place at the interdisciplinary workshop "Textiles in Manuscripts: Cross-cultural Trade, Craft Production, and Influence in the Art of the Premodern Book," which took place online on 2-3 June 2021. Both sets of videos—those produced by the research clusters, and those generated at the workshop itself—continue to be available on the workshop website, along with a substantial living bibliography that is still growing.[1] The "Textiles in Manuscripts" website is, in turn, part of a larger Mellon Foundation-funded research project that was at that time in its first phase under the title "The Book and the Silk Roads," and is now its second phase as "Hidden Stories: New Approaches to the Local and Global History of the Book."[2] In both of its phases, this project aims to map connections between and among various parts of the premodern world by means of the technology of the book.

The following pages provide a brief overview of how this volume fits within larger conversations currently underway regarding the nature of the premodern interconnected world, especially as these are articulated through the history of material culture. To some extent, these conversations overlap with debates concerning whether (and, if so, how) the "Global Middle Ages" might be a helpful paradigm for research. Next, we tell the story of how this study of textiles in manuscripts has developed, starting with our preliminary investigation of particular examples to the fully collaborative undertaking that subsequently emerged before turning to an overview of some key issues that are illuminated by the work in this volume. These issues include interconnectivity and entanglement—terms that have been used to suggest a set of relationships linking various cultures and regions across space and time. In what way are these terms useful, and can they be grounded in specific historical circumstances that allow us to better comprehend the scope and nature of these regional relationships? Periodization is a second key issue that underlies the chapters of this volume: while terms such as 'medieval,' 'premodern,' and 'early modern' appear throughout, these terms' implicit assertion of certain privileged turning points in time—above all, the 'modern'—continues to lurk in the background. Is 'modernity' to be understood in terms of the emergence of certain forms of global capital? In terms of exploration and expanded trade networks? In terms of the spread of printing? This last point, in particular, is thrown into relief

by a close look at the place of woodblock printing in a variety of bookmaking traditions across the globe, a topic that several of the chapters touch upon. Finally, what is the place of the book in this interconnected history, especially when it is understood not merely as another object but as having very special qualities—even as being itself a relative or relation? How might this perspective invite us to think differently about how the book is cared for, or interacted with?

The second section of the introduction moves into the thematic realm, providing an overview of textile use across book traditions, including functional applications, decorative applications, and spiritual or symbolic use. This section thus offers a kind of conceptual through line centered on use that provides a backbone for the individual chapters that follow. To put it another way, rather than doing a comparative analysis based on the different types of cloth or textile used in manuscripts—a topic that is explored throughout the individual chapters—this section of the introduction instead considers how bookmakers and users incorporated textiles in the making and care of their manuscripts and how textiles provided them with a closer connection to the books they used. The third and final section of the introduction briefly summarizes the chapters, following the order that they appear in the volume in order to expose the underlying logic of the sequence of chapters. This section starts with a brief overview that identifies three or four conceptual strands that run throughout the chapters, and ends by sketching out some future directions and possibilities.

Regionality, Periodization, Relations

The so-called 'global turn' has taken place in a wide range of historical fields, but it has a particular character from the vantage point of Medieval Studies, where it has been used to frame the field for almost two decades. A group of researchers based at the University of Minnesota and the University of Texas at Austin, led by Geraldine Heng, have for over two decades been arguing that the 'global' is a useful frame of reference.[3] The Global Middle Ages project's timeline starts in 2004, with a course on "Global Interconnections," and it hosts a range of projects, including "The Black Death Digital Archive."[4] This project, led by historian of science Monica Green, is truly global in scope: pandemic, like climate, offers the historian a field of study that is unconstrained by regional or local limitations. Other approaches to the medieval past, however, have been 'global' in a more circumscribed or limited way. María Rosa Menocal's *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, published in 1987, turned the conventional narrative of the European Middle Ages on its head, arguing that Arabic language and literature had played a fundamental role in the emergence of "western culture."[5] That work, initially controversial, proved to be deeply influential—and fruitful. A conference on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of its publication generated a volume called *A Sea of Languages: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, co-edited by Suzanne Akbari and Karla Mallette.[6] What had changed over these twenty years was the emergence of the field of Mediterranean Studies and the concurrent development of a specifically medieval corner of that field. *A Sea of Languages* therefore built on Menocal's literary history but did so with a focus on regional and confessional identities, and

with a targeted approach to the region that owed much to Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell's concept of "definite places." These targeted areas of intensification and remission could be investigated in order to produce microhistories that would offer insights into the nature of the premodern interconnected world.[7]

In addition to these two approaches—one truly global, based on climate or pandemic, and one regional, building on the paradigm of Mediterranean Studies—we also see, emerging mainly from the field of art history, an interest in conceiving of the premodern past in terms of networks and entanglements, still focusing on regional and local identities but in a way that is distinct from the methodological approaches seen in Mediterranean Studies. An important early intervention is Finbarr Barry Flood's 2009 *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*, which offers a rich regional account while theorizing entanglement in cultural, linguistic, and devotional terms.[8] This focus on the 'object of translation' continues to be central in Flood's recent collaboration with Beate Fricke, *Tales Things Tell: Material Histories of Early Globalisms* (2023), which offers an account of the object as traveler: the book's first half follows an itinerary "From al-Andalus to Germany" and the second "From Iraq to India and Africa."[9] Here, regional connectivities provide the structural underpinning to a composite, knitted-together account of the globe, while storytelling is recentered in place of purely documentary accounts of material culture.[10] Another important and influential contribution coming from the field of art history is the 2019 collection edited by Bryan Keene, emerging from a show he curated at the Getty Museum, *Toward a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World through Illuminated Manuscripts*.[11] Keene's book is useful in two ways: first, the range and scope of the essays, some brief case studies, others more extended, gives a variegated picture of the premodern past, based on a wide range of perspectives. Second, the book is purposefully sprawling: it does not attempt to give a holistic, unified view of the global Middle Ages, but is instead directed *toward* that goal, implicitly pushing away any aspiration toward comprehensiveness to the distant horizon while giving a robust and plural account of local and regional entanglements.

It is worth noting that the field of textile studies has long embraced an interdisciplinary approach, relying as it does on scholars across the fields of art history, archaeology, history, and anthropology to tell its stories. Many of the most successful recent publications in this field emerge from exhibitions and conferences that allow for interdisciplinary workshopping and knowledge-sharing to take place over an extended period of time, thus making participants better able to draw connections between objects and to place them in the context of global trade and cultural exchange. Striking examples include the groundbreaking 2020 volume edited by Nikolaos Vryzidis which was developed from a 2016 conference on "Textiles and Identity in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean"; Amelia Peck's collaborative Met exhibition catalog, *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800*; the volume edited by David Ganz and Barbara Schellewald following their 2014 conference on "Clothing Sacred Scriptures"; and the 2005 Getty Museum exhibition "Shrine and Shroud"—which was one of the earliest attempts to study the interconnection between textiles and books.[12] These examples inform the method-

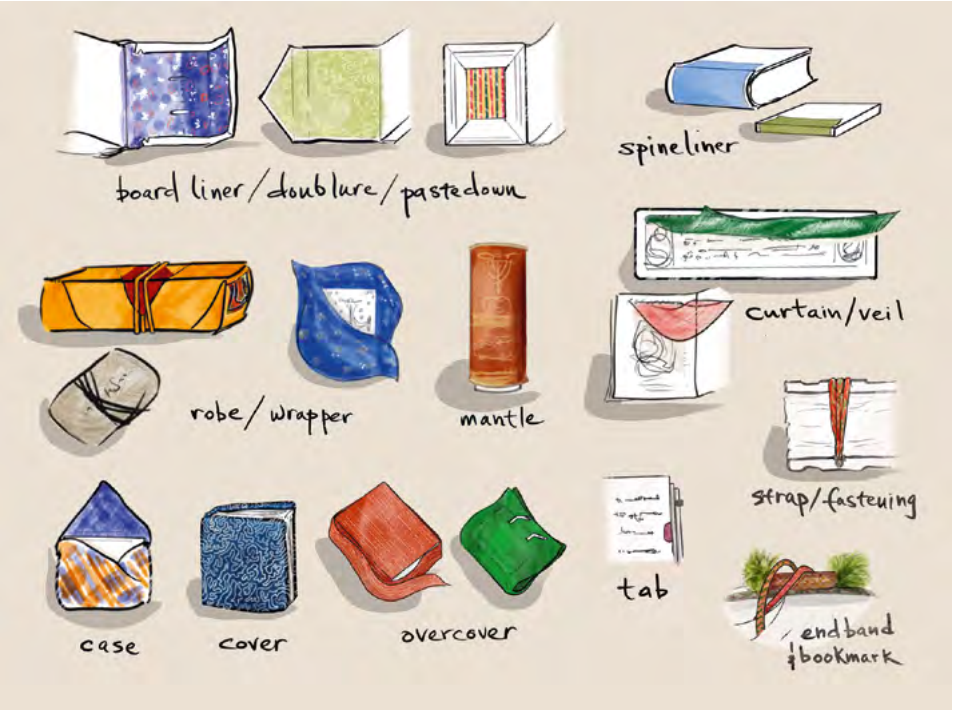
ologies embraced in "Textiles in Manuscripts," both the original workshop and the subsequent development of the present volume.

Over the last few years, reflections on the global medieval paradigm have included particularly insightful contributions that critique and even challenge the idea of a "Global Middle Ages" from a position of solidarity, recognizing the positive changes that the global turn has ushered in. In a special issue of *boundary 2* edited by Sierra Lomuto, she introduces a series of articles on the theme of "The 'Medieval' Undone: Imagining a New Global Past" with a study of Belle da Costa Greene that is framed by a careful account of what has been gained through the global turn in Medieval Studies, and what has been lost. On the one hand, Lomuto suggests, "A global Middle Ages can unmask the colonial gaze that the politics of periodization obscures. […] It can expose the colonial, racial logic that has underscored and sustained knowledge about the past and its use within modernity's hegemonic structures" (10-11).[13] On the other hand, the global Middle Ages can simply be a rebranding exercise that leaves the underlying disciplinary structures intact: "This turn exposes the obsolescence of the structures and methods that have defined the discipline, and we cannot merely patch up their inadequacies with a wider geographic scope. But how do we do this work of undoing when we are doing it within the very framework we are trying to undo?" (19). Lomuto closes by acknowledging that "The present crisis requires interdisciplinary collaboration and risk-taking: to imagine a new global past is to imagine a new, unbounded present" (26).[14] While the articles gathered by Lomuto in that special issue of *boundary 2* carry out this bold imagining in the fields of language and literature, with explicit attentiveness to the interpretive modes enabled by Critical Race Theory, *Textiles in Manuscripts* also aims in its own way to "imagine a new global past" in the realm of material culture. The boldness of the present volume lies in its intensively collaborative nature, the methodology of bringing together experts from a wide range of fields around the single book or book tradition, and our intention to situate the book not simply as the object of study but as itself a relation, embedded in a network of relationships that have developed—and continue to develop—over time.

In this respect, we aim to answer the call of Thelma Thomas and Alicia Walker in their introduction to the 2023 volume *Out of Bounds: Exploring the Limits of Medieval Art*, edited by Pamela Patton and Maria Alessia Rossi. In "Shifting Boundaries: Medieval Art History for Now," Thomas and Walker argue that an attentiveness to temporality is required: the "medieval art history for now" proposed in that volume seeks to provide "both an urgent reply to the particular needs of the present moment—'for NOW'–and a provisional effort to address concerns that are 'only for now,' that, over time, will inevitably shift, evolve, and be replaced by new calls and responses" (2).[15] In other words, it is necessary to recognize the situatedness of our own scholarship in time, just as we acknowledge the situatedness of our object of study. Moreover, this work cannot be carried out by individual scholars, but must be collaborative; and it cannot simply include a broader range of objects of study, but must also include collaborators who bring a wider range of perspectives and experiences to the work. As Thomas and Walker put it, "No one scholar–or volume–can accomplish it all. Much more remains to be done, individually and collectively. […] Increasing representation

of the scholars whose primary expertise lies in Africa, the Near and Middle East, and Asia, if not also the Americas and Australia, is equally essential. It is both an intellectual and an ethical imperative that more be done to include scholars who not only study these regions but live in and produce scholarship from these locales today and who hold perspectives shaped by different academic traditions and presentist perspectives than those that dominate the North American and Western European spheres represented in this and many other volumes" (9-10).[16]

One of the reasons why art history has been such a generative field for the rethinking of Global Medieval Studies is because the collaborative approach that Thomas and Walker call for so eloquently can be carried out more effectively in the realm of material culture than is the case for the fields of literary or intellectual history. This dilemma is foregrounded in the short introduction to a special issue of *The Medieval Globe* on "Practices of Commentary: Medieval Traditions and Transmissions," edited by Amanda Goodman and Suzanne Conklin Akbari, where the editors acknowledge the acute challenges of collaborative and cross-disciplinary work when "the shared field of study is intellectual history rather than material culture, with all the additional linguistic challenges that this brings. These collaborations have revealed the ways in which our individual disciplines were not shaped for us to do this kind of work" (3).[17] They further recognize that the choice of terminology poses particular challenges to collaboration: "In some fields of study, the terminology pertaining to commentary practices is underdeveloped; in other cases, the terminology is so elaborately developed as to be overdetermined. Can (and should) the terminology pertaining to commentary developed in one region of the world be exported to others? If not, how to develop terminology that permits comparative and synthetic work across fields? This is a challenge that the Practices of Commentary group



0.1
Diagram illustrating the uses of textiles within and on books.

0.2
Dawit (psalter) with textile fragment pasted onto inner board of cover, 18th–c. (?). Monastery of Gundä Gunde, Təgray, Ethiopia. Gundä Gunde ms 053

continues to reckon with" (3). Terminology is also a challenge within the field of codicology and material book studies.[18] Some book traditions, structures, and materials have been described in academic literature for centuries and terminology has been standardized in the field. Others—especially those where the primacy of the text is paramount (such as in the Buddhist tradition)—are just now developing shared terminologies to describe different book formats and material aspects of the book. The rich and detailed terminology described in *Ligatus: The Language of Bindings* currently focuses on terms used in the European binding tradition.[19] It does not, and does not claim to, fully represent all book terminologies. We follow the Ligatus guide in this volume where applicable, but draw on other guides, such as the Islamic binding terminology developed by Paul Hepworth and Karin Scheper (two of the co-authors of Chapter 9), in describing books from the Islamicate world.[20] Standardized terminology is still needed for some Eastern Christian traditions, and for the vast range of Asian book traditions. This is both a challenge and an opportunity to learn from book practitioners and scholars working within these traditions to develop shared terminology that can be applied across all areas of research and practice.

To provide just one example, in developing this volume one of the most interesting debates has centered on what to call the cloth on the inner board of books–a place where textiles appear frequently, but which is described differently in various parts of the world. Depending on its purpose (functional or decorative), where it appears, and when it is applied, it may be called a "doublure," "pastedown," or "board lining"—all three of these are French and English language terms, each with its own history of development and use. It is worth taking a moment to describe these terms, since they are used across the volume (see fig. 0.1). "Doublure"[21] is a term commonly used for Islamic and Armenian bindings, a nod to the French influence in the scholarship of these traditions. The very pragmatic term "pastedown"[22] comes from the bookbinding tradition and describes the action of adhering a material (paper, cloth, etc.) across the inside cover *after* the outer covering is added. A "board lining"[23] is applied across the full inner surface of the board *before* the book is covered and its covering material (leather, tawed skin, cloth, paper, etc.) 'turned-in' over the edges of the inner board. The board liner has the functional mandate of stabilizing the board, or in some cases, neatening the appearance of the book. However, these standardized terms, which emerge from the field of European bookbinding, book conservation, and codicology, are insufficient to describe the cloth used on Ethiopic manuscripts, which are fragments added in small swatches to the inner board *before* the book is covered (see fig. 0.2).The chapter on Ethiopic manuscripts (Chapter 3) uses the default term "pastedown" for lack of a standard-

ized term, but chapter co-author Hagos Abrha Abay suggests new terminology, coming out of his field work in Tigray (Təgray), Ethiopia. He notes that, according to the book practitioners and Ethiopian Orthodox monks he has met in Ethiopia, there is no common term for this decorative cloth on the inner board. Abay therefore suggests a new phrase in Ge'ez: "ፀሪቀ ድጉስ" (*ṣäriqä dugs*), which means "binding garment" or "ልብሰ ዱግስ" (*ləbsä dugs*), meaning "binding cloth." In his fieldwork in Tigray, he used *ṣäriqä dugs*, which was understood by those in the monasteries. Binding garment / *ṣäriqä dugs* is a useful and fitting term, where no appropriate term exists. It alludes to the decorative aspects of the Ethiopian use of cloth, adorning the book as body, demonstrates the reverence for the book in Ethiopian culture, and the status of sacred books as living relations.[24] The example highlights the value of an interdisciplinary approach, and one that connects with the local production of books to inform global terminology. We have had the privilege, in crafting this volume, to have a bird's eye view of how terminology is used across traditions, something that book historians and conservators with specialization in a single area are not often presented with. Terminology can evolve through this kind of shared research and we hope the volume will open up new conversations about how the material culture of the book is discussed globally, and the value of connecting to a wide community of scholars, conservators, and local book practitioners when developing new terms for the field. Indeed, terminology is a key consideration in the chapters contained in *Textiles in Manuscripts*, not with the aim of leveling out the choice of terms across all fields or imposing a Eurocentric set of terms across geographical regions, but rather in the hope of identifying which terms can be acknowledged as being broadly shared and which must remain specific to a particular geographical region, confessional identity, or cultural group.

Textiles in Manuscripts contributes to the larger conversation regarding the global turn in Medieval Studies in three ways, each of which builds upon the other: in centering the book as the object of study; in rethinking periodization; and in understanding the book as not simply object, but rather as relation. By centering the book as our object of study, we seek to use it as a window into the past, recognizing the materials and, above all, the craft practices that generate, maintain, and recreate the book as absolutely central to our inquiry. Books offer a way to know more about the communities and the individuals who produced them; about those who read, touched, and used them, individually or collectively; about their movement from one place to another, whether through displacement of people (as in the case of the Armenian diaspora) or in the violent appropriation of the colonial archive (as in the case of Ethiopia). The history of one individual book is thus a way to identify and appreciate one single strand within a rich and complex account of the past. We recognized immediately that this work necessarily requires collaboration: as a result, this specific project as well as the larger projects it resides within—"The Book and the Silk Roads" and "Hidden Stories"—draws together groups of people committed to thinking through key questions such as what terminology to use; how to think about periodization; whether to focus on regional entanglements or global perspectives; and how best to develop the collaborative relationships that would form a network able to take us out of our disciplinary silos. This

collaborative approach has necessarily pushed us out of the constraints imposed by periodization, in part because of the very different periodization schemas that underlie our various disciplinary fields. The canonical start and end dates imposed within our fields seem increasingly arbitrary when we are confronted with book traditions that clearly do not respect those boundaries. Yet the freedom to range widely that emerges when we follow the book tradition across time periods reveals problems in our standard terminology: for example, while an eighteenth- or even nineteenth-century manuscript might clearly be part of a robust lineage of book crafts extending over many generations, should it be called 'premodern' (much less 'medieval')? The problems of periodization that are called into being by this collaborative approach are sometimes frustrating, but they are also highly generative in that they cast a bright light on the unspoken assumptions that govern our fields of study, especially as we recognize the historical formation of these fields, particularly those that developed in the context of nineteenth-century European national, imperial, and colonial ideologies.

Finally, while initially we conceived of our collaborative approach to book history as a kind of gathering of people around one central focus, with the book as the object of study, more recently we have come to recognize the book is itself a relative or a relation. In part, this move is continuous with the longstanding practice in book history of acknowledging the 'life' of the book, offering an account of its 'biography' as the book moves through time. Beyond this, however, we aim to follow the guidance of Cree and Métis archivist Jessie Loyer in placing the book at the center of our inquiry not as the passive object of examination, but as itself animate and connected to its community—not just the people who originally made and used it, but those who continue to be in relation with the book until the present day. This involves establishing and maintaining relationships with communities of origin, both those remaining in traditional territories as well as those living in diasporic communities.[25] As early as the 2021 workshop on "Textiles in Manuscripts," before we had explicitly encountered Loyer's way of acknowledging the book as relative, several of the speakers had in their online presentations described books as though they were living beings. Hrair Hawk Khatcherian declared that the Armenian manuscript "needs to be open, to breathe.... The manuscript is alive." Eyob Derillo picked up on this thought when he said, of Ethiopian manuscripts, that the volume takes up the scent of the places it has been, emphasizing what he called "the physicality of the manuscript." He emphasized how, as a living object, these devotional manuscripts receive careful attention and the "dedication" of those who are entrusted with it, and who may "beautify the manuscript with textiles." The precious cloth pastedowns found in many Ethiopic manuscripts are an "expression of [that] devotion." In the Sikh tradition, some sacred books are feasted, clothed, woken and allowed to rest; in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the cloths wrapped around a pecha (book) are referred to as robes, the ties as belts, evoking the image of the book as body, its textile wrapper both a protective covering and a worthy adornment. The chapters that follow bring out these living dimensions of the book, not only in its original instantiation but also in the repeated moments of making and remaking, re-binding, re-dedication, and renewed adornment.

Application and Use of Textiles in Manuscripts

The chapters gathered here explore a wide range of book-related textiles, whose histories and travels often overlap and intersect. Several themes emerge when we examine textile use across book traditions. These include the use of textiles for functional purposes such as structural reinforcement in spine liners, hinges, and on boards, or as protective coverings for sacred images or the books themselves; in decorative applications, where textiles serve as embellishment; or spiritual and symbolic use, in which textiles that carry meaning based on their origin are used in a ritual or performative context. The building of the book was largely the realm of the craftsperson, the bookbinder who used textiles to strengthen, shape, and / or embellish the structural aspects of the manuscript. But the book, in fulfilling its function within a broad network of relations, involved participation by many generations of makers and users. Textiles, though a common material, provided a powerful vehicle for users, makers, and patrons to connect with their sacred books. This allowed them to better tend to the books under their care—care that often spanned centuries and was carried out across many generations.

From a functional perspective, cloth has long been recognized by bookmakers as a lightweight, strong, and flexible material capable of reinforcing the spines, cover hinges, and fore edge flaps (see fig. 0.1). Globally, when cost was a factor, cloth was often chosen as a covering material because it was less expensive than leather or other materials—and for many book communities was simply the vernacular material. In the late medieval Western and Eastern Christian traditions (Byzantine, Syriac, Armenian, etc.) spine liners are associated with fat, rounded spines. Thin yet strong, the cloth placed on the spine, after sewing and before covering with leather, unobtrusively supported the shape of a spine and lent flexibility to the joints of the book's gatherings. Invisible to the reader but experienced by the hand, cloth spine reinforcements and hinges provided good 'book action,' each turn of the page prompting a lifting of the subsequent page. In the Islamic tradition, the structural needs of the book were quite different. Paper was adopted in the Islamicate regions of the Mediterranean by the ninth century, quickly superseding more expensive parchment as a writing material.[26] Islamic books on paper, flat-spined and relatively lightweight, were often sewn with silk or thin vegetal-based thread which could break over time, especially if a supportive book stand was not available or not used. Cloth spine liners provided extra stability to the binding edge. The extended flap, covering the fore-edge of the cover, similarly needed a lightweight but strong material that could hold up to repeated use without breaking. Most codex books would not function without textiles. Given their commonplace presence in every culture, textiles were cheaper and easier to access than other book covering materials such as brain-tanned skin, leather, tawed skin, or parchment.

Though cloth reinforcements were a pragmatic choice by bookmakers across the Mediterranean, it did not prevent some from choosing a textile that would provide both structural and spiritual support. This is the case with some Syriac (and likely Armenian and Byzantine) books where the spine liner was reused from a liturgical

0.3
Eleventh-century liturgical manuscript in Syriac (a volume of the *Menaion*) with a red cross sewn on the canvas spine lining with appliqué embroidery, both elements possibly repurposed from a liturgical vestment. Mt. Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery Library, MS Syriac 44.

or other sacred garment. Again, unseen by the viewer, hidden as it was under the book's leather covering, the textile could nonetheless be felt on another level by both the reader and the book. The example illustrated in figure 0.3, from Georgios Boudalis' research, comes from the remote Monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai, where the reuse of materials was necessary to create new books. The desert library may contain the highest percentage of double and triple palimpsests (reused parchment containing layered, hidden texts) in the world, since the parchment that texts were written on had to be 'erased' and reused to make new books due to the periodic shortages of fresh sheet material. A similar motivation may have led the monastic bookbinder to reuse a fragment of a liturgical cloth containing an embroidered red cross, attaching it to the spine of the book before covering it in leather. Was this a simple, practical reuse of a cloth fragment, or was the binder "vesting" the body of the book in a liturgical garment? In either case, it likely increased the sacrality of this liturgical manuscript in the hands of the priests who used it.

Another use of textiles that is both functional and spiritual is illustrated by Turner in Chapter 8, exploring the use of cloth veils in Byzantine, Ethiopic, and European manuscripts (a topic also illustrated in Chapter 4 on Armenian books). These textiles, used across both Western and Eastern Christian as well as Buddhist traditions, cover

sacred images, protecting the pigments and gold leaf against abrasion and wear, serving to care for the 'body of the book' as well as becoming an intimate part of the ritual of worship. In the Buddhist tradition, the lifting of the curtain is integral to the act of invoking the deities that lay beneath the cloth (fig. 0.4). On an interactive ritual level, the repetitive act of unveiling or revealing the image is part of a devotional performance that affirms and reinforces the relationship between the devout reader and the sacred text.[27] These lightweight veils, made of silk or cotton, have been replaced over the centuries (with the cloth taking on the wear that the image might otherwise have) and thus represent a continuity of care by the spiritual community.

The use of textiles as intercessory material is also seen in medieval images of books, where the user (usually a saint) uses their cloth robes to protect the book from the human body or hand. While this scene, documented throughout medieval European painting and sculpture, is quite striking in its performative nature, the act also serves the very practical function of literally protecting the book from hands and any associated grime. Both male and female saints are depicted as participating in this ritual use of textile as intercessor. Using their robe as a protective cloth, the book is buffered against direct contact with the human body, protecting the divine body of the book and its sacred text (fig. 0.5).[28] Indeed, the chemises or "shirts" which often covered devotional books were made of velvet or soft skins like suede. These chemises may be understood as an extension of the practice of covering a book with a material intercessor; an example of a cloth or suede chemise is depicted with the female saint to the right in figure 0.5b. Medieval girdle books also had primary or secondary coverings, sometimes made of cloth. These were, in

0.4
Protective green silk curtain, raised to reveal the text and images of bodhisattva Ruciraketu and the Buddha, in a Tibetan Buddhist manuscript containing the *Mahayana Sutra*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University East Asian Library, Gest Collection, BQ2130.S43.

0.5 a–b
(a) Left: **Saint Ambrose holding a manuscript using his robe to protect the book from his hands. Detail of a painting by Conçal Peris, c. 1430. Paris, Musée du Louvre.**

(b) **Saint Columba of Sens (figure on right) using her robes to cradle a book bound in a chemise. Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece, c. 1505–1510. Mainz, Landesmuseum.**

0.6
Evangelist portrait of Saint Luke, using his robes to cradle his gospel, with a book cover that resembles decorative metalwork. One of earliest surviving illustrated gospel books, with parchment dated between 330–650 CE. Abba Garima MS I, fol. 344v. Ethiopia, Abba Garima Monastery.

effect, chemises with an extended end that was gathered and could be tucked under the belt or carried for portable devotional reading.[29] The use of the robe as protective intercessor is also seen in the Ethiopic book tradition, a practice depicted in the earliest illustrated gospel books known to survive anywhere in the world. The Garima Gospels, which date between 330-650 CE, feature portraits of the four evangelists (Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and a figure likely to be Saint Eusebius, each cradling a book using his robes (see fig. 0.6).[30] These early depictions show gospel books with decorative covers, akin to European treasure bindings, which were made of metal and often jeweled. The surviving Garima Gospels covers are made from gilt copper and silver, materials that can degrade or tarnish if they come in contact with oils from the hand (fig. 0.7b). The textiles, therefore, may have served a dual purpose of acting as spiritual intercessor as well as providing functional protection against damage caused by the hands of the celebrants. Textiles are still used in Ethiopia today to wrap, display, and protect liturgical and devotional books (see figs. 0.7a–b, 0.8), including the Garima Gospels, which continue to be cared for by the Ethiopian Orthodox monks of the Abba Garima Monastery.

0.7 a–b
(a) **An Ethiopic liturgical manuscript displayed by a celebrant on a cloth-covered lectern at Nä'akkweto Lä'ab Church, near Lalibäla, Ethiopia.**

(b) **Gilt copper cover of Abba Garima MS I, resting on its textile wrappers. Ethiopia, Abba Garima Monastery.**

0.8
Ethiopic devotional manuscript with a tapestry-inspired textile overcover and extended cloth tail that completely encircles the fore-edge and spine of the book to keep out dust and debris. Ethiopia, 19th century. Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, MSS 03004.

This practice of protective and symbolic wrapping continues in the Judeo-Christian tradition, with cloth wrappers still used to protect the Torah (as Sienna discusses in Chapter 10). Torah scrolls were wrapped in a decorative textile often sourced by devout congregants. Though direct access to the scroll was denied, the decorative wrapper placed patrons in closer proximity to the sacred text. Some wrappers were highly decorated. Sienna notes that, in Jewish communities in the German-speaking lands, it was customary to place the most beautiful side of the inner liner facing the scroll and to position the most beautiful side of the outer wrapper facing out toward the worshippers and congregation. Here, the beauty of the textile conveyed a powerful message of both piety and reverence, while also demonstrating the piety (and wealth) of the donor of the textile. In the Ethiopian Christian context, this 'textile as intercessor' function may have played a role in the donation of luxury textiles that embellished the inner boards of manuscripts. Viewed by the reader at each opening and closing of the book, the cloth board liners—and by extension the donor—became an integral part of the performative ritual of entering and leaving the text.

Cloth wrappers and enclosures had a protective function across all the book traditions they were used in, serving to keep out dust, damaging light, and acting as a deterrent to damage caused by pests, fire, and water. Chapters 4 and 9 illustrate cloth pouches used to protect Armenian and Islamic manuscripts, coverings that are also highly decorative (see figures 4.9a–b and 9.10). Overcovers, or secondary coverings that went over the book's primary binding, similarly serve to both protect and embellish the book (see fig. 0.8 for an Ethiopic example). These practical aspects of wrapping often overlap with the act of 'dressing' the body of the text. The authors of Chapter 2 discuss the technique for wrapping a sacred Buddhist pecha or pōthī-style books. The book, with the text facing up, is laid at the bottom of the diagonally laid out cloth, then rolled to wrap the book up. The reader must remember which side is 'up' in order to ensure that the word of the Buddha is facing up when the wrapping is complete and the book secured with its long strap or belt. The textile is an intimate part of the first and last act of interacting with and / or reading the book.

The reuse of textiles is a common theme throughout the volume. Whether repurposing fragments of a prestigious cloth or piecing together sections of block-printed fabric, binders were resourceful and creative in their reuse and placement of textiles within their books. Some textiles were deemed important because of

their association with a saint or holy person. Placed against the manuscript, they offer protection that is at once pragmatic and otherworldly. As the authors explore in Chapter 3, the repurposing of textiles in the Ethiopian context serves both to embellish the manuscript and, in the case of fine imported fabrics, bring prestige to the book and its owner. In other cases, the textiles are reused materials from everyday use, such as sheets, coverings, and clothing. The authors note the use of quilted textiles across the Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic traditions. One of the most striking examples is the quilt used to cover the Buddhist Kanjur from Mongolia, discussed in Chapter 2. The manuscript is one of 108 volumes of the canonical Buddhist Kanjur text, and the only one that is wrapped with multiple robes—two of which are quilted. As the user undresses the book, they move through quilted, plain cotton, and silk textiles, traveling through multiple layers of increasingly fine cloth, creating anticipation in the user and signaling that this is an important volume. The authors note that in the Himalayas and in traditions elsewhere in Asia, worn out quilted fabrics owned by wealthy or prestigious families were sometimes gathered and made into patchwork clothing for children in need of extra protection, while fine fabrics from the deceased might be donated to priests to wrap the bodies of their books (reused quilts are also noted by Wang in Chapter 1, on Buddhist sutra wrappers).

A striking example of the book as body and textile reuse comes in authors Butts and Thomas' story of the codex from Williams College, a Syriac New Testament

0.9
Blind-tooled leather cover (left) **and decorative cloth on the inner board** (right) **of a Syriac New Testament from the Church of Our Lady in Siirt, renewed in the early 1600s before reentering the church. Williamstown, MA, Williams College, Syriac Codex MS 37.**

0.10
Two Syriac volumes of the New Testament from the Malabar Coast (southwest India), covered by Indian block-printed ajrakh fabrics, likely from the areas of Kutch and Sindh in the northwest. Before 1720. Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS UBL Or. 1212a–b.

that was rebound and reclothed with cloth board liners. A note in the manuscript states that the book was reconsecrated at the door of the Church of Our Lady in Siirt (in modern day Turkey) in 1632/33. One can imagine standing at the door, in the presence of the book, surrounded by the patron of the rebinding, the priest, and other monastic community members. Like members of the congregation being baptised before properly entering the church, the book would have needed to be reconsecrated in order to re-enter the sacred space where it could continue to be used for the liturgy (see fig. 0.9). Truly a relation, the book was re-clothed and covered, allowing it to continue its work within the community—work that spanned generations.

The stories within this volume highlight the resourcefulness of bookmakers, who used the materials available to them locally, rather than remaining rigidly loyal to distant traditions. A noteworthy comparative example comes in the form of several Syriac New Testament manuscripts, linked by a common textual tradition but separated by geographic distance. One was made and used in the Near East (the Williams Syriac codex discussed above), a medieval manuscript rebound in the early seventeenth century in blind-tooled leather and decorated with block-printed cotton fragments inside the covers—work likely done by an Armenian binder. The textile liner may have been imported cloth from India, or produced locally using Turkish cotton block-printed with a design inspired by the decorative Indian cottons in circulation throughout the Near East (fig. 0.9). In another Syriac Christian

context, on the Malabar coast of southwest India, two volumes of a Syriac New Testament Bible were bound in a similar fashion, but covered instead with layers of cloth, some of which is pieced together to maintain a uniform design (fig. 0.10). Likely dating to the late seventeenth century, this paired set made use of locally available Indian fabrics imported from northwest India for its covers, rather than leather which may not have been as readily available or preferred as a dressing for these books.[31] The ubiquity and popularity of Indian and Indian-inspired block-printed fabrics is highlighted in both cases. These Syriac New Testament volumes were separated by thousands of miles, but were bound and decorated in the same century. They share a connection through their use of these decorative textiles, but each has its own unique relationship with the fabrics that clothe them.

Textiles have generally gone unnoticed in the larger history of the book. Textile scholars have not traditionally been aware of the wealth of textiles used in and on books (and their potential for dating textiles found within dateable manuscripts), and book historians have generally not had the training to draw on the wealth of information found in textiles—information that can help contextualize a book's production, travels, and use, as well as its economic and social status. However, book conservators have long been attentive to the presence of textiles in books, noting a wide range of textiles in their conservation assessments and treatment reports: these are visible on coverings, as wrappers and envelopes, on endbands, in board linings or spine liners, and as curtains or veils covering sacred painted images within books. A project at the University of Oxford, "Textiles in Libraries: Contexts & Conservation," launched in November 2021 just after the "Textiles in Manuscripts" workshop, highlights the conservators' privileged view.[32] A book conservator's perspective comes out of a deep understanding of the book's materiality, production, and use, as well as the practice of 'describing what you see' embedded within pre-treatment assessment practices and post-treatment documentation. As noted at the outset of this Introduction, traditional knowledge keepers and scholars from communities of origin are also key partners in moving the field forward. Because they bring experience with traditional care practices and use local terminologies to identify parts of the book, as well as an understanding of continuous book traditions that may still be practiced regionally, knowledge keepers and scholars from origin communities bring an essential perspective to this history. For example, understanding that the cloth wrapper covering a Tibetan Buddhist pōthī-style book is called a 'robe' namsa / na bza' and the tie a 'belt' sku rags provides insight into the position of the book in Tibetan culture, treated with the same reverence one would show to a Buddhist monk.[33]

By developing shared terminologies that draw on local traditions as well as disciplinary norms, books and their textiles can be better described, understood, and shared across the global community through library catalogs and digital facsimiles. In some traditions, where 'codicology' is still a methodology in formation, this may provide an opportunity to bring a wide and interdisciplinary range of scholars together to develop descriptive terminology. Indeed, not having fixed academic terminologies for some traditions might be viewed as an opportunity to learn from traditional care practitioners and knowledge-keepers about the terms they use

within their own communities to describe the material aspects of books, such as bindings, sheet materials, textiles, etc. As long as this process is not extractive, it may offer a preferable methodology for developing book terminologies within academic scholarship.

As we continue to develop this area of research, we must include book conservators, textile historians, library professionals, knowledge-keepers and community of origin scholars in conversations about descriptive terminology, cataloging, and how best to create access to these historical objects, which need to be described in order to be findable. Integrating this 'local' knowledge into a larger global history of the book allows the stories of these objects to be told in a deeper, broader, and more fully integrated way.

Local Perspectives, Global Histories

The chapters assembled here range from tightly focused case studies, as in the contribution by Thelma Thomas and Aaron Butts on the textiles of a Syriac New Testament, to wide-ranging, almost comprehensive surveys of an entire dataset, as in the collaborative piece by Hagos Abrha Abay, Carolina Almenara-Melis, Eyob Derillo, Sarah Fee, Michael Gervers, and River Hobel on Christian Ethiopic manuscripts. Two of the chapters—one by Rosemary Crill, on South Asian textiles in Ethiopian and Armenian bookbindings, and one by Georgios Boudalis and Joy Boutrup, on braided and woven binding features in Byzantine manuscripts—take a different approach, offering a highly specialized (and at times quite technical) account of fundamental features of textiles in manuscripts: the cloths made in India that circulated widely, with a particular focus on their appearance in Ethiopian and Armenian manuscripts, and the sewing structures typical of one particular—highly important and influential—book tradition. Nancy Turner's contribution similarly offers the specialist knowledge a conservator brings to a study of textile veils within Christian manuscripts, ranging across a number of different cultural milieus that all nonetheless share a single confessional identity. Turner's piece therefore resonates powerfully with the other two chapters that are centered on book traditions identified in confessional terms—the chapter on "Islamic manuscripts," by Paul Hepworth, Alison Ohta, and Karin Scheper, and the chapter on textiles used to encase Torah scrolls, the most sacred text of Jewish communities, by Noam Sienna.

We begin in Central Asia, with Michelle Wang's account of "Textile Sutra Wrappers from the Silk Roads: Materials, Forms, Functions." Wang offers an overview of the astonishing array of books that were found in Mogao Cave 17 at Dunhuang, presented in a wide range of formats (scroll, concertina, pōthī, codex) and a variety of languages (mainly Chinese and Tibetan, but also Khotanese, Uyghur, Sogdian, Sanskrit, and Hebrew), preserved for almost a thousand years before the cave was opened up in the early twentieth century, first by a resident monk and later by European collectors. Wang investigates the textile wrappers, positing that these can be best understood as "material extensions of the manuscripts." The various materials that make up the book, including silk, hemp, paper, and wood, can be understood not only in terms of a hierarchy of value but also in terms of "the intersection between these four materials." In this way, Wang digs deeply into the materiality of the sutra

wrappers while also illuminating how the textile covering served as a kind of clothing for the book, understood as itself an animate body.

This formulation is echoed in the second chapter, which centers on the cloth wrappers of a canonical Buddhist text, the Kanjur. In "Unwrapping the Buddhist Canon: The Textiles of a Five-Robed Mongolian Kanjur from the Harvard-Yenching Library," a group of six contributors—Katherine Beaty, Jody Beenk, Kalzang Dorjee Bhutia, Rachel Bissonnette, Jim Canary, and Kristen Pearson—gather around a single volume of the 108-volume Kanjur to tell a highly focused story that also illuminates a much more wide-ranging practice of book creation and care. As in the chapter centered on textiles in Ethiopian manuscripts, the range of contributors reflects the range of specializations that need to be gathered around the book to aid it in telling its story; unlike that chapter, however, "Unwrapping the Buddhist Canon" focuses on a particular case study, as we saw in the chapter by Thomas and Butts centered on the Syriac Williams Codex. This chapter illuminates the equivalence of book and body evoked in some of the earlier contributions, bringing out how the terminology used to describe the various textile items tracks onto terms for clothing: the robe, the belt, and so on. This equivalence is also made apparent by care practices which require that books not be "placed on the floor" and that they "must be kept in their robes when not being examined," both of these acts being gestures that correspond to the physical expressions of respect that would be shown to a venerated person. The complexities of periodization commented upon earlier in this introduction are also illuminated by this codicological microhistory by Beaty, Beenk, Bhutia, Bissonnette, Canary, and Pearson. The Mongolian Red Kanjur is a printed book, produced in Beijing during the early eighteenth century; yet the text it contains is a translation into Mongolian that was started in the fourteenth century and only gradually completed in the seventeenth century, with a manuscript tradition that moved into print in the early eighteenth century. The Mongolian Red Kanjur therefore represents both a disjunction, with the move into printing, and a continuity, with the continued care practices that are demonstrated in the ongoing use of luxurious cloth wrappings. As a result, this chapter offers a particularly rich space to think about the roles of print culture in terms of periodization within a global framework.

The third chapter, as noted above, provides an exhaustive—if not yet fully comprehensive—account of "Ethiopian Manuscripts and Global Textile Circulations from the Fifteenth to Nineteenth Centuries." The large number of contributors to this chapter—Hagos Abrha Abay, Carolina Almenara-Melis, Eyob Derillo, Sarah Fee, Michael Gervers, and River Hobel—reflects the range of expertise required to address this topic: historical, codicological, and philological. In addition, these experts on Ethiopian book culture also take pains to acknowledge the advice received from textile experts, especially Rosemary Crill (who also contributed a separate chapter to this volume). This group is at work on an associated research project ("Textiles in Ethiopian Manuscripts," or TEM, based at the University of Toronto) which the authors acknowledge was itself inspired by our June 2021 "Textiles in Manuscripts" workshop. This connection is worth mentioning because it sheds light on the methodology of "The Book and the Silk Roads" and "Hidden Stories" projects, which aim to

generate a growing research network with interlinking nodes. This chapter Abay, Almenara-Melis, Derillo, Fee, Gervers, and Hobel illuminates the "global exchange networks" that the textiles adorning the inside covers of Ethiopian manuscripts reveal. In addition, this research group makes very significant contributions with regard to terminology, both identifying terms that can be shared widely across geographical and cultural fields (including Ethiopian Christian manuscripts) and those that must be used in a more restricted sense, including specific terms in local languages. They note the need to identify such local terms and include commentary on the exchanges with local users of these manuscripts in order to reflect the perspective of communities of origin. They also investigate the hierarchy of the kinds of imported textiles found in manuscripts, as well as the symbolic value that the different colors, patterns, and qualities of fabric might bear.

At first glance, the turn to Armenia in the next chapter—with a contribution by Bryan Keene, Hrair Hawk Khatcherian, and Sylvie Merian—might seem far removed from the Horn of Africa. But in fact Armenia and Ethiopia share an intertwined history, both being among the very earliest adopters of Christianity, and having had monastic, diplomatic, and trade relationships almost continuously over that time. "Global Entanglements: A Study of Textiles in Armenian Manuscripts" offers a wide-ranging overview of Armenian manuscripts that pays particular attention to the ways that community members interacted with their books, especially through the cycles of repeated diaspora and dispersal experienced into the modern era. Keene, Khatcherian, and Merian offer an account of how Armenia has been interpreted within wider histories of manuscript culture, including in a series of prominent museum shows in North America, before considering how "manuscripts can reveal the global connections of a region and its peoples both in terms of the materials used in its production and also in its subsequent peregrinations."

Rosemary Crill's contribution, "Indian Textiles in Ethiopian and Armenian Bookbindings," connects back to the two previous chapters—one on Ethiopia, one on Armenia—with a specialist focus on the textiles themselves. She focuses particularly not on the life of the book but on the life of the textile, noting cases where we can identify exactly how the item traveled—whether as a fragment, a larger piece of cloth, or a garment—which can be revealed through the existence of other surviving textile items from the same source, or through the existence of seams which might "suggest a former life as a garment, perhaps a robe of honor given as a diplomatic gift." Crill also considers the value or rarity of textiles for what this can tell us about how the manuscript was seen, "with the most luxurious textiles apparently being used for the most lavish manuscripts." This chapter goes a long way toward illuminating the complex trade and exchange relationships that linked India, Ethiopia, and Armenia, complicated further not only by the Armenian diaspora (especially but not only in Persia, at New Julfa) but also by the increasing presence of British, Italian, and Portuguese colonization. As a result, textiles might travel (for example) from Britain to South Asia before finding their way to East Africa.

In their contribution, "Encountering a Wide World in a Modest Manuscript: Textile and Text in the Williams College Syriac New Testament," Thelma Thomas and Aaron Butts present a chapter which is at once a tightly focused case study and—as their

title puts it—the whole wide world. This manuscript had a long and complex life, which Thomas and Butts narrate from their different perspectives: Thomas, as an art historian attentive to the "cosmopolitan trends" that are made visible through the physical changes in the book over time, and Butts as a specialist in Semitic philology interested in "entanglements, connections, contacts, circulation, and exchange" in the context of "Ethiopic and Syriac Christianity." The life of the Williams Codex—a name that reflects its current institutional home—begins with the twelfth-century Syriac Christian community that created the book and were among its first generations of users; the repair and renewal of the volume over the ensuing centuries reveal its connections to Armenian Christian communities as well as the movement of the book—and of people—across the wider region of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. The cloth present in the volume makes apparent not only the "immediate environment" of Syriac and Armenian exchange but also "the much broader circulation of textiles across the Indian Ocean and Silk Road trade routes." In other words, textiles in this manuscript reveal both local and global movements.

Like the earlier chapter by Rosemary Crill on textiles, the next chapter—Georgios Boudalis and Joy Boutrup's study of "Braided and Tablet-Woven Fastenings, Endbands, and Bookmarks in Byzantine and post-Byzantine Books"—provides a highly specialized account of a particular aspect of material culture: here, the sewing structures and associated braided or woven textiles that were associated with the manuscript in the Byzantine tradition. Boudalis and Boutrup are careful to define the ways in which they are using the terms "Byzantine" and "post-Byzantine" to circumscribe a corpus of books that are at once distinctive and highly influential in the development of a range of related book traditions—including some of those discussed in the other chapters of this volume, which allows *Textiles in Manuscripts* to illuminate each of these traditions while also showing their interconnections. The next chapter, Nancy Turner's "Tending the Sacred: Textile Interleaving Curtains as Care Practice in Illuminated Manuscripts," continues in this vein, with a conservator's perspective on the use of textile coverings to protect—and, perhaps, aid in the adoration of—precious illuminated images. Like Boudalis and Boutrup, Turner focuses particularly on manuscripts in a single confessional tradition, but across a wide range of cultural formations extending across Europe and also including Byzantine and Ethiopian manuscripts. In each case, Turner illuminates an "ethics of care," both in terms of the "medieval preservation practice" revealed by the use of protective textiles, but also in terms of modern conservation methods. In this way, she writes a history of "ongoing care practices of manuscripts by those in whose possession they have been held over the centuries, from medieval to modern caretakers," including "renewed care." This last detail resonates powerfully with the microhistory of the Williams Codex offered by Thomas and Butts, where the twelfth-century Syriac manuscript experienced such "renewed care" in its rebinding and textile additions in the seventeenth century. And like Wang, in the volume's opening chapter, Turner brings out the equivalence of book and body in this ethics of care, paralleling the use of textiles as "vestments worn by clergy members" both with those used "to wrap and protect saints' relics" and with those used to protect and exalt venerable manuscripts.

The final chapters of *Textiles in Manuscripts* depart from the preceding focus on Christian manuscript cultures to turn to the book traditions of other confessional environments—Islamic and Jewish, with Buddhist traditions having been treated earlier in the volume (in Chapter 2). In "Textiles in Islamic Manuscripts: An Overview," Paul Hepworth, Alison Ohta, and Karin Scheper offer a capacious survey that is, in some ways, comparable to the broad account found in Gervers *et al.*'s account of textiles in Ethiopian manuscripts. Yet unlike the latter, whose "Textiles in Ethiopian Manuscripts" project explicitly seeks to create a comprehensive database of textiles in Ethiopian manuscripts, Hepworth, Ohta, and Scheper are clear in outlining the limitations of their undertaking here. First of all, the 'Islamic' manuscript tradition is almost indescribably diverse: in the same way that the chapters of *Textiles in Manuscripts* break apart or refract what could be seen as a single "Christian" manuscript tradition into Ethiopic, Syriac, Armenian, and Byzantine varieties, it would be desirable to break apart the "Islamic" manuscript tradition into regional divisions. We are not quite there yet as a field, however, and perhaps a future study could develop these distinctions in a productive way. Hepworth, Ohta, and Scheper nonetheless observe that the Islamic manuscript tradition is more consistent than one might imagine, noting that "a manuscript binding made in Indonesia shares a readily recognizable Islamic identity with one from Morocco, as do manuscript bindings made in the tenth century with those made in the nineteenth century." Hepworth, Ohta, and Scheper offer a rich account of the variety of ways that textiles were used in Islamic manuscripts across a wide range of collections, limited (as the authors acknowledge) by their own access to particular archives and libraries. (Collections located in Iran, for example, are less fully represented and South and Southeast Asian examples are outside the scope of the essay; a whole separate volume would be needed to cover the vast scope of textiles used in manuscripts across the Islamic tradition.) They also point out the conservative use of textiles in their manuscript corpus, which are less exuberant than one might perhaps expect, at least for the earlier period. Some suggestions are made regarding the reasons for this conservatism—including the possible use of "bags and wrapping cloths" which could be "much more showy and opulent" including "brilliant silks" or "satin and brocade." Such luxurious book wrappers are attested in manuscript illustrations, but would almost certainly have been displaced, repurposed, or even discarded by modern librarians and archivists. Hepworth, Ohta, and Scheper suggest that more consistent cataloging practices could aid in the tracking of such book wrappers, recalling Turner's similar suggestion regarding the need for better tracking of textile curtains or veils included within manuscripts.

In the final chapter, "Wrapping the Word: The Textiles of the Torah Scroll," Noam Sienna offers an overview of the extraordinarily rich tradition of textile use as demonstrated by the way that Jewish communities have cared for—and continue to care for—their most sacred scriptures. As in Chapter 2, where Beaty *et al*. showed how the terminology used to describe the wrappings of the Buddhist Kanjur volume maps onto that used for clothing, this chapter reveals the multiple correspondences of book and body. Sienna outlines the terminology used to describe the various textiles that could be associated with the Torah, including the wrapper used

to line the scroll, identified by terms meaning "cloth," "sheet," or "scarf"; the binder, identified by terms meaning "veil," "bandage," "swaddling cloth," "belt," or "fringe"; and the mantle, an item of clothing "like a coat, cloak, or robe" whose name is attested in a range of vernacular languages that are consistently "borrowed from the vocabulary of clothing." As Sienna puts it, "perhaps more than any other Torah textile, the mantle bore the closest resemblance in form, material, and usage, to human garments." The materials used to enwrap the Torah Scroll were sometimes repurposed from other luxurious textiles, including one nineteenth-century example "sewn together from ten different pieces of two women's dresses, in purple velvet with gold embroidery, lined with Chinese turquoise silk printed with gold patterns." This example could be fruitfully juxtaposed with the enrobed Mongolian Kanjur described in Chapter 2. Yet the equivalence of book and body in Jewish tradition as described by Sienna is strikingly supple and allusive, oriented toward drawing the individual members of the community into an affective and highly personal relationship with the Torah Scroll. This in turn integrates all of those gathered about the sacred scripture into a shared devotional practice that is at once spiritual and corporeal, connected to ritual practices that bring the individual into new roles within the community over time.

An important underlying theme that runs through these contributions concerns time: not only the complexities of periodization that are revealed by the disjunctions and continuities of manuscript (and early print) culture outlined above, but also the urgency of the present moment. Several of the contributions gesture toward this, both in the specific context of the online workshop on "Textiles in Manuscripts" that took place in June 2021 and in the broader framework of the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuing social changes. It is worth noting that the workshop took place online precisely because of the pandemic conditions; it was originally planned as a smaller-scale in-person workshop to take place in Toronto. At the time, we worried that the lack of in-person format would curtail the usefulness of the gathering; on the contrary, the potentiality that was unlocked by the online format was extraordinary. Inspired by the example of the Rare Book School seminar on "Race and the Boundaries of the Book: Seven Early American Perspectives" that took place on 20 October 2020,[34] the preliminary preparation of study videos that was organized by Melissa Moreton produced a vital shared context for the workshop participants. The online conversations at the workshop itself, which brought together the researchers who had recorded the videos with additional researchers who joined the panels, were extraordinarily productive. These workshop conversations were grounded in a self-reflectiveness that resulted from the production of the initial study videos, as well as the shared opportunity for each group of researchers to watch the videos produced by the other groups; this in turn enabled a comparative perspective that was put into action at the online workshop.

Beyond this level of dynamic exchange, the virtual workshop was attended by a remarkably large number of participants (over 500), which resulted in more opportunities both within the "Textiles in Manuscripts" project and adjacent to it. As graciously acknowledged in the chapter on Ethiopian manuscripts by Gervers *et al.*, the TEM project (which aims to produce a comprehensive database of textiles

in Ethiopian manuscripts) was directly inspired by the "Textiles in Manuscripts" workshop. Discussions at the online workshop regarding traditions that had not been addressed and which had an important place in the history of textiles in manuscripts produced the brilliant contribution by Noam Sienna that concludes this volume. And the invaluable contributions by Rosemary Crill at the workshop, both in connection with the preliminary videos and at the event, have immeasurably enriched several of the contributions here, as well as resulting in her own single-authored chapter in this volume. The chapter on the Mongolian Kanjur, too, emerged from discussions engendered by the workshop. This sense of immediacy—or this attentiveness to the "now," as Thelma Thomas and Alicia Walker put it in their contribution to *Out of Bounds*, quoted above—is perhaps the most resonant note that persists in *Textiles in Manuscripts*: the history of the book, focused particularly on the threads and cloths located within bindings, between pages, and enwrapping the volume, may offer an opportunity to rethink the continuities and disjunctures in our world more generally. It is a time of loss and limitation, certainly, but perhaps also a time of opportunity and change.

1 "Textiles in Manuscripts: Cross-cultural Trade, Craft Production, and Influence in the Art of the Premodern Book": https://booksilkroadstextiles.artsci.utoronto.ca/.

2 The "Hidden Stories" project (2023-2026) is co-located at the University of Toronto and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ: https://hiddenstories.library.utoronto.ca/).

3 See Heng, "The Global Middle Ages: An Experiment in Collaborative Humanities, or Imagining the World, 500–1500 C.E," *English Language Notes* 47 (2009): 205–216; Heng, *The Global Middle Ages: An Introduction*.

4 Global Middle Ages project page: https://globalmiddleages.org/; Black Death Digital Archive page: https://globalmiddleages.org/project/black-death-digital-archive-project. See Green, "Taking 'Pandemic' Seriously: Making the Black Death Global," *The Medieval Globe* 1.1 (2015): 27–61.

5 Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*.

6 Akbari and Mallette, eds., *A Sea of Languages: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*.

7 Akbari, "The Persistence of Philology: Language and Connectivity in the Mediterranean," in *A Sea of Languages*, ed. Akbari and Mallette, pp. 3–21; see esp. 3–6, 10–12.

8 Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*.

9 Flood and Fricke, *Tales Things Tell: Material Histories of Early Globalisms*.

10 This recentering of storytelling in Flood and Fricke's *Tales Things Tell* is consistent with the way that Edward S. Cooke, Jr. flattens the hierarchies of fine art vs. decorative art or craft in his *Global Objects: Toward a Connected Art History*, which mediates story through the long and complex social lives of objects.

11 Keene, ed. *Toward a Global Middle Ages: Encountering the World through Illuminated Manuscripts*.

12 Vryzidis, ed., *The Hidden Life of Textiles in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean: Contexts and Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Islamic, Latinate and Eastern Christian Worlds*; Peck, ed., *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500–1800*; Ganz and Schellewald, eds., *Clothing Sacred Scriptures: Book Art and Book Religion in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Cultures*; "Shrine and Shroud," exhibition at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 28 June-2 October 2005. https://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/shrine_shroud/index.html

13 Lomuto, "Belle da Costa Greene and the Undoing of 'Medieval' Studies," introduction to "The 'Medieval' Undone: Imagining a New Global Past," special issue of *boundary 2* 50.3 (2023): 1–30; quotations cited in the text by page number.

14 Rebecca De Souza has recently built on Lomuto's work to interrogate the temporal boundaries of the global turn in Medieval Studies; in particular, De Souza questions whether efforts to integrate the Americas into this research paradigm can ever be successful. Rebecca De Souza, "Are there limits to globalising the medieval?," *postmedieval* 15.1 (2024): 257–83, esp. 5–6, 11, 17–18. De Souza offers a particularly useful critique of the argument by Pennock and Power who write, in their "Globalizing Cosmologies" (*Past & Present* 238 [issue suppl.13, November 2018]: 88–115), "We offer here 'globalizing cosmologies' as a challenge both to monolithic, teleological ways of thinking about the 'global', and to the Eurocentric perspectives which often follow. The value of the 'globalizing cosmology' lies not in the way a society imagined its connections, its trade routes, but in its capacity to show the richness, variety and dynamism possible in 'global' thinking. There is an urgent need to think more provocatively and creatively; to develop more flexible and intellectually robust approaches to the questions of how, why and when communities conceive of themselves in global terms, and what we, as historians, can learn from being able to recognize and explore this strand in human thought" (113).

15 Thomas and Walker, "Shifting Boundaries: Medieval Art History for Now," in *Out of Bounds: Exploring the Limits of Medieval Art*, ed. Patton and Rossi; quotations cited in the text by page number.

16 On how recentering the field of medieval art history on a different point of focus—here, Africa—can contribute to the global turn in Medieval Studies and radically transform perspectives on periodization, see Andrea Myers Achi and Seeta Chaganti, "'Semper Novi Quid Ex Africa': Redrawing the Borders of Medieval African Art and Considering Its Implications for Medieval Studies."

17 Akbari and Goodman, "Commentary at the Crossroads," introduction to *Practices of Commentary: Medieval Traditions and Transmissions*, ed. Goodman and Akbari; quotations cited in the text by page number.

18 The terminology of codicology—as a field of study emerging primarily from the study of Western European Christian books—can be problematic when applied across Islamic, Eastern Christian (Syriac, Byzantine, Ethiopic, etc.) traditions, and it is arguably inappropriate to apply it to non-codex book forms used across Asia (including the pōthī-format book, folded books, scrolls, etc.). The very term "codicology" is an unsatisfactory umbrella term for the study of the material aspects of the book, since it was coined to refer to the study of the 'codex' or book bound on one edge. "Manuscriptology" has been offered as an alternative term to cover all handwritten book forms (codices, scrolls, folded books, pōthī-format and other loose leaf format books), but this excludes printed books of all types, privileges the manuscript above the printed book, and largely ignores the importance and elevated status of printing outside of Europe (for example, within the Buddhist traditions of the Himalayas).

19 Ligatus: The Language of Bindings. https://lob.is.ed.ac.uk/

20 Islamic Manuscript Conservation: Terminology. www.islamicmanuscriptconservation.org

21 The French term "doublure" ("lining") has wide application, referring to cloth, paper, or leather, and often has a decorative function. Because of its broad use, Ligatus notes "If the word 'doublure' is used, it should always, wherever possible, be qualified by the component or components from which it is made" (https://lob.is.ed.ac.uk/search?search_api_fulltext=doublure).

22 "Pastedown" generally describes "endleaves that are adhered to the inside of a cover or to the boards after a book is

covered" (https://lob.is.ed.ac.uk/concept/1493).

23 "Board linings" are adhered *before* the book is covered, across the fullest surface of the board. They are often used to counteract board warpage as the covering material shrinks and dries, but in other cases may be used to neaten the appearance of the inner board (https://lob.is.ed.ac.uk/search?search_api_fulltext=board+lining).

24 The Psalter, for devout Ethiopians, is understood as Christ, and the *mahdar* case within which it is held, as the womb of the Virgin Mary. For more on this aspect of care and handling, see the short film by the "Hidden Stories" project, "Traditional Care Practices for Ethiopic Manuscripts" with Eyob Derillo: http://bit.ly/3RYDWGC

25 Jessie Loyer, "Collections Are Our Relatives: Disrupting the Singular, White Man's Joy That Shaped Collections," in *The Collector and the Collected: Decolonizing Area Studies Librarianship*.

26 See Bloom, *Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World*.

27 For one of the earliest publications to explore the performative aspects of textiles, see Baert and Rudy, eds., *Weaving, Veiling and Dressing: Textiles and their Metaphors in the Late Middle Ages*, an interdisciplinary exploration of the use of textile "veils" covering sacred images, clothing on religious sculpture, and the symbolic power of textiles in medieval art.

28 The "BASIRA: Books as Symbols in Renaissance Art" website (https://basira.library.upenn.edu/) hosted by the University of Pennsylvania Libraries, contains thousands of images of medieval and early modern books provides dozens of search fields, including "Textile," under the category "Binding Ornamentation." For any images not tagged as including a textile, users can use the responsive main search field to search using other terms. As the site grows, it will be a powerful resource for studying book use and the importance of textiles across book traditions.

29 On girdle books, see Smith, *The Medieval Girdle Book*.

30 The parchment in the earliest of the manuscripts has been carbon dated between 330–650 CE, and some of the images have been moved from one volume of the gospel to another over time. For a history of these books, see McKenzie *et al*., *The Garima Gospels: Early Illuminated Gospel Books from Ethiopia*.

31 The volumes, Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, MS UBL Or. 1212a–b, entered the collection at Leiden in 1720, already showing decades of wear and use (they were donated by Gabriel the Metropolite of the Syrian Christians to Carolus Schaaf (d. 1729)). Thanks to Karin Scheper for sharing these (first in her "Modest Manuscripts in Fine Fabrics") and to Rosemary Crill for identifying the textiles, which are block-printed ajrakh fabrics. MS UBL Or. 1212a is covered with a cotton textile printed with a stylized fish scale design, likely produced in Sindh Province (today Pakistan), while Or. 1212b is covered with a cloud-patterned fabric particularly associated with production from the neighboring Kutch district of Gujarat, India.

32 "Textiles in Libraries: Context & Conservation" series. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. 2021-2022. https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/textiles-libraries-context-conservation-series

33 Traditional care practices are a central theme of the "Hidden Stories" project, explored across the nine research areas, from Ethiopia and Coastal East Africa and the Himalayas to Indigenous North America. The project is producing a video series on traditional care practices, with speakers from communities of origin discussing the use of books (carrying cases, textile coverings, proper wrapping techniques), storage practices (housing books off the ground, within protective wrappings and enclosures, the use of naturally insecticidal herbs, allowing cats to live in the monastery to keep book-nibbling rodents away, etc.) and methods of caring for books that allow for periodic assessment and cleaning with local materials. The hope is that this information, once made readily accessible through videos and short publications, can be shared more widely and provide better care practices for books living within GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums–plus book conservation labs) outside of their traditional places of production and use. For more on this initiative, see the "Hidden Stories" digital hub: https://hiddenstories.library.utoronto.ca/exhibits/show/traditional-care-practices/overview. See also the forthcoming essays on traditional care of books and book-adjacent objects in the proceedings of the 20th "Care and Conservation of Manuscripts" seminar. For an overview, see Moreton, "Traditional Care Practices for Books: Connecting Local Knowledge to Global Care."

34 Rare Book School seminar, "Race and the Boundaries of the Book: Seven Early American Perspectives" (20 October 2020), featuring Michael Galban, Alan Ojiig Corbiere, and others: "Rather than a traditional academic conference panel, the participants intended to create an engaging conversation by incorporating an innovative blend of pre-recorded video, focused analysis of specific material texts, and a live-streamed panel discussion of how their work engages with larger questions raised by the fields of early American literature and book history." https://rarebookschool.org/rbs-online/race-and-the-boundaries-of-the-book/

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