Men’s fashion, particularly the trends involving undergarments, was once reserved for the elite; today it has become democratised, clear proof of social progress. The aestheticism of the body so highly valued by the Greeks seems to have regained a prominent place in the masculine world. Mirroring the evolution of society’s values, the history of underwear also highlights the continuous, dancing exchange that exists between women’s styles and men’s fashion. Undergarments are concealed, flaunted, stretched or shortened, establishing a game between yesterday’s illicit and today’s chic and thereby denouncing the sense of disgrace that these simple pieces of clothing used to betray.

In this work, Shaun Cole endeavours to re-establish for the first time, through well-researched socio-economic analysis, the importance of men’s underwear in the history of costume from ancient times to today. A reflection of technological progress, this study is full of surprises and powerful reflections on man’s relationship with his body.

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