

**The making of clothing and the making of London,  
1560-1660**

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

### **Declaration of originality**

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution.

### **Statement of word length**

This dissertation is 79,723 words in length, including statistical tables, and excluding front matter, glossary, images, footnotes, and bibliography.

### **Note on this open access edition**

For copyright reasons, images have been removed from this open access edition. Sections of this thesis have been previously published (in edited and altered form) as 'Prodigal Years?: Negotiating luxury and fashioning identity in a seventeenth-century account book,' *Luxury: History, Culture, Consumption* 3:1-2 (November 2016), 7-31 and 'Redressing London: policing clothing in the early modern city,' in *A Cultural History of Law in the Early Modern Age*, ed. Peter Goodrich (Bloomsbury, forthcoming 2017).

## Abstract

In recent years, urban historians have established that the period from 1560 to 1660 was a key era for London's development from a relatively small European urban centre into a large dynamic global capital. This dissertation attempts to intervene in London scholarship by drawing attention to the economic, political, religious and – most significantly – cultural importance of clothing in the city in this period. Using material, visual, literary and archival sources, it explores the ways clothing contributed to the development of early modern London and, in turn, how London's rapid growth changed the making, wearing, and meaning of clothing.

This dissertation places material evidence at the fore using extant objects from museum collections. It also employs the new methodology of reconstruction to explore craft, ingenuity, and emotional self-expression in dress. As clothing infused economic and social life, it draws upon a wide range of evidence, from London guild records, to portraits, travel accounts, personal letters, diaries and account books, plays, sermons and poems.

With a focus on urban experience, this dissertation discusses not only elite luxury consumption, but also investigates the wardrobes of guildsmen, immigrant craftspeople, apprentices and maids – asking what they wore, what they thought about what they were wearing, and how they used clothing to navigate through the city during this time of rapid change. A chapter on the 'London Look' shows how inhabitants and visitors documented the visual and material styles of the city. Exploring the collaborative processes by which clothing was made, worn and appreciated by craftspeople and consumers, chapters on making and buying clothing demonstrate how clothes were made and chart the emergence of a new consumer culture. Existing scholarship on sumptuary laws is challenged in a chapter that demonstrates how laws were enforced in the city while also integrating extant objects into the discussion for the first time. Finally, using a sample of London wills, the dissertation shows how Londoners owned, bequeathed and inherited clothing, and imbued it with emotional meaning.

In sum, this dissertation aims to integrate scholarship on early modern London with material culture studies, and to promote the new methodology of reconstruction for historians. In revealing how London was conceived during a time of rapid change, clothing can be used as a lens through which to explore wider discourse about a city that by 1657 was being described as 'Londinopolis.' Clothing helped to make London into a wealthy, dynamic, and diverse urban centre, and these changes dramatically shaped the way clothing was made and appreciated.

## Acknowledgements

First and unreserved thanks go to my supervisor, Ulinka Rublack, who took a chance on me by agreeing to supervise a thesis about London. After supporting my undergraduate dissertation on sumptuary laws, Paulina Kewes contacted me to tell me that *Dressing Up* had just been published and that I needed to get my hands on a copy; she didn't need to send that email, for I was already devouring it with complete joy. I knew at that moment that I wanted to come to Cambridge to study with Ulinka, and I owe my development as a historian, writer, and thinker largely to her. She has offered me countless opportunities for professional development, and encouraged that elusive work-life balance too. I have gained so much from the community of scholars she nurtures at Cambridge – particularly Katy Bond and Regine Maritz who were there from the beginning with me. Ulinka's astute comments have sharpened my approach and opened my eyes to new possibilities, and I always leave our discussions effervescing with ideas and enthusiasm for the subject. Her work is a source of inspiration, and her supervision was an even greater pleasure than I could have anticipated.

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A PhD is an apprenticeship of sorts, but my steepest learning curve was undertaken at The School of Historical Dress as an apprentice maker. For their enthusiasm, insights, and remarkable patience with me, thanks to Jenny Tiramani, Melanie Braun, Claire Thornton, Karl Robinson, and Rachel Frost. The long list of curators, conservators, and assistants who care for the objects in this thesis are too long to mention here. Particular thanks go to Hilary Davidson, Timothy Long and the Museum of London, Susan North and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Melinda Watt and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, all of whom introduced me to exciting objects, and patiently peered in pockets and doubled over doublets with me. Thanks also to

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A number of friends in Berlin, Cambridge, London, and New York sustained and encouraged me throughout my doctoral studies (and moves!); they know who they are, but they will never know just how much they mean to me. To my partner, Jeremy Cliffe, I know I never stop talking but I don't have the words to thank you. My family – Mum, Dad, and Simon – supported me unconditionally throughout this process. I could not have done this without them all.

## **Note on the Text**

Original spelling and punctuation are retained in quotations, although use of *i* and *j*, and *u* and *v* has been modernised. For clarity, superscripts have been lowered and contractions expanded and, at times, capital letters have been changed. Changes and words omitted are indicated by ellipses.

Throughout the period, the English used the Julian calendar, which took the first quarter of the year as beginning on 25 March ('Lady Day'), the second quarter on 24 June (Midsummer's Day), the third quarter on 29 September (Michaelmas) and the fourth on 1 January (New Year's Day). I have kept the dates consistent with the calendar, but have assumed the year to begin on 1 January (or, in the case where a source is quoted, have indicated the discrepancy by showing the two years e.g. February 1624/5).

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## Introduction

### The Material Metropolis

Woven into a linen damask cloth, now housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum, are the words ‘Londinium Britanniae Metropolis et Emporium’ (Figure 0.1). The napkin was made in Holland in the first half of the seventeenth century and depicts a view of London from St Paul’s to London Bridge from the south bank of the Thames. The city is identified as both the ‘Metropolis’ and ‘Emporium’ of Britain. It is a dense landscape of roofs, spires, and the river teeming with boats and ships.<sup>1</sup> Woven into the napkin’s fine handspun threads, this image of London was copied from an engraving by Claes Jansz Visscher (Figure 0.2).<sup>2</sup> But the weaver has made three changes to the original: transforming a paper panorama into cloth, adding a decorative border of crowns, Tudor roses, and fleurs-de-lys, and annotating it with the words above. London is made material, mapped in threads, ennobled, and declared both city and commercial centre of Britain.

A second napkin survives showing a wider view of the city to the east (Figure 0.3). This is also bordered with regal crowns and fleurs-de-lys, reminding us that London was the centre of the court as well as the commercial hub. But its inscription goes further than its pair in declaring the city’s importance. The title, woven carefully across the scene, declares, ‘Emporiumque Toto Orbe Celeberrimum’. London was, according to this napkin’s weaver, ‘the most celebrated centre of trade in the whole world’.<sup>3</sup> Both napkins are embroidered with small cross-stitched initials (EC), but the identities of their maker and owner have been lost. We do not know who spun the linen threads, wove the damask, sold the napkin, laundered it, or used it in their home (Figure 0.3b).

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous weaver, after Claes Jansz Visscher, *Napkin*, linen damask, c.1635-1616, T.39-1982, Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O359909/napkin-claes-jansz-visscher/>.

<sup>2</sup> For a print of Visscher’s panorama, see Claes Jansz Visscher, *Print of London*, etching, 1616, 1880,1113.1124.1-4, British Museum, [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?assetId=132255&objectId=1628976&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?assetId=132255&objectId=1628976&partId=1).

<sup>3</sup> After Claes Jansz Visscher, *Napkin*, linen damask, c.1616, T.38-1982, Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O359910/napkin-claes-jansz-visscher/>.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 0.1 (above):

Unknown maker after engraving by Claes Jansz Visscher (1587-1652),  
napkin, c.1616-1635, linen damask, 108.2cm x 73.5cm, Victoria and Albert T.39-  
1982

Image edited to better reveal design.

Figure 0.2 (below):

London, looking north across the River Thames, engraving by Claes Jansz  
Visscher, London, 1616.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 0.3 (above):

Unknown maker after engraving by Claes Jansz Visscher (1587-1652),  
Napkin, c.1616-1635, linen damask, 108.2cm x 73.5cm, V&A T.38-1982

Photo taken by Sophie Pitman, at an angle to best reveal design.

Figure 0.3b (below):

Detail of Figure 0.4, with embroidered initials. Photo taken by Sophie Pitman.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

This thesis aims to continue the anonymous weaver's work, by revealing the early modern city in threads and cloth. Using material, visual, literary, and archival sources, it explores the ways clothing contributed to the cultural, economic, and social development of early modern London into the celebrated 'metropolis', 'emporium', and 'centre of trade' celebrated on the napkin. In turn, it explores how these changes, brought about by London's unprecedented growth, changed the making, wearing, and meaning of clothing.

In 1986, A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay identified the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the period in which London emerged as a 'world city'. Changes in demographics, commerce, manufacture, and society across these years, they declared, were 'the making of the metropolis'. Their volume alerted a generation of scholars to the 'phenomenal growth' of London, prompting a surge in scholarship about population growth, size, and global trade.<sup>4</sup> It also fuelled research about the pressures placed on the city (from crime and poverty to plague and fire) and as well as the cultural impact of growth on gender relations, the environment, consumption, scientific developments, and literary culture. A fundamental interest in the lived experiences of Londoners unite these diverse studies by economic, political, social, and cultural historians, and literary scholars, who have uncovered a multiplicity of voices by turning to a rich and diverse archival record.

Building upon Beier and Finlay, and drawing upon the ensuing London historiography, this thesis argues that 'making of the metropolis' was due, in no small part, to the economic, social, and cultural impact of a flourishing clothing culture. Moreover, it claims that the period from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries was also the 'making of clothing' in two senses. First, clothes and the clothing trade became central to the city's cultural identity. Second, London's changing dynamics transformed the ways clothing was made, sold, worn, controlled, and bequeathed.

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<sup>4</sup> A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay, 'Introduction: The Significance of the Metropolis', in *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*, ed. A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay (London: Longman, 1986), 2. These studies are too numerous to list here, but will be cited throughout the thesis. For an overview of the field see Rachel D. Ramsey, 'Redefining, Rediscovering, and Rewriting Early Modern London', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 3, 2 (2013): 136-53.

Early modern London and dress history have both received much scholarly attention in the past two decades. But no one has devoted a study to the changing attitudes towards clothing, and its increasingly frequent appearances in social discourse, in London's unique context. This thesis seeks to address that. It uses clothing as a lens through which to explore and see afresh wider discourses about the city. By focusing on London specifically, rather than England or Europe more generally, new narratives about the history of the city and the history of dress emerge.

### **The exceptionalism of London**

The napkin weaver's claim that London was the 'most celebrated centre of trade in the whole world' by the early seventeenth century was hyperbole, although many commentators described London in similar superlatives. In terms of population, geographical size, and concentration of powerful guilds, the royal court, the law courts, parliament, and merchants, London became increasingly set apart from the rest of England. In 1616, James I stated that soon 'England will onely be London'.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1560 and 1660, London grew from a small city of around 75,000 inhabitants to a major metropolis of over 400,000.<sup>6</sup> As much as one eighth of the English population either lived in or visited London, with many moving to the city in their teens or twenties.<sup>7</sup> London's growth far outpaced the rest of England. Unlike Venice and Antwerp, which had dominated sixteenth-century Europe, it continued to

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<sup>5</sup> Speech to the Star Chamber, 1616, in James I, *The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 343; this is often miscited as 'Soon London will be all England', as noted in D. M. Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth: England Under the Later Tudors* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), 250.

<sup>6</sup> In line with recent scholarship on London, I follow Harding's data; see Vanessa Harding, 'The Population of London, 1550–1700: A Review of the Published Evidence', *The London Journal* 15, 2 (1990): 111–28.

<sup>7</sup> Of the women who deposed before the London consistory courts, over three-quarters declared that they were born outside the city. Around ninety per cent had arrived in London in their teens or twenties. Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 17–21; Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

grow throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> By 1660, London was at least twenty times larger than any other English city, including Norwich, York, Bristol, and Newcastle.<sup>9</sup>

As the capital, London's material success enriched the nation. It was the flagship of the country. It was the 'metropolis' and 'emporium' of James' new 'Britain', as the napkin puts it.<sup>10</sup> Already in 1563 it was estimated that four-fifths of England's overseas trade was concentrated in London.<sup>11</sup> This owes much to the decline of Bruges (a national market which largely sold goods produced in the Low Countries and where English cloth was banned) and the rise of Antwerp (where English cloths were sold in great quantity, alongside other luxury goods from across the world).<sup>12</sup> Direct trade with Antwerp was easy for London, given the location of the mouth of the Thames estuary opposite Antwerp's Scheldt.<sup>13</sup> London merchants established trade routes into the Americas and Asia, bringing back new goods and prompting London's manufacturers to produce import substitutions.<sup>14</sup>

From the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries, London grew rich from this trade in cloth and clothing. Over a quarter of all imports into the city were finished textiles. Raw materials for textile manufacture – silks, threads, dyes, and

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<sup>8</sup> Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer, 'Population Growth and Suburban Expansion', in *London 1500-1700*, ed. Beier and Finlay, 37-59; Karen Newman, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence Stone, 'The Residential Development of the West End of London in the Seventeenth Century', in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J.H. Hexter*, ed. Barbara C. Malament (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 168.

<sup>10</sup> For more on the emergence of Britain, see Jenny Wormald, 'James VI, James I and the Identity of Britain', in *The British Problem, C. 1534-1707*, ed. Brendan Bradshaw and John Morrill (London: Macmillan, 1996), 148-71; Tristan Marshall, *Theatre and Empire: Great Britain on the London Stages Under James VI and I* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Ronald M. Berger, *Most Necessary Luxuries: The Mercers' Company of Coventry, 1550-1680* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 46.

<sup>12</sup> W. Brulez, 'De handelsbalans der Nederlanden in het midden van de 16e eeuw', *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 15 (1960), 280 as cited in Lien Luu, 'Skills and Innovations: A Study of the Stranger Working Community in London, 1550-1600' (PhD Thesis, University of London, 1997), 47; Jan van der Stock, ed., *Antwerp, Story of a Metropolis: 16th-17th Century: Antwerp, Hessenhuis 25 June-10 October 1993* (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju, 1993); Patrick O'Brien, ed., *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Beier and Finlay, 'Introduction', 15.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). On London's role in disseminating these goods into rural England, see Jon Stobart, 'Making the Global Local? Overseas Goods in English Rural Shops, c.1600-1760', *Business History* (2017), 1-18.

calicoes – constituted another quarter. London paid for these luxurious textile imports with woollen goods, which accounted for approximately ninety percent of export trade throughout the period.<sup>15</sup>

National trade, too, became concentrated in London. Regional English markets and fairs declined in the sixteenth century, so producers across England increasingly sent their goods to London, where they were consumed or redistributed to other parts of the country.<sup>16</sup> By 1570, Norwich, England's second largest city, and the heart of the English textile industry where worsted 'stuffs' were produced, was sending most of its manufactures to London overland several times per week. From there they were sold to domestic and international buyers.<sup>17</sup>

London was also a dynamic centre of manufacturing, particularly in the production of clothing. As Beier has shown, from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries, over a fifth of London's population was involved in clothing manufacture, with even more Londoners employed in the connected trade and manufacture of leather, and as clothing merchants or shopkeepers.<sup>18</sup> London's dynamism was largely fuelled by immigration. Its newcomers were mainly young English men and women searching for employment (usually termed 'foreigners'), but also people from overseas (often called 'aliens' or 'strangers') fleeing religious persecution and looking to import goods and skills into the booming capital.<sup>19</sup> Many sought employment in the clothing industry, which transformed the city into a wealthier, more diverse centre of trade and exchange. As inhabitants grew richer and were exposed to an ever-increasing range of goods, fashions developed and circulated.

London did not have a monopoly on the sale of fashionable and luxury goods, which were distributed by a network of petty chapmen and small shops to towns and

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<sup>15</sup> Brian Dietz, 'Overseas Trade and Metropolitan Growth', in *London 1500-1700*, ed. Beier and Finlay, 115-40.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Stuart Willan, *The Inland Trade: Studies in English Internal Trade in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Manchester University Press, 1976), 40-41, 76-77.

<sup>17</sup> Ursula Priestley, 'The Norwich Textile Industry: The London Connection', *The London Journal* 19, 2 (1994): 108-18.

<sup>18</sup> A. L. Beier, 'Engine of Manufacture: The Trades of London', in *London 1500-1700*, ed. Beier and Finlay, 141-67.

<sup>19</sup> Nigel Goose and Lien Luu, *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Sussex Academic Press, 2005); Lien Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2005).

villages across England. But most of these fashionable luxuries, even if they were not manufactured in London, had probably been traded through the city, and often retained their association with it.<sup>20</sup> An area of Stourbridge Fair in Cambridge known for its luxury goods was even named ‘Cheapside’ after London’s primary shopping street.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, those who were able to travel to London to shop, or ask friends and family to shop on their behalf, seem to have taken the opportunity to access to the widest range of goods and skilled craftspeople.<sup>22</sup> As John Styles notes, ‘[t]he density of information networks and personal interactions in which Londoners were enmeshed, educating them as consumers by exposing them to fashion and novelty in a particularly intense way, was unmatched in even the largest provincial town’.<sup>23</sup> In other words, London became a place in which new innovations could thrive.

The idea that cities offered a ‘whole different way of life’ emerged, according to Raymond Williams, in sixteenth-century London.<sup>24</sup> People were attracted there not just for economic opportunities, but also for the cultural and material riches of urban living. Fernand Braudel influentially acknowledged the emergence of global cities in the early modern era, and urban historians have since shown the importance of port cities, which with their concentration of capital, credit, news, and goods, offered a new way of life enriched with innovative commodities.<sup>25</sup> Changes in the making and wearing of clothing in this period were both the product of and a cause of London’s transformation from a

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<sup>20</sup> Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclotting of Rural England Petty Chapmen and Their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984); Joan Thirsk, ‘England’s Provinces: Did They Serve or Drive Material London?’, in *Material London, c.1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 97-108; John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). On luxury goods, see Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). <sup>21</sup> Berger, *Most Necessary Luxuries*, 46.

<sup>22</sup> See for example Mark Merry and Catherine Richardson, *The Household Account Book of Sir Thomas Puckering of Warwick, 1620: Living in London and the Midlands: With His Probate Inventory, 1637* (Stratford upon Avon: Dugdale Society, 2012); Joyce Jeffreys, *The Business and Household Accounts of Joyce Jeffreys, Spinster of Hereford, 1638-1648* (Oxford: British Academy, 2012); Sophie Pitman, ‘Prodigal Years? Negotiating Luxury and Fashioning Identity in a Seventeenth-Century Account Book’, *Luxury* 3, 1-2 (2016): 7-31.

<sup>23</sup> John Styles, ‘Product Innovation in Early Modern London’, *Past & Present* 168, 1 (2000): 129.

<sup>24</sup> Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 47.

<sup>25</sup> Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World*, trans. Siân Reynolds, vol. III, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992) as cited in Newman, *Cultural Capitals*, 3; Annemarie Jordan Gschwend and K. J. P. Lowe, *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2015).

peripheral European city to a major global centre.

## Defining London

When Antony Munday designed a pageant for Lord Mayor and draper Thomas Haynes in 1614, he described London dressed in protective garments:

The walles of any Citty, were termed [...] The Cloathing or garments of the Cittie. Intimating thereby, that as garments and cloathing do ingirt the body, defending it continually from the extremities of colde and heat: so walles, being the best garments of any Citie, do preserve it from all dangerous annoyances[.]<sup>26</sup>

Munday, himself a member of the Drapers' Company, flattered Haynes and his fellow liverymen by allying city history with drapery. The Drapers were among the most prominent of London's livery companies, which elected a Lord Mayor and controlled the pricing, quality, training, and provision of crafts in the city. While much guild history remains to be written, some excellent published and unpublished studies reveal that London's companies were particularly anxious about the city's growth, and the unregulated workers and new inventions which threatened the livelihoods of their members.<sup>27</sup> The guilds were wrapped up in the world of London clothing, not least because a large number of livery companies were directly involved in making and trading dress accessories, cloth, and clothing.<sup>28</sup> Termed 'livery companies', their very

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<sup>26</sup> Anthony Munday, *Himatia-Poleos. The Triumphs of Olde Draperie, or the Rich Cloathing of England*, 2nd ed. (London: Edward Allde, 1614), 5.

<sup>27</sup> N. V. Sleight-Johnson, 'The Merchant Taylors Company of London, 1580-1645, with Special Reference to Government and Politics' (PhD Thesis, University of London, 1989); Ian W. Archer, *The History of the Haberdashers' Company* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co., 1991); Matthew P Davies, 'The Tailors of London and Their Guild, c.1300-1500' (PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 1994); N. V. Sleight-Johnson, 'Aspects of the Tailoring Trade in the City of London in the Late Sixteenth and Earlier Seventeenth Centuries', *Costume*, 37 (2003): 24-32; Matthew P. Davies and Ann Saunders, *The History of the Merchant Taylors' Company* (Leeds: Maney, 2004); N. V. Sleight-Johnson, 'The Merchant Taylors' Company of London under Elizabeth I: Tailors' Guild or Company of Merchants?', *Costume*, 41 (2007): 45-52.

<sup>28</sup> Including, but not limited to, the Drapers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Merchant Taylors, Haberdashers, Clothworkers, Dyers, Leathersellers, Girdlers, Broderers, Glovers, Feltmakers, Framework Knitters, Needlemakers, and Pinmakers. For more on guilds, see George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London: Methuen, 1908); Robert Ashton, *The City and the Court, 1603-1643* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 43-82; Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis, eds, *Guilds, Society and Economy in London 1450-1800* (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 2002).

identity referred to the ‘livery’ clothing that distinguished guild members (or as they referred to themselves, ‘citizens’) from non-members.<sup>29</sup>

Munday’s description shows how clothing was understood as defensive, structural, and – crucially – associated with the city itself.<sup>30</sup> But it also evoked a widespread nostalgia for the more clearly defined, walled London of the past.<sup>31</sup> Comprised of 110 separate parishes, nearly thirty wards, and a dozen or so liberties, London swelled from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries. The term ‘city’ had many meanings, the most limited being the space lying within the Roman and medieval city walls. Since the early thirteenth century, civic authorities extended their jurisdiction to the ‘bars’, markings on posts of the main roads outside of the walls. The city had also gained the borough of Southwark, south of the river Thames, in 1550, and suburbs were sprawling outside the official city bounds.<sup>32</sup> In line with much scholarship on early modern London, this study will consider the separate city of Westminster, as well as the many parishes falling outside the walls of the ‘City of London’, as part of the metropolis of London. Many of these spaces lay outside the ‘City’ itself, and so were subject to other jurisdictions, but maps, letters, and plays suggest that the whole metropolitan space was considered to be ‘London’.<sup>33</sup> The walls maintained a symbolic importance, however, as Munday shows, but clothing – like people and buildings – sprawled outside of these old bounds.

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<sup>29</sup> For more on livery and its role in the early modern economy, see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). On the language of freedom, see John Michael Archer, *Citizen Shakespeare: Freeman and Aliens in the Language of the Plays* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>30</sup> For more on *Himatia Poleos*, see Roze Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England: Textual Constructions of a National Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 167-73. For more on pageants, see Andrew Gordon, ‘Performing London: The Map and the City in Ceremony’, in *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 69-89.

<sup>31</sup> Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Natasha Korda, “‘The Sign of the Last’: Gender, Material Culture, and Artisanal Nostalgia in The Shoemaker’s Holiday”, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, 3 (2013): 573-97.

<sup>32</sup> Vanessa Harding, ‘City, Capital, and Metropolis: The Changing Shape of Seventeenth-Century London’, in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 117-44.

<sup>33</sup> Unless capitalised, when referring to the ‘city’ I refer to the whole urban area, rather than the ‘City of London’, bounded by the walls.

In 1560, London was largely just the walled city, a narrow band of suburbs, Westminster to the west, and Southwark to the south of the Thames. As Vanessa Harding has shown, London was ‘compact, definable, separate from its surrounding agrarian hinterland’, as depicted – perhaps with some exaggeration – in Braun and Hogenberg’s 1572 map (Figure 0.4). A century later, London had swelled ‘into a continuous and shapeless metropolis’, engulfing Westminster and Southwark. A Londoner walking from Piccadilly in the west to Limehouse in the east in 1560 would have started and ended his journey surrounded by fields; by 1660, he would have been walking on streets and past houses the whole way.<sup>34</sup>

London was diverse. Building use in the city and suburbs was mixed, like the wealth, rank, and occupations of those who lived there.<sup>35</sup> Many spatial studies of London have developed from Henri Lefebvre’s assertion that space is actively constructed by humans, and that the cultural climate of any city is related to the way its space is conceived.<sup>36</sup> Londoners experienced the city in many different ways, depending on their age, wealth, social status, and gender, but many shared an interest in the history and present conditions of the city, and the desire to establish an urban identity.<sup>37</sup> Benedict Anderson’s theory of ‘imagined communities’ also permeates

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<sup>34</sup> Harding, ‘City, Capital, and Metropolis: The Changing Shape of Seventeenth-Century London’, 177-78.

<sup>35</sup> Lena Cowen Orlin, ‘Temporary Lives in London Lodgings’, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71, 1 (2008): 223.

<sup>36</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Wiley, 1992).

<sup>37</sup> For example, Ian W. Archer, ‘Social Networks in Restoration London: The Evidence of Samuel Pepys’s Diary’, in *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, ed. Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 76-95; Laura Gowing, ‘“The Freedom of the Streets”: Women and Social Space, 1560-1640’, in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 130-51; Andrew Gordon and Bernhard Klein, *Literature, Mapping, and the Politics of Space in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Mary Bly, ‘Playing the Tourist in Early Modern London: Selling the Liberties Onstage’, *PMLA* 122, 1 (2007): 61-71; Jasmine Kilburn-Toppin, ‘Crafting Artisanal Identities in Early Modern London: The Spatial, Material and Social Practices of Guild Communities c.1560-1640’ (PhD Thesis, The Royal College of Art, 2013).

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Figure 0.4:  
Joris Hoefnagel, *Londinum Feracissimi Angliae Regni Metropolis* (G. Braun and F. Hogenberg, 1572; this edition published Cologne c.1600-1623). Map showing the cities of London and Westminster.  
British Library, Maps C.29.e.1.

recent work which explores how Londoners experienced the city as fragmented, diverse, and plural.<sup>38</sup>

Sometimes this diversity was celebrated. By 1657, James Howell dubbed the city 'Londinopolis', stating 'London is not inferior to any City whatsoever'. Howell admitted that its dynamism owed much to the skills and inventions of immigrants: 'tis true that mingling with *Forreiners*, hath much advantag' her in this kind.<sup>39</sup> Many of these innovations were in clothing and cloth, such as the light-weight textiles termed the 'new draperies' introduced by Dutch refugees after 1560. Immigrants pioneered new industries including, as Natasha Korda and Lien Luu have shown, the starching and silk trades.<sup>40</sup> However, as Jacob Selwood has suggested, given 'the importance of the cloth trade for the economy of England as a whole, and for London in particular [...] textile production was a locus of anti-stranger sentiment'.<sup>41</sup>

### **Clothed Londoners**

Ian Munro has suggested that population growth in early modern London has been 'employed as a useful shorthand for the transitional nature of urban life in the period', but reminds us of the 'phenomenological implications of population growth in the city' with 'the visible and tangible presence of more and more *bodies*'.<sup>42</sup> This thesis considers

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<sup>38</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); J. F. Merritt, ed., *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Tarnya Cooper, Daisy Hawker, and London University College, *Paper Cities: Topography and Imagination in Urban Europe, c.1490-1780* (London: UCL Art Collections, University College London, 2003).

<sup>39</sup> James Howell, *Londinopolis an Historicall Discourse or Perlustration of the City of London, the Imperial Chamber, and Chief Emporium of Great Britain: Whereunto Is Added Another of the City of Westminster, with the Courts of Justice, Antiquities, and New Buildings Thereunto Belonging* (London: J. Streater for Henry Twiford, George Sawbridge, Thomas Dring, and John Place, 1657), 397.

<sup>40</sup> Natasha Korda, *Labor Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Natasha Korda, 'Staging Alien Women's Work in Civic Pageants', in *Working Subjects in Early Modern English Drama* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 53-68; Natasha Korda, 'Sex, Starch-Houses and Poking-Sticks: Alien Women's Work and the Technologies of Material Culture', *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 5, Special Forum on "Sex and the Early Modern Woman: Representation, Practice, and Culture" (2010): 201-8; Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700*.

<sup>41</sup> Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 34-38.

<sup>42</sup> Ian Munro, *The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London the City and Its Double* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 4.

the visible and tangible presence of more and more *clothed* bodies. Taking into account the broadest definition of Londoners as possible, it incorporates people across national, gender, social, and wealth spectrums. As Amy Erickson has argued, it can be difficult to distinguish between women's actual experiences and the perceptions of men who recorded this experience.<sup>43</sup> Laura Gowing pioneered the systematic use of church court records to access the language of sex and the experiences of women in early modern London, as told through their depositions.<sup>44</sup> More recent work has revealed information about the working lives, social connections, quarrels, expectations, and disappointments of London women.<sup>45</sup> These court records include repeated references to clothing – as a gift during courtship, a stolen commodity in marital breakdown, and a means for both men and women in court to assess their 'worth' (sometimes described as 'nothing save the clothes on my back').<sup>46</sup> Clothing was clearly central to the lives of London women.

Work by Amanda Bailey, Roze Hentschell, and Alexandra Shepard reminds us that the city was a space where ideas about gender clashed and were challenged, and where manhood was 'negotiated, made visible, and even engendered'.<sup>47</sup> Clothes often mediated these ideas. Men's clothes were just as expensive and elaborate as female dress, if not more so. Although an emerging body of rhetoric allied excessive consumption of dress with female vice, men were just as likely to make, buy, and flaunt their clothing as women.<sup>48</sup> Will Fisher's work on codpieces, hair, beards, and handkerchiefs highlights the role of accessories and appearances in the definition of

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<sup>43</sup> Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>44</sup> Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London*, paperback (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>45</sup> Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Hubbard, *City Women*; Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>46</sup> Hubbard, *City Women*, 59.

<sup>47</sup> Amanda Bailey and Roze Hentschell, *Masculinity and the Metropolis of Vice, 1550-1650* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3. Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>48</sup> Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

early modern gender, and recent work on ornamentation demonstrates how accessories could constitute identity, as well as mediate social and political relationships.<sup>49</sup>

This thesis builds on influential work which has established how cloth and clothing shaped identities in early modern Europe. Using political discourses and literary sources, Hilary Larkin and Roze Hentschell have shown that woollen cloth was central to the construction of English national identity.<sup>50</sup> Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have convincingly demonstrated that clothes are material memories which constitute and reveal identity.<sup>51</sup> Ulinka Rublack has established that clothing was as important as paintings in the aesthetic movement of the Renaissance, and shown how dress and its visual representation ‘contributed to people’s self-awareness of themselves as subjects who visually explored the world’.<sup>52</sup> Rublack’s work on Germany, combined with excellent recent studies of Spanish and Italian clothing culture, provides a rich context for London’s clothing culture.<sup>53</sup>

Many excellent studies of early modern clothing have privileged the elites who left behind clearer material and textural trails for scholars to follow. Work by Susan Vincent and Hannah Greig, as well as recent exhibitions such as *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion* (2013), have showcased attitudes towards and depictions of the most sumptuous clothes in this period.<sup>54</sup> This thesis will take a broader view of clothing by looking not just at cutting-edge fashions and sumptuous textiles, but also shoes built

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<sup>49</sup> Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Bella Mirabella, ed., *Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England*; Hilary M. Larkin, *The Making of Englishmen: Debates on National Identity 1550-1650* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014).

<sup>51</sup> Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*.

<sup>52</sup> Ulinka Rublack, ‘Renaissance Dress, Cultures of Making, and the Period Eye’, *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 23, 1 (2016): 6-34; Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 259, 285.

<sup>53</sup> In particular, the pioneering Carole Collier Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence: Families, Fortunes, & Fine Clothing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Elizabeth Currie, *Fashion and Masculinity in Renaissance Florence* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Amanda Wunder, ‘Women’s Fashions and Politics in Seventeenth-Century Spain: The Rise and Fall of the Guardainfante’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 68, 1 (2015): 133-86. Most recently, Evelyn Welch, ed., *Fashioning the Early Modern: Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

<sup>54</sup> Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003); Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Anna Reynolds, *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013).

to withstand London weather, imitation velvets, and clothes made fashionable on the cheap through innovative alterations. While jewellery and accessories merit their own studies, and are not the prime focus of this thesis, in some cases they are included to provide an idea of the complete London look and to show connections between objects and clothes worn on the body.<sup>55</sup>

This thesis builds on such work in three ways. First, it focuses specifically on London, rather than England or Europe more broadly, to ask how clothing contributed to the creation of a distinctly urban identity and how this manifested itself through literary, material, visual, and archival sources. Second, this study is based on the conviction that clothing can reveal early modern preoccupations with consumption, materiality, making, and ownership, as well as self-presentation and identity, across the social spectrum. This is a study about people – what they wore, what it meant to them, and how clothing helped them to navigate in a rapidly changing city. But as the napkins show, many of our subjects – men and women who made, bought, used, and passed on textiles and clothing – are anonymous. By embracing this anonymity, and connecting objects with archival, literary, and visual sources using interdisciplinary approaches, the clothing culture of early modern London can be revealed in all its diversity. Using objects as generative, rather than illustrative sources, is my third intervention in existing studies.

### **Clothing: The basics**

As Lorna Weatherill and Margaret Spufford have shown, clothing was the ‘second largest expenditure after food and food production’ in seventeenth-century households.<sup>56</sup> But clothes were not just bought commodities. Many Londoners were

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<sup>55</sup> See for example Mirabella, *Ornamentalism*; see also Natasha Awais-Dean, ‘Bejewelled: The Male Body and Adornment in Early Modern England’ (PhD Thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2012). For the most important collection of London jewellery from the early modern period, see Hazel Forsyth, *London’s Lost Jewels: The Cheapside Hoard* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2013).

<sup>56</sup> Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1996), 298-299, 309; Margaret Spufford, ‘The Cost of Apparel in Seventeenth-Century England, and the Accuracy of Gregory King’, *Economic History Review* LIII, 4 (2000): 677-705.

skilful with needle and thread, and would have been able to make, alter, and repair their own belongings. Some even spun and wove their own cloth. Others (particularly apprentices and servants) received clothing as part of their salary, and members of wealthier households often wore the uniform livery of their employers.

While the aim of this thesis is not to trace the rise and fall of each fashion, or to offer a comprehensive account of the wardrobes of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century men and women, it is worth providing a basic account of the garments and materials worn throughout the period.<sup>57</sup> From cradle to grave, all men, women, and children wore linen next to their skin. Babies were swaddled in linen cloths, children and adults alike wore a long shirt or smock as underwear, and at death men and women were wound in a linen sheet.<sup>58</sup> Linen accessories, such as ruffs and cuffs and coifs, protected outer clothing from grease and sweat, and highlighted the face and hands of their wearers. Light, absorbent, and (most importantly) washable, linen made from flax plants was produced in a wide range of qualities.<sup>59</sup> The finest lawns, mainly produced in Flanders and the Low Countries, were so delicately spun and woven that they were soft and nearly transparent, while coarser canvas and sackcloth was durable and stiff. Amateur and professional seamstresses were responsible for most of the production of linen clothes, stitching smocks, shirts, handkerchiefs, ruffs, cuffs, bands, cuffs, stockings, and coifs.

On top of this linen layer, the basic outfit of the early modern man was a 'suit of apparel' which at minimum comprised a doublet and breeches and/or hose connected at the waist by points or hooks. Most men owned at least one gown, cloak or cassock as an outer garment, and often a jerkin or waistcoat. For women, the basic dress was a bodice and skirt. The skirt was sometimes worn open to show the underskirt, called a

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<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Men's Clothes: 1600-1900* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1964); Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Women's Clothes: 1600-1930* (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1968); Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 3: The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women, c1560-1620* (London; New York: Macmillan, 1985); Janet Arnold, Jenny Tiramani, and Santina Levey, *Patterns of Fashion 4: The Cut and Construction of Linen Shirts, Smocks, Neckwear, Headwear and Accessories for Men and Women C. 1540 - 1660* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>58</sup> For linen throughout the life cycle, see Alice Dolan, 'The Fabric of Life: Linen and Life Cycle in England, 1678-1810' (PhD Thesis, University of Hertfordshire, 2015).

<sup>59</sup> Susan North, 'Dress and Hygiene in Early Modern England: A Study of Advice and Practice' (PhD Thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2012).

kirtle or petticoat. Jackets or waistcoats were worn as more informal or working wear, and for outdoor or formal dress, floor-length gowns were worn open or closed.

The fashionable body shape altered over the century between 1560 and 1660, and was partly achieved in women through tailor-made boned bodices (called a ‘pair of bodies’), stays, farthingales, and bum rolls shaped with whalebone, reeds, card, stuffing, and animal hairs. The ideal male shape was fashioned through padding, stitching, and stuffing contained between the layers of the doublet. Clothing was in many ways sculptural, at times tailored very close to the human form or to exaggerate parts of the body. By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, it was softer and looser, with intentional drapes and folds.

Clothing was most frequently made of wool or leather, or finer materials like silks or velvets, and lined in linen. It could be trimmed with fur, lace, and ribbons and decorated with embroidery, knotting, pinking (small cuts) or slashes, or stamped with hot presses. Outdoors, men and women customarily covered their heads with hats or caps, and wore gloves, shoes, and boots, usually made of leather. Stockings, knitted in wool or silk, were worn for warmth and fashion by both men and women, and could be held up with garters.

## **Time**

This thesis spans a large time frame, beginning as Elizabeth I started her long rule of England, and ending with the Restoration of the English, Scottish, and Irish monarchies as Charles II reclaimed the throne after the interregnum. London was the centre of the court and government, and the proximity of monarchy and parliament influenced both fashion trends and sumptuary controls. But while the royal progresses celebrating the coronation of kings and queens were staged across London, their occasions are not the bookends or focal points of this work. Rather, as the 1666 Great Fire of London is such a monumental event in the history of London, and the rich diaries of Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) begin so neatly on 1 January 1660, this date has come to mark a key turning

point in London scholarship.<sup>60</sup> Thanks in part to Pepys, documentation post-1660 is rich and illustrated with full and lively narratives; no thanks to the fire, pre-1666 London history is more scarce.

A number of studies stop in the 1640s, before the Civil War and interregnum. The war certainly made an impact upon the city; soldiers were a familiar sight on the Strand, rents fell, legal cases dwindled, and businesses like the New Exchange suffered as their gentry clientele returned to their country estates, joined the army, or relocated to royalist Oxford. Julia Merritt and Ben Coates have shown, however, that these were only temporary disruptions.<sup>61</sup> After the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1649, rents gradually rose again, the Küffler dye works reopened, and coach travel returned to popularity. In 1653 the royalist dowager the countess of Devonshire remarked that even in ‘these our cloudy days [...] the garb in the town is ladies all in scarlet, shining and glittering as bright as an antymaske’.<sup>62</sup> While a focused study of clothing during the Civil War and interregnum is needed, this thesis sees a broad continuation of urban clothing developments across the period.

Key work on early modern material culture often begins with the 1660 restoration of Charles II. Scholars like Beverly Lemire, John Styles, and Lorna Weatherill see this as the beginning of the period in which ordinary English people could acquire exotic commodities, an increasing range of household goods, and multiple outfits made of decorative fabrics.<sup>63</sup> Important studies of luxury and global goods have also tended to focus on the long eighteenth century; however, as the recent Fitzwilliam exhibition *Treasured Possessions from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* demonstrated, many

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<sup>60</sup> Key documentary work has tended to be organised for the pre- or post-fire periods, for example Derek Keene and Vanessa Harding, *A Survey of Documentary Sources for Property Holding in London before the Great Fire*, London Record Society 22 (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 1985), <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=582>.

<sup>61</sup> Ben Coates, *The Impact of the English Civil War on the Economy of London, 1642-50* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); J. F. Merritt, *Westminster 1640-60: A Royal City in a Time of Revolution* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013).

<sup>62</sup> Letter from Countess Dowager of Devonshire to Lord Bruce, William Page, ed., *The Manuscripts of the Duke of Somerset, the Marquis of Ailesbury, and the Rev. Sir T.H.G. Puleston, Bart* (London: H. M. Stationery Office by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898), 159; also cited in Merritt, *Westminster 1640-60*, 217.

<sup>63</sup> Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997); Styles, *The Dress of the People*; Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*.

attitudes towards belongings, whether global, luxurious, or humble, were shared and reconfigured across a longer early modern period.<sup>64</sup> Beverly Lemire's work on dress in the post-1660 period was driven by a realisation that, 'by the last half of the seventeenth century the clothing trade was neither novel nor original and therein lies its importance', she writes; '[it] is ironic that this trade received relative [*sic*] little attention from historians when contemporaries found it such a rewarding avenue of advancement'.<sup>65</sup> This thesis seeks to contribute to histories of clothing in particular and early modern material culture more generally, and to show the roots and divergences of these post-1660 developments and impulses in the previous century.

Studies of London as a 'fashion capital' also begin in later eras, with Christopher Breward's *Fashioning London* beginning with the dandy looks of what he terms the 'new' West End in the 1790s.<sup>66</sup> Breward's work is a compelling account of how certain fashions came to be associated with London, but this thesis sees the development of the fashionable West End in the seventeenth century, and the stylish 'guls' who haunted London's theatres and churches two hundred years before the dandy, as evidence that London became a 'fashion capital' around the turn of the seventeenth century.

## Sources and methodology

One reason historians have shied away from a focus on this period is, in Margaret Spufford's opinion, the 'relative paucity of source material before 1660'.<sup>67</sup> Despite a rising interest in dress history, clothing is still, in Spufford's words, 'something of a Cinderella in seventeenth-century history'.<sup>68</sup> In fact, as textile specialists have pointed

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<sup>64</sup> John Brewer and Roy Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (Routledge, 1993); Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Victoria Avery, Melissa Calaresu, and Mary Laven, eds, *Treasured Possessions from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2015).

<sup>65</sup> Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce*, 38-40.

<sup>66</sup> Christopher Breward, *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

<sup>67</sup> Spufford, 'The Cost of Apparel in Seventeenth-Century England, and the Accuracy of Gregory King', 678.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 677.

out, ‘textiles compose the largest imaginable body of material culture’, and surviving clothing is neither as drab as the downtrodden Cinderella, nor an imaginary fairy-tale, although many objects in museum collections, historic houses, and private collections are certainly as fragile as a glass slipper.<sup>69</sup> Extant clothes from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries are, however, unrepresentatively elite (most belonged not to courtiers, but to the gentry), and many have been altered by their nineteenth-century owners who used them enthusiastically for fancy dress.<sup>70</sup> Some quotidian woollen and leather goods have been excavated from London sites, but many remain un-catalogued, un-photographed, and understudied.

Working with a predominantly textual source base, Vincent discovered that ‘[d]espite, or perhaps because of the way apparel featured in daily life, evidence is everywhere, and nowhere [...] Typically commentary about clothing is dispersed widely throughout a range of records whose main subject is almost always something other than dress’.<sup>71</sup> As one of London’s most important industries, as a signifier of social status and gender, as a subject of legal and cultural contention, and as alluring and innovative fashion, it is no wonder that clothing matters were debated in parliament, played out on stage, sung out in ballads and London’s street cries, discussed in letters and diaries, and depicted in images.<sup>72</sup> This thesis employs as broad a source base as

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<sup>69</sup> Elizabeth Kramer, ‘Introduction’, in *Textiles and Text: Re-Establishing the Links between Archival and Object-Based Research: Postprints*, ed. Maria Hayward and Elizabeth Kramer (London: Archetype Publications, 2007), xi.

<sup>70</sup> Madeleine Ginsburg, Avril Hart, and Valerie Mendes, *Four Hundred Years of Fashion*, ed. Natalie Rothstein (London: V&A Publications, 1992); Melanie Braun et al., *17th-Century Men’s Dress Patterns, 1600-1630* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016).

<sup>71</sup> Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> The new commercial theatre, Howard suggests, made ‘city space socially legible’: Jean E. Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 3; Sean Shesgreen, *The Criers and Hawkers of London: Engravings and Drawings* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990). For more on the ‘cries of London’, see Charles Hindley, *A History of the Cries of London: Ancient and Modern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). On clothing in ballads, see Angela McShane and Clare Backhouse, ‘Top-Knots and Lower Sorts: Popular Print and Promiscuous Consumption in Late Seventeenth-Century England’, in *Printed Images in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. Michael Hunter (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 337-57. More bills were initiated in parliament regarding the cloth trade than for any other economic activity. In parliament, MPs debated the statutory weights and breadths of woollen cloths, and pondered over the relative qualities of wools. They passed acts to ensure that English cloths were of a high enough standard and made in the right sizes and colours to be marketable overseas, and prohibited the use of certain materials in the felting of hats. They examined proposals to control the labour force of spinners and weavers, and discussed how tenting

possible, including archival material (from London's mayoral courts, livery company records, account books, wills, personal diaries, and letters), visual material (such as *alba amicorum*, costume books, portraits, and maps), literary sources (including ballads, plays, and sermons), and material sources spanning elite velvet hose to excavated fragments of shoes. Each of these sources has challenges. For example, literary texts like plays and satires are exaggerated, but can sometimes be almost ethnographic in detail and were witty or barbed because they were in some ways plausible or recognisable. The drawbacks of extant objects – being unrepresentatively elite, sometimes altered, and often lacking detailed provenance – are limiting, but as long as the historian recognises these limitations they are generative sources.

The greatest challenge for historians of clothing, Daniel Roche has explained, is not a lack of sources, but their diversity: 'the history of clothes has its sources, they are abundant, though difficult to master from one single approach.'<sup>73</sup> Breadth is a boon as well as a challenge, however, for reasons that Lou Taylor has explained: 'because of the multi-faceted "levels" at which clothing functions within any society and culture, clothing provides a powerful analytical tool across many disciplines.'<sup>74</sup> Thanks to the wide range of source material, this thesis draws upon approaches from economic, social, and cultural historians of urban history, London history, dress history, textile history, the history of senses, the history of emotions, and material culture studies, and touches on histories of consumerism and science. As Taylor argues, '[t]he most dynamic research in dress history has indeed now fused artifact-based and theoretical

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(stretching) cloth or adding oils and waters to wool should be prevented, to ensure a high quality. They listened to repeated bills from the Curriers' Company, who were desperately attempting to regain the right to buy and sell leather, following a prohibitive statute in 1563 that did not recognise them as leather-using craftsmen. The large number of bills attests to the rapidly changing cloth and leather industries, the active lobbying and petitioning of individuals and London companies, and also the widespread expertise regarding cloth and clothing manufacture and trade. Members of Parliament would have had to hear, understand, and debate repeated explanations of the processes of making and selling textiles and leather goods. For bills and laws concerning textile and leather trades, see David Dean, *Law-Making and Society in Late Elizabethan England: The Parliament of England, 1584-1601* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 133-44.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, originally published in French as *La Culture des apparences*, 1989. First published in England in 1994 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 20, as cited in Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 6.

<sup>74</sup> Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 1.

approaches', which requires 'interdisciplinary good practice'.<sup>75</sup> In doing so, this study cannot be comprehensive in scope, and future work on clothing in London (in particular on court records, livery company records, and self-narratives, or focusing on particular communities or areas of London) would be most welcome.

Given this interdisciplinary approach, it is beyond the scope of this introduction to trace all the influential scholarship in each of these areas, although throughout the thesis, the most important texts will be acknowledged. It is worth, though, noting those influential works which have particularly laid the way for this thesis, and the development of material culture studies.

Interest in everyday life and '*mentalités*' was promulgated by the social historians of the *Annales* school, particularly Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel, inspiring work on the consumption of goods.<sup>76</sup> Economic and social historians have revealed changing modes of production and consumption in early modern England. Importantly, John Styles has demonstrated how early modern London developed into a sophisticated space in which innovative products were produced and appreciated, and Joan Thirsk has shown the how new products fostered new modes of consumption in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.<sup>77</sup> Craig Muldrew drew attention to the importance of credit to the English urban 'middling sort'; it enabled them to buy more things, and in turn raise their social status, and improve their reputation and creditworthiness.<sup>78</sup> Alexandra Shepard has demonstrated that 'attaching value to one's own and other

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>76</sup> Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973); Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: The Perspective of the World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992); Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992); Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992). For the history of the Annales School, see André Burguière, *The Annales School: An Intellectual History*, trans. Jean Marie Todd (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009); Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Daniel Miller, ed., *Consumption: Theory and Issues in the Study of Consumption*, vol. I (London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2001).

<sup>77</sup> Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London'.

<sup>78</sup> Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

people's possessions was a routine part of quotidian social relations', and that in the century between 1550 to 1650 there was a massive increase in the value of goods owned by witnesses in court.<sup>79</sup> Margaret Spufford detected an increase in the consumption of clothing, particularly linens, in the later seventeenth century, and Shepard reminds us that increasing consumption was also a form of saving, for goods retained significant value which could be released through pawning or re-selling them.<sup>80</sup>

These English studies have been complemented by work on a global 'material Renaissance'.<sup>81</sup> Richard Goldthwaite's study of a consumer-led Italian Renaissance demonstrated that privileging of fine arts (paintings, sculpture, and architecture) is a modern construct, showing that 'decorative' arts and skilled crafts were highly valued in early modern Italy.<sup>82</sup> Lisa Jardine extended Goldthwaite's focus, suggesting that 'wordly goods' are not 'a record of acquisitiveness limited to Italy', but rather they demonstrate the interest in exotic materials and skills, and 'celebrat[ed] global mercantilism'.<sup>83</sup> Textiles, particularly cotton, have elegantly illustrated many themes of early modern global material culture.<sup>84</sup> A wealth of scholarship has emerged which demonstrates the ways objects were purchased, given as gifts, collected, and used to mark rites of passage, decorate the home, and foster sociable relationships.<sup>85</sup> Jan de Vries has suggested that

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<sup>79</sup> Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 112, 278-79.

<sup>80</sup> Spufford, *The Great Reclathing of Rural England Petty Chapmen and Their Wares in the Seventeenth Century*, 144-45; Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 298-99.

<sup>81</sup> The term was coined by Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch, *The Material Renaissance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

<sup>82</sup> Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

<sup>83</sup> Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 9.

<sup>84</sup> Giorgio Riello and Prasanna Parthasarathi, *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Beverly Lemire, *Cotton* (Oxford: Berg, 2011); Giorgio Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric That Made the Modern World* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Amelia Peck, ed., *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade: 1500-1800* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013). For one impressive study, see Zara Anishanslin, *Portrait of a Woman in Silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016).

<sup>85</sup> Including, but not limited to, Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997); Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400-1600* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005); Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (London: British Museum Press, 2001); O'Malley and Welch, *The Material Renaissance*; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge

the power of objects motivated Europeans to work longer hours to generate income to purchase new kinds of luxuries – an ‘industrious revolution’.<sup>86</sup> Literary scholars have also begun to pay attention to objects; thanks to the widespread public interest in Shakespeare and the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, recent exhibitions and podcasts have brought an inspiring range of early modern English objects and scholarship to a wider audience.<sup>87</sup>

This ‘material turn’ owes much to sociology and cultural anthropology, particularly Marcel Mauss’s canonical theory of the gift, Arjun Appadurai’s claims that human agency imbues objects with meaning, and Nicholas Thomas’s exploration of the ways objects become ‘entangled’ and take on meaning through repeated human transaction and reuse.<sup>88</sup> Although historians differ in their use of objects, the field of material culture is based on a simple definition, outlined by one of its American grandees:

Material culture is the study through artifacts of the beliefs – values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions – of a particular community or society at a given time. The term *material culture* is also frequently used to refer to artifacts

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University Press, 2008); Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and Its Meanings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010); Peta Motture and Michelle O’Malley, *Re-Thinking Renaissance Objects: Design, Function and Meaning* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2011); Renata Ago, *Gusto for Things: A History of Objects in Seventeenth-Century Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Paula Findlen, *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, eds, *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Meredith Martin and Daniela Bleichmar, eds, *Objects in Motion in the Early Modern World* 38, *Art History Special Issue*, 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Jan de Vries, ‘The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution’, *The Journal of Economic History* 54, 2 (1994): 249-70; Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>87</sup> Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Jonathan Gil Harris, ‘Shakespeare’s Hair: Staging the Object of Material Culture’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 52, 4 (2001): 479-91; Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare’s Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton, *Shakespeare: Staging the World* (London: British Museum Press, 2012); Neil MacGregor, *Shakespeare’s Restless World: An Unexpected History in Twenty Objects*, in collaboration with a BBC Radio 4 podcast series (London: Penguin, 2012); Tarnya Cooper and Jane Eade, eds, *Elizabeth I & Her People* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2013).

<sup>88</sup> Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, trans. W. D. Halls, *Essai sur le don* first published in 1950, English edition first published 1954 (Oxford: Routledge, 2002); Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

themselves [...] Material culture is singular as a mode of cultural investigation in its use of objects as primary data, but in its scholarly purposes it can be considered a branch of cultural history.<sup>89</sup>

Given this widespread interest, and the rich cultural histories of the city, it is surprising that there has been no focused study of material culture in early modern London more generally, let alone clothing in particular. The inspiring collection *Material London c.1600* (2000) encouraged historians to incorporate a wider range of sources, such as playtexts, prints, and archaeological remains in urban histories of London. Yet while its authors explored a breadth of subjects from a range of disciplines, material culture was not their focus.<sup>90</sup> There is, however, a rich and growing assemblage of objects excavated from the city as well as a wealth of museum objects, suggesting that much more exciting work can be done.<sup>91</sup>

### **Reconstructing London clothing**

While the field of early modern material culture has flourished over the past decade, scholars have largely focused on consumption and use, and only recently have started to think about how the materiality (the physical properties) of objects shaped emotions, cognition, and sensory bodily experience.<sup>92</sup> Early modern Londoners engaged with the multi-sensory dimensions of clothing such as the smells of manufacture and wear, the feel of textiles, and the sounds of knitting or dressing.<sup>93</sup> They were also highly attuned

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<sup>89</sup> Jules David Prown, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method', *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, 1 (1982): 1.

<sup>90</sup> Lena Cowen Orlin, ed., *Material London, c.1600* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

<sup>91</sup> Geoff Egan, *Material Culture in London in an Age of Transition: Tudor and Stuart Period Finds C1450-c1700 from Excavations at Riverside Sites in Southwark* (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2005); Sam Pfizenmaier, *Charterhouse Square: Black Death Cemetery and Carthusian Monastery, Meat Market and Suburb*, Crossrail Archaeology (London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2016).

<sup>92</sup> Ulinka Rublack, 'Matter in the Material Renaissance', *Past & Present* 219, 1 (2013): 41-85.

<sup>93</sup> Intriguingly, work on the sense of smell seems to be most popular in writing on early modern England; see Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Mark S. R. Jenner, 'Follow Your Nose? Smell, Smelling, and Their Histories', *The American Historical Review* 116, 2 (2011): 335-51. Using Donne's 'Elegy 19 To his Mistress Going to Bed' while actors disrobed in period costume, Tiramani was able to demonstrate the way Donne plays with the aural experience of undressing; Jenny Tiramani, 'The Elizabethans Undressed' (National Portrait Gallery, 25 October 2013).

not only to the economic and social worth of clothing, but also appreciated and understood the material properties of textiles. At least one fifth of Londoners, and in practice probably at least half of the urban populace, were highly skilled craftsmen and women, and would have had a trained eye with which to appreciate and visually interrogate the clothing they saw worn by others on the city streets.<sup>94</sup> The cultural value of early modern clothing must have been elevated when so many men, women, and even children had hands-on daily encounters with textile materials.

Understanding making processes is crucial for the historian of early modern London. The changing city shape and demographics altered the way the companies policed their trades, and thought about their identity as craft organisations. Clothing trades diversified, as Londoners seized opportunities to create popular new goods both within and outside the confines of the livery companies. With the status of craft knowledge debated by city authorities, new philosophers, and the English government, the skills of makers were under particular scrutiny. On stage, in plays, in historical writings, and in sermons, the value of skilled labour and the threats of new innovations were debated; the city at once embraced and shunned immigrant skills and products. New materials changed the shape of clothing, enabling tall stiff beaver hats, flat fronted bodices and doublets, and tight knitted stockings.

Can we trace an epistemology among these makers? As Pamela Smith is demonstrating through a pioneering project at Columbia University, ‘making and knowing’ were linked in the minds and hands of early modern craftspeople. She argues that reconstruction can reveal the ‘material imaginary’ (a taxonomy of materials and beliefs as to how they relate to the world) of artisans, their workshop practices, and skills.<sup>95</sup> Smith argues that ‘artisanal epistemology’ is present in the writings and objects produced by early modern artisans, demonstrating that craftspeople employed certain techniques to produce naturalistic objects that asserted ‘their status as active knowers’.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Beier’s figures take into account only occupations, and not temporary or unofficial employment, or the domestic work which women across the spectrum would have engaged in. Beier, ‘Engine of Manufacture: The Trades of London’.

<sup>95</sup> Pamela H. Smith, Amy R. W. Meyers, and Harold J. Cook, eds., *Ways of Making and Knowing*, The Bard Graduate Center Cultural Histories of the Material World (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2014).

<sup>96</sup> Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, 8.

If made objects (like Bernard Palissy's ceramic wares, which include animals and insects cast from life) make knowledge about the world into a material form, then reconstructing these processes is a way to access the practical and technical knowledge of their makers.<sup>97</sup> Put simply, Smith explains, 'making is actually constitutive of knowing in a scientific sense'.<sup>98</sup>

Can we extend Smith's concept of artisanal epistemology to consider the 'active knowledge' of the large proportion of Londoners who were involved in the production of textiles and clothing in early modern London? Can we access the mental world and material preoccupations of a large proportion of the London populace who worked to produce clothing in the city, but who did not leave textual sources behind? As Glenn Adamson puts it, '[t]he idea that making is its own particular sort of thinking is an appealing one. But it also constitutes a major challenge for anyone who wants to do justice to making through the seemingly inadequate tools of words and ideas'.<sup>99</sup>

Literary scholars have noted the conceptual connection between needles and pens, reading female embroidery and needlework as a form of writing.<sup>100</sup> Surviving braid manuals, some of which can be attributed to elite women, have been examined to reveal the intimate connection between fingerloop braiding and poetry.<sup>101</sup> But objects need to be read by scholars materially literate in making practices, rather than just in textual practices, because making processes are not just a form of self-expression, but a practice which prompts new kinds of thinking.

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<sup>97</sup> Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*. See also Hanna Rose Shell, 'Casting Life, Recasting Experience: Bernard Palissy's Occupation between Maker and Nature', *Configurations* 12, 1 (2004): 1-40.

<sup>98</sup> Pamela H. Smith, 'Guest Editor's Introduction: New Directions in Making and Knowing', *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 23, 1 (1 March 2016): 3.

<sup>99</sup> Glenn Adamson, ed., *The Craft Reader* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 1.

<sup>100</sup> Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: Women's Press, 1984); Suzanne Trill, Kate Chedgzoy, and Melanie Osborne, *Lay by Your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen: Writing Women in England, 1500-1700* (London and New York: Arnold, 1997); Susan Frye, 'Sewing Connections: Elizabeth Tudor, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth Talbot, and Seventeenth-Century Anonymous Needleworkers', in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 165-82; Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

<sup>101</sup> Claire Canavan, 'Textual and Textile Literacies in Early Modern Braids', *Renaissance Studies* 30, 5 (2016): 684-707.

Reconstructing early modern techniques can lead to a clearer understanding of extant items of clothing, and of the processes and negotiations of those who made them. Historians of the arts and sciences have recently begun to embrace reconstruction as a methodology. For some, the process of reconstruction enables the replication and conservation of painterly techniques, or a closer reading of instructional texts, including books of secrets, recipes, and artist handbooks and notebooks.<sup>102</sup> Lawrence Principe, for example, argues that reproducing historical processes offers the historian ‘a deeper and more vivid understanding of texts’.<sup>103</sup> While many scholars who embrace reconstruction as a methodology work with written instructions, historians interested in early modern clothing are faced with a challenge, for few texts about making processes exist. But we can consult extant objects and learn from experienced craftspeople.

Learning to read surviving doublets and hose, leather garments, ruffs, and beaver hats as evidence about the people who made them and the way their skills were appreciated by wearers relies on collaboration. Sara Pennell notes that ‘as historians, we are insufficiently equipped to ‘read’ objects’, and warns, ‘practitioners not attuned to the materiality of [their...] sources undertake research myopically and even, on occasion, at the risk of their reputations’.<sup>104</sup> In line with Pennell, Beverly Gordon argues that ‘[u]nderstanding the way a textile is made is a kind of literacy, and we must be literate to properly “read” our artifacts’. Gordon insists that ‘the experience of making a

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<sup>102</sup> See for example, the Recipes Project, an international group of scholars who blog about the history of recipes: <http://recipes.hypotheses.org/about>; the ColourConText Project and the wider ‘Art and Knowledge in Pre-Modern Europe’ research group at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, who aim to explore the role of written transmissions in the transfer of artisanal knowledge in pre-modern Europe: <https://arb.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/node/7>; and the ARTECHNE project based at Utrecht University and the University of Amsterdam, which seeks to trace the evolution of ‘technical art history’, and to explore how technique is transmitted in the visual and decorative arts, <http://artechne.wp.hum.uu.nl/>. See also the work of technical art historians, such as Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages* (London: Marion Boyars, 2009); Jo Kirby, Maarten van Bommel, and André Verheeken, *Natural Colorants for Dyeing and Lake Pigments: Practical Recipes and Their Historical Sources* (London: Archetype, 2014).

<sup>103</sup> Lawrence Principe, ‘Chymical Exotica in the Seventeenth Century, Or, How to Make the Bologna Stone’, *Ambix* 63, 2 (2016): 118.

<sup>104</sup> Sara Pennell, ‘Mundane Materiality, or Should Small Things Still Be Forgotten? Material Culture, Micro-Histories, and the Problem of Scale’, in *History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 175-76.

textile is an important component of understanding it, encouraging textile researchers to include hands-on experiments as part of their investigation'.<sup>105</sup>

Ulinka Rublack explains that the act of 'making' has long been dismissed by academics, and she encourages historians to engage in 'new forms of dialogue with different kinds of historical practitioners'.<sup>106</sup> Rublack commissioned a reconstruction of the outfit worn by Fugger accountant Matthäus Schwarz to the Imperial Diet of Augsburg in 1530 from the School of Historical Dress. Witnessing skilled craftsmen make the garments and dress a model led Rublack to acknowledge a number of achievements and practices that would have occupied Schwarz and those who made his attire: the lengthy process of coordinating craftsmen, the challenge of sourcing quality materials, the difficulty of achieving a vibrant golden-yellow dye, and the need for skilled craftspeople to experiment with different techniques while drawing upon their 'confident cognition'. For Rublack, '[r]econstruction trains visual acuity, as one is able to better register the intelligence of the hand that has crafted a garment'; such training enables the historian to understand the importance of visual experience as outlined by Michael Baxandall's concept of the 'period eye'.<sup>107</sup>

Rather than commission items of clothing and observe practitioners, I took classes at the School of Historical Dress in order to experience first-hand the skills and processes required of early modern makers, and to handle the tools and materials used by tailors, seamstresses, starchers, felters, and leatherworkers.<sup>108</sup> Teachers at the School

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<sup>105</sup> Beverly Gordon, 'The Hand of the Maker: The Importance of Understanding Textiles from the "Inside Out"', *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings* (2002), 189, 197.

<sup>106</sup> Ulinka Rublack, "The Status of Historical Knowledge," in *A Concise Companion to History*, ed. Ulinka Rublack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 77.

<sup>107</sup> Ulinka Rublack, 'Renaissance Dress, Cultures of Making, and the Period Eye', *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 23, 1 (2016): 6-34. On the period eye, see Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, 143-63; Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 29-108. See also Jenny Tiramani, 'Reconstructing a Schwarz Outfit', in *The First Book of Fashion: The Book of Clothes of Matthäus and Veit Konrad Schwarz of Augsburg*, ed. Ulinka Rublack and Maria Hayward (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 373-96.

<sup>108</sup> The School of Historical Dress in London, established in 2012, is run by Jenny Tiramani, a theatre costumier and former designer at the Globe. The School collaborates with the Victoria and Albert Museum and, as owners of the late Janet Arnold's archive, have continued her pioneering work taking patterns of surviving garments. The teachers are all professional craftspeople, who taught themselves how to make as historically accurate clothing as possible by interrogating museum objects and reverse-engineering the making processes. They apply their skills to create costumes for theatrical production and

combine their extensive tacit knowledge, honed through years of producing theatrical costumes, with written sources like tailoring pattern books, and close observations and x-rays of surviving garments.<sup>109</sup>

Reconstruction enables us to recover the unwritten tacit skills and techniques employed by makers of early modern clothing, compensating for the lack of sources about the training of apprentices and the working lives of professional artisans and informal workers. Attempting some of the processes and techniques evident in surviving objects helps the historian – even, and perhaps particularly, when not an experienced handworker – to appreciate the maker behind the object. Reconstruction, in collaboration with expert makers, prompts reflection on the many complex material negotiations made by early modern makers, from concerns for economic use of fabrics to subtle flattery of the client, and innovative experimentation with materials. With this new appreciation, along with an embodied experience of these processes, the historian is better able to examine extant objects in museum collections, and read objects, images, and texts more closely for what they do, and do not, reveal about making processes and skills. It is also a means to gain material literacy, understanding the value of materials not just in economic and social terms, but for their material properties.

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museum replicas. See Arnold, Tiramani, and Levey, *Patterns of Fashion 4*; Jenny Tiramani and Susan North, eds., *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns*, 1 (London: V&A Publishing, 2011); Jenny Tiramani and Susan North, eds., *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns*, 2 (London: V&A Publishing, 2012); Melanie Braun et al., *17th-Century Men's Dress Patterns, 1600-1630* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016).

<sup>109</sup> For three Austrian manuscript tailoring manuals from the sixteenth century, see Katherine Barich and Marion McNealy, *Drei Schnittbücher: Three Austrian Master Tailor Books of the 16th Century* (Nadel und Faden Press, 2015). For x-rays and the use of extant garments on seventeenth-century clothing see Tiramani and North, *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns*, 2011; Tiramani and North, *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns*, 2012; Braun et al., *17th-Century Men's Dress Patterns, 1600-1630*. See also Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America: The Colonial Williamsburg Collection* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

## Chapter overview

The structure of this thesis is based on Igor Kopytoff's insistence that objects have biographies that extend before and after their lives as commodities.<sup>110</sup> It begins with making, then turns to consumption and use, looks at social controls, and finally explores bequests of clothing, re-use, and their incorporation into museum collections.

While the whole thesis is informed by my experiences reconstructing early modern clothing, the first chapter explicitly discusses these experiments in its exploration of how clothes were made in the city. Focusing on tailors who made most outer garments, but also referring to the wide range of craftspeople who made accessories and other garments, this chapter asks what it meant to have an urban population deeply invested in, and knowledgeable about, the processes of producing garments and textiles. It employs a wide source base – extant objects, images, diaries, account books, letters, advice manuals, and court records – to explore changes in manufacture in early modern London. As well as looking at skilled practicing citizens, it acknowledges the contributions of immigrants and women to the city, and shows how the artisanal knowledge of London makers was appreciated by courtiers, new philosophers and merchants alike.

Chapter two explores the 'London look', asking what visitors to the city noticed about the clothing worn by Londoners, and what those in the city identified as particularly urban dress. Drawing on a wide range of visual and written sources, it establishes the visual vocabulary of London clothing and looks at how clothes were made to withstand city pressures. Building on work that has established England more broadly, and London specifically, as an emerging consumer society in which fashionable society clamoured for an ever-increasing range of luxury goods in new shopping spaces, it asks how people acquired clothing and broadens the focus to second-hand and street-sellers.<sup>111</sup> Using case studies of wealthy shoppers who kept account books, it shows how

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<sup>110</sup> Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94.

<sup>111</sup> Peck, *Consuming Splendor*.

shopping for clothes required a deep knowledge of materials and craftspeople, and how those outside the city could ‘shop by proxy’. It also explores the way Londoners looked at one another, and how this changed interactions in the city. Coach travel and masks were forms of ‘conspicuous concealment’ for Londoners who wished to see and be seen. While for some, London was a catwalk for flaunting, for others this brought danger and unease. Using a court case, in which a woman apprehended for cross dressing reveals that she was avoiding the scorn of her neighbours, this chapter also argues that appearance was closely scrutinised and people were associated with their clothing in the densely populated London streets.

With London’s rapid growth came anxieties and fears. Clothing often became the target of attacks – it could spread disease in its folds, make a pauper appear a prince, and might rob the English of their identity via foreign fabrics and fashions. Many attempted to control clothing; preachers used sermons and prevented those in large yellow ruffs from taking a seat in their pews, while masters were expected to police their apprentices and stop them from wearing upstart and exuberant styles. Clothes were also controlled through legal statutes and royal proclamations, and no monarch issued more of these than Elizabeth I. This chapter challenges existing claims that sumptuary law was not enforced in England, drawing upon evidence from London Mayoral Court records to show that the Mayor and his Alderman policed the city and apprehended offenders (particularly those wearing ‘monstrous hose’). London was particularly targeted by the law. There seem to have been ‘surges of enforcement’ which followed new dress proclamations and when pressure was placed on the Mayor by the Queen. This chapter also incorporates extant objects, which are usually missing from scholarship on sumptuary laws, to try to better explain both the allure and the threats of policed clothing.

Chapter four uses a sample of 220 London wills proven at the highest court, the Prerogative Court in Canterbury, to look both qualitatively and quantitatively at the afterlives of clothing. It incorporates approaches from the history of emotions, in combination with close readings of surviving garments, to investigate how Londoners emotionally valued their clothing, how they described it and bequeathed it, and how

clothing was reused. While some scholars have suggested that early modern women were more likely emphasise clothing when making a will, this sample of London wills suggests that men also valued it, often taking great care to ensure that their best items went to their closest friends and family. This chapter closes with a discussion of clothing's afterlives, as material witnesses for the individuals who made them, wore them, maintained them, bequeathed them, and – on rare occasions – were able to preserve them.

Incorporating material evidence and reconstruction experience challenges existing assumptions about what clothing might mean for Londoners: how multi-sensory effects and materiality could communicate far more than just the status of the wearer, revealing the skills and ingenuity of his or her tailor, embroiderer, and laundress, and expressing emotions and social connections while celebrating colour, texture, and light. Far more than mere frippery, clothing mattered to Londoners, who spent large sums of their income on it, vast amounts of time making and caring for it, and significant thought and care styling themselves. If we pay attention to the visual and material evidence, placing it alongside archival sources, we discover that the 'making of London' into a dynamic global city (now at the heart of the fashion world) owes much to developments made in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

## Chapter One

### Making Clothing

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, over a fifth of those who lived in the London metropolitan area, stretching from Stepney to Westminster, worked in the clothing trades. If we include those who worked in the leather trades, nearly a third of the city could be said to be professionally involved in creating materials that could eventually be worn on the body. Burial records document Londoners working as bodicemakers, buttonmakers, cappers, cardmakers, clothworkers, cobblers, cordwainers, cutters, drapers, dyers, embroiderers, feltmakers, girdlers, glovers, haberdashers, hatbandmakers, hatmakers, hempdressers, hosiers, leathersellers, milliners, orrisworkers, packthreadmakers, pursemakers, shoemakers, silktwisters, silkweavers, skimmers, tailors, tanners, tapistryworkers, weavers, and woolwinders.<sup>1</sup> An even more diverse array of makers who made tiny golden spangles, wove ribbons, created decorative flowers, and dyed feathers emerge from letters, court records, the returns of aliens, and account books. Still more Londoners worked in distributing raw materials and finished products as mercers, shopkeepers, second-hand dealers, and street vendors, or in the maintenance of clothes as botchers, cobblers, launderers, and starchers. London was a city of makers.

Given the proximity of the royal court and the law courts, as well as the large number of gentry who regularly visited the capital, skilled makers of clothing and

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<sup>1</sup> These figures were gleaned from parish burial records, taken from 26,737 persons buried in 15 parishes between 1540 and 1700. Despite great demographic changes, the proportion of those working in clothing and leather trades remained remarkably consistent over the period: from 1540-1600, Clothing 22.4% Leather 9.1%; from 1601-1640, Clothing 23.3% Leather 8.7%; from 1641-1700 Clothing 22.7% Leather 8.9%. This incorporates women and adolescents employed as dependent workers, but not women and children working within the family, and incorporates a range of parishes from the wealthy mercantile St Michael Bassishaw to the suburban St Olave's in Southwark. As Beier does not distinguish between metalworkers who made accessories, armour, or metal thread, I could not incorporate these figures into this account, although it should be remembered that metal was worn by many men and women, in the form of simple pins, aglets on laces, hooks as well as fine jewellery and metal threads. As related in A. L. Beier, 'Engine of Manufacture: The Trades of London', in *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*, by A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay (London; New York: Longman, 1986), 141-164. See also Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 87-129.

accessories had ample opportunity to attract a diverse, wealthy, and fashion-seeking customer base.<sup>2</sup> Queen Elizabeth I employed the most highly skilled wardrobe clerks, tailors, skinners, hosiers, shoemakers, embroiderers, farthingalemakers, pinmakers, and silkmen and -women at her Great Wardrobe, and at her clothing storage locations in the Tower of London and the Palace of Whitehall.<sup>3</sup> With his penchant for scented gloves and tight dress, James I vastly outspent his predecessor, and he and his court embraced the London trends available.<sup>4</sup> Charles I and Henrietta Maria also received large annual bills from silk mercers, merchants, embroiderers, pinmakers, linendrapers, featherdressers, tirewomen, sempstresses, and tailors, who provided clothing for the royal family, courtiers, dwarves, and music boys.<sup>5</sup> Even the supposedly puritanical Cromwell and his fellow Parliamentarians spent vast sums on fine silks and luxury French tailoring in London.<sup>6</sup>

London's clothing makers did not exclusively cater to the elites. Laundresses and tirewomen worked hard behind the scenes for London's public theatres, where their creative

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<sup>2</sup> For more on this see Felicity Heal, 'The Crown, the Gentry and London: The Enforcement of Proclamation, 1596-1640', in *Law and Government under the Tudors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 211-26; Ian Warren, 'The Gentry, the Nobility, and London Residence c.1580-1680' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2007); F.J. Fisher, 'The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 30 (1948), 37-50; Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> 'The Queen's Artificers' in Janet Arnold et al., *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd: The Inventories of the Wardrobe of Robes Prepared in July 1600, Edited from Stowe MS 557 in the British Library, MS LR 2/121 in the Public Record Office, London, and MS V.b.72 in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC* (Leeds: Maney, 1988), 177-240.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth's wardrobe expenses for the last four years of her reign averaged £9535 while James I spent an average of £36,377 annually during the first five years of his reign. Perhaps this increase is unsurprising, as James would have had to establish a wardrobe fit for his new position, while aging Elizabeth already had a large store of fine garments; *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Caroline Hibbard, '“By Our Direction and For Our Use”: The Queen's Patronage of Artists and Artisans Seen through her Household Accounts', in *Henrietta Maria: Piety, Politics and Patronage*, ed. Erin Griffey (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 127-33. So important was this trade that in February 1641, wives of London citizens and tradesmen petitioned Parliament expressing their fear of a decay in trade following Henrietta Maria's departure to Holland. See also Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 111; Patricia Higgins, 'The Reactions of Women with Special Reference to Women Petitioners', in *Politics, Religion and the English Civil War*, ed. Brian Manning (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 179-222.

<sup>6</sup> J. F. Merritt, *Westminster 1640-60: A Royal City in a Time of Revolution* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), 187-217.

use of cheap materials such as copper lace, and regular laundering were valued.<sup>7</sup> In June 1595, the theatre entrepreneur Philip Henslowe paid to apprentice his niece Mary ‘to Learne to sowe al maner of workes & to Lerne bonelace’.<sup>8</sup> Mary was one of countless Londoners, many of whom were women and children, who worked on clothing in ways that were rarely recorded on paper. Their labour, at home or in workrooms, spinning, sewing, darning, washing, and lacemaking did not necessarily define their identity in parish or court records and is mostly undocumented.<sup>9</sup> The fortunes of Agnes Cowper (c.1599- after 1619), a vagrant woman who had formerly made woollen caps until the trade declined, were probably not unusual; the decline of certain clothing trades must have forced many men and women to seek alternative employment, and led some into lives of struggle and poverty.<sup>10</sup> A tiny thimble so repeatedly pressed between a finger and needle that it has been completely worn through demonstrates how objects can offer evidence not conveyed by written records. Far too small to fit on even my little finger, the thimble is a material source attesting to the exhaustive labour performed by young boys and girls (Figure 1.1a&b).

Despite this widespread culture of making and repairing clothing, we know very little about the skills of early modern craftspeople in London specifically, or across Europe more widely. Absences in London sources partly explain this. Three decades ago, A. L. Beier acknowledged the difficulty of studying the early modern London workforce, noting that apprenticeship records give little sense of the reality of work, and guild records rarely discuss the organisation, practices, or evolutions of the craft.<sup>11</sup> Since Beier’s claim, some

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<sup>7</sup> Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 190-91; Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women’s Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe’s Diary*, ed. Reginald Anthony Foakes and R. T. Rickert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 123, as cited in Natasha Korda, ‘Household Property/Stage Property: Henslowe as Pawnbroker’, *Theatre Journal* 48, 2 (1996): 188.

<sup>9</sup> Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 14-15; Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 14-28.

<sup>10</sup> Laura Gowing, ‘Agnes Cowper (b. c.1559, D. after 1619)’, in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26611>.

<sup>11</sup> Beier, ‘Engine of Manufacture: The Trades of London’, 144-45.

excellent studies of immigrant and female skill and labour have emerged, but there is still far more to uncover about the culture of making all kinds of goods – from foodstuffs to luxury items like clocks and scientific instruments – in early modern London.<sup>12</sup>

This situation is not unique to London scholarship. In material culture studies more widely, as Malcolm Barker notes, scholarly attention has ‘remained primarily focused on the uses of, and social attitudes toward, things rather than to their materials and making’.<sup>13</sup>

Despite excellent scholarship on early modern clothing, and a recent emergence of scholarship about artisanal culture, the making of clothing and the skills and experiences of early modern artisans have gone largely unexplored.<sup>14</sup> In 1952, Peter K. Newman expressed his surprise that there had been no study of the emergence of London clothing trades, when the textile trade had received much attention.<sup>15</sup> This chapter is an attempt to redress this situation, by paying attention to examples of those who made clothing and its constituent parts – including textiles, leather, and accessories. Frustratingly, in early modern parlance, the phrase ‘clothing trade’ usually refers not to tailoring, sewing, and the sale,

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<sup>12</sup> Lien Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2005); Natasha Korda, ‘Froes, Rebatoes and Other “Outlandish Comodityes”: Weaving Alien Women’s Work into the Fabric of Early Modern Material Culture’, in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and Its Meanings*, ed. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 95-106; Natasha Korda, ‘Sex, Starch-Houses and Poking-Sticks: Alien Women’s Work and the Technologies of Material Culture’, *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 5, Special Forum on “Sex and the Early Modern Woman: Representation, Practice, and Culture” (2010): 201-8; Korda, *Labors Lost*.

<sup>13</sup> Malcolm Baker, “Epilogue: Making and Knowing, Then and Now,” in *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge*, ed. Pamela H. Smith, Amy R. W. Meyers, and Harold J. Cook (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 409.

<sup>14</sup> For scholarly interest in artisanal culture, see Margaret A. Pappano and Nicole R. Rice, ‘Medieval and Early Modern Artisan Culture’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, 3 (2013): 474-85.

<sup>15</sup> Newman aimed to provide ‘no more than a sketch’ from his perspective as an economist, and welcomed a full treatment from historians. Peter K. Newman, ‘The Early London Clothing Trades’, *Oxford Economic Papers* 4, 3 (1952): 243.

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Figure 1.1 a and b:  
Child's thimble, c.1600?, collection of the School of  
Historical Dress.  
Thumb and paper lines for scale.

repair, and maintenance of clothes, but rather to the production of cloth.<sup>16</sup> The production and sale of textiles, while not of central concern here, directly shaped the possibilities of dress styles and their economic and cultural value and so will be discussed in part. For example, England's declining wool industry caused the decline of the woollen cap trade, while imported silks and velvets, and new immigrant industries such as silk weaving, led to an increase in availability and affordability of fabrics.<sup>17</sup> While this chapter will focus on tailors who were responsible for making male and female outer garments, it will also refer to other craftspeople, like the women who made buttons and silk flowers, and immigrant silk weavers, to recognise the wide range of skilled people who contributed to clothing in the city. I employ the term 'makers' to encompass the broadest possible definition of those who had a hands-on interaction with dress and accessories, spanning a broad spectrum that includes professional artisans who were citizens of London's livery companies, small-scale entrepreneurs who spotted new opportunities in a market hungry for innovative fashions, and the domestic servants, women, and children who repaired and cleaned clothing at home.

It took a supernatural ability for the protagonist of William Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* (1570) to be able to make out the quiet sounds of spinning and the 'sewing of sockes' over the cacophony of urban nightlife.<sup>18</sup> This chapter tries to listen to these whispers and traces of making by ranging across a wide range of sources – from official city records to

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example Elizabeth I, *By the Queene. A Proclamation for the Reformation of Sundry Abuses about Making of Clothes Called Deuonshire Kersies, or Dozens, Whereby the Statutes Made in Queene Maries Time, for the Weight, Length, and Breadth Thereof, May Be Duely Observed Hereafter* (London: the deputies of Christopher Barker, 1592).

<sup>17</sup> For the importance of cloth for English identity see Roze Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England: Textual Constructions of a National Identity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), *passim*. For a thorough account of changes in textile manufacture in this period, see Eric Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> *Beware the Cat* was written in 1553 but not published until 1561 when it was suppressed, and then again in 1570. Often described as the first English novel, it is a remarkable anti-Catholic satire that vividly and surreally evokes mid-sixteenth century London and the printing trade. The full 1570 version only survives in a Victorian transcript. William Baldwin, *Beware the Cat*, ed. William A. Ringler and Michael Flachmann (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1988), 32; William A. Ringler, "'Beware the Cat" and the Beginnings of English Fiction', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 12, 2 (1979): 113-26; Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London* (London and New York: Verso Books, 2015), 44-45.

personal diaries and letters, plays, images, and objects. This period has been identified as the ‘making of London’ in economic, social, and cultural terms, and this chapter asks how the manufacture of clothing responded and contributed to the changing cultural and demographic urban climate.<sup>19</sup> What did it mean to have an urban population deeply invested in and knowledgeable about the processes of producing garments and the textiles, dyes, accessories, and trimmings that comprised them? How did this culture of making influence the development of London? The chapter also places these skills in the context of a broader debate about the status of craft in the period, which was often debated in religious terms. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to trace all the developments in manufacture that occurred over the century from 1560 to 1660, but in many ways this was an era of profound change, as the examples given should illustrate.

Rather, the aim of this chapter is to recover the ‘material literacy’ and innovative skills of London craftspeople, which have been overlooked by historians of London. In doing so, I also demonstrate how my own experiences watching and working with skilled craftspeople have developed my own ‘material literacy’, enabling me to better recover traces of making in texts, images, and extant objects. This chapter advocates reconstruction methodology and material culture as ways of recovering the skills and practices of early modern craftspeople. It engages with an emerging strand in material culture studies, inspired by work done by art historians and historians of science, and attempts to push further ideas about artisanal epistemology, to find evidence that making clothing was about more than just manual labour. The processes of making design decisions, honing practical skills, and transforming materials into desirable finished garments were knowledge-intensive, and informed by cultural, religious, and scientific debates.

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<sup>19</sup>A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay, *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (London and New York: Longman, 1986).

## Objects and agency

In the stores of the Victoria and Albert Museum lies a black silk doublet, decorated at the waistline with gilt lace points. Its elegantly curved sleeves and stiff flat front, shaped by an internal bellypiece probably made from reeds or whalebone, would have been the height of fashion in the 1630s (Figure 1.2). The doublet's external colour, shape, and materials already mark it out as an expensive and sumptuous item of clothing. But its inside lining, made of bright yellow silk, is even more exuberant than its exterior (Figure 1.3).

The act of lining a doublet in fine silk was an ultimate expression of luxury for those who could afford it (and who, before the repeal of sumptuary legislation in 1604, were allowed to wear it), because it is unlikely that this fabric would have been seen by others. Anyone wealthy enough to have such a doublet would have rarely removed it in company. James I's son was said to look more like an artisan than a prince when he was seen without his doublet, wearing just his shirt, suggesting that the plainer linings worn by artisans would have been more visible, as they might remove clothing to work.<sup>20</sup>

Luxurious items of dress like this doublet are more likely to have survived than clothing that was worn by labourers and artisans. Fine materials, if they were not reused, were saved by later generations and preserved by museums. But objects regarded as elite because they were consumed by only the wealthy and powerful, need not be considered purely as elite objects – they can tell us much about the large community of makers and even non-makers who fashioned and appreciated them. Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff's widely-adopted concept of an 'object biography' acknowledges that an object's

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<sup>20</sup> Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 84. Another anecdote from the Venetian ambassador tells of Henry VIII removing his doublet to play tennis. As Elizabeth Currie notes, Italians played sports in their doublets, and so it was remarkable that the English King was seen in such a state of undress. His shirt was incredibly fine linen, so sheer that his skin could be seen through it. Henry was making a great statement of both bodily and textile prowess. Elizabeth Currie, *Fashion and Masculinity in Renaissance Florence* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 139.

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Figure 1.2 (above):  
Doublet, 1630-1635, shot silk,  
Victoria and Albert Museum, 185-  
1900.

Figure 1.3 (left):  
Interior lining of Figure 1.2. Note  
the triangular piecing on the lap.

life encompasses far more than just the act of consumption, but rather encapsulates its creation, use, repair, collection, conservation, and display.<sup>21</sup> But it bears repeating here that even in the absence of written records, an object can reveal much about its manufacture and the skills and embodied knowledge of its makers. As Bert De Munck has argued, objects are still far too often seen as commodities detached from their makers. He suggests that the influential work of anthropologists like Daniel Miller, alongside scholarship identifying a ‘modern’ Renaissance consumer who could purchase goods as a kind of ‘objectification of the self’, has encouraged a focus on material culture from the perspective of the consumer, eclipsing the ideas and practices of the artisans who made the object.<sup>22</sup> But what can the doublet reveal about the skills and ideas of the artisans who made it?

The philosopher Jane Bennett describes objects as ‘vibrant matter’, suggesting that things should be seen as ‘quasi agents’ which have the ability to ‘impede or block the will and designs of humans’ and also have ‘trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own’.<sup>23</sup> Her theory might be used to refer to the material qualities of an object, such as the way silk must be handled and stitched, or as Michael Baxandall has demonstrated, the way a sculptor expertly handles the properties of limewood.<sup>24</sup> But we can also attribute to objects agency that is not directly related to their physical limitations and possibilities. Such an idea, while counter to twenty-first century conceptions of matter and objects as passive and inert, was more widely accepted in the early modern period, when objects were seen to impart powerful spiritual, emotional, humoral, and communicative energies. Anything

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<sup>21</sup> Igor Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-94; *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Bert De Munck, ‘Artisans, Products and Gifts: Rethinking the History of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe’, *Past & Present* 224, 1 (2014): 39-74. Most influential here is Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010), viii.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

coloured yellow, for example, was thought ‘to make a man vigilant, adding grace and sweetness’ and bright yellows in particular caused ‘joy, mirth [and] delight’.<sup>25</sup>

Early modern fictions in which clothing takes on anthropomorphic powers play with these ideas.<sup>26</sup> In *A pleasant dialogue betweene the cap and the head* (1564), the cap not only disagrees with the head, but also presents arguments ‘contrarye to the common opinion’, such as challenging the idea that a gentleman should be revered for the achievements of his forefathers. That an item of headwear is here imagined to challenge not only his ‘owner’ but also social norms is notable, but even more interesting is that it resists being owned and controlled by the head. The cap’s first words to the head focus on the materials he is made of, and the woman who made him. He declares that rather than be owned, he would rather be destroyed: ‘I would the Wolle that I was made of and the Sheepe that bare it had been deuoured with Dogges, or that it had bene burned in the filthy fingers of the ilfavored olde queane that spunne it’. At the end of the dialogue, the head decides to buy a new hat that will allow him to ‘frame [him]selfe according to the tyme and company’, but the story is less about the wearer being able to shape his identity through dress and more about the cap being able to express its own creation.<sup>27</sup> If we acknowledge objects as agents, whose materials encourage and resist certain kinds of making and shaping, then we can read them as vocal sources about the skills and practices of the people that made them. To create this black silk doublet, many hands worked to extract silk from cocoons, to prepare, dye, and weave the silk, to cut the fabric to shape the structure of the doublet, to stitch its many

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<sup>25</sup> Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Painting, Carving, Buildinge, Written First in Italian by Jo: Paul Lomatius, Painter of Milan, And Englished by R H Student in Physik*, trans. Richard Haydocke (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1598), 112.

<sup>26</sup> See for example, the pamphlet by Robert Greene, *A Quip for an Vpstart Courtier: Or, A Quaint Dispute Betweene Veluet Breeches and Cloth-Breeches Wherein Is Plainely Set Downe the Disorders in All Estates and Trades* (London: John Wolfe, 1592) and the anonymous plays *Dialogue between Gown, Hood, and Cap* (c.1612), *Work for Cutlers, or a Merry Dialogue Betweene Sword, Rapier, and Dagger* (1615), *A Dialogue between Boot, Spur, Pump and Slipper* (1615), and *A Merry Dialogue Betweene Band, Cuff, and Ruff* (1615). See also Jonathan Lamb, *The Things Things Say* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> This is an anonymous English translation of Antoine Geuffroy’s French edition of the original text, Pandolfo Collenuccio, *Dialogo tra la beretta e la testa* (1497). Anonymous, *A Pleasaunt Dialogue or Disputation Betweene the Cap, and the Head* (London: Henry Denham, 1564), Aiiir, Cviv.

layers, and to make the decorative points that hang around the waist. Skills and embodied knowledge are embedded in this doublet's layers; its bright yellow lining is vibrant matter indeed.

### **The tailors of London**

Named for their double layers, doublets were upper body garments worn by men and sometimes women. Their production was the responsibility of the tailor, who made the majority of male and female outergarments. By the mid-sixteenth century, the Merchant Tailors' Company was the largest in London, representing perhaps twenty per cent of the city's freemen. For the first half of the seventeenth century, annual enrolments surged to an unprecedented and unsurpassed high of over 800 new apprentices and freemen each year.<sup>28</sup> Just how many tailors worked in the city is impossible to say, but in the 1630s it was estimated that 'at least one thousand' freemen were 'working Tailors'; given the numbers of new enrolments to the company (an inestimable but high proportion of whom would have been practicing), and the additional numbers of alien and unauthorised tailors, it seems likely that close to two thousand Londoners were practicing tailors.<sup>29</sup> Even this conservative estimate suggests that London's population was far better served by tailors than Florence or Rome.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> In the first half of the seventeenth century, Sleigh-Johnson calculates that an average of 586 apprentices and 225 freemen were enrolled annually. This did not include free journeymen, salesmen tailors, or unfree workers. A 1599 survey of unauthorised tailors working in the City area identified 418 independent producers who hired 910 journeymen and apprentices. In addition, alien tailors who were protected by the Crown were estimated at several hundred. N. V. Sleigh-Johnson, 'Aspects of the Tailoring Trade in the City of London in the Late Sixteenth and Earlier Seventeenth Centuries', *Costume*, 37 (2003): 27. See also N. V. Sleigh-Johnson, 'The Merchant Tailors' Company of London under Elizabeth I: Tailors' Guild or Company of Merchants?', *Costume*, 41 (2007): 46.

<sup>29</sup> Merchant Tailors Company Court Minutes, Volume 8, 310, 330, as cited in Sleigh-Johnson, 'Aspects of the Tailoring Trade', 27.

<sup>30</sup> If c.2000 tailors served a population of c.350,000 Londoners, this means that each tailoring workshop served c.175 Londoners. Elizabeth Currie provides figures for Rome (1 tailor per 210 people) and Florence (1 tailor for 857 people) which suggest that London was better served by tailors. Currie, *Fashion and Masculinity in Renaissance Florence*, 115-16.

Despite this large workforce, we have relatively few sources about the tailor's trade. Surviving Merchant Tailors' Company records do not reveal much about the working practices of jobbing tailors, or discuss the skills taught to apprentices or required in masters examinations. No English tailoring pattern books exist for this period, although a few sixteenth-century Spanish and northern European examples survive. But other than these texts, some literary depictions, and a few images of tailoring (often made on the continent rather than in England), we know little about the trade.

The 1661 inventory of John Wolstenholme, a member of the Merchant Tailors', suggests what might be in a London tailor's workhouse and home.<sup>31</sup> The appraisers found four shelves, a bedstead, a stool, an 'old Leather chair', a featherbed, flock bolster, two 'old greene Ruggs', two candlesticks, and old lumber in Wolstenholme's 'workhouse' in St Dunstan-in-the-West. The only specific tools of the trade there were 'shop boards' and 'two pressinge yrons'. Wolstenholme also had a room called 'the cuttinghouse', where he kept many yards of fabrics. This included thirteen-and-a-half yards of broad calico, white calico, baize, and several remnants of bombazine, cloth, and shag, as well as trimmings like livery lace, stiffenings such as belly pieces, and linings from old cloaks. The inventory suggests that a tailoring workshop could be working on multiple commissions at once, but also shows how few tools a tailor needed to do his job, simply pairs of shears and pressing irons. Candles, of which four dozen remained, were also crucial for light, enabling tailors to continue their work at night and in all seasons. Wolstenholme's inventory does not mention paper or parchment (for making patterns, or for cutting into strips to record each client's measurements), a yard stick (to measure fabric), or compasses, all of which would have

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<sup>31</sup> John Wolstenholme, merchant tailor, 1661, National Archives, C6/151Pt1/55 ff. X-1. Accessed online 22 November 2016:  
[http://www.marinelives.org/wiki/MRP:\\_C6/151Pt1/55\\_Inventory\\_of\\_John\\_Wolstenholme,\\_merchant\\_taylor,\\_1661,\\_ff.\\_X-1](http://www.marinelives.org/wiki/MRP:_C6/151Pt1/55_Inventory_of_John_Wolstenholme,_merchant_taylor,_1661,_ff._X-1)

been used by a tailor.<sup>32</sup> Tailors are often hard to identify in probate documents as cloth, needles, thread, irons, and scissors were fairly common household possessions.<sup>33</sup>

Wolsenholme's relatively large stock of cloth and lace, as well as his separate cutting room, suggests that he was a fairly prosperous tailor. A will, likely referring to the same man, suggests that he was wealthy enough to leave his wife, siblings, and nieces and nephews several hundred pounds. There are no traces of Wolsenholme's trade in this will, other than his company membership and bequests of twenty shillings to his journeyman and five former apprentices.<sup>34</sup> Poorer tailors or botchers could make do with one room and only the cloth that they were using for their current commissions.

Contemporary depictions of tailoring workshops corroborate this picture. In Quiringh van Brekelenkam's *Interior of a Tailor's Shop* (c.1655-1661), the tailor and two assistants sit cross legged on the table or 'shop board', making the most of the light streaming in through the window (Figure 1.4). Some scissors, chalk, and a bodkin (for making buttonholes or eyelets) are at hand on the table. A few garments, perhaps works-in-progress, or clothes that await repair, are strewn over a chair and a shelf, and on the wall hang a few laces (for tying doublets and hose) or lengths of thread. Under the table a barrel holds remnants of cloth that has been cut out for garments. The scene is at once professional and domestic; a woman nurses a baby next to the fire. A tailoring shop was often a small unit and very much part of the home.

Tailors worked sitting on their shop board, not only so that they could have the best access to light, but also so that they could use their bodies to shape the garment as they

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<sup>32</sup> Curves and measurements could be made with a piece of twine and a pin, if the tailor did not own a compass. Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 3: The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women, c1560-1620* (London and New York: Macmillan; Drama Book, 1985), 4.

<sup>33</sup> Mark Overton et al., *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600-1750* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 35.

<sup>34</sup> John Wolstemrost, 1661, The National Archives, PROB 11/306/101. The National Archives spell his name Wolstemrost, but the will contains spellings of Wolstencost, Wolstencroft, and Wolstencrose. The will was proved on 29 October 1661, and the inventory taken on 4 November 1661, and as they both refer to a Merchant Taylor in St Dunstan in the West, with variant spellings of a similar surname to the inventories' 'Wolstenholme', it seems possible that they refer to the same man.

stitched. While seamstresses can turn, fold, and manipulate linens as they stitch (as linens are easily washable, and lose their form when laundered) a tailor must try to only touch and move the garment he works on when he wants his fabric to bend permanently. The shop board provided a flat surface to support the material and keep it clean while the tailor worked, and enabled him to use his knees to create shape in the garment when desired. This bodily work, combined with the use of a pressing iron, gave early modern garments their distinctive sculpted shapes, but at the cost of the tailor's health. Robert Campbell wrote in his eighteenth-century guide *The London Tradesman*: 'the custom of sitting cross-legged, always in one posture, bending their body, makes them liable to coughs and consumption more than any other trade I know. You rarely see a tailor live to a great age'.<sup>35</sup> A century earlier the London physician John Bulwer noted: 'we commonly know a tailor by his legs'.<sup>36</sup> Large lumps on the side of the foot are still today known as tailor's bunions, referring to the long hours spent cross-legged at the table that physically deformed generations of tailors.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (London, 1747), 193 as cited in Newman, 'The Early London Clothing Trades', 245.

<sup>36</sup> John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd: Or, the Artificiall Changling Historically Presented, in the Mad and Cruell Gallantry, Foolish Bravery, Ridiculous Beauty, Filthy Fineness, and Loathsome Loveliness of Most Nations, Fashioning and Altering Their Bodies from the Mould Intended by Nature; with Figures of Those Transfigurations. To Which Artificiall and Affected Deformations Are Added, All the Native and Nationall Monstrosities That Have Appeared to Disfigure the Humane Fabrick. With a Vindication of the Regular Beauty and Honesty of Nature. And an Appendix of the Pedigree of the English Gallant* (London: by William Hunt, 1653), 432.

<sup>37</sup> See for example Adam Ajis, Manjunath Koti, and Nicola Maffulli, 'Tailor's Bunion: A Review', *The Journal of Foot and Ankle Surgery* 44, 3 (2005): 236-45.

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Figure 1.4:  
Quiringh van Brekelenkam,  
*Interior of a Tailor's Shop*, c.1655-61,  
oil on oak, 42.7 x 50 cm,  
National Gallery London, NG2549.

Over the course of the sixteenth century, the development of ‘new draperies’ had transformed the English textile trade. These light mixed fabrics used the medium- to long-staple wool which was not suitable for the heavier traditional woollen cloths and were cheaper, lighter, and often bright, colourful, and highly finished.<sup>38</sup> They also enabled a tighter fit for clothing. Tailors developed new techniques to fashion clothing that highlighted certain parts of the body, and altered and reshaped the human form in other areas. Clothes were no longer just draped and sewn, but stiffenings – often made of non-textile materials such as bombast, card, horse-hair, and whalebone, as well as new methods of pad stitching (where stitches are used to provide structure and shape rather than to attach two fabrics together) – were used to create new sculptural shapes in dress. If a tailoring workshop required only space for cutting and laying out, and light by which to sew, the tailor’s skills to create garments that flattered and reshaped the human form lay not in expensive tools or set-up costs but in their own embodied knowledge and use of materials, which in turn deformed their own bodies.

The ubiquity of the shears as the tailor’s ‘mark’ (both as a proxy signature and as a decorative device applied to objects owned by tailors), demonstrates the intimate connection and mastery tailors possessed over their tools.<sup>39</sup> In 1595, when testifying before Norwich Mayor’s Court, the tailor Leonard Thompson signed his name with a pair of scissors. This use of a symbol, the tool of Thompson’s trade, was common practice for craftspeople who were unable to write, but it also indicated that his literacy was based in his use not of a pen, but of shears (Figure 1.5).

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<sup>38</sup> D. C. Coleman, ‘An Innovation and Its Diffusion: The “New Draperies”’, *The Economic History Review* 22, 3 (1969): 417-29; Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures*; Laura Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here amongst Us: Policies, Perceptions, and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabethan England* (London: Routledge, 1996), 77; N. B. Harte, *The New Draperies in the Low Countries and England, 1300-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Alexandra Walsham, ‘Domesticating the Reformation: Material Culture, Memory, and Confessional Identity in Early Modern England’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 69, 2 (2016): 566-69.

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Figure 1.5:  
Mark of Leonard Tompson, 1595,  
Mayor's Court Depositions, Norfolk Record Office,  
NCR Case 12a/7 (unfoliated).  
Discovered by Tim Wales, and reproduced with the  
kind permission of the Intoxicants Project.

Although literacy rates amongst traders and craftspeople in London were relatively high, makers of clothing in early modern London did not leave many written records about their skills, ideas, and practices.<sup>40</sup> But their work, shaped by scissors and needles rather than pen and ink, is legible in surviving objects if we as historians learn how to read it.

### **Reconstructing a doublet: Part 1 – pattern making**

Reconstructing a doublet at the School of Historical Dress was a means to think through the kinds of skills, tools, and knowledge required of tailors in early modern London. Rather than attempting to make a finished garment, the trained tailor Melanie Braun and skilled costumier Claire Thornton demonstrated each step in the process of making both a peascod belly doublet (fashionable in the late sixteenth century) and a flat fronted style (favoured in the early seventeenth century) so that we students could work with the range of materials and techniques that are visible on surviving objects.

Before stitching or shaping, the first challenge the tailor faces is to measure the body and then translate these measurements into a two-dimensional pattern that will use cloth economically and create the desired three-dimensional and well-proportioned effect that flatters the client's body shape. Pattern making is the one step in the tailoring process for which some textual sources, albeit not English ones, survive. When the Spanish tailor Juan de Alcega published the first tailor's pattern book in 1580, he realised that he was

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<sup>40</sup> David Cressy has discovered that literacy was higher among London tradesmen and craftsmen than their counterparts in Middlesex or Norwich, finding that in the early seventeenth century only between a fifth and a third could not write their names. Cressy argues that there was a literacy stagnation in the city in the seventeenth century, suggesting that rates in the 1670s were 'no better' than they had been in the 1610s, holding around the rate of 25% illiteracy. *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 154. For literacy among London apprentices, see Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 298-99. On the absence of English artisanal writings, see Jasmine Kilburn-Toppin, 'Crafting Artisanal Identities in Early Modern London: The Spatial, Material and Social Practices of Guild Communities c.1560-1640' (PhD Thesis, The Royal College of Art, 2013), 4. On artisanal writing see Pamela Long, *Openness, Secrecy Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2001); Pamela H. Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

providing ‘something quite new and never before seen’.<sup>41</sup> Entitled the *Book of geometry, practice and design*, it focused on how to calculate how much cloth was required for a garment, how to translate these measurements for cloth of different widths, and how to lay out pattern pieces for different garments. Alcega claimed that he had intended to write ‘at enormous length about the profession’ but due to the ‘great cost, and the amount of type’ necessary to print such a book, he was forced to take a ‘short cut’, instead including ‘only what seemed to me most necessary to master the profession’. Alcega provided four patterns for doublets, two for men and two for women, and his instructions for a ‘silk doublet, from open silk’ show what he thought was the ‘most necessary’ information:

To cut this doublet for men you have to fold the fabric crosswise placing half the length over the other so that there are selvages along both sides. Cut the Front on the left and below it, on the right, cut one sleeve. Cut the other sleeve and the Back along the other selvedge. The trimmings for this doublet will come out of the cabbage. This doublet can be cut wider and longer from this pattern and the extra-piece for the Front can be smaller than when cut from the silk folded lengthwise. Note that when a satin doublet is being quilted its length is reduced but its width shrinks very little. So when quilting is desired cut 3 finger’s breadths more than the measurement shown, or what you think may get taken up in the quilting. If need be, this doublet can be cut longer or wider than is shown in the pattern.<sup>42</sup>

Alcega’s instructions demonstrate that the tailor had to negotiate between the size of his fabric, the measurements of the client, and the behaviour of different materials. Elsewhere in the book he advised him to avoid wrinkles in the neckline, to make sure that the nap of velvet is running in one direction, to account for extra fabric if using a damask so that the pattern can be matched across pieces, and to ensure that the silk is used in the same direction on each side of a gown ‘thereby avoiding a sheen on the silk’.<sup>43</sup> Economic use of fabric is one of the greatest concerns in Alcega’s work. Accompanying each

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<sup>41</sup> ‘Prologue’ (f. vi) Juan de Alcega, *Juan De Alcega Tailor’s Pattern Book: 1589 Facsimile*, ed. J. L. Nevinson, trans. Jean Pain and Cecilia Bainton (Carlton, Bedford: Ruth Bean, 1979), 16.

<sup>42</sup> Another pattern for a silk doublet from open silk (f. 13a) *ibid.*, 22.

<sup>43</sup> Silk doublet for a woman, from open silk (f. 14a), Herruelo cloak cut from a single thickness of silk (f. 33), Silk gown for a woman (f. 70a) *ibid.*, 23, 31, 51.

instruction, Alcega provided an image of how the pieces should be laid on the cloth, including a complex key of the measurements and proportions of each piece. For a doublet, the image indicates that the tailor should overlap the patterns for the doublet front and the sleeve, and then should piece the end of the doublet (which would sit under the arm and be relatively hidden from view) with a spare piece of fabric or ‘cabbage’ from elsewhere (Figures 1.6 and 1.7).

Such economic use of fabrics was paramount for London tailors, as the labour of even the most highly skilled tailor was cheap in comparison to the value of the fine fabrics. Account books and tailors bills show that materials could easily cost at least five to ten times the tailor’s ‘making’ fee. When Sir Edward Dering purchased a suit and cloak of black unshorn velvet lined with white satin in February 1626/7, it cost him £37 13s. 6d., of which the tailor’s fee was only £3 14s.<sup>44</sup> When even the satin lining of a doublet cost almost as much as the tailor’s entire wage (Dering’s white satin lining for the doublet and pockets alone cost £2 12s. 6d.), it was crucial that the tailor be seen to save as much material as possible. The surviving yellow silk-lined doublet shows evidence of the kind of piecing advocated by Alcega on the inside back ‘lap’ (Figure 1.3).<sup>45</sup> The tailor or tailors who produced this doublet were obviously keen to use material sparingly, but exercised this economy discretely.

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<sup>44</sup> Edward Dering, ‘A Booke of Expences from Ye Yeare 1619 (being Halfe a Year before I Was First Married); unto Ye Yeare -’ 1619, f. 68v, Kent History and Library Centre.

<sup>45</sup> So called ‘The Skirts or Laps, because one lieth a little over another’, Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory, Or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon Containing the Several Variety of Created Beings, and How Born in Coats of Arms, Both Foreign and Domestick: With the Instruments Used in All Trades and Sciences, Together with Their Their Terms of Art: Also the Etymologies, Definitions, and Historical Observations on the Same, Explicated and Explained according to Our Modern Language: Very Usefel [sic] for All Gentlemen, Scholars, Divines, and All such as Desire Any Knowledge in Arts and Sciences* (Chester: for the author, 1688), Book 3, 95.

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Figure 1.6 (above):

Juan de Alcega, 'Silk doublet, from open silk' in  
*Libro de Geometria, Pratica, y Traça* (Madrid, 1580), 13a.

Figure 1.7 (below):

My reconstruction of the peascod side of the doublet, laid out on silk. I  
did not have to use silk as economically as Alcega advised.

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Alcega's mathematical and geometrical instructions are useful in calculating how much cloth is required and how a pattern can be made economically. But although he mentions that quilting requires three fingers' worth of extra material, he does not show how to measure and flatter the client, provide instructions for making up garments, or mention which stitches, stuffing, and lining materials to use. His advice stops after the pattern has been drafted.

### **Reconstructing a doublet: Part 2 – flattering the client**

Making a reconstruction doublet revealed the complex, skilled processes required of early modern tailors as well as the gaps in Alcega's instruction. Tailors had to be geometers, able to translate flat paper patterns onto an imperfect human body by compromising between ideal proportions and the oddities of the body, by smoothing lines and removing asymmetry.<sup>46</sup> Contemporary tailors admit to making these negotiations silently, without telling their client about their bodily imperfections, and they are often better aware of their customer's body shape than the customer.<sup>47</sup> Garments had to reflect the fashionable shape, fit the client, and suit his or her budget. Tailors also had to be aware of how the garment would be worn with other items in the wardrobe, for example not quilting inside the doublet on the side where a sword belt would hang. One doublet shows the transition between the quilted shape and the flat fronted style, and is probably from the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The doublet is not quilted at the back or all the way to the waist, which would enable the sword belt and hangers to comfortably sit at the wearer's side (Figures 1.8 and 1.9). Letters sent from Stephen Smith to his godfather Sir Hugh Smith reveal how knowledgeable a tailor might be about his client's wardrobe. On 14 June 1620,

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Stephen

<sup>46</sup> On an eighteenth-century dress that was made in a flattering shape to slim down a large woman and conceal her curved spine and uneven hips, see Barbara J. Heiberger, 'Looking at Costume', in *Textiles Revealed: Object Lessons in Historical Textile and Costume Research*, ed. Mary M. Brooks (London: Archetype Publications, 2000), 110.

<sup>47</sup> In conversation with Melanie Braun and Jenny Tiramani, during 'The Cut & Construction of Men's Doublets 1580-1620' course, The School of Historical Dress, December 2013.

wrote that he was sending a new cassock and canvas doublet from London to Sir Hugh's home in Bristol, which had been made and 'buttoned [...] according to the Fashion now in request'. Stephen told Sir Hugh that his doublet was a carefully planned new garment that would work well for the season and fit with his existing wardrobe: 'Your Taylor and I considered that canvas was only fit for Summer [...] it is not only suitable to your Scarlet hose but will agree as well with any other cloth hose you have.'<sup>48</sup>

### **Reconstructing a doublet: Part 3 – embodied knowledge, cutting, and stitching**

While Alcega's instructions are not sufficient for the historian reconstructing a doublet, the School of Historical Dress usually teaches re-enactors and costume designers who already possess good sewing skills and the ability to read patterns and are able to compensate for Alcega's lack of information, just as a tailor in early modern London would have been able to do. Alcega often recommended that his reader use his own judgement, as when he advised the tailor of the silk doublet to cut 'what you think' necessary, and so he clearly expected his reader to be a skilled maker, already familiar with a range of stitches and the handling of materials.

My inability to cut fabric accurately came as something of a surprise, but the challenge of following a faint chalk line and keeping the cloth as flat as possible, as well as the varied resistance of linen, wool, leather, and silk, gave me even greater respect for the work of the cutting tailor. In the early modern period, as now, cutting tailors held the most senior position in the workroom, for their job was to draft the pattern and cut the cloth into pattern pieces. Given the relative expense of the fabric, a cutter took great responsibility, one that could cause significant anxiety.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Letter from Stephen Smith to Sir Hugh Smith, 14 June 1620, Folger X.c.49 (2).

<sup>49</sup> Thanks to Melanie Braun and Jenny Tiramani for sharing this with me, during workshops on tailoring techniques and the history of fabric.

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Figure 1.8:  
Inside of doublet, c.1605-  
1610, black and crimson  
shot silk, V&A, 184.1900.  
Photograph taken by  
Sophie Pitman.

Note that the quilting is  
only thin at the sides, and  
does not extend into the  
area the swordbelt would  
hang, or cover the back.

Figure 1.9:  
Michiel Jansz Van  
Miereveld (1567-  
1641),  
Portrait of Sir  
Edward Cecil (1572-  
1638), Viscount  
Wimbleton, oil on  
panel, 113.4 x 85cm,  
Walker Art Gallery  
Liverpool, WAG  
2997.

Here the swordbelt  
hangs on top of the  
doublet, over the  
right hip and round  
the lower left.

As an observer and ‘apprentice’, it was sometimes hard to discuss this tacit embodied knowledge with expert makers, for their movements and decisions have become so instinctively ‘felt’ that they cannot always put into words why or how they make each subtle stitch, or why one measurement is more likely to create a pleasing line or graceful sense of proportion than another. Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s concept of incorporation, in which he describes how the blind man’s stick becomes an extension of the body, can also be applied to the skilled craftsman: ‘The blind man’s stick has ceased to be an object for him, and is no longer perceived for itself; its point has become an area of sensitivity, extending the scope and active radius of touch’.<sup>50</sup> For the tailor, seamstress, or embroiderer, the needle and scissors become part of the body, a means for sensing materials as well as having mastery over them, but it can also be a challenge for the craftsman to articulate this bodily experience. Paul Connerton has described how collective memory is sustained through embodied practices like gesture, clothing, and manners: ‘Patterns of body use become ingrained through our interactions with objects. There are the apparently automatic, long familiar movements of artisans, the way a [...] weaver uses a loom, so habitual that, if asked, they would say that they had a feeling of the proper management of the implement in their hands; there are the ways that working [...] imposes and reinforces a set of postural behaviours which we come to regard as “belonging” to the [worker]’.<sup>51</sup>

Connerton has claimed that the work of anthropologists is distinct from that of historians in that historians are not dependent on ‘social memory’.<sup>52</sup> But as an outside observer and new practitioner, as well as an historian, I was able to feel and notice the kinds of practice that were so familiar to skilled practitioners. My body felt awkward and tired, it bore the strains of tailoring. I was slow to cut and stitch, and my work was uneven, but as an amateur my lack of prior experience was in many ways beneficial. First, I made no

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<sup>50</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 127.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 94.

<sup>52</sup> Jeffrey Kastner, Sina Najafi, and Paul Connerton, ‘Historical Amnesias: An Interview with Paul Connerton’, *Cabinet*, Summer 2011, n.p., [http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/42/kastner\\_najafi\\_connerton.php](http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/42/kastner_najafi_connerton.php).

assumptions about early modern practice, as I was learning to sew using early modern tools, materials, and techniques, and did not have to re-learn or counterbalance any twenty-first century experiences. Second, as a complete novice, I had to question even the most simple actions: why does a seamstress, leatherworker, or tailor use a thimble? (Having no calluses on my fingers from years of work, I quickly discovered the answer on my own.)

Also, I could not initially understand why it was so important to pad-stitch the collar and shoulders of the doublet, when these stitches are hidden between lining and facing layers and do not attach fabric or provide decorative value. Pad stitching (long stitches worked in horizontal rows thus: \\\\/\\\/\\\/) is present in the linings of a majority of tailored garments from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and as skilled tailors already know, provides structure and shaping in a garment.<sup>53</sup>

#### **Reconstructing a doublet: Part 4 – linings**

The process of reconstructing one side of the doublet with a flat front and the other with a peascod-belly revealed the startling role of the tailor as a three-dimensional sculptor, able to manipulate a range of materials (animal hair, wool, glue, card, cork, reeds, whalebone) that would be hidden beneath the top layer of velvet, silk, wool, or linen but would contribute to the visual appeal of the finished garment. While surviving doublets are usually catalogued as being made of silk, velvet, linen, and so on, we often overlook other materials in their making. Extant garments (especially those that are deteriorating) show that tailors were experimenting with both local materials such as animal hair and reeds from nearby riverbanks, and newly-imported materials like whalebone and cork. X-ray images have recently revealed that a high-waisted crimson silk grosgrain doublet from the 1620s has a bellypiece made from cork, probably imported from Portugal, Spain, or Italy, and hitherto

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<sup>53</sup> Pad stitching is the only stitch used exclusively by tailors and not, for example, by seamstresses or embroiderers. Braun et al., *17th-Century Men's Dress Patterns, 1600-1630*, 21.

not associated with seventeenth century doublets (Figures 1.10 and 1.11).<sup>54</sup> Account books corroborate this picture. In January 1569, John Petre paid a man named Whitmore who worked on Fleet Street to mend a pair of red hose and to make a pair of russet taffeta sarcennett trunks. In his accounts, Petre noted that he paid 12d. for hair, and 18d. for ‘workmanship therein’.<sup>55</sup> At the School of Historical Dress, we stitched rows of reeds (often called ‘bents’) sourced from a nearby riverbank and plastic imitation whalebone (baleen is illegal) to create the flat front side, and for the peascod belly used handfuls of brittle hog hair, combed from pigs.

We also quilted vast amounts of wool between two layers of linen into the lining, which required a strong grip on the garment with the left hand to hold down the wool while stitching it in with the right, and stiffened the inner-layer linens with card and rabbit skin glue (Figures 1.13, 1.14, 1.15). It was even more difficult to stitch through artificial whalebone. Reconstruction enables the amateur tailor to better appreciate the physical challenges faced by tailors who stitched bellypieces into doublets, and marvel further at their embrace of this new material which made such sculptural styles possible.

Tim Ingold has argued that making is a means to ‘knowing from the inside’.<sup>56</sup> Reconstruction exposes the range of local and imported materials embraced for their sculptural qualities as well as new kinds of stitching and shaping techniques. Tailors clearly understood and took advantage of the natural world as well as new kinds of materials being brought into London by merchants and traders, and surviving doublets are made of a mix of exotic dyes and luxurious foreign silks combined with ecological traces of the local landscape.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>55</sup> Accounts of John Petre, chiefly at the temple, 1567-70, Essex Record Office, D/DP A17. As transcribed at <http://www.elizabethancostume.net/cyte/node/30887>.

<sup>56</sup> Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>57</sup> Ingold suggests that the forms of objects ‘grow from the mutual involvement of people and materials in an environment’; Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 339-48. For more on the exploration between making and growing, see Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold, eds, *Making and Growing: Anthropological Studies of Organisms and Artefacts* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). For the changing relationship between people and the natural world in the early

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Figure 1.10 (left):  
Crimson silk grosgrain doublet, c.1620, V&A, 268.1891.

Figure 1.11 (right):  
Composite x-ray of the doublet front of Figure 1.10.  
Note the triangular cork bellypieces.  
Image from Melanie Braun et al., *17th-Century Men's Dress Patterns, 1600-1630* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2016), 95.

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modern period, see Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983).

## Reconstruction, apprenticeship, and material literacy

Witnessing expertise in practice and then attempting to replicate the processes of measuring a body and translating these measurements into a pattern, cutting the fabrics, stitching precisely and evenly, quilting, braiding, and manipulating a range of tools and materials was a humbling experience.<sup>58</sup> Early modern artisans commonly became skilled in a trade through a seven-year apprenticeship, and London was filled with thousands of young men (and, to a lesser extent, women) who exchanged their labour for formal training, as well as bed and board with a skilled master or mistress.<sup>59</sup>

Although we do not have written sources to show how and what most apprentices were taught, reconstruction quickly reveals the importance of imitation, and closely watching and copying the hand and body movements of skilled makers.<sup>60</sup> As Erin O'Connor discovered when learning to blow glass, the acquisition of skills was a 'transformative process, both dynamic and corporeal, by which the novice translates visual observations into corporeal action and incorporation'.<sup>61</sup> Alongside the perception and acquisition of this kind of embodied knowledge, repeatedly handling and working with materials is also a crucial but slow process. When cutting out the doublet and hose, I quickly discovered not to push on the silk as I cut, otherwise the pieces would be distorted. But learning how to manipulate and shape my doublet using my own body as I

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<sup>58</sup> For similar experiences of experiencing humility when attempting to follow or reconstruct artisanal techniques, see Erin O'Connor, 'Embodied Knowledge in Glassblowing: The Experience of Meaning and the Struggle towards Proficiency', *The Sociological Review* 55 (2007): 139; David Esterly, *The Lost Carving: A Journey to the Heart of Making* (New York: Penguin, 2012), *passim*.

<sup>59</sup> For the difficulty in calculating the number of apprentices in London, see Leonard Schwarz, 'London Apprentices in the Seventeenth Century: Some Problems', *Local Population Studies* 38 (1987): 18-22. For discussions about the number of apprentices, see Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 76-81, 311-23. For numbers of apprentices, and for an account of the flexibility of apprenticeships, see Chris Minns and Patrick Wallis, 'Rules and Reality: Quantifying the Practice of Apprenticeship in Early Modern England1', *The Economic History Review* 65, 2 (2012): 556-79. For female apprenticeships, see Laura Gowing, 'Girls on Forms: Apprenticing Young Women in Seventeenth-Century London', *Journal of British Studies* 55, 3 (2016): 447-73.

<sup>60</sup> Minns and Wallis, 'Rules and Reality'. For more on learning by doing, see Bert De Munck, Steven L. Kaplan, and Hugo Soly, eds, *Learning on the Shop Floor: Historical Perspectives on Apprenticeship* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).

<sup>61</sup> O'Connor, 'Embodied Knowledge in Glassblowing', 135.

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Figures 1.13, 1.14, 1.15:  
Stitching hog hair into the bellypiece, and quilting wool into the back  
of the doublet.  
Photographs by Sophie Pitman.

stitched, how to ease fabric into the shaped shoulder, or even just how to sew with an even stitch was a process that could not be easily copied, and would require years of training and practice. Melanie Braun, a master cutting tailor, told me that she had to begin every day of her apprenticeship sewing a buttonhole; this was a training of muscle memory, and she is now almost instinctively able to quickly stitch a perfect buttonhole.<sup>62</sup>

The more I practiced pattern-drafting, sewing, cutting, pinking, quilting, and felting, the better I understood the actions and instructions of my teachers. When Loïc Wacquant pursued what he called ‘a visual and mimetic apprenticeship’ as a boxer, he discovered that it was not enough just to watch expert boxers to learn their practice: ‘you do not truly see what they [masters of the craft] are doing unless you have already understood a little with your eyes, that is to say, with your body’.<sup>63</sup> When watching an experienced cutting tailor cutting a pattern out of fabric or pad-stitching an inner layer of a doublet, their confident handling of scissors or needle and thread obscures the embodied multisensory expertise required to successfully achieve the desired effect. This kind of physical education, of acquiring an embodied knowledge, is described by Wacquant as a kind of present sight, just as for Rublack watching craftspeople was a means to acquiring a period eye. This physical training, nurturing a better understanding of the actions of and objects produced by a craftsperson, can also be thought of as a way of becoming literate in craft practice and materials.<sup>64</sup> Makers of clothing learnt how to read and use these materials to their advantage. When making a leather sleeve, leatherworker Karl Robinson demonstrated how to select leather from the centre of the animal, where it is least stretchy, so that repeated arm movements would be less likely to distort the elegant tight fit of the sleeve. Material literacy, which I define as a deep understanding of the properties, possibilities, and limitations of a range of materials, was acquired by early modern tailors and other makers

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<sup>62</sup> In conversation with Melanie Braun, during ‘The Cut & Construction of Men’s Doublets 1580-1620’ course, The School of Historical Dress, December 2013.

<sup>63</sup> Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *Body & Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 118. Also cited in O’Connor, ‘Embodied Knowledge in Glassblowing’, 138.

<sup>64</sup> Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, 8.

through skilled practice and observation. In addition to the ‘period eye’, then, reconstruction trains this ‘material literacy’ in the historian, enabling a closer reading of visual depictions and written texts about clothing and extant objects.

### **Trust and the tailor**

Tailoring was a trade built upon trust. The best tailors had to be able to extend credit to their clients, often completing and delivering commissions many months before they received any payment.<sup>65</sup> Dering bought a black satin suit and a mourning cloak to wear to Sir John Tufton’s funeral in April 1624 and did not settle his hefty debt of £7 4s. with the tailor until the following January.<sup>66</sup> In turn, clients had to trust their tailor. As we have seen, even those who visited their tailor’s shop would have been confronted with a workroom space rather than a display of finished goods, and it is unlikely that tailors would have kept samples of their work for inspection, so a new customer would have had to hope that the tailor would be able to skilfully execute their order. Clients often purchased materials from mercers and then gave them to the tailor, trusting them with valuable materials. Tailors were sometimes accused of stealing leftover pieces or ‘cabbage’ and reselling them, and London’s mayoral courts repeatedly tried to halt the market for scraps. In June 1583, the Court of Common Council noted that

of late ther hathben multiplied in this Cittie A trade called Brokers of stollen goodes or brokers of remnantes or small *parcells*, that ys to say such also use the trade or kepe shoppes for buying of remnantes of silke silke lace or other like thinges, whereby the servantes of mercers, retailers of silke, Taylors, linen drapers and other are nourished in robbinge their Maisters and in deceavinge of suche as putt garmentses to makinge.

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<sup>65</sup> For more about this era, when consumers relied upon credit to pay for goods days, months and even years after they had been received, see Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

<sup>66</sup> Dering, ‘U350/E4’, f. 24v.

Brokers' shops were declared illegal, and anyone caught there would lose their citizenship, or if they were foreign, would be banned from the city. The Common Council also proclaimed that tailors and embroiderers could not pay servants or workmen in cloth, silk, fringe, lace, or any other part of clothing, and could only provide their wages 'in money'. If caught, both master and servant would be disfranchised. Any legal seller of old garments had to hang them in the 'open streete' for at least seven days.<sup>67</sup>

A faded black wool doublet, lined with linen, shows how scraps could be used by ingenious tailors (Figures 1.16 and 1.17). Inside the sleeve, just around the edge of the buttonholes, has been stitched a thin strip of crimson silk. When worn, it would be visible through the arm slit, buttonholes, and at the sleeve cuffs, giving the impression that the whole doublet was lined in expensive red-dyed silk. But unlike the yellow silk-lined doublet, here the wearer only had to pay for a few inches of silk — perhaps the leftover cabbage from a finer doublet.

Given their intimacy with their male and female clients' bodies, and their use of fine fabrics, it is no wonder plays and satires about tailors depicted them as sexually inconstant and dishonest. In Francis Beaumont's play *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613), Old Merrythought warns '[n]ever trust a tailor that does not sing at his work: his mind is of nothing but filching'. The London citizen's wife agrees: 'Godfrey my tailor, you know, never sings, and he had fourteen yards to make this gown; and I'll be sworn Mistress Pennistone the draper's wife had one made with twelve'.<sup>68</sup> In the pamphlet *The Defence of Conny-Catching* (1592), Robert Greene discusses 'London and courtly Tailors' as being the most deceitful, but explains that even a 'poor pricklouse' country tailor will steal cloth and place it in a box or barrel containing leftover scraps, colloquially called the 'Tailor's hell'.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> LMA, COL/CC/01/01/022, 294v-295r.

<sup>68</sup> Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ed. Sheldon P. Zitner (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), Act 2, lines 454-59, 100.

<sup>69</sup> 'this hel is a place that the tailors haue vnder their shopboord, wher al their stolne shreds is thrust'. Greene goes on to tell a story about a tailor who was known for filching but 'for the excellency of his workmanship' was still sought after. In the story, the tailor steals fabric from a gentlewoman, but her loyal servingman witnesses the theft and reports it to his master and mistress, who in turn steal his cloak and force the tailor to

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Figure 1.16 (above): Doublet and breeches, England, 1625-1635.  
Wool, trimmed with silk and lined with linen.  
V&A T.29&A-1938.

Figure 1.17 (left):  
Detail of silk scraps used in the sleeve of Figure 1.16.

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confess. Robert Greene, *The Defence of Conny Catching, Or a Confutation of Those Two Iniurious Pamphlets Published by R.G. against the Practitioners of Many Nimble-Witted and Mysticall Sciences* (London: A. I[effes] for Thomas Gubbins, 1592), D4v-E1r.

The Merchant Tailors' company did arbitrate when tailors were accused of cheating their clients by stealing or wasting cloth, or producing poor-quality garments. In 1572, for example, the master and wardens ordered Thomas Taylor to repay the widow Mary Stacey for a cassock he had made that she declared was too small. Taylor was allowed to keep the cassock for re-sale. In 1630, Henry Calcott was accused of overcharging his client, a Mr Cater, and for cheating on the quantity of cloth he had used in two suits of apparel and two cloaks.<sup>70</sup> But it is striking, given the ubiquity of the trope of the dishonest tailor, how rarely instances of disappointment or dispute are recorded.

An autobiography written by John Dane (1612?-1684) also resists this stereotype. Recalling his training as a tailor before emigrating to New England in 1639, Dane recounted how one day as a young boy, working in his father's tailoring workshop, he sat 'alone on the shopbord' ripping open a pair of gentleman's breeches to sew up a hole in a pocket. He discovered that a gold coin had fallen through the hole in the pocket and lay in the lining of the breeches, and took the money. But Dane's conscience plagued him ('thow nobody could know of it, yet god, he knew of it') and he decided to return the coin to his father, who returned it to the gentleman.<sup>71</sup> Dane's autobiography also challenges the trope of the libidinous tailor. As a young journeyman working in Berkhamsted, Dane was up late one night and while he 'Rought on a shopboard', a maid came into his shop. They sat talking and 'jested' together, but then the maid put herself in such a position that Dane made his excuses and left, 'for I fared, if I had not, I should have cumitted foley with hur'. Another evening, having worked late to finish a large order of sergeants' coats in time for the assizes at Hertford, Dane returned to his lodgings in the dark to find the hostess 'sat in a chare by the fyer, in hur naked shift, houlding hur brests open'. He declined her invitation

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<sup>70</sup> MF 325, CM V1, 14.1.72, p. 560 and MF 328, CM V6A, 24.1.30 as cited in N. V. Sleight-Johnson, 'The Merchant Tailors Company of London, 1580-1645, with Special Reference to Government and Politics' (University of London, 1989), 328.

<sup>71</sup> John Dane, 'A Declaration of Remarkabell Prouedenses in the Corse of My Lyfe', *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* VIII (1854): 149.

to drink with him, and praised his self-will: 'I toke no notes of the goodnes of god in Restraining me, but Rattther ascribd it to my self'.<sup>72</sup>

Dane's efforts to stress that he was neither a thief nor an adulterer suggest that tailors were keen to escape their bad reputation, and also demonstrate how spiritual concerns permeated the working lives of early modern craftspeople. Likewise, the wood turner Nehemiah Wallington (1598-1658) who lived in St Leonards Eastcheap to the north of London Bridge was compelled to write about faith, religious struggles, and depression (both accounts contain failed suicide attempts). Through his fifty notebooks, Wallington did not always describe his work producing and selling wooden goods in his shop on Philpot Lane as a fulfilling vocation. After an evening reading and praying at home in December 1654, Wallington noted that he returned to his shop to work 'more out of conscience to God's commands than of any love I had unto it'.<sup>73</sup> Few London craftspeople left written accounts detailing their thoughts about their working life, but these accounts suggest that religious beliefs were fundamental to the identity and working practices of artisans.<sup>74</sup>

### **Body-makers, soul-makers: The godly artisan**

Debates about the relationship between religion and clothing must have been particularly meaningful to London congregations with a high proportion of clothing makers. Many moral attacks on clothing focused on those who wore fashionable dress, such as when Leonard Wright (c.1555-c.1591) declared that 'newe fashions deforme Gods workemanship

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<sup>72</sup> When going to the circuit courts, sergeants wore broadcloth coats with sleeves, and faced with velvet. Rules of dress drawn up in 1635, as cited in Edward Smedley, Hugh James Rose, and Henry John Rose, eds, *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana, Or, Universal Dictionary of Knowledge: Comprising the Twofold Advantage of a Philosophical and an Alphabetical Arrangement, with Appropriate Engravings*, vol. XXI (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1845), 162. Dane, 'A Declaration of Remarkable Prouedenses in the Course of My Lyfe', 150.

<sup>73</sup> As cited in Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1985), 113.

<sup>74</sup> For a survey of autobiographies written by artisans, many of which were spiritual accounts, see James Amelang, *The Flight of Icarus: Artisan Autobiography in Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

in their bodies’, singling out in particular starched ruffs that prohibited wearers from being able to ‘looke up to heaven when they pray’, and the shaped and slashed doublets that made men look ‘as though theyr guts were ready to fall out’.<sup>75</sup> But Wright also attacked the makers of clothing as ungodly. Although his best-selling works defended the Elizabethan episcopacy, he criticised both the Church and clothing makers when he wrote ‘the honourable profession of divinitie is much like the Taylor’s craft. The one through daily inventing of new fashions is ever in learning. And the other by continuall devising strange articles is never learned’.<sup>76</sup>

Clothing makers were not only critiqued by satirists and moralists. In the book of Genesis, God was said to have ‘made coates of skinnes’ to clothe Adam and Eve after their fall, but Protestant reformers were anxious about these claims. John Calvin objected to the suggestion, commenting that ‘Moses after a rude and grosse manner declareth here, that the Lorde tooke suche paines for Adam and his wife, that he made them garmentes of skinnes. For we must not take his wordes, as though God were a Tawer of skinnes, or a Tailer’.<sup>77</sup> The 1560 *Geneva Bible* even added a marginal gloss suggesting the alternative, ‘or gave the[m] knowledge to make the[m] selues coates’.<sup>78</sup> God could not be considered a tailor, these arguments ran, because artisans were low-status members of society. Craftspeople ranked lowest in William Harrison’s 1577 *Description of England*: ‘all artificers, as tailors, shoemakers [...] etc.’ were the ‘fourth and last sort of people’ with ‘neither voice

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<sup>75</sup> Leonard Wright, *A Summons for Sleepers Wherein Most Grievous and Notorious Offenders Are Cited to Bring Forth True Frutes of Repentance, before the Day of the Lord Now at Hand. Hereunto Is Annexed, a Patterne for Pastors, Deciphering Briefly the Duties Pertaining to That Function* (London: John Wolfe, 1589), 30-31. For more on godly comportment and bodily eloquence, see Herman Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body: Studies on Gesture in the Dutch Republic* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2004); Herman Roodenburg, ‘The Body in the Reformations’, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformations*, ed. Ulinka Rublack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 643-66.

<sup>76</sup> Leonard Wright, *The Pilgrimage to Paradise Lately Compiled and Newly Augmented; for the Direction, Comfort, and Resolution, of Gods Poore Distressed Children in Passing through This Irkesome Wilderness of Tribulation and Tryall* (London: H. L[ownes] for William Leake, 1608), A3v.

<sup>77</sup> Calvin also suggests that Adam and Eve wore leather because linen or wool were too fine – leather was more ‘beastlie’ and their clothing was supposed to signify their ‘filthinesse’. Jean Calvin, *A Commentarie of John Calvine, Vpon the First Booke of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. Thomas Tymme (London: Henry Middleton for John Harison and George Bishop, 1578), 118-19.

<sup>78</sup> *The Geneva Bible: The Facsimile Edition of the 1560 Edition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), f. 2v.

nor authority in the commonwealth'.<sup>79</sup> Literary depictions too placed artisans at the lowest level of society. A tailor was among the craftsmen dismissed by Shakespeare's Puck as mere 'rude mechanicals' working only with their hands, '[w]hich never labour'd in their minds till now'.<sup>80</sup> The term 'mechanical' also highlights the tailor's role as an artificer, who made unnatural garments against nature.<sup>81</sup> John Bulwer concluded *Anthropometamorphosis*, his extraordinary description of the visual strategies and attire of mankind, by calling for clothes to be cut 'according to the naturall shape and proportion of the body, as we may probably imagine the skin-garments were, wherewith the Lord God, who best knew their shape, first clothed the nakednesse of our first Parents'.<sup>82</sup> For Bulwer, God could be considered a tailor if his clothes followed the natural human body form, although he thought that 'most nations' were 'altering their Bodies' with 'artificiall and affected Deformations'.<sup>83</sup>

The idea that clothing makers deformed the natural human form and turned people away from God sparked attacks on tailors and other artisans of the body. Barnabe Rich was disgusted by 'certaine new inuented professions, that within these fourtie or fiftie yeares, were no so much as heard of, that are now growne into that generalitie'. He warned that these 'Fashion Mongers' such as the 'Attyre-makers' who made the 'lowzie commoditie of Periwys' were 'not only offensive unto God' but also threatened the civic and commercial life of London, as 'the worthy Citizens of London, must bee enforced to make choise of their Aldermen, from amongst these new vpstart companies'. Worst of all for Rich, however, were 'those that be called Body-makers, that doe swarme through all the partes

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<sup>79</sup> William Harrison, *The Description of England: The Classic Contemporary Account of Tudor Social Life*, ed. Georges Edelen (Washington, DC and New York: The Folger Shakespeare Library and Dover Publications, 1994), 118.

<sup>80</sup> William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Roma Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Act 5, Scene 1, Line 73; Act 3, Scene 2, line 9.

<sup>81</sup> On the derogatory term 'mechanical' see Patricia Parker, 'Rude Mechanicals', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 43-82.

<sup>82</sup> Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis*, 558.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, frontispiece.

both of London & about London, that are better customed, and more sought unto, then he that is the Soule maker'.<sup>84</sup>

In the mid-sixteenth century women began to wear stiffened upper garments, and Rich's criticism plays with the language of this new form of female dress, known as a 'pair of bodies' (from which the word 'bodice' evolved in the seventeenth century).<sup>85</sup> The only extant item of clothing that can be confidently attributed to Queen Elizabeth I is a pair of 'straight bodies' made of fustian and whalebone by her London-based tailor William Jones for her funeral effigy (Figure 1.18).<sup>86</sup> Just like doublets, pairs of bodies were structured by rigid materials like whalebone stitched into tight channels, but often they were further stiffened with a long 'busk' made of wood, metal, whalebone, or horn.<sup>87</sup> Elizabeth's bodies were made for her funeral effigy, so they are hastily made and plain, but other bodies could be covered in bright silks which made them expensive and often sexualised items of dress.<sup>88</sup>

Not only was the tailor said to be a thief and adulterer, on the lowest rung of society then, but in reshaping the human body with unnecessary and foreign materials, he worked against God, nature, the city of London, and the English commonwealth. For Sir Thomas Overbury, such debates were a source of satire. Overbury argued that the tailor 'differeth altogether from God', punning that unlike God, tailors sent the 'best pieces' to hell (i.e. they stole the cabbage and put it into their scrap store). He also dismissed 'any skill

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<sup>84</sup> Barnabe Rich, *The Honestie of This Age: Proouing by Good Circumstance That the World Was Neuer Honest till Now* (London: Thomas Dawson for T Adams, 1614), 23-24.

<sup>85</sup> 'bodice, n.'. *OED Online*. March 2017. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/20911?redirectedFrom=bodice> (accessed April 13, 2017).

<sup>86</sup> Janet Arnold, 'The "Pair of Straight Bodies" and "a Pair of Drawers" Dating from 1603 Which Clothe the Effigy of Queen Elizabeth I in Westminster Abbey', *Costume: Journal of the Costume Society*, 41 (2007): 1-10.

<sup>87</sup> The earliest written reference to a pair of bodies found by Sarah Anne Bendall dates to 1554. Sarah Anne Bendall, 'To Write a Distick upon It: Busks and the Language of Courtship and Sexual Desire in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England', *Gender & History* 26, 2 (1 August 2014): 200.

<sup>88</sup> A pair of very similar bodies, dating to c.1620s, was found concealed under the floorboards of a public house in Sittingbourne in Kent. Dinah Eastop, 'Outside In: Making Sense of the Deliberate Concealment of Garments within Buildings', *Textile: The Journal of Cloth & Culture* 4, 3 (2006): 238-54. For more, see Luca Costigliolo, 'From straight bodies to stays' in Tiramani and North, *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns*, 10-11. For more on the sexual connotations of busks and bodices, see Bendall, 'To Write a Distick upon It'.

Figure 1.18:  
A pair of bodies, 1603,  
fustian, linen thread,  
whalebone, probably  
made by William Jones.  
Westminster Abbey.

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in Geometrie', claiming the tailor 'could never yet finde out the dimensions of his owne conscience'. Rather, Overbury described the tailor as 'partly an Alchemist' who could 'turne your silks into gold'.<sup>89</sup>

Overbury's suggestion that the tailor was an alchemist plays with the fact that tailors made money from luring their clients into spending money on fabrics, but his critique also hints at how others could admire the transformative power of tailoring. George Puttenham described in positive terms how the tailor was generative and inventive, for his 'arte' in making a garment 'contrary to nature' led to him 'producing effects neither like to hers, not by participation with her operations, nor by imitation of her patternes, but makes things and produceth effects altogether strange and diverse, and of such forme and quality (nature always supplying stufte) as she never would or could have done of her self'.<sup>90</sup> For Thomas Wilson, the tailor was able to realise the inner potential of materials through the mastery of his tools. In *The Arte of Rhetorique*, Wilson described how a good orator must learn to place his argument in 'good order', just as a 'The Tailour his mette Yarde, & his measure [...] every one accordyng to his callyng frameth thynges thereafter. For though matter be had, and that in greate plentie: yet al is to no purpose, if an order be not used. As for example: [...] What good dothe clothe, if Tailours take no measure, or do not cutte it out?'<sup>91</sup>

In his prologue to *Midas* (1592), a comedy laden with allegorical references to Elizabethan England and the threat of Spanish invasion, John Lyly suggested that there had been a recent shift in practice: 'Come to the Tayler, hee is gone to the Paynters, to learne howe more cunning may lurke in the fashion, then can bee expressed in the making [...] Trafficke and trauell hath wouen the nature of all Nations into ours, and made this land like

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<sup>89</sup> Thomas Overbury, *A Wife Now the Widow of Sir Thomas Overburie Being a Most Exquisite and Singular Poeme, of the Choyse of a Wife. Whereunto Are Added Many Witty Characters, and Conceyted Newes; Written by Himselfe, and Other Learned Gentlemen His Friendes* (London: T. C[reede] for Lawrence Lisle, 1614), E4v-F1r.

<sup>90</sup> George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie. Contrined into Three Bookes: The First of Poets and Poesie, the Second of Proportion, the Third of Ornament* (London: Richard Field, 1589), 255.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique for the vse of All Suche as Are Studios of Eloquence, Sette Forth in English* (London: Richardus Graftonus, 1553), f. 83v.

Arras, full of deuise, which was Broade-cloth, full of workemanshippe'.<sup>92</sup> Lyly's lines have been read as a disparagement of foreign influences on English textiles, or a wider lament about the loss of national identity.<sup>93</sup> Yet while he suggests that the 'workmanship' that marked out English broadcloth has been replaced by foreign trade and travel, the outcome of this is to turn England into 'Arras' – a rich and highly valuable tapestry. His use of the terms 'cunning' and 'device' suggests that they were not straightforwardly derogatory concepts. As early as 1518 it was said that older tailors had great difficulty finding work in London: because 'of their ages [they did not] haue [...] the experience nor cunning to cutt or shape garments of the newe and diuerse fassions so often new founde and changed'.<sup>94</sup> 'Cunning' craftsmanship was essential for the London tailor in order to keep pace with the fashions. And if a tailor could take inspiration from a painter, as Lyly suggested, his craft might be elevated into an art. After all, both the tailor and the painter began their work by preparing linen canvas with rabbit skin glue and thread; the interior layer of the doublet is made with the same materials as the inside of a painting.

Tailors had an intimate relationship with their clients' bodies, and had to employ their knowledge of human proportions, transforming flat textiles into sculpted garments that would produce a pleasing and proportional shape on a daily basis. As Sandra Cavallo has shown of Italy, the work of 'artisans of the body' – including jewellers, tailors, and upholsterers – also influenced the physical and mental health of their clients.<sup>95</sup> The colours of fabrics and gemstones were likened to personal and spiritual attributes, and could be used to promote or match the wearer's 'complexion' (their balance of humours).<sup>96</sup> In Ben

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<sup>92</sup> John Lyly, *Midas. Plaied before the Queenes Maiestie Vpon Twelue Day at Night, by the Children of Paules* (London: Thomas Scarlet for I[ohn] B[roome], 1592), A2.

<sup>93</sup> David Morrow, 'Local/Global Pericles: International Storytelling, Domestic Social Relations, Capitalism', in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna G. Singh (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 355-56.

<sup>94</sup> CLRO JOR 11 ff.336-336v as cited in Lien Luu, 'Skills and Innovations: A Study of the Stranger Working Community in London, 1550-1600' (University of London, 1997), 294.

<sup>95</sup> Sandra Cavallo, *Artisans of the Body in Early Modern Italy: Identities, Families and Masculinities* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 77-81.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

Jonson's *The Staple of News* (published 1631, acted 1625), Pennyboy Junior tells his tailor (the aptly named 'Fashioner') that 'this suite | Has made me wittier, then I was'. The tailor replies, 'Believe it Sir, | That clothes doe much upon the wit, as weather | Do's on the braine; and thence comes your proverbe; | The Taylor makes the man'. While Jonson's play is a satire about the emergence of news and the wasteful spending of young men on fripperies, these witty lines play on well-established stereotypes of London tailors. The best tailors were also respected as creators of new designs and fashions. Pennyboy Junior asks Fashioner whether books, prints, or textile arts inspire his 'invention[s]', at once suggesting that the tailor is both an inventor and an educated humanist.<sup>97</sup> Elizabeth Currie has noted that, in 1611, the tailor for the Magalotti family in Florence issued a separate charge for the 'disegnatura' (design) of two outfits, which he priced at approximately ten per cent of the cost of the 'making'.<sup>98</sup> The paradoxical status of the tailor merits further investigation. On the one hand, the tailor was lower class, deforming the body in violation of God and nature and stealing valuable materials. On the other, the tailor or 'bodymaker' might be seen (for better or worse) as a sculptor, a painter, an architect, or an alchemist. Tailors were under particular scrutiny due to their intimacy with the body and their access to fine materials, but broader shifts in the status of craft practice altered the way that early modern craftsmen and women were perceived in early modern Europe.

### **The changing status of artisanal knowledge**

When publishing the first tailor's pattern book in 1580, Alcega hoped that what he called 'this little book of mine' would be 'good and beneficial to the State'.<sup>99</sup> But Alcega's attempt

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<sup>97</sup> 'I pray thee tell me, Fashioner, what Authors | Thou read'st to help thy invention? Italian prints? | Or Arras hangings? | They are tailors' libraries'; Ben Jonson, *The Staple of News: A Comedie Acted in the Yeare, 1625, by His Maiesties Seruants* (London: I. B. for Robert Allot, 1631), 10.

<sup>98</sup> Currie, *Fashion and Masculinity in Renaissance Florence*, 11415. See also Elizabeth Currie, 'Diversity and Design in the Florentine Tailoring Trade', in *The Material Renaissance*, ed. Michelle O'Malley and Evelyn Welch (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 154-73.

<sup>99</sup> Alcega, *Tailor's Pattern Book, 1589*, f. v-vi, 16.

to present the tailor as a skilled geometer and mathematician was not a selfless act, but rather aimed to elevate the cultural status of tailoring to that of a learned profession. In the frontispiece, Alcega holds a compass and rule more like an architect than a tailor; his shears, needle, and thread are visually sidelined (Figure 1.19).<sup>100</sup> Alcega's pioneering achievement can be seen as part of a pan-European effort by artisans and specialists to publish instructional books for others in their profession and laypeople, in part as a means to elevate practical crafts to the status of art.<sup>101</sup> At the same time, across Europe there was a marked increase in visual representations of occupations, which often depicted artisans in idealised workspaces. Most famous of these was Jost Amman and Hans Sachs' *The Book of Trades* (1568) which characterised manual work as noble and honest, placing verses about the virtues of production alongside over one hundred woodcut images of artisans (Figure 1.20). While English artists did not depict craftspeople in this idealised or systematic way, and no English tailor published a similar manual to that of Alcega, shifts in the cultural status of craft knowledge led to new valuations of artisanal work.

In the century leading up to the establishment of the Royal Society in 1660, the status of artisanal knowledge in London shifted dramatically. By the seventeenth century, the Aristotelian theory of knowledge that distinguished between categories of *episteme* (theory), *praxis* (experience), and *technē* (craft knowledge) were being combined by scientists who began to 'engage bodily with nature'.<sup>102</sup> Historians of science, most notably Pamela Long and Pamela Smith, have highlighted how artisanal ways of understanding the natural

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<sup>100</sup> As one of the seven liberal arts, geometry was highly respected across Europe. For more on the 'geometric turn' and its influence on English culture, see Henry S. Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts 1580-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>101</sup> Pamela Long has suggested that 'particular crafts and constructive arts, having been transformed into written, discursive disciplines, came to be treated as forms of 'knowledge,' characterized by rational and sometimes mathematical principles'. Long, *Openness, Secrecy Authorship*, 104.

<sup>102</sup> Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, 17-81.

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Figure 19:  
Juan de Alcega, *Libro de Geometria, Pratica, y Traça*  
(Madrid, 1580), frontispiece.

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Figure 1.20:  
'The tailor' in Jost Amman and Hans Sachs,  
*The Book of Trades* (Frankfurt: Sigmund  
Feierabend, 1568), F4.  
British Museum, 1904,0206.103.20,  
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

world became incorporated into what Francis Bacon (1561-1626) termed the ‘new philosophy’. In 1620 Bacon called for a ‘New Philosophy; or Active Science’, portraying science as an active practice, produced by a philosopher engaging with the physical world, rather than simply contemplating theoretical works.<sup>103</sup> Bacon’s ideas emerged from a vibrant urban culture. As Deborah Harkness has demonstrated, the term ‘science’ had already been used in Elizabethan London to describe the study and manipulation of the natural world ‘for productive and profitable ends’, based in ‘urban ways of knowing’.<sup>104</sup> Alchemical practitioners, for example, were often involved in the commercial environment of the Royal Exchange.<sup>105</sup> As Rob Iliffe explains, ‘The shops of craftsmen were important places for gleaned information’ in this culture ‘obsessed with technical innovation’.<sup>106</sup> Juan Luis Vives, in his treatise *De tradendis disciplinis*, had already reassured men of learning that they ‘should not be ashamed to enter into shops and factories, and to ask questions from craftsmen, and get to know about the details of their work’.<sup>107</sup> The impression given by Samuel Hartlib’s diary is that seventeenth-century London teemed with knowledgeable craftsmen willing to share intriguing and cutting-edge knowledge. Hartlib consulted barbers, cobblers, and a combmaker who was described as an ‘ingenious Mechanical, Mathematical and Astrological witt’.<sup>108</sup>

By 1660, ‘natural philosophers’ were openly consulting craftsmen, although Royal Society members fiercely debated the merits of craft expertise. As has been well-studied, their close relationship with craftsmen shaped these new philosophers’ practices and even

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 18-19; Pamela Long, *Artisan/Practitioners and the Rise of the New Sciences, 1400-1600* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2011).

<sup>104</sup> Deborah E. Harkness, *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), xvii.

<sup>105</sup> On this, and on the emerging alchemical community in London, see Deborah E. Harkness, “‘Strange’ Ideas and ‘English’ Knowledge: Natural Science Exchange in Elizabethan London”, in *Merchants and Marvels*, ed. Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen (London: Routledge, 2002), 154-55.

<sup>106</sup> Rob Iliffe, ‘Hartlib’s World’, in *London and Beyond: Essays in Honour of Derek Keene*, ed. Matthew Davies and James A. Galloway (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2012), 104, 118.

<sup>107</sup> As cited in Eric H. Ash, *Power, Knowledge, and Expertise in Elizabethan England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 12.

<sup>108</sup> Hartlib Papers, 28/1/30A–B as cited in Iliffe, ‘Hartlib’s World’, 119.

conception of the world.<sup>109</sup> Historians often overlook makers of clothing when discussing ingenuity and expertise in the early modern period, yet debates about the status of skill and expertise, which were undergoing redefinition in the period, often referred to textiles and clothing.<sup>110</sup> One of the Royal Society's founders, Robert Hooke, described the relationship between art and nature and between observations and 'artificial improvements' in textile terms, as if he were a weaver and his results were fine clothing: 'I design alwayes to make them follow each other by turns, and as 'twere to interweave them, being apart but like the Warp or Woof before contexture, unfit either to Cloth, or adorn the Body of Philosophy.'<sup>111</sup>

The century between 1560 and 1660, then, saw science and clothing intersect in new ways.<sup>112</sup> Scarlet dye, for example, was invented by Cornelis Drebbel (1572-1633) and developed at the Küffler dyeworks using cochineal, aqua regia, and tin; it was known as 'Bow-dye', geographically connecting the invention to the east of London.<sup>113</sup> Experimenter Hugh Platt took extensive notes on dyeing, and strived to develop new ways to black shoes and waterproof textiles.<sup>114</sup> The large numbers of skilled makers, the confluence of

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<sup>109</sup> Michael Hunter, *Science and Society in Restoration England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Michael Cyril William Hunter, *Establishing the New Science: The Experience of the Early Royal Society* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1989); Mark Greengrass, 'Samuel Hartlib and the Commonwealth of Learning', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 304-22; Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*. I am grateful to Vera Keller for sharing this chapter with me, which will appear in a forthcoming volume Vera Keller, 'Scarlet Letters: The Mayerne Papers within the Royal Society Archives', in *Archival Afterlives: Life, Death, and Knowledge-Making in Early Modern British Scientific and Medical Archives*, forthcoming.

<sup>110</sup> See, for example, Ash, *Power, Knowledge, and Expertise in Elizabethan England*.

<sup>111</sup> 'The action or process of weaving together or intertwining; the fact of being woven together' in 'contexture, n.'. *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, December 2016) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/40218?rskey=4LTlim&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed February 22, 2017); Robert Hooke, *An attempt to prove the motion of the earth from observations*, (London, 1674), 'To the Reader' (n.p.), as cited in Wilkins, although she erroneously footnotes it as being from Hooke's *An Attempt for the Explication of the Phaenomena*; Emma Wilkins, 'Margaret Cavendish and the Royal Society', *Notes & Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science*, 68, 3 (2014): 250.

<sup>112</sup> As Smith has shown, while active knowledge was increasingly valued through the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, by the late seventeenth century, new philosophers were uncomfortable about the role of the body and the senses in artisanal epistemology, and science became distanced from artisanal practice; Smith, *The Body of the Artisan*, 20.

<sup>113</sup> Franco Brunello, *The Art of Dyeing in the History of Mankind* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1973), 200-1.

<sup>114</sup> Malcolm Thick, *Sir Hugh Plat: The Search for Useful Knowledge in Early Modern London* (Devon: Prospect Books, 2010), 268-76. See also Chapter 2 of this thesis.

knowledgeable craftspeople and merchants, and the glut of resources imported from across the country and world meant that London was uniquely placed to develop new kinds of clothing materials. Londoners were materially literate; capable of witnessing and discussing craft expertise in practice.

### **Widespread knowledge of making practices**

Even those early modern Londoners who were not professional craftspeople or domestic workers were likely to have had a greater degree of familiarity with processes of making than the twenty-first century consumer, as will be explored in Chapter 2. The ‘shops’ Londoners frequented were often in essence workrooms where they might have witnessed craftspeople in action. Many Londoners would have lived among working craftspeople, as Shakespeare did when he lodged on Silver Street with a family of tiremakers.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, the basic vocabulary of the craft trades was regarded as fundamental knowledge.

*Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, Comenius’s Latin primer and picture-book for children, was translated from Dutch into English by London grammar school teacher Charles Hoole in 1659 and aimed to explain all the ‘chief Things that are in the world’.<sup>116</sup> The basic actions and tools of laundresses, seamstresses, spinners, shoemakers, tailors, and weavers were each given a double-page spread, on the left side a numbered engraving and on the right a verse in English and Latin which pointed out the numbered actions and objects in the image. A child would learn how the spinster ‘with her left hand pulleth out the Thred, 8. and with her right hand turneth a wheel 9 or a Spindle 10’, and could witness how the tailor ‘cutteth Cloth 2. with Shears 3. and soweth it together with a needle and double thred 4. Then he presseth the seams with a pressing-iron 5’ (Figures 1.21 and 1.22).

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<sup>115</sup> Korda, *Labors Lost*, 109. See also Charles Nicholl, *The Lodger: Shakespeare on Silver Street* (London: Penguin, 2007).

<sup>116</sup> Johann Amos Comenius, *Job. Amos Commenii Orbis Sensualium Pictus, Hoc Est, Omnium Fundamentalium in Mundo Rerum, & in Vita Actionum, Pictura & Nomenclatura Job. Amos Commenius’s Visible World, Or, A Picture and Nomenclature of All the Chief Things That Are in the World, and of Mens Employments Therein*, trans. Charles Hoole (London: J. Kirton, 1659), frontispiece.

The widespread familiarity with making practices is demonstrated by the frequency with which the actions of cloth and clothing makers were used metaphorically. ‘The fashion of play-making’, the playwright Thomas Middleton wrote in the epistle to *The Roaring Girl* (1611), ‘I can properly compare to nothing so naturally as the alteration of apparell’.<sup>117</sup> Margaret Cavendish described herself as a humble craftsman who had to assemble all of her own writing, saying that although among ‘great Taylors, the Master only cuts out and shapes, and his Journy-men and Apprentices join and sow them together; but I like as a poor Taylor was forced to do all my Self, as to cut out, shape, join, and sow each several Scene together’.<sup>118</sup>

The deep association between London’s history and noble craftsmen is evident in the Elizabethan reimagining of the popular story of Simon Eyre, a fifteenth-century draper who had apprenticed with a second-hand clothes dealer before rising to the position of Lord Mayor. In Thomas Deloney’s novels *The Gentle Craft, Parts I and II* (c. 1597-8) and Thomas Dekker’s play *The Shoemakers’ Holiday* (1599) Eyre was recast as a shoemaker.<sup>119</sup> On the stage and in ballads, hard-working apprentices and craftsmen and merchants like Eyre, Dick Whittington, and the clothier Jack of Newberry were celebrated as an entrepreneurial hero figures who could rise to the position of Lord Mayor of London.<sup>120</sup> Craftsmen and women were frequently portrayed on stage as wise and honourable upholders of national

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<sup>117</sup> Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl. Or Moll Cut-Purse* (London: Nicholas Okes for Thomas Archer, 1611), A3r.

<sup>118</sup> Margaret Cavendish, *Plays Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious and Excellent Princess, the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle*. (London: A. Warren for John Martyn, James Allestry, and Tho. Dicas, 1662), unpaginated.

<sup>119</sup> Natasha Korda, ‘“The Sign of the Last”: Gender, Material Culture, and Artisanal Nostalgia in The Shoemaker’s Holiday’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, 3 (2013): 573-97. See also Charles Wellner Camp, *The Artisan in Elizabethan Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1924); Laura Caroline Stevenson, *Praise and Paradox: Merchants and Craftsmen in Elizabethan Popular Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>120</sup> Peter Burke, ‘Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century London’, *The London Journal* 3, 2 (1977): 143-62, pp. 156-57. A play and a ballad were entered into the Stationers’ Register in 1605, but their texts are lost. The first extant version of the story of Dick Whittington, according to Robertson, is in a ballad from 1612; James Robertson, ‘The Adventures of Dick Whittington and the Social Construction of Elizabethan London’, in *Guilds, Society and Economy in London 1450-1800*, ed. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 2002), 51-66.

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Figure 1.21:

‘The dressing of Line[n]’ in Johann Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus* (London, 1659), 120-21.

Figure 1.22:

‘The Taylor’ in Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus*, 126-27.

pride and nostalgic tradition, a depiction that could clash with the widespread hunger and desire for innovation and new goods.<sup>121</sup>

### London as a site for making

Clothing manufacture was an important part of the city's identity. 'The multitude (or whole body) of this populous Citie', John Stow wrote, consisted of 'three parts, Marchantes, Handicrafts men, and Labourers'. While the merchants, Stow explained, were the wealthiest, the craftsmen were so numerous that they 'doe farre exceede both the rest'. When describing these ubiquitous craftsmen, Stow stated: 'Handicrafts men bee those who do exercise such artes as require both labour and cunning, as Goldsmithes, Taylors, and Haberdashers, Skinners, &c.'<sup>122</sup> Stow's pride in craftsmen broadly, and his focus on makers of jewellery, clothing, accessories, and leather specifically, illuminates their predominance in the city, but also reflects his personal experience. Having worked for thirty years as a London tailor, Stow (1524/5-1605) made a remarkable move to become the most prolific writer of history in sixteenth-century England. In this his most famous work, *A Survey of London* (1598), he walked the reader around the city, pointing out its classical and historical features, and commenting on its changing shape.<sup>123</sup> Stow's *Survey* is filled with references to the city's role in the production and wearing of clothing. Pages are given over to recording

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<sup>121</sup> This tradition can be traced back into the medieval period; Lisa H. Cooper, *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), *passim*.

<sup>122</sup> John Stow, 'The singularities of London,' in *A Survey of London. Reprinted From the Text of 1603*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), 199-217. *British History Online*, accessed March 20, 2017, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/survey-of-london-stow/1603/pp199-217>.

<sup>123</sup> For Stow's biography, see Barrett L. Beer, 'John Stow (1524/5-1605)', in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26611>. See also C. L. Kingsford and John Stow, 'Introduction: The Life of Stow', in *A Survey of London. Reprinted from the Text of 1603*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), vii-xxviii, *British History Online*. For more on Stow and the Survey, see Vanessa Harding, 'City, Capital, and Metropolis: The Changing Shape of Seventeenth-Century London', in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 117-44; Ian Anders Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie, *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past* (London: British Library, 2004).

the fine liveries worn by past and present Londoners, to charitable gifts of fine colourful cloth, and to sites of industry and retail. Stow's breathless descriptions show how hard it was, even for a lifetime Londoner, to keep up with manufacturing and retailing developments in the city, particularly when these defined the urban space. The city wards and streets bore names witnessing their identities as centres for clothing and textile production: 'Cordwainer Street Ward, taking the name of cordwainers, or shoemakers, curriers, workers of leather, dwelling there', for example. But as Stow noted, trades moved on while street names persisted: 'The upper part of this street [...] was called Hosier Lane, of hosiers dwelling there in place of shoemakers; but now these hosiers being worn out by men of other trades, as the hosiers had worn out the shoemakers'.<sup>124</sup> London was a city that wore its identity as a centre for clothing production on its sleeve.

London was an attractive home for craftspeople working in the clothing trades, especially those willing to respond to the rapid developments in urban life by producing new and exciting goods. As Stow commented, with so many of England's gentlemen and their families 'for a good portion of the year out of the country' and living in London, it was no wonder that 'retailers and artificers [...] do leave the country towns where there is no vent and do fly to London where they are sure to find ready and quick market'.<sup>125</sup> When, for example, Anne Toy moved from Carmarthen to London in the late 1620s in order to pursue a suit in Chancery, she was able to support herself by making silk flowers for gentlewomen.<sup>126</sup> A memorandum to the Statute of Artificers made clear that the urban environment was the appropriate place for such practices, and the countryside should focus on agriculture: 'Cities and great towns are only, or for the most part, to be maintained by

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<sup>124</sup> John Stow, *A Survey of London Written in the Year 1598*, ed. Antonia Fraser (Stroud: The History Press, 2005), 221-22. See also pp. 86-87 where Stow explains 'Men of trades and sellers of wares in this city have oftentimes since changed their places, as they have found their best advantage' and then maps where current trades are and formally were.

<sup>125</sup> John Stow, 'The singularities of London' in *A Survey*, ed. Kingsford, 199-217. *British History Online*, accessed March 20, 2017, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/survey-of-london-stow/1603/pp199-217>.

<sup>126</sup> LMA, DL/C/231, fols 35-37 as cited in Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 45.

manual arts, occupations, mysteries, and sciences. And therefore it appeareth convenient that apprentices should be there brought up and instructed in the said arts and sciences, and not in such other towns and places where men ought to live by husbandry and the labouring of grounds'.<sup>127</sup> The city was the ideal crucible for clothing developments: full of increasingly wealthy visitors and residents keen to cultivate new urban looks, served by many skilled makers with easy access to materials imported by merchants from around the world.<sup>128</sup>

### **New clothing industries**

The emergence of new clothing industries and the diversification of making throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was, according to Joan Thirsk, nothing short of 'revolutionary'.<sup>129</sup> Lists of foreign imports drawn up in 1559 and 1564-5 show that the London ports received a colourful array of commodities for clothing, such as £108 10s. worth of buttons, £685 of canvas for doublets, £1863 of feathers, over £15,000 of sewing silk, and thousands of pounds worth of mockado, sarcenet, worsted, Spanish wool, and velvet.<sup>130</sup> But concerns that such 'necessary' and 'unnecessary' wares were costing England valuable coinage when many could be made at home prompted a concerted effort to make new kinds of goods in England.

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<sup>127</sup> This has been tentatively dated to 1573; Richard H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds, *Tudor Economic Documents: Being Select Documents Illustrating the Economic and Social History of Tudor England*, vol. I (London: Longmans, 1924), 354 as cited in Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 108.

<sup>128</sup> For the link between urban centres and innovation, see Karel Davids and Bert De Munck, eds, *Innovation and Creativity in Late Medieval and Early Modern European Cities* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016). For London as a centre of creativity, see Patrick O'Brien, ed., *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>129</sup> Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, 45. See also Joan Thirsk, 'The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: The English Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500-1700', in *The Rural Economy of England* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 235-58.

<sup>130</sup> Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, 181-85.

A unique silk stocking foot, dated to the mid-sixteenth century, represents one of many ‘revolutionary’ industries in this period (Figure 1.23). The Museum of London suggests that this stocking foot, finely knitted with 540 stitches per square inch, was probably imported from Italy or Spain.<sup>131</sup> But as Joan Thirsk has shown, in 1560, Mistress Montague gave a hand-knitted pair of black silk stockings for Queen Elizabeth.<sup>132</sup> Knitted stockings were a rarity in 1560s London, but by the turn of the seventeenth century were a widely available commodity. Silk stockings remained a luxury item (Dering paid at least £1 a pair when he purchased them, numerous times, for himself and his wife between 1619 and 1627) but stockings knitted in wool and linen were also available at more affordable prices.<sup>133</sup> While the industry expanded across the country, silk stockings were almost exclusively knitted in London until the later seventeenth century.<sup>134</sup>

Many inventions and innovations were developed in London, some the result of state-sponsored projects designed to promote English industry in collaboration with immigrants and London-based craftsmen, and others connected to gentlemen and nobles connected to the court. The importance of the textile and clothing trade to the prosperity of the English state is attested by William Cecil, Elizabeth I’s chief minister and closest advisor, who is said to have ‘always consulted artificers in their own art’, such as learning leather tanning from a cobbler.<sup>135</sup>

The Stuart court has been described as stimulating a culture of experiment, valuing innovation, and promoting an interest in new materials in a globalising city, but many of

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<sup>131</sup> *Stocking Foot*, silk, mid-16th century, A13833, Museum of London, <http://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/online/object/90604.html>.

<sup>132</sup> Joan Thirsk, ‘The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: The English Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500-1700’, in *Textile History and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Miss Julia De Lacy Mann*, ed. N. B. Harte and K. G. Ponting (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1973), 54.

<sup>133</sup> A pair of willow colour silk stockings, for example, cost £1 11s. in 1619 and a pair in carnation-coloured silk for Dering’s wife cost £1 4s. However, woollen stockings cost 4s. in 1626 and knitted linen stockings 4s. 6d. in 1629. Dering bought silk stockings in a wide range of colours, from sky colour to black, yellow, and green. He also had stockings cleaned and dyed new colours. Dering, ‘U350/E4’, 5r, 58v, 68r, 79v, 92v.

<sup>134</sup> Thirsk, ‘The Fantastical Folly of Fashion’.

<sup>135</sup> *History of the Worthies of England* (1661), republished as Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England*, ed. P. Austin Nuttall, vol. II (London: Thomas Tegg, 1840), 312.

these developments were based in the Elizabethan culture of granting patents for new inventions from the 1560s.<sup>136</sup> As Thirsk has shown, from the 1560s patents of monopoly were granted by a government keen to promote native industries making new kinds of goods like laundry soap, dye materials, cloth, cloth finishings, starch, and writing paper made from clothing rags.<sup>137</sup>

Many of these industries, such as making pins and starch, were intimately connected with dress styles. Starch, extracted from wheat in a process that took over a month, was required in increasing quantity in order to stiffen and shape ruffs and cuffs into fashionable shapes. Pins had been imported in the thousands at the estimated cost of at least £40,000 in 1597, and were in such high demand that the government tried to stimulate a native industry to produce them at the cheap prices offered by the Dutch, who also made high quality fine pins for use on delicate cambric and lawn.<sup>138</sup> Used in everyday dressing to fasten swaddling clothes around babies, a well-tucked pin also attached cuffs, ruffs, headwear, sleeves, stomachers, and accessories, and enabled the arrangement of folds and pleats. As well as enabling creative and flexible dress styles, pins were used by seamstresses and tailors in the making of clothing; far from being an insignificant product, the emergence of a London pin industry saved England from importing foreign goods and provided employment.<sup>139</sup> Pins were made of two pieces of finely-drawn iron or brass wire, one for the shank, the other coiled two or three times and fitted around the shank to form a small head (Figure 24). The head was then secured by soldering with tin, and was either stamped

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<sup>136</sup> Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), 264; K. Ochs, 'The Royal Society of London's History of Trades Programme: An Early Episode in Applied Science', *Notes & Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science* 39 (1985): 129-58; Ash, *Power, Knowledge, and Expertise in Elizabethan England*; Peck, *Consuming Splendor*.

<sup>137</sup> Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-92.

<sup>139</sup> Mary C. Beaudry, *Findings: The Material Culture of Needlework and Sewing* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 10-43; Jenny Tiramani, 'Pins and Aglets', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and Its Meanings*, ed. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 85-94.

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Figure 1.23 :  
Stocking foot, mid-sixteenth century, silk,  
L (foot) 225mm, W (foot) 70mm, H (heel to top) 130mm, H (foot) 75mm.  
Museum of London, A13833.

flat or shaped into a smooth ball. Each point had to be filed by hand in a pinner's bone, and so the process of making pins was labour intensive (Figures 25 and 26).<sup>140</sup> Recent excavations of a ditch in Charterhouse Square, Smithfield, uncovered two crucibles, several lengths of copper wire between 0.5 to 1mm thick, and two pinners bones, suggesting that pins were being made in this area of London. The ditch passed through properties that fronted onto Long Lane. With a mix of wealthy residential properties and Smithfield market nearby to the west, and a market and processing industries nearby, it was probably a good place to set up a pin-making business.<sup>141</sup>

Not all of the projects were a success, but by 1660, a wealthy Londoner would have been able to dress in silk-knitted stockings, a bodice structured with whalebone, scented gloves, and linen shaped with coloured starches, fastened with fine pins that had been made by skilled craftspeople in or around the city. This would have been impossible a century earlier, when even Queen Elizabeth had not yet received her first pair of scented gloves imported from Italy.<sup>142</sup> The arrival of these new dress technologies was so celebrated that it was written into chronicles.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> It is no wonder Adam Smith singled out pin making as the first example of an industry that could benefit from a division of labour. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. 1 (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), 6-7.

<sup>141</sup> Sam Pfizenmaier, *Charterhouse Square: Black Death Cemetery and Carthusian Monastery, Meat Market and Suburb*, Crossrail Archaeology (London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2016), 59-82.

<sup>142</sup> Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 126-53. For more on scented gloves, see Evelyn Welch, 'Scented Buttons and Perfumed Gloves: Smelling Things in Renaissance Italy', in *Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories*, ed. Bella Mirabella (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2011), 13-39.

<sup>143</sup> 'Milleners or Haberdashers had not then any gloves Imbroydered or trimmed with Gold or Silke [...] neither could they make any costly wash or perfume until about the fourteenth or fifteenth yeare of the Queene the right honourable Edward de vere, Earle of Oxford, came from Italy, and brought with him Gloves, sweete bagges, a perfumed leather jerkin, and other pleasant things, and that yeere the Queene had a payre of perfumed Gloves trimmed onley with foure Tuftes or Roses, of cullered Silke', in John Stow, *The Annales, or a Generall Chronicle of England, Begun First by Maister John Stow, and after Him Continued and Augmented with Matters Forreyne, and Domestique, Auncient and Moderne*, ed. Edmund Howes (London: Thomas Dawson, 1615), 868.

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Figure 1.24 (left):  
Pin, c.1620-1650, silvered brass,  
V&A, 123-1900.

Figure 1.25 (above):  
Pin in pinners bone, demonstrating how the pinner  
would use the bone for filing. © York  
Archaeological Trust.

Figure 1.26 (below): An example of a pinner's bone  
found at London Wall,  
Pitt Rivers Museum 1885.118.260.

## National restrictions vs urban dynamism

London's artisanal dynamism was sometimes at odds with the English parliamentary vision of craft and trade, which often overlooked the labour of women and those who were not members of the London companies. While the memorandum to the Statute of Artificers promoted the city as an ideal place for craft trades, the 1563 Statute itself had attempted to restrict each craftsman to the practice of a single craft: 'no man shall use or exercise any manual trade or occupation unless he has been brought up as an apprentice [for] seven years at the same trade'.<sup>144</sup> The custom of London, however, maintained that freemen were free to practice any trade, irrespective of their livery company. A member of the Dyers' company, for example, could be a practicing clothworker; a free draper might instead choose to earn his living as a jobbing tailor.<sup>145</sup>

There was some resistance to the London custom. Lawsuits were sporadically brought against men who violated the Statute, as companies sought to protect their members by restricting the involvement of others.<sup>146</sup> In May 1571, for example, the wardens of fourteen companies presented a bill to the Lord Mayor and his yeomanry, claiming that the London custom was leading to 'poverty, decay, and ruin of the said handicrafts', while '[i]n old ancient times past' when only members of a company practiced their trades, not only were craftsmen more prosperous, but also 'the things then pertaining to the said arts were truly workmanly and substantially made'.<sup>147</sup> The most vocal defenders of London custom were the Clothworkers' and the Merchant Taylors' Companies, perhaps

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<sup>144</sup> 5 Elizabeth c. 4 as in *The Statutes of the Realm*, vol. IV (London, 1819), 414-22; S. T. Bindoff, 'The Making of the Statute of Artificers', in S. T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C. H. Williams, eds, *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays Presented to Sir John Neale* (Athlone Press: London, 1961), 56-94.

<sup>145</sup> For a fascinating case study of the relationship between company membership and practicing trade, as well as chains of knowledge transmission, see Roger Feldman, 'Dyeing and the London Dyers' Company: Membership, Craft, and Knowledge Transmission, 1649-1829', *London Journal* 39, 1 (2014): 37-58.

<sup>146</sup> See, for example, the suits mentioned in Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 115-16.

<sup>147</sup> The companies were the Bakers, Blacksmiths, Carpenters, Coopers, Cordwainers, Cutlers, Dyers, Girdlers, Glaziers, Horners, Painter Stainers, Stationers, Tallow Chandlers, and Upholders. The bill was recorded in the Merchant Taylors Court Minutes: I, 257-58 as cited in *ibid.*, 111.

as Steve Rappaport suggests because their members were the most affected by the economic fluctuations of the declining cloth trades.<sup>148</sup> Rappaport has proposed that while London's cloth trade was in decline and clothworkers were petitioning for help, the city's population boom meant that the demand for clothing was far greater than ever before, so perhaps 'cloth finishers [...] traded in their shears and tenterhooks for needles and thread'.<sup>149</sup> The custom withstood most legal challenges, and so in London, unlike in many other English and European cities, there was a high level of occupational mobility and flexibility, which created and shaped markets by introducing new materials and developing and consuming goods.<sup>150</sup>

### **Controlling trades**

The records of London's livery companies are unusually quiet about the daily working practices of their artisan members, or the skills that an apprentice was expected to gain. London custom meant that the city's livery companies were not fully focused on the practices of craftsmen, as many company members were in fact merchants or practitioners of other trades. Jobbing tailors, for example, were usually members of the Merchant Taylors' company, but they rarely belonged to the livery, the most powerful grouping within the company, which was instead more commonly comprised of wealthy merchants and drapers. This separation between the livery and the craftsmen in the London companies has been linked to the decline of the guilds and corporations, and might explain why much company business did not touch on the working practices of the craft.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Sleigh-Johnson, 'The Merchant Taylors Company of London, 1580-1645, with Special Reference to Government and Politics', 325-50; Sleigh-Johnson, 'The Merchant Taylors' Company of London under Elizabeth I: Tailors' Guild or Company of Merchants?', 45-52.

<sup>149</sup> Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 121.

<sup>150</sup> Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen, eds, *Merchants and Marvels* (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>151</sup> See, for example, J. R. Kellett, 'The Breakdown of Guild and Corporation Control over the Handicraft and Retail Trade in London', *The Economic History Review* 10, 3 (1958): 381-94.

But even members of the companies who did not spend their working life crouched over a cutting table or steaming and felting caps needed to spend time debating the standards expected of the products made by members in the company, and trying to represent the interests of the ‘members of the handicraft’ when changes in manufacture threatened to impinge upon the livelihoods of their members.<sup>152</sup> As the records of the Lord Mayor’s Courts (which often mediated between companies) demonstrate, and as Nigel Sleigh-Johnson found in his study of the Merchant Tailors’ Company, much time was spent debating and enforcing the organisation and practices of the craft trades.<sup>153</sup> Given the porousness of craft practice in London, trade secrets could not be closely guarded by the livery companies, and there must have been a translation of skills and expertise across craft boundaries. Moreover, the close proximity of workshops must have made it difficult for makers to conceal their practices from their neighbours (Figure 1.27).<sup>154</sup> The wire-drawer Philip Washbourne, for example, prevented anyone who used engines from entering his workroom as he worried that his trade secrets would be revealed.<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, the companies did try to keep the ‘secrets’ or their trade within the company. The Merchant Tailors’ Ordinances declared ‘no person [...] shall discover or disclose any of the lawfull secrets concerning the feats of merchandizing in their own occupation’, and members were threatened with a £5 fine.<sup>156</sup> London’s companies held the right to search the

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<sup>152</sup> In the thirty-six months from May 1607, 79% of masters whose occupations were recorded in the court minutes were described as ‘cutting tailors’. The membership was, it seems, largely comprised of working tailors. By 1660, however, the apprentice binding books record only 35% of masters binding apprentices as tailors. Sleigh-Johnson, ‘Aspects of the Tailoring Trade in the City of London in the Late Sixteenth and Earlier Seventeenth Centuries’, 27.

<sup>153</sup> Sleigh-Johnson, ‘The Merchant Tailors Company of London, 1580-1645, with Special Reference to Government and Politics’, 345.

<sup>154</sup> For example, see the houses in Cheapside and Bread Street, c.1617, Dorian Gerhold, *London Plotted: Plans of London Buildings c.1450-1720*, ed. Sheila O’Connell (London: London Topographical Society, 2016), 72-77.

<sup>155</sup> As cited in Michael Berlin, ‘Broken All in Pieces: Artisans and the Regulation of Workmanship in Early Modern London’, in *The Artisan and the European Town, 1500–1900*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 82.

<sup>156</sup> C. M. Clode, ed., ‘Memorial XXXVIII: Ordinances of the Company, 1507 and 1613’, in *Memorial XXXVIII: Ordinances of the Company, 1507 and 1613*, in *Memorials of the Guild of Merchant Tailors of the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist in the City of London* (London: Harrison, 1875), 215, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/tailors-guild-london/pp199-227>.

shops of those practicing their trades, and to fine or expel those who broke the rules. The Master and livery of the Merchant Taylors searched to find false measures and discover breaches in apprenticeship: on 24 January 1566, the search revealed an unlawful yard in Thomas Pullen's shop.<sup>157</sup> But by the 1580s, the 'General Search Day' had apparently become merely a symbolic practice, with money raised from fines going towards a dinner.<sup>158</sup> However, the Bachelors' Company (a lesser branch within the Merchant Taylors', made up of a higher proportion of working craftsmen) made their own vigorous searches and in 1602 they recorded their procedure: four times a year, the yeomanry wardens and assistants would meet at six in the morning at St Paul's Cathedral, and split up to search the shops of all 'bocherers and all others that dothe work menes garments and womenes garmentes'.<sup>159</sup>

The city was entitled to half of the fines levied by searchers who discovered illegal working practices. These payments are recorded in the Chamberlain's Book of Fines, which shows that hundreds of botchers and tailors were caught working illegally between 1517 and 1628.<sup>160</sup> Most of the fines were levied on alien or foreign workers who were not authorised to work within the city, but as the garments they worked on were sometimes confiscated or noted down as evidence, these records offer a glimpse into London tailoring workrooms. On 19 May 1614, for example, the city received its part of the fines levied by the wardens, who had discovered a number of foreign tailors working within the city. Fines of 3s. 4d. were levied from Thomas Scalticke, who had been working on a 'night gowne with hanging sleeves of stammell baies', a man named Edmond for the 'backside of a Gowne of Mild Say', Thomas Joyner for a pair of 'stuffe hose and a doublet of changeable silke saye', and William Eastlacke for the 'bodies and sleeves of a black satten gowne'. A man named John Vantell was fined 20s. for a 'figured taffaty childs bodies, two paire of breeches with divers other parcells'. That year, the city also received fines from

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<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 210 ft. 17.

<sup>158</sup> Sleight-Johnson, 'The Merchant Taylors Company of London, 1580-1645, with Special Reference to Government and Politics', p.332.

<sup>159</sup> Guildhall Library Microfilm 310, Yeomanry Ordinance Book, 16.4.02. f. 2 as cited in *ibid.*, 332.

<sup>160</sup> Even in the 1640 these searches occurred at least biannually, according to Sleight-Johnson, *ibid.*, 333.

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Figure 1.27:

Houses and shops in Cheapside and Bread Street, c.1617, showing the ground floor. On the left, with a shopfront on Cheapside, are the large upper and lower shops belonging to the rich silk merchant Baptist Hicks. On the right side, with doors to Bread Street, are the much smaller shops of a girdler, a milliner, and pointmaker. This building had five stories above the cellar, and one of the first floor parlours even had a 'window looking into the shopp'. John Milton grew up in this building.

Plan of Cheapside, 435 x 320 mm, scale 1: 86, Eton College, 16/WB/44.

Image taken from Dorian Gerhold, *London Plotted: Plans of London Buildings c.1450-1720*, ed. Sheila O'Connell (London: London Topographical Society, 2016), 73.

clockmakers, drapers, glovers, goldsmiths, haberdashers, and tailors, who had been discovered in other searches.<sup>161</sup>

The increasing suburbanisation of London into areas beyond city jurisdiction caused problems for company members who had to compete with foreign masters. In 1634, free tailors complained about this competition and by the 1650s, the Merchant Taylors' struggled to search in extra-mural London and Westminster. These problems would only be compounded after the Great Fire of 1666 and the building of Covent Garden in the West End.<sup>162</sup>

### **Immigrants and the clothing trades**

The Book of Fines suggests that the companies were largely preoccupied with controlling 'foreign' (that is, unfree) workers. A large influx of aliens entered London during the 1560s and '70s, and while these new Londoners were not economic migrants, having been driven across the channel by religious and political upheavals like the Dutch Revolts and the French Wars of Religion, many of them contributed significantly to the trade and manufacture of clothing.<sup>163</sup> Over forty per cent of strangers in London were recorded as working in the clothing industry.<sup>164</sup> Historians have debated the extent of xenophobia against these immigrants, and it seems that in times of plague or economic hardship such as the 1590s, anti-immigrant feeling spilled over.<sup>165</sup> Jacob Selwood highlights how there was

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<sup>161</sup> City's Book of Fines 1517-1628, LMA, COL/CHD/CM/10/001, October 1613-August 1614, 252r-254r.

<sup>162</sup> Sleigh-Johnson, 'Aspects of the Tailoring Trade in the City of London in the Late Sixteenth and Earlier Seventeenth Centuries', 31.

<sup>163</sup> See Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here*; Natasha Korda, 'Staging Alien Women's Work in Civic Pageants', in *Working Subjects in Early Modern English Drama* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 53-68; Nigel Goose and Lien Luu, *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005); Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700*; Korda, 'Staging Alien Women's Work in Civic Pageants'; Korda, 'Sex, Starch-Houses and Poking-Sticks'; Korda, 'Froes, Rebatoes and Other "Outlandish Comodities"'.  
<sup>164</sup> Luu, 'Skills and Innovations', 101; Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700*, 184.

<sup>165</sup> Joseph P. Ward, 'Fictitious Shoemakers, Agitated Weavers and the Limits of Popular Xenophobia in Elizabethan London', in *From Strangers to Citizens: The Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550-1750*, ed. Randolph Vigne and Charles Littleton (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), 80-87.

‘disproportionate involvement of aliens in the textile business’, and that ‘the importance of the cloth trade for the economy of England as a whole, and for London in particular [...] ensured that textile production was a locus of anti-stranger sentiment’.<sup>166</sup> Strangers were blamed for rent increases and price rises, unemployment, and changes in popular taste: ‘[they] have introduced foreign Fashions and Inventions, to the Ruin of the honest English handicrafts Tradesman.’<sup>167</sup>

Highly skilled immigrants were, however, welcomed. Elizabeth I had no qualms about employing a French tailor to make clothing in both French and Italian styles, although there is no evidence to suggest that her search for one was successful.<sup>168</sup> In 1559, mercers Richard Springham and Michael Lok offered to bring over two skilled Italian weavers, a spinner, a dyer, and a carpenter (to build and repair looms) for the introduction of high quality silk velvet, satin, damask, and taffeta manufactures into London using raw silk imported from Spain and Italy. Cecil agreed to use Crown funds to pay for the raw materials and set-up costs, but made sure that English workers would be involved in the manufacturing process in order to acquire the skills.<sup>169</sup> It seems that the scheme was unsuccessful, but the 1560s marked the beginning of a concentrated effort, as Thirsk has demonstrated, to establish new industries by issuing patents and co-opting immigrant workers to teach Londoners how to manufacture previously imported goods.<sup>170</sup> Laura Yungblut has suggested that Londoners held particularly strong xenophobic ‘grudges against their alien competitors’ because of the government’s support of alien craftsmen who often worked counter to the London guilds.<sup>171</sup> The London market was, however, hungry for these new products and skills, and the government officially recognised and

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<sup>166</sup> Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 34-38.

<sup>167</sup> J. Strype, *Stow's Survey of London* (1720), Book 5, 298. As cited in Lien Luu, ‘Migration and Change: Religious Refugees and the London Economy, 1550-1600’, *Critical Survey* 8, 1 (1996): 97.

<sup>168</sup> Letter from Sir William Cecil to Sir Henry Norris (Ambassador at Paris), as cited in Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion*, 8.

<sup>169</sup> PRO SP12/8/33-5 as cited in Luu, ‘Skills and Innovations’, 163-64.

<sup>170</sup> Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, 24-50.

<sup>171</sup> Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here*, 76-77.

promoted foreign skills, which were both creating new industries and benefitting established ones.<sup>172</sup>

Many immigrants embraced the English hunger for new goods, and shifted from traditional occupations towards new luxury crafts such as thread making, the new draperies, linen weaving, lace making, sugar refining, diamond cutting, and glass making.<sup>173</sup> A small silk industry had existed in London since at least the second half of the fifteenth century, but innovations that were brought to the city by immigrants in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods dramatically altered the industry.<sup>174</sup> In 1571, of 254 stranger households recorded as working in luxury trades, 72% (183 households) were working in silk-related trades as silk dressers, dyers, gummers, fringe makers, silk lace workers, spinners, throwsters, twiststers, weavers, winders, and workers.<sup>175</sup> These new industries altered the demographics of the city. In 1593, the majority of foreign silk weavers were French (66%) and Dutch and Flemish (26%), and a small number came from Germany, Italy, and Spain.<sup>176</sup> One African named Resonabell Blackman was even described in the parish records as a 'silkweaver' who brought his son to be baptised in St Olaves on 19 February 1586/7.<sup>177</sup> St Olaves in Southwark was one of the wards in which silk weavers clustered (in 1571, 16% of London's recorded stranger silk weavers, mainly Dutch-speaking, lived there), only eclipsed in popularity by Bishopsgate (which contained 22% of stranger silk weavers, mainly French-speaking).<sup>178</sup> While the Southwark silk industry does not seem to have survived, the

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>173</sup> Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*; Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700*.

<sup>174</sup> Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here*, 51, 77.

<sup>175</sup> As Luu notes, it is possible that these figures are exaggerated however, as one of the reasons that records of alien occupation were made was to demonstrate whether alien workers were competing with native Englishmen for work; Luu, 'Skills and Innovations', 96-98, 104-5.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 171; Luu used data from R. E. G. Kirk and Ernest F. Kirk, *Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII. to that of James I: Part II. 1571-1597*, vol. 10 (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1900) and Irene Scouloudi, *Returns of Strangers in the Metropolis, 1593, 1627, 1635, 1639: A Study of an Active Minority* (London: Huguenot Society of London, 1985).

<sup>177</sup> Imtiaz H. Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 97.

<sup>178</sup> Luu, 'Skills and Innovations: A Study of the Stranger Working Community in London, 1550-1600', 185, using data from Kirk and Kirk, *Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII. to that of James I: Part II. 1571-1597*.

Bishopsgate industry, probably because it was already dominated by French immigrants, attracted Huguenot immigrants in the seventeenth century and expanded into the Spitalfields silk industry so celebrated in the eighteenth century.<sup>179</sup> London demographics altered with these immigrants, as did its industries. In just one generation, London textile manufacture dramatically changed and previously imported luxury goods were made in the city; all-silk tuftaffeta, for example, was first recorded as being made in London in 1594.<sup>180</sup>

Foreign workers were keen to demonstrate that they were bringing new skills and prosperity to the city. In 1594, the Dutch Church in London noted that silk twisting was not ‘used by Englishmen’ but claimed that eighteen alien silk twisters ‘set on worke and maintaine under them a thowsand English poore people at the least’.<sup>181</sup> Such claims helped to challenge anti-immigrant rhetoric from city authorities and the London companies. In 1616, for example, it was suspected that immigrants were not teaching their skills to the English:

[the] cheifest cause of [entertainment] here of late was in charity to shroud themselves from persecution for religion. And being here, their necessity become the Mother of their Ingenuitie in devising many trades, before to us unknowne. The state notinge their diligence, and yet preventinge the future inconvenience enacted that they should enterteine Englishe apprentices and servants to learne these trades, the neglect whereof giveth them advantage to keepe their misteries to themselves.<sup>182</sup>

At least some Englishmen recognised immigrant contribution. In 1577, it was said ‘by reason of the trobles grown in other Contries, the making of Baies, friesadowes,

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<sup>179</sup> For more on Spitalfields silk see Natalie Rothstein, ‘Huguenots in the English Silk Industry in the Eighteenth Century’, in *Huguenots in Britain and Their French Background, 1550–1800*, ed. Irene Scouloudi (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987), 125-40.; William Farrell, ‘Silk and Globalisation in Eighteenth-Century London: Commodities, People and Connections c.1720-1800’ (PhD Thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2014); Zara Anishanslin, *Portrait of a Woman in Silk: Hidden Histories of the British Atlantic World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016).

<sup>180</sup> Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England*, 126-27.

<sup>181</sup> J. H. Hessels (ed.), *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Archivum, Epistulae et Tractatus* (Cambridge, 1889-97) Volume 3, 963-64. As cited in Luu, ‘Skills and Innovations’, 105; J. H. Hessels (ed.), *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Archivum, Epistulae et Tractatus* (Cambridge, 1889-97) Volume 3, 963-64. As cited in, Luu, ‘Skills and Innovations’, 105.

<sup>182</sup> PRO SP14/88/112 as cited in *ibid.*, 137.

Tuftmoccadowe, and many other things made of wull, is mightlie increased in England [...] For this Cause we ought to favour the strangers from whom we learned so great benifites'.<sup>183</sup> Immigrants could also alleviate pressure. The Merchant Taylors, for example, allowed freemen to employ aliens and foreigners to help make clothing 'if it be for some noble tryumphe [...] or for some other sodeyn cause for a great estate which in all hast possyble must needly be done'.<sup>184</sup> Dynamism and innovation which served the city's needs and furthered technical and professional skills usually won out over tradition and stability.

The native adoption of new trades was highly celebrated, and became part of the story of London's development. Edmond Howes celebrated the transmission of foreign skills to the native English population when he updated Stow's *Annales, or Generall Chronicle of England* (1615). Howes recorded that in 1564 Mistris Dinghen van den Plasse had arrived in London from her native Flanders with her husband 'for their better safeties', where she set up a starching business catering to the richest wives in the city. While lawn ruffs were, according to Howes, 'at that time, a stuffe most strange, and wonderfull', van den Plasse was so skilled at making and starching them that daughters and kinswomen began to go to her to learn, for four or five pounds, how to starch. Learning from foreigners was important, but so was imitation and copying: Howes also recorded how in 1564, the apprentice William Rider had seen a pair of knitted worsted stockings owned by an Italian merchant from Mantua, borrowed them, and had a similar pair made himself: 'and these were the first worsted stockings made in England'. 'Within a few years after', Howes noted, 'in short space they wared common.' Howes was keen to credit men and women who pioneered industries in London: 'Master John Tyce, dwelling neere Shorditch Church, was the first Englishmanne that deuised and attained, the perfection of making all manner of Tufted Taffeties, Cloath of Tissue, wrought Veluets, branched Sattins and all other kinde

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<sup>183</sup> Richard H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds, *Tudor Economic Documents: Being Select Documents Illustrating the Economic and Social History of Tudor England: Volume 3. Pamphlets, Memoranda, and Literary Extracts*, vol. 3 (London: Longmans, 1924), 212. As cited in Luu, 'Migration and Change', 93.

<sup>184</sup> Ancient Manuscript Book of the Merchant Taylors' Company, MF 310 V2, f.54v. As cited in Sleigh-Johnson, 'The Merchant Taylors Company of London, 1580-1645, with Special Reference to Government and Politics', 362.

of curious silk stuffes'.<sup>185</sup> London was not the only urban centre to try to attract foreign workers, and many towns wrote to Queen Elizabeth to request that aliens be allowed to settle there.<sup>186</sup> In 1590, Arthur Rotye, a Dutch immigrant dyer living in London, was invited by another Dutch immigrant named Gyles Cambye to visit Norwich. Rotye was said to be an expert in green dyes, and when he arrived in Norwich he shared his trade secrets with an English dyer in the city, and his apprentices.<sup>187</sup>

London's adoption and improvement of these goods became a central to its identity. In 1657, James Howell claimed that it had been agreed by 'all nations that, though the Londoners be not so apt to invent, yet when they have got the invention, they use always to improve it, and bring it to greater perfection.'<sup>188</sup>

### **Flexible designs: Buttons and pinking**

Flexible skills could be valuable for those new to London, enabling them to find a residence and make professional connections quickly. Just as alien weavers were said to be teaching their countrymen silk weaving 'though before they were a tailor, a cobbler, or a joiner', English immigrants and native Londoners benefitted from learning new skills.<sup>189</sup> In 1562, Elizabeth Foxgall received a room on Fleet Lane in exchange for teaching a joiner's wife 'to

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<sup>185</sup> Stow, *The Annales*, 869.

<sup>186</sup> In Norwich and Sandwich, the towns requested that Dutch, Flemish and French immigrants be allowed 'the exercise there of the faculty of making says, bays, and other cloths which have not been used to be made in this our realm of England'. In Maidstone in Kent, officials asked permission to invite skilled weavers and makers of 'Spanishe leather', 'corseletts and hedde peces and all kynde of armor [...] and many other artes and sciences which are not there knowen being both necessary and profittable for the comon Wealthe.' SP 12/18/9 and SP 12/43/19 as cited in Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here*.

<sup>187</sup> The Norwich Strangers Book, Norwich Record Office, 17d/9/1 fo.107. My thanks to Frank Meeres for this reference.

<sup>188</sup> James Howell, *Londinopolis an Historicall Discourse or Perlustration of the City of London, the Imperial Chamber, and Chief Emporium of Great Britain: Whereunto Is Added Another of the City of Westminster, with the Courts of Justice, Antiquities, and New Buildings Thereunto Belonging* (London: J. Streater for Henry Twiford, George Sawbridge, Thomas Dring, and John Place, 1657), 396.

<sup>189</sup> Guildhall Library, MS 4647, f. 67v, as cited in Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 65.

make buttons'.<sup>190</sup> Foxgall might have taught her landlord's wife to wind colourful silk threads around a wooden core to create decorative patterned buttons which could be sold to haberdashers and tailors, a very suitable and lucrative pursuit for the wife of a joiner. After all, it would have been a clever use of scraps of wood left over from his occupation, and would capitalise on the growing market for decorative fastenings. Such buttons still survive on extant doublets. One from c.1625, now in storage at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is in fairly poor condition. Many of the doublet's buttons have been lost, and others remain stitched onto the sleeves in various states of disrepair. Some of the buttons have lost their covering, revealing the wooden core which may have been made from the remnants of a larger joinery project by someone like Foxgall's landlord. A few remaining buttons show how beautiful and visually effective this kind of passementerie could be – green and white silk threads wrap the wooden core in a chevron pattern, creating a small but striking round button (Figures 1.28, 1.29, 1.30).

A flexible workforce enabled a flexible dress style. Designs inspired by worked silk buttons could be replicated, by other craftsmen, in different materials.<sup>191</sup> Fifteen small pewter buttons, moulded in imitation of the kinds of silk buttons made by Foxgall, fasten the front of a brown leather jerkin now at the Museum of London (Figures 31 and 32). Sized for a young man and dated to the second half of the sixteenth century, this jerkin demonstrates that even a practical item of outerwear, far less expensive than a silk doublet, could be transformed through decoration to express the emotions and sartorial interests of a young man. John Petre paid 13s. 6d. for a 'spanyshe leather jerkyn cutt' in June 1569, but in August of that year he had to spend an eye-watering £5 5s. 6d. for a russet satin

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<sup>190</sup> Bridewell Court Books 01. f. 198r, as cited in Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71, 1 (2008): 242.

<sup>191</sup> The term 'material mimesis' was coined by Marta Ajmar, and was the subject of the CRASSH conference, 'The Matter of Mimesis. Studies on mimesis and materials in nature, art and science', 17-18 December 2015, Cambridge, organised by Emma Spary and Marjolijn Bol. Marta Ajmar, 'Mechanical Disegno', *RIHA*, 84 (2014): np, <http://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2014/2014-jan-mar/special-issue-art-design-history/ajmar-mechanical-disegno>.

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Figure 1.28 (above left):

Intact button with chevron pattern on Figure 1.30.

Figure 1.29 (above right):

Wooden core of button on collar of Figure 1.30.

Figure 1.30 (below):

Doublet, c.1625-1630, silk and linen, V&A, 170-1869.

doublet.<sup>192</sup> The leatherworker who stitched, scored, slashed, and pinked hearts and stars in diagonal rows on this jerkin was not just making a decorative statement; the diamonds made of tiny cuts on the collar would have made the leather far more supple, so that the young wearer could have easily turned his head or shrugged his shoulders (Figures 1.33 and 1.34).<sup>193</sup> Slashed and pinked leather shoes, like those recently recovered in Charterhouse Square, were also popular; they too were more supple to put on and wear, although heavily slashed shoes would also be prone to wear out more rapidly. Only one of the twenty-one thick cattle leather shoes discovered in the ditch is extensively decorated, but many of the others had a few horizontal slashes or vertical cuts, which would have made these shoes easier to put on (Figure 1.35 and 1.36). They were also found with a fragment of a slashed leather jerkin.<sup>194</sup>

The leatherworker and the tailor achieved these distinctive shapes quickly and easily using pinking and cutting tools, as reconstruction reveals (Figure 1.37). Under the tutelage of leatherworker Karl Robinson, I was quickly able to learn this skill. After a few practices handling the hammer and pinking tool to test how much pressure was required, I was able to quickly punch and score a replica portion of the leather jerkin in stars and hearts (Figure 1.38).<sup>195</sup> As Beverly Gordon states, ‘When we understand from the inside out, we recognize which designs are difficult to achieve and which aren’t’.<sup>196</sup> Reconstruction of this leather style reveals that pinking tools were a simple and efficient way of achieving such a design, requiring no more than patience and eye accuracy.

Cuts and slashes were practical and visually striking on leather clothing and shoes, especially if the wearer wore bright hose underneath. The fashion for slashing was also

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<sup>192</sup> Accounts of John Petre, chiefly at the Temple, [London], 1567-1570, Essex Record Office, D/DP A17.

<sup>193</sup> Beatrice Behlen, ‘A Leather Jerkin Well Examined’, *Museum of London*, no date, <https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/leather-jerkin-well-examined>.

<sup>194</sup> Pfizenmaier, *Charterhouse Square: Black Death Cemetery and Carthusian Monastery, Meat Market and Suburb*, 59-82.

<sup>195</sup> ‘Historical Stitching & Decorative Techniques on Leather Clothing, 1400-1800’ at the School of Historical Dress, led by Rachel Robinson, October 2014.

<sup>196</sup> Gordon, ‘The Hand of the Maker’, 192.

Figure 1.31 (above left):

Detail of pewter button, in imitation of woven silk on Jerkin, c.1550-1600, Museum of London (36.237). © Museum of London.

Figure 1.32 (above right):

Detail of Figure 1.30 buttons, for comparison

Figure 1.33 (left):

Jerkin, c.1550-1600, Museum of London (36.237).  
H 480 mm (centre front overall); H 60 mm (collar);  
H 90 mm (tab, centre front); H 550 mm (centre  
back); W 450 mm (shoulders); W 70 mm (wings,  
from armhole); D (max) 305 mm. © Museum of  
London.

Figure 1.34 (below):

Jerkin interior, showing the diamond-shaped  
pinking at the neck collar. © Museum of London.

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Figure 1.35 (left): Highly decorated slashed shoe, child size. Late sixteenth century. Excavated in 2013 at the Crossrail Farringdon Station site, now in the Museum of London Archaeology collection.

Figure 1.36 (right): Vamp of shoe with vertical slash, designed to make it easier to put on. Excavated in 2013 at the Crossrail Farringdon Station site, now in the Museum of London Archaeology collection.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 1.37 (above left):

Photograph of my reconstruction of Figure 29 and tools.

Figure 1.38 (above):

Detail of heart and star decoration and scored diagonal lines of Figure 1.33.

Figure 1.39 (below left):

Doublet and hose, said to have belonged to Christian II (1583-1611), Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.

Figure 1.40 (below):

Detail of pinked and slashed silk on Figure 1.39.

regularly used by tailors on silk garments. Already supple, unlike thick leather, silk fabric does not need to be cut for flexibility, and cuts and pinks were for style rather than function. Tightly woven high quality silk should not fray excessively, but when cut with a sharp knife and then rubbed with a finger, the fraying threads raise into soft tufts. The effect of these pinks and cuts is that the light plays over the shiny silk and is disrupted by the soft and dull frayed ends, and the more that the pinked silk is worn, the larger the holes will get. A crimson doublet and hose belonging to Christian II, Elector of Saxony (1583-1611) is decorated in hearts, diagonal lines, and pinks, similar to the brown leather jerkin (Figures 1.39 and 1.40). While the similar decorative techniques of slashing and pinking hearts into these two garments – a leather jerkin from London and a silk doublet from Dresden – show how designs transferred across a range of different materials, and appealed across geographical and class boundaries, the visual and material effects of these pinked hearts are strikingly different.

### **Transformation of materials**

Most clothing was made by craftspeople who had to invest much time in repetitive processes, and their skill lay in their ability and patience to create even-handed, balanced work. Each spangle or metal ‘oe’ that was stitched to a fine nightcap or bodice had been twisted in a circle of hand-drawn wire and then hand-hammered, or beaten into a teardrop shape and then punched through. A fustian waistcoat, embroidered with chain stitch in silver thread in the shape of sycamore leaves, is completely covered in thousands of spangles of both the twisted and hammered ‘split-ring’ style and the punched style which hangs off bobbin lace trimming the neck, hem, and centre front of the waistcoat (Figures 1.41 and 1.42).<sup>197</sup> Although made of a rather coarse fustian, the incredible amount of work invested in making this waistcoat’s elegant high waistline and short sleeves, and then

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<sup>197</sup> Tiramani and North, *Seventeenth-Century Women’s Dress Patterns*, 2011, 60-69.

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Figure 1.41 (above left):

Waistcoat, 1630s, British, fustian, linen thread, silver thread, spangles, British, V&A T.70-2004

Figure 1.42 (above right):

Detail of Figure 1.41. Note the two kinds of spangle – those hanging from the bobbin lace have been punched through, while the spangles attached to the fustian and circled in chain stitch have been made in the split ring style.

Figure 1.43 (below left):

Pair of Gloves c.1600, British, Leather, satin worked with silk and metal thread, seed pearls, satin, couching, and darning stitches, metal bobbin lace, paper, 31.1 x 15.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 28.220.7 and .8.

Figure 1.44 (below right):

Detail of weeping eye on Figure 43, embroidered in silk and metal threads onto leather gloves. Magnification 10x. Image by Cristina Balloffet Carr.

embroidering silver thread in chain stitch around each hand-made spangle, created a fine and fashionable garment. Spangle makers must have been producing spangles in significant numbers, for in 1624 James I issued a proclamation attempting to prevent the melting down of gold and silver for the making of thread, spangles, and oes. In October, two London goldsmiths petitioned the Privy Council saying that despite the proclamation, many goldthread makers and wire drawers continued to ‘drawe wyer’ and ‘beat oes’ and spangles.<sup>198</sup> An undated document from Charles I’s State Papers called for silk-makers to ‘forbear buying’ spangles made from sterling silver, to stop makers from melting down silver plate and coin and thus ‘deceiv[ing] the King of his duty’, so the practice must have continued well into his reign.<sup>199</sup>

Much of the fine work of skilled and patient craftsmen and women can barely be appreciated by the naked eye, but microscopes and high-definition photography reveal the astonishing levels of skill employed by embroiderers on embroidered gloves and mittens (Figures 1.43 and 1.44). In other cases, however, the absence of visible traces of the making process indicates the skill of the artisans who made an object.<sup>200</sup> Henry Cary wears accessories that demonstrate both kinds of skill in a striking portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts (Figure 1.45). While the red velvet mittens he wears are delicately embroidered in colourful rainbows and clouds, the rest of his outfit is comprised of many textures and shades of white. Most striking of all is his large white hat, topped with a downy feather.

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<sup>198</sup> 13 October 1624. PC 2/32 f.467 in *Acts of the Privy Council of England: A.D. 1542-[[June 1631]*, Vol. 39: 1623-1625 (London: His Majesty’s Commission for State Papers, 1933), 340. Accessed via State Papers Online, 18 April 2017.

<sup>199</sup> SP 16/520 f/192 ‘Reasons against making spangles of starling’ in *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reign of Charles I, Jan 1648-Jan 1649, preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty’s Public Record Office*, Vol. 22: Jan 1648-Jan 1649. Accessed via State Papers Online, 18 April 2017.

<sup>200</sup> See, for example, discussions about how skilled metalworkers concealed traces of pins used in life-casting animals for *kunstkammer* in Pamela H Smith and Tonny Beentjes, ‘Nature and Art, Making and Knowing: Reconstructing Sixteenth-Century Life-Casting Techniques’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 63, 1 (2010): 153-55.

## Reconstructing the beaver hat: Unseen skill

Large felted hats, made with shaved beaver fur or wool, were the height of fashion for men and women by the turn of the seventeenth century. Driven to near-extinction in Europe, beaver pelts were imported into London from Russia and Scandinavia and, as trade expanded there, through French-controlled Canada.<sup>201</sup> According to Randle Holme, beaver hats were usually made of a mixture of beaver and wool, ‘castor’ hats were made of rabbit or beaver and wool, and ‘felts’ of rabbit and sheep wool.<sup>202</sup> Beaver wool was very valuable, for its comparative strength created strong weatherproof hats with less need for adhesives and varnishes than hats made of other kinds of wool.<sup>203</sup> In September 1617, Richard Banester, a ‘beaver-feltmaker’ of Blackfriars, gave evidence at court that Henry Ball had stolen beaver wool from him.<sup>204</sup> White beaver hats like the one worn by Cary were exceptionally rare. Mary Spencer bought one for £3, which was her largest single purchase between 1610 and 1613.<sup>205</sup> Black beaver hats were slightly less expensive, although still a luxury item; Dering’s hats cost him between 2s. 2d. and 2s. 8d.<sup>206</sup>

While the flat-brimmed caps worn by working Londoners were usually knitted before being felted (see Figure 3.5), the highly fashionable tall beaver hats were not knitted

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<sup>201</sup> Harold Adams Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 74-75. It was not until 1669 when the Hudson’s Bay Company was established that England was able to gain access to large supplies of beaver skins; David Corner, ‘The Tyranny of Fashion: The Case of the Felt-Hatting Trade in the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries’, *Textile History* 22, 2 (1991): 155.

<sup>202</sup> Holme, *The Academy of Armory, Or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon Containing the Several Variety of Created Beings, and How Born in Coats of Arms, Both Foreign and Domestick*, Book III, Chapter III, 129; also cited in Corner, ‘The Tyranny of Fashion’, 155.

<sup>203</sup> Corner, ‘The Tyranny of Fashion’, 154.

<sup>204</sup> Sessions Roll 560/68, 201, William Le Hardy, ed., ‘Sessions, 1617: 2 and 3 September’, in *County of Middlesex Calendar to the Sessions Records, 1616-18*, vol. 4 (London: Clerk of the Peace, 1941), 210-42, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/middx-sessions/vol4/pp210-242>.

<sup>205</sup> Margaret Spencer, ‘Account Book’ c.1610, 14r, British Library. For more on white beavers, see Charles Garrad, ‘Michabous and the Colonel’s White Beaver’, *The Beaver* 67, 1 (1987): *passim*; Edith Snook, ‘The Greatness in Good Clothes: Fashioning Subjectivity in Mary Wroth’s *Urania* and Margaret Spencer’s Account Book (BL Add. MS 62092)’, *The Seventeenth Century* 22, 2 (2007): 240-41. For the development of the trade, see Corner, ‘The Tyranny of Fashion’.

<sup>206</sup> Dering, ‘U350/E4’, 27v, 34r, 41r, 55r, 68v, 92v.

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Figure 1.45 (right):  
Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger,  
Portrait of Henry Cary, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount  
Falkland, 1603, oil on canvas, 216.2 x  
127 cm, Sarah Campbell Blaffer  
Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts,  
Houston, BF.1985.19.

Figure 1.46 (below left):  
Taking small amounts of carded  
and dyed merino wool.  
Photograph by Sophie Pitman.

Figure 1.47 (below right):  
Nineteen layers of wool, laid in  
vertical and horizontal directions.  
Hand to show how thick the

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Figure 1.48 (top):  
Having roughly felted one side, I placed a bell-shaped form in the middle, and repeated the process of placing thin layers of wool to create the other side of the hat.  
Photograph by Sophie Pitman.

Figure 1.49 (middle):  
The hat, with the form encased inside, roughly felted.  
Photograph by Sophie Pitman.

Figure 1.50 (bottom):  
Learning hand techniques to ensure that the hat is finely felted, with no holes, from skilled felter Rachel Frost.  
Photograph by the School of Historical Dress.

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Figure 1.51 (left):

Cutting the base of the hat to remove the form.

Photograph by Sophie Pitman.

Figure 1.52 (below left):

Stiffening the hat with varnish and rabbit skin glue.

Photograph by Sophie Pitman.

Figure 1.53 (below right):

Combing the hat to create a smooth and shiny surface.

Photograph by Sophie Pitman.

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Figure 1.54 (left):  
Hat, 1590-1680, felt, V&A, 752-1893.

Figure 1.55 (left):  
My finished felt hat, which has a thick and uneven brim, and evidence of the vertical join mark. Photograph by Sophie Pitman.

but were made through manual manipulation around a form. Felting is a fairly simple process: the transformation of wool into felt requires only heat, moisture, and manual agitation or pressure; if sheep are not shorn, their wool coat will naturally felt. However, reconstructing this technique reveals that skilful felting requires patience, knowledge, and a balanced application of pressure to avoid knotting and to achieve a smooth and even felt.

To make a felted hat of the kind that was fashionable in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, I used  $\approx$ 300g of fine black merino wool, which had been carded. Using my hands, I picked up a few fibres and placed them down in a vertical direction, creating the first layer in a bell shape. I then covered the shape in a second layer, but this time placed the wool at 90 degrees (Figures 1.46 and 1.47). I built up nineteen layers of wool in this way. Then I placed a large pattern made of rubber in the centre, and repeated the layering process on top. Using my fingers, I started to rub the fibres together (Figures 1.48 and 1.49). Applying hot water mixed with soap helped to raise tiny scales on the fibre, to better tangle and knot them together. The process was simple but time-consuming, requiring patience and even-handed pressure (Figure 1.50). Once the wool was thoroughly felted, I snipped along the base of the hat, in order to remove the rubber form, and then worked the hat over a wooden hat block (Figure 1.51). I then used rabbit skin glue to stiffen the hat, and brushed it to give it a gloss to imitate beaver (Figures 1.52 and 1.53).

Reconstruction reveals that the greatest challenge is to get the felt thin enough to look elegant and even, and to blend together the halves so that the join between the two sides is visible. Extant felted hats barely reveal traces of the join, and are impressively thin. One surviving example of a very high-crowned sugar-loaf hat has felt only 1/16 inch thick and although damaged, has little trace of a join (Figure 1.54). My finished hat, despite my focused attempt to blend the joins and maintain an even thickness, has a thicker and more uneven brim, and an obvious join mark (Figure 1.55).<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> 'Felt-making for Hats 1400 – 1900' at the School of Historical Dress, led by Rachel Frost, September 2015.

## Women's work in clothing

To understand clothing manufacture in London, the historian has to look for the hidden traces of making and manufacture. Although London guilds tried to prevent women from working 'openly', they were actively engaged in the production and distribution of clothing goods and services.<sup>208</sup> As very few women were officially apprenticed in the guilds, it is difficult to grasp the scope and practices of women's work in the city, but London court records and the Returns of Aliens reveal that the textile and clothing trades occupied a large proportion of women. In her study of wives' and widows' work between 1570 and 1640, Eleanor Hubbard found that the majority of women who testified for the consistory court in London who mentioned their occupations were craftswomen working with textiles and clothing, and laundresses.<sup>209</sup>

Whether a domestic or professional pursuit, the making and maintenance of clothing enabled women to demonstrate their skills and good reputation. Women often mentioned their textile labour in court as a way to prove that they were 'honest' and trustworthy.<sup>210</sup> The twenty-one-year-old Joan Blackborne of Whitechapel, for example, told the court that she was 'a wife and lyves partly of her husband labour and partly of her owne by winding of silke and making of buttons for handkerchers'. Textile skills enabled women a degree of labour flexibility: Magdalena Holmes said she sometimes 'useth her nedle and knitting and sometymes washing and starching'. These domestic skills could be useful for women who needed to shift jobs or gain a secondary income.<sup>211</sup> Mary Stevens, for example, had moved to London to be a servant but instead took up a job spinning and

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<sup>208</sup> Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 41. See for example Jessica Collins, 'Jane Holt, Milliner, and Other Women in Business: Apprentices, Freewomen and Mistresses in the Clothworkers' Company, 1606-1800', *Textile History* 44, 1 (2013): 72-94. For the kinds of informal and formal labour by women, see Korda, *Labors Lost*; see also the pioneering study, which discusses women's work in textile trades, Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1919), 93-149.

<sup>209</sup> For two recent studies, see Korda, *Labors Lost*; Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London*. Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 194-6.

<sup>210</sup> Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London*, *passim*.

<sup>211</sup> DL/C 226/V, fols 13 r-v (1619); GL MS 919/I, fo. 76v (1623) as cited in Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, p. 14.

carding wool in an all-female household.<sup>212</sup> Some women assisted their husbands; Jane Dampont, married to a poor tailor in St Botolph Aldgate, mentioned working in her husband's shop.<sup>213</sup> Other women did piecework, such as Luce Hitchcock who knitted silk stockings for 'shop men', or Elizabeth Jordayne who 'getteth her living by stitching of bodies for the shops and otherwise by her needle'.<sup>214</sup> As Jordayne's testimony demonstrates, women could rely on their needlework skills for makeshift work. To make ends meet, London women twisted and spun silk, mended stockings, worked caps, knitted hose, wound silk buttons, made lace, did embroidery, washed their neighbours' clothing, and starched ruffs for shops.

The occupations of immigrant single women and widows, as Natasha Korda has found, were more frequently recorded in the Returns of Aliens than the work of wives, although sometimes the work of married women was recorded incidentally. The range of labour performed by these immigrant women matches closely with the evidence from London court depositions: alien women starched, spun, dyed, embroidered, made lace and buttons, laundered, and repaired clothing.<sup>215</sup> Some immigrant women were able to distinguish their work from that of their husbands: one woman described as a silkweaver was married to a Dutch merchant and another was defined as a kersey dyer, although her husband was a brewer.<sup>216</sup> This work was likely to be poorly paid, but textile and laundry skills would have been fluidly transferable, so that a woman would have performed them as an unpaid housewifely duty or as a paid service for others, or both.

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<sup>212</sup> Bridewell Court Books 5, fo. 223 as cited in Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 183.

<sup>213</sup> Jane Dampont, 1601, LMA, DL/C/216, sl. 473 as cited in Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 197.

<sup>214</sup> Luce Hitchcock, 1619 (LMA, DL/C/226, 2nd series, fols 11v-12r) and Elizabeth Jordayne, 1619 (LMA, DL/C/227, f. 246v), as cited in *ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> Korda, *Labors Lost*, 102-3. R. E. G. Kirk and Ernest F. Kirk, *Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII. to that of James I: Part III. 1598-1625*, vol. 10 (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1900); Kirk and Kirk, *Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII. to that of James I: Part II. 1571-1597*; R. E. G. Kirk and Ernest F. Kirk, *Returns of Aliens Dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII. to that of James I: Part I. 1523-1571*, vol. 10 (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1900).

<sup>216</sup> Scouloudi, *Returns of Strangers*, 82, 179, 200. As cited in Korda, *Labors Lost*, 103.

Most women were also expected to take care of their household's clothing needs, and so the division of domestic and professional labour was often blurred. Household manuals and religious sermons encouraged women to support their families by spinning and making items of dress, whether for the family to wear or, in the words of the rector of Rotherhithe, 'if no need of it in the house, to sell and make merchandise of it; and that no discredit or discommendation at all to her neither'.<sup>217</sup> Such calls for women to work beyond the immediate needs of her household are part of what Jan de Vries has termed the 'industrious revolution', which seems to have been markedly evident in the London economy.<sup>218</sup>

For the advice writer Gervase Markham, making textiles and clothing was not just a way for women to contribute to the household economy, but was also a way for 'curious Hous-wiues' to become 'expert' skilled makers who exercised an 'art'.<sup>219</sup> Over a fifth of Markham's manual *The English Huswife* (1615) was dedicated to the transformation of textile materials – including instructions to make washing balls, perfume gloves and jerkins, dye cloths, grow and process hemp and flax, warp a loom, and do laundry.<sup>220</sup> Markham's manual imagined the housewife living in the countryside, processing wool from her husband's sheep and growing hemp and flax on their own land, but even his idealised imaginary (which was published and sold in London) suggests that the division between domestic and

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<sup>217</sup> Thomas Gataker, *Marriage Duties Briefly Couched Together, in Certain Sermons* (London, 1637), 195, as cited in Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 28.

<sup>218</sup> Jan de Vries, 'The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution', *The Journal of Economic History* 54, 2 (1994): 249-70; Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), *passim*; R. C. Allen and J. L. Weisdorf, 'Was There an "industrious Revolution" before the Industrial Revolution? An Empirical Exercise for England, C. 1300–1830', *The Economic History Review* 64, 3 (2011): 715-29.

<sup>219</sup> Gervase Markham, *The English Huswife: Containing the Inward and Outward Vertues Which Ought to Be in a Compleate Woman: As Her Phisicke, Cookery, Banqueting-Stuffe, Distillation, Perfumes, Wooll, Hemp, Flaxe, Dairies, Brewing, Baking, and All Other Things Belonging to an Houshold. A Worke Very Profitable and Necessary for the Generall Good of This Kingdome* (London: I[ohn] B[eale] for R. Iackson, 1615), 82, 87, 91.

<sup>220</sup> Gloves were perfumed with a mix of almond oil, nutmeg, oil of Benjamin, ambergris, and musk, which was ground using a 'Painters stone'. To perfume a jerkin, Markham suggested that oil of Spike and oil of olives be added to the glove perfume. The rest of the manual contains medicinal and cookery recipes, instructions for distillation (for medicinal, cooking and skincare purposes), advice for keeping a dairy and making dairy produce, and brewing. *Ibid.*, 80-100.

professional labour, particularly regarding the making of clothing, could be blurred anywhere. While Markham provided instructions for how to prepare and process textiles, he also suggested that housewives collaborate with professionals. For example, after detailed instructions to dye wool black, 'haire colour', red, blue, 'puke', 'sinder', green, yellow, and then how to mix colours by combing and carding dyed raw wool together ('the greatest Art in Housewifery'), he then suggests that housewives might instead send wool to 'the Dyers to be dyed after her owne fancie'.<sup>221</sup> Instead of spinning her own yarn, a housewife might choose to employ 'the best Spinners you can heare of'.<sup>222</sup>

Whether or not the housewife worked herself, Markham claimed that knowledge of these processes was important. Although he described weaving as the work of a professional, he claimed 'yet must not our English Housewife be ignorant therein, but though the doing of the thing be not proper unto her, yet what is done must not be beyond her knowledge, both to bridle the falshood of unconscionable workemen, and for her own satisfaction when shee is rid of the doubt of anothers evill doing'. Markham advised the housewife to 'intreate' the weaver to weave the cloth 'close, strong and true', the Fuller to mill it 'carefully', the Clothworker to dress it 'sufficiently' so that by the time it comes to the Tailor it be not 'thridbare'. Then, the cloth can be returned and 'used at your pleasure'. For Markham, women are understood as part of a cycle of combined domestic and professional labour.<sup>223</sup>

While it is likely that the majority of London women had to make as much of their household clothing as possible, even wealthy women made clothing for themselves and as gifts for others. Often this involved collaboration with professionals. In her household account book, the merchant's wife Anne Blount recorded payments for materials to make a pair of sleeves, including spending 12d. for 'drawinge', 28d. for 'boning', 3d. for 'bentes'

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 84-87.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 89-90.

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Figure 1.56 (above):

Two upper sleeves and two under sleeves, drawn in pen and ink, with some blackwork embroidery, linen and silk thread, *c.*1619-1625?, attributed to Mary Pierrepoint, V&A, 252&A-1902.

Figure 1.57(right):

Anonymous, Elizabeth I, 1590, oil on panel, 30 x 24 inches, Jesus College, Oxford, PI/M.2.

My thanks to Robin Darwall-Smith, archivist at Jesus College, for sharing this image with me.

and 20d. for whalebone ‘for one payer of sleeves’.<sup>224</sup> A surviving pair of sleeves that were never made into a garment show how patterns could be drafted onto a linen ground in ink. Although they were embroidered, much of the thread has disintegrated, leaving the ink lines which marked the elaborate pattern of trailing vines, insects and flowers visible (Figure 1.56). Blount might have paid for a similar ‘drawinge’ service, and then made up the sleeves herself, or taken them to a tailor to bone and structure them.<sup>225</sup> A portrait of Elizabeth I wearing sleeves embroidered in blackwork with visible boning channels suggests the effect that Anne might have been aiming to replicate (Figure 1.57).<sup>226</sup> Blount’s account book raises the possibility that even wealthy merchants’ wives with access to the London network of skilled craftspeople chose to make some part of their own clothing.<sup>227</sup> Given the extensive evidence of London women practicing highly skilled work at almost every stage in the clothing making process, whether working for pay or within the home, extant objects are not merely evidence of expert professional male work, but rather of collaborative work between men and women.

### **Locating an artisanal epistemology in clothes**

A manuscript in the National Art Library containing instructions to make purse strings, and including worked samples of a wide range of complex patterns made of silk and metal thread, seemingly depersonalises the makers who made these braids: at the beginning of each instruction is a note stating whether the design requires ‘1’ or ‘2 bodyes worke’ (Figure

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<sup>224</sup> Household account-book of Anne Blount of Milk Street, London, 1594-1596, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian F XVI, f. 9v, 10r, 10v, 16v.

<sup>225</sup> For other examples, see Andrew Morrall, Melinda Watt, and Cristina Balloffet Carr, eds, *English Embroidery from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1580-1700: Twixt Art and Nature* (New York: Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture, 2008).

<sup>226</sup> My thanks to the Jesus College, Oxford, archivist, Robin Darwall-Smith, for providing me with information about the portrait and a high-resolution image.

<sup>227</sup> Household account-book of Anne Blount of Milk Street, London, 1594-1596, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian F XVI, f. 9v.

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Figure 1.58:  
Anonymous, *How to Make Purstrings with Samples of  
One Bodyes Work and Two Bodyes Work* (England,  
1625-1650), V&A, T.313-1960, unpaginated.

1.58).<sup>228</sup> But reconstructing these processes reveals not only the complicated hand movements required in fingerloop braiding, but also the collaborative and sociable practice, and the vivid bodily experience, of making. When working in the School of Historical Dress workrooms, more experienced makers shared with me their techniques of keeping tension in threads and knotting threads dexterously, and showed me how best to curl my fingers and prevent arm ache. Activities like braid making, laundering, and spinning were both time consuming and laborious, but they were also sociable, and prompted thinking and discussion. While focus was needed when weaving braids or making lace, in order to count the number of twists or manipulations of thread, makers could keep time and maintain the count of their threads while singing.<sup>229</sup> Whether in the home or a workroom, men and women would sing or talk together, or listen to someone read books or broadsheets.<sup>230</sup>

The diary of Elizabeth Isham is perhaps the most compelling written account of how such forms of making shaped a kind of ‘artisanal epistemology’ amongst clothing makers, showing how making could be both a bodily and mental process.<sup>231</sup> Isham complained about sore eyes, which is unsurprising given how much time she spent spinning, knitting, making a pair of bodies, and embroidering and stitching garments for herself and her family. Making beautiful garments also prompted Isham to think about her body in larger terms. In her diary, addressed to God, Isham revealed that she struggled with ageing and worried about taking pride in her appearance:

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<sup>228</sup> Anonymous, ‘How to Make Purstringes with Samples of One Bodyes Work and Two Bodyes Work’ (England, 1625), T.313-1960, Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O11031>. For more on braid books, see Claire Canavan, ‘Textual and Textile Literacies in Early Modern Braids’, *Renaissance Studies* 30, 5 (2016): 684-707.

<sup>229</sup> For work songs and textile labour, see Fiona McNeil, ‘Free and Bound Maids: Women’s Work Songs and Industrial Change in the Age of Shakespeare’, in *Oral Traditions and Gender in Early Modern Literary Texts*, ed. Mary Ellen Lamb and Karen Bamford (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 101-16. For the history of lacemaking, and female labour, see Pamela Sharpe, ‘Lace and Place: Women’s Business in Occupational Communities in England 1550–1950’, *Women’s History Review* 19, 2 (2010): 283-306.

<sup>230</sup> Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 52-53.

<sup>231</sup> For the pioneering concept of artisanal epistemology, see Pamela Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[I] sometimes found discontent in my selfe for I saw as the flower it fades so beauty vanished away [...] this offence in youth was sin but in age madnes. therefore I thought it time to leave it also my Aunt gave me no incouragment to it who spake against my wearing of gay cloths as if they did not become me. I knit me a pare [of] glovs. Also I began a while afore this to put off [em]mulation of others beauty by rejoycing or praising thee my God in thy workes.<sup>232</sup>

Although Isham chastised herself for worrying about clothes and appearance, she still records her creation of a pair of gloves, and considers such work a means to praise God. Her diary shows that one individual – a non-professional female maker – internalised and worried about many of the debates that, we have already seen, faced London makers: the value of skilled work, the place of God in human craft, whether objects should be novel and new or true to nature, and the threat of pride.

Isham was not a trained maker, but she was sure of her self-taught skills, saying: ‘I not of that opinion but there may be as good or better handy worke of those which have skill by learning [...] which I had not.’ However, she admitted that sometimes, while working, her ‘owne worke many times affected me so much that I apprehended to be better then I found it to be when I (again) looked on it: which caused some discontent in me because it pleased me not’. She also worried about being proud of her work: ‘I thought there was a kind of temtation in it when I looked on it too much [...] and thought of this saying Let not that which thou hast made possesse thee lest thou forget him?’<sup>233</sup>

Despite this anxiety, making and admiring clothing and accessories was a way for Isham to work through her struggles with atheism, and she sought solace in making and admiring objects at once close to nature and new:

Now as Salomon made for his delight gardens and orchards. \Eccl 2.5/ so in my worke I made the shadow of these things. and I divers times thought to make my hart rejoyce in the things which I had made. which delighted me so well when I did them. for I had devised such veriaty in little things that I

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<sup>232</sup> ‘Booke of Rememberance’, Princeton University Library, Robert Taylor Collection, MS RTC01 no. 62, f. 32v. Accessed: [http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/bor\\_p32v.htm](http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/bor_p32v.htm).

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., f. 32v.

might long looke and still entertaine my eyes with new objects which I did neere to the life. neither had I ever seene the like.<sup>234</sup>

Knitting and sewing, then, could be seen as a religious experience, a means of solace and reflection, but they could also bring pride and self-worth to the maker. Objects could be considered a 'shadow' of God's work, even if they were new and innovative. Isham's writing shows how makers might think deeply and in contradictory ways about the objects they produced.

Isham also wrote that she 'purposed to read of the vertue of those hearbs and flowres which I had wrought which as they are different in there shapes and coullers so are there vertues.'<sup>235</sup> Early modern English embroidery is distinctive in its depiction of detailed bright flowers, plants, insects, and animals, and Isham's statement makes clear how the choice of plants, colours and shapes was connected to their associated virtues, which was deeply meaningful for the maker as well as the wearer.<sup>236</sup> Such patterns decorate a variety of surviving waistcoats, nightcaps, sleeves, and gloves. The elaborate pair of gloves with the weeping eye, mentioned above, are also decorated with colourful pansy flowers and bright green parrots. These motifs, which can be found in books of emblems printed on the continent and in England, suggest that the gloves were a deeply symbolic statement of love and desire; the pansy, for example, was considered a pun on the French word *la pensée* (thought), and so should prompt remembrance.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., f. 28r.

<sup>236</sup> Morrall, Watt, and Carr, *English Embroidery from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1580-1700*.

<sup>237</sup> 'Designs for Jewellery and Embroidery: their Sources and Symbolism', Arnold et al., *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 70-92. More information about the gloves can be found in Frances Morris, 'A Gift of Early English Gloves', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 24, 2 (1929): 46-50; Melinda Watt, 'Pair of Gloves with Emblematic Decoration', *Object of the Month*, undated, <https://www.bgc.bard.edu/research-forum/articles/61/pair-of-gloves-with-emblematic-decoration>; Morrall, Watt, and Carr, *English Embroidery from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1580-1700*, 180-81.

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Figure 1.59 (above):  
Detail of paper supporting the embroidery at the  
cuffs of Figure 43. Image by Cristina Balloffet Carr.

Figure 1.60 (below):  
John Taylor, *The Needles Excellency* (London: for James  
Beale, 1640), 8.

Like many of the objects examined in this chapter, these gloves are deteriorating, and some of the inner linings and stiffenings are visible (Figure 1.59). We have seen how makers employed a wide range of materials such as cork, whalebone, and reeds to stiffen early modern clothing. But the stiffener used in these gloves makes perhaps the most clear statement about innovation in its lining: it is made of paper patterns from John Taylor's *The Needles Excellency* (1631), a pattern book complete with a poem praising those 'skild | In this rare Art' of embroidery and sewing, for without them, and without the needle, we would not have 'any Garment man or woman weares'.<sup>238</sup> This pattern of crowned swans, a fountain, and acorns was not used by the embroiderer as decorative inspiration for these gloves, but rather as a support to shape the gloves, literally backing up his or her own work (Figure 1.60). Perhaps this act was a statement of inventiveness on the part of the maker, who clearly had no further need for this page of the pattern book, a material expression of artisanal epistemology linking clothing structure with inventive creation.

## Conclusion

Most surviving garments, made of expensive materials in fashionable shapes, are unrepresentative of the clothing worn by the vast majority of Londoners. But they are evidence of exceptional skill by makers, most of whom were not themselves elite. Isham is unrepresentative of the majority of London makers – she was from a wealthy merchant family, only briefly based in London, and was unusual in writing a diary about her experiences. But these sources, combined with a broad range of archival, literary, visual, material, and reconstruction evidence, demonstrate how the clothing of the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries was a response to commercial, civic, demographic, religious, and scientific changes. The status of craftspeople in society, and their work catering to new markets of fashionable consumers, preoccupied city authorities, company

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<sup>238</sup> John Taylor, *The Needles Excellency. A New Book Wherin Are Divers Admirable Workes Wrought with the Needle. Newly Invented and Cut in Copper for the Pleasure and Profit of the Industrious* (London: for James Boler, 1640), A1v.

members, religious and governing elites, playwrights, and new philosophers. These embroidered gloves, and Elizabeth Isham's writing, suggest that makers of early modern clothing understood the world through their work. If making clothing was a form of knowledge making, London clothes are an expression of both the skills and preoccupations of the London populace.

## Chapter Two

### The London Look

In October 1658 Thomas Windsor penned a letter to Kitt Hatton. Windsor had heard that his friend was in London, and he wanted a favour. In Worcestershire, far from the London fashions and markets, he was anxious to keep up appearances:

I observe all gentlemen were swords; and that I may not looke more lyke a bumking then the rest, I desire you will bwy me a lytle wryding sword and belt. I would not exced five pound price. I did see Andrew Newport's, which hee baught over against the Temple. At the same time Nor: Phill: Howard baught such a one in the same place. If there be another of the same to be had, I desire it, and that you will send it downe by the Sturbridge horse carrier who lyes at the Castle in Wood streete and comes oute of the towne on Saterday.<sup>1</sup>

Swords were a dress accessory as much as a weapon for wealthy men in early modern England, and Windsor's letter reveals the time and attention that a fashionable man had to pay to get his appearance right.<sup>2</sup> Windsor clearly 'observe[d]' and conversed with his friends about where they shopped, and he desired to fit in with his social circle not just by dressing like them, but by acquiring 'the same' things, from the same tradesmen. This ambition required a deep knowledge of shops, tradesmen, and services. Windsor's letter is brief and to the point; unlike many early modern letters which mention clothing and accessories incidentally or as a postscript, this one is entirely about their acquisition – it reveals the 'desire' of getting new fashionable urban goods, and the vivid anxiety that those outside of London might feel about looking like a country 'bumking', and the knowledge required of those who wanted to acquire clothing in the London style.

This chapter is about the 'London look'. It aims to locate a distinct urban culture of clothing and accessories by examining surviving objects, images, and written accounts about London. The first section offers a view of London as seen by outsiders, as visitors to the city often recorded the differences between the city and their home.

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<sup>1</sup> E. M. Thompson, ed., *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton*, Camden Society, 2nd ser. 22 (1878) i. 15, also cited in Ian Warren, 'The Gentry, the Nobility, and London Residence c.1580-1680' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, 2007), 208.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Tobias Capwell, ed., *The Noble Art of the Sword: Fashion and Fencing in Renaissance Europe, 1520-1630* (London: Wallace Collection, 2012).

Looking at paintings, engravings, and friendship albums alongside diaries and letters, it asks what those visiting the city noticed about the appearances of Londoners.

A second section explores the way Londoners looked at one another. For some London was a catwalk for flaunting stylish dress, for others clothing caused danger and unease. Clothing prompted a range of emotions – the anxieties about fitting in and desires for up-to-date styles expressed by Windsor were felt by men and women across the social spectrum – as appropriate and fashionable clothes represented and constituted credibility, respectability, knowledge, creativity, and access while tattered, inappropriate or out of style clothing could damage reputations. Appearance was closely scrutinised by neighbours, and people were associated with their clothing in the densely populated London streets.

Section three explores how Londoners cultivated their appearance. It explores how the look of the city itself was profoundly altered by London's emergence as a consumer capital, its shape and architecture shifting as shopping became a fashionable activity promoted at new shopping sites. Buying clothes engaged and provided excitement for early modern men and women, who had to be actively involved with the production of each item. Arguing for a redefinition of the early modern consumer as a knowledgeable collaborator or producer, it uses a case study of the account book of Sir Edward Dering in combination with other accounts and diaries which demonstrate the care, pleasure, and knowledge with which clothes were commissioned and accounted for. As Windsor's letter shows, those with friends and connections in the city did not have to visit shops in person and could instead 'shop by proxy', receiving goods via professional carriers. Shopping for clothing in this way cemented bonds between family members and friends but also caused much anxiety and frustration when the clothing did not fit the body or tastes of the client. Clothing was not just bought new, but was also acquired from second-hand markets and street vendors, made at home, given as a gift or as charitable support from the parish, or was taken by theft.

Finally, the chapter shows how Londoners learned to look at themselves. As so few items were available ready-made, putting together an outfit took significant time, care, and effort. Early modern men and women had a deep engagement with the

making and materiality of clothing and this chapter argues for a recognition of the ‘material literacy’ of Londoners: that Londoners had a trained eye with which to assess the looks of other urban dressers.

## 1. Looking from the outside

Some of the most detailed verbal and visual descriptions about early modern London dress come from outsiders. Many visitors to the city, whether there for a few days, months, or years, were compelled to record details about the colours, styles, and shapes that struck them as distinctive. Seeing new styles of clothing was one of the appeals of travelling abroad, as many contemporaries noted. Samuel Purchas (1577-1626), for example, was disparaging about the many gentlemen who ‘adventure themselves to see the Fashions of other Countries’ without learning more about ‘God, the World, or themselves’, but Robert Burton suggested that such a practice was healthy: ‘no better Physick for a melancholy man than [...] to travel abroad and see fashions’.<sup>3</sup> Learning about and adopting local trends was advised by Robert Dallington: ‘take heede that the apparell hee wears be in fashion in the place where he resideth, for it is no less ridiculous to weare cloathes of our fashion among them, then at our returne to use still their fashion among us. A notorious affectation of many Travellers’.<sup>4</sup> Such a criticism may have been directed at gentlemen such as John North, who returned to London from a journey around Italy in 1577. Examining North’s diary, John Gallagher reveals that North not only continued to write in Italian long after his return, but also socialised and dined with Italians living in London and learned to play the lute, fence, and dance under Italian instruction. Moreover, North adopted Italian fashions, readily available on the London market, such as perfumed gloves and a velvet hat.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his pilgrimes* (1625), as cited in Karen Newman, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 31-32. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy, What It Is. With All the Kindes, Causes, Symptomes, Prognostickes, and Seuerall Cures of It* (Oxford: Iohn Lichfield and Iames Short for Henry Cripps, 1621), 336.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Dallington, *A Method for Trauell Shewed by Taking the View of France* (London: Thomas Creede, 1605), C1v.

<sup>5</sup> John Gallagher, ‘The Italian London of John North: Cultural Contact and Linguistic Encounter in Early Modern England’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 70, 1 (2017): 88-131.

While travellers looked for distinguishing features of a London style, the reality was that clothing was far more fluid, and North was one of many English men and women who adopted and adapted styles associated with the French, Italians, Spanish, and elsewhere in Europe, many of which were sold in London. In *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606), Thomas Dekker accused urbanites of ‘Apishness’, stating:

an English-mans suite is like a traitors bodie that hath beene hanged, drawne, and quartered, and is set up in severall places: his Cod-peece is in Denmark, the collar of his Duple and the belly in France: the wing and narrow sleeve in Italy: the short waste hangs over a Dutch Botchers stall in Utrich: his huge sloppes speakes Spanish: Polonia gives him the Bootes.<sup>6</sup>

While Roze Hentschell uses this passage to highlight the importance of English industry to English identity, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass remind us that Dekker’s Englishman is able to dress in such diverse styles thanks to increased international trading.<sup>7</sup> Both accounts, however, neglect to ally Dekker’s Englishman with the city of London; it is London’s influence as a centre of international trade with a market of diverse styles that has enabled this ‘traitor’ to dress in such a manner, and as Dekker’s title reminds us, this sin is explicitly connected to London. While English men and women could identify and dress in French, Spanish, and Italian styles, an English style was not articulated clearly; what was worn on the London streets was at once thrillingly and dangerously hybrid. A London look, then, while impossible to pin down or depict in one image or written description, could be defined as comprised of international influences, fashionable new shapes and styles, and innovative ways of dressing.

### **Londoners in costume books and paintings**

As Ulinka Rublack has noticed, ‘everyone in the Renaissance was increasingly confronted with questions about the national styles her or his dress adhered to [...]

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Dekker, *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London Drawne in Seven Seuerall Coaches, through the Seven Seuerall Gates of the Citie Bringing the Plague with Them* (London: Edward Allde and S. Stafford, 1606), 32.

<sup>7</sup> Roze Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England: Textual Constructions of a National Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 113-15; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

Clothes were seen to manifest and even impart the customs and morals of cultures.<sup>8</sup> To feed this fascination in foreign clothing styles, in the 1560s European publishers began to produce collections of woodcuts or engravings of clothing worn by the people of different nations, many of which suggested that they were a substitute for travel; in the words of the 1562 *Recueil de la diversité des habits* (1562), 'If you're not eager a voyager to be [...] here you can see [...] dress just as well.'<sup>9</sup> For the first time, Londoners who were not able to afford to travel would have been able to see their own clothing in relation to other nationalities.<sup>10</sup> Londoners, too, were more visible to others, even if they were unable to travel to other cities. By 1610, over fifteen different 'costume books' had been published across Europe: in Paris, Padua, Venice, Frankfurt, Antwerp, and Amsterdam.<sup>11</sup> Some of these books represented Londoners as having a distinct style, set apart from those in the rest of England, often by being more elaborate. The 'ornate' or adorned London woman depicted in Pietro Bertelli's 1594 costume book, for example, wears a curved brim hat decorated with a hat band, a small neat ruff and cuffs, large stuffed sleeves decorated with trimming, tabbed shoulder wings, and a voluminous gown, open and lifted to show her skirt underneath, which is guarded with three wide bands (Figure 2.1).

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<sup>8</sup> Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 125.

<sup>9</sup> François Deserps, *Le recueil de la diversité des habits* (Paris, 1562), D3v as cited in Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Habits, Holdings, Heterologies: Populations in Print in a 1562 Costume Book', *Yale French Studies*, 110 (2006): 102.

<sup>10</sup> For more on 'armchair travel' see Newman, *Cultural Capitals*, 109-19.

<sup>11</sup> For lists of costume books, see Joanne Olian, 'Sixteenth-Century Costume Books', *Costume* 3 (1977): 20-48; Odile Blanc, 'Images Du Monde et Portraits D'habits: Les Recueils de Costumes à La Renaissance', *Bulletin Du Bibliophile* 2 (1995): 221-61.

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Figure 2.1:  
'Faemina londinensis ornata' (adorned London  
woman), Pietro Bertelli, *Diversarum nationum  
habitus* (Padua, 1594), plate 56.

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Figure 2.2:

François Deserps, 'L'angloyse,' *Recueil de la diversité des habits qui sont de présent usage tant es pays d'Europe, Asie, Afrique et isles sauvages* (Paris: R. Breton, 1567), woodcut, 17.5 x 30.5 cm. Bibliothèque nationale de France (10007/R 87403), 17.

Figure 2.3 (below):

Detail of Joris Hoefnagel, *Londinum Feracissimi Angliae Regni Metropolis*, (G. Braun and F. Hogenberg, 1572; this edition published Cologne c.1600-1623).  
British Library, Maps C.29.e.1.

Note the London woman, reversed from the Deserps engraving (Figure 2.2), to far right of the group. For full image, see Figure 0.4.

Other costume books, however, conflated 'English' with 'London' clothing, and suggested that dress was a fixed custom rather than changing with fashions. The *Recueil*, for example, depicted an Englishwoman in a furred square bonnet with a boned or striped wide skirt, and open gown and a slashed bodice (Figure 2.2). This book was reprinted in 1564 and 1567 without making changes to the dress of the Englishwoman, and twelve years later Joris Hoefnagel used the image in the foreground of G. Braun and Franz Hogenberg's map of London in *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (1572-1617) to represent not an Englishwoman, but a Londoner (Figure 2.3). Hoefnagel was, however, sensitive to differences in English dress styles. His painting of a wedding in Bermondsey (c.1568-1570), a suburb across the river from the Tower of London (which is depicted in the background of the scene), offers an unparalleled view of a range of dress worn across the social spectrum (Figure 2.4). To the left of centre, a woman who is dressed in the traditional dress of a citizen (a black gown with a decorated red skirt, coif, and handkerchief) walks alongside a man in a sober black gown. To the right of centre, we see the rear view of a woman wearing traditional countryside attire in a plain red gown with cream sleeves, a neckerchief, coif, and black hat. A number of men and women grouped at the far right of the scene are dressed in sober black gowns, although one man in the centre of the scene wears extravagant stuffed trunk hose with tight stockings and a shiny doublet, demonstrating that depending on the textile, texture, and styling, an outfit comprised entirely of black clothes could be extravagantly styled. While it has been suggested that bright colours were more often worn by the lower or labouring classes, and are certainly on display here worn by the musicians in yellow and red doublets and hose, and by the dancing women in blue and pink bodices and skirts, this scene makes clear that wealthier dressers also wore a broad range of colours. To the left and centre of the scene, women wear bright gowns in pink, gold, and blue and men and women display colourful hats in a variety of styles, some decorated with feathers. A man in the centre of the scene wears a sleeveless long gown over a peascod doublet, which he has paired with black and silver paned hose, teal tight stockings, red shoes, and a turned brim hat. Many of the subtleties of social class and dress style are now lost on the modern observer, although distinctions not only between urban style and rural

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.4:  
Joris Hoefnagel, A fete or wedding at Bermondsey, *c.*1568-1570, oil on  
panel, 73.8 x 99cm.  
The Marquess of Salisbury, Hatfield House.

dress but between fashionable and festive fabrics, hues, and shapes appropriate for different ages and social statuses, would have been legible to a sixteenth-century observer. Nevertheless, Hoefnagel's painting evokes that here in Bermondsey, just outside the city, a wide range of shapes, colours, and fashions were on display.

The distinction between urban and rural dress was also documented by the exiled Protestant Lucas de Heere (1534-1584), resident in Britain from c.1566 to 1576, who recorded a variety of dress styles of women and men of various social classes. In addition to drawing upon other sources, it is widely accepted that de Heere also sketched from life, making his ink and watercolour illustrations some of the clearest we have of Londoners from the Elizabethan period.<sup>12</sup> One sketch of a mayor, alderman, and liveryman offers a detailed visual description of the official robes of London's most prominent citizens, and also depicts in detail their beards, gloves, and flat black felted caps (Figure 2.5). De Heere's depiction of four women demonstrates a clear difference between urban and rural dress (Figure 2.6). On the far left, the citizen's wife is dressed in a dark grey or black short-sleeved gown trimmed with black fur or velvet, with longer sleeves of striped grey, and her petticoat is made of undecorated purple-red cloth, silk, or velvet, over which de Heere might be illustrating a very fine sheer linen apron. She wears black leather shoes, and her outfit is accessorised with a flower decoration in the centre of her chest, attached where the front of the gown closes. To the right, the wealthy citizen's wife models a finer elaboration: a black or brown gown cinched in with a girdle, with striped velvet or fur decoration on the full-length sleeves, and a petticoat made of pomegranate patterned velvet in a very large weave (a very expensive Italian import).<sup>13</sup> The wealthy woman's daughter is hidden in the background of the scene, so her outfit is only partly visible, but she seems to wear a very similar variation of dark gown trimmed with fur or velvet, although her sleeves are far more colourful than the wives', in a striped pink or red. All three Londoners wear linen head coverings but no

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<sup>12</sup>Tarnya Cooper and Jane Eade, eds, *Elizabeth I & Her People* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2013), 152.

<sup>13</sup>For more about the design and circulation of velvets, and the importance of the pomegranate design, see Melinda Watt, 'Renaissance Velvet Textiles', *The Met's Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, 2011, [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/velv/hd\\_velv.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/velv/hd_velv.htm); Lisa Monnas, *Renaissance Velvets* (London: V&A Publications, 2012).

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Figure 2.5 (above):  
(L-R) the mayor, an  
alderman, and a  
liveryman, from Lucas  
de Heere, *A*  
*Description of England,  
Scotland, and Ireland,*  
England, 1573-1575,  
British Library, Add.  
MS 28330, f. 30r.

Figure 2.6: (below)  
(L-R) the wife of a  
citizen of London, the  
wife of a wealthy  
citizen of London, his  
young daughter, and  
'a country-woman as  
they go nowadays';  
from de Heere, *A*  
*Description of England,  
Scotland, and Ireland,* f.  
33r.

hats, and high ruffled collars, and the two wives wear undecorated gloves. In contrast, the 'country-woman' on the right wears a neckerchief over a red petticoat, a brown gown laced with red ties, and a pristine white linen apron. Although she carries a dead chicken, the countrywoman demonstrates her virtue and labour through a whole range of spotless linen in addition to the apron and neckerchief, wearing a coif, chin clout, ruffled collared smock, and cuffs. She wears a black felted hat, black leather shoes, and her complexion is rosy. De Heere's illustrations plausibly suggest that although both city- and countrywomen wore gloves, simple leather shoes, and linen next to their skin, at the neck, wrists, and on the head, the darker colour palate and greater range of textiles worn by the Londoners distinguished them from the countrywoman who wore practical, washable linens over her simpler garments.

Another immigrant to London, the Bohemian artist Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-1677), was fascinated by the dress of those living in his adopted home. Hollar lived in England from 1637 to 1644 and again from 1652 until his death in 1677, and his detailed drawings demonstrate his fascination for the textures and subtleties of dress.<sup>14</sup> In 1643, Hollar published a series about the dress of European women, the first volume of which was published in London as the *Theatrum Mulierum* (Theatre of Women).<sup>15</sup> Hollar distinguished between English women and London women, offering the viewer rear, front, and side depictions of a number of women in the city, including a merchant's wife (wearing a black broad-brimmed hat, scalloped lace-edged neckerchief and cuffs, a shiny silk gown, a laced underskirt, and heeled shoes with a rosette; Figure 2.7), a merchant's daughter (in a plain linen neckerchief, apron, cuffs, and gloves with long fingers, with a small feathered fan or purse hanging from the waist, and no hat; Figure 2.8), a citizen's wife (pictured from behind in a large felt hat, a lace-edged

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<sup>14</sup> For an account of Hollar's work in England, see Richard T. Godfrey, *Wenceslaus Hollar: A Bohemian Artist in England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> In 1640, Wenceslaus Hollar published a series of twenty-six prints of the dress of Englishwomen 'done by the same Hand & about the same Time', sold for 4s. at the White Horse without Newgate, but he did not label these images, and so which (if any), are particularly distinctive to London, is not clear.

Wenceslaus Hollar, *Ornatus Muliebris Anglicanus: The Several Habits of English Woman, from the Nobilitie to the Country Woman, as They Are in These Times* (London: H. Overton, 1640); Wenceslaus Hollar, *Theatrum Mulierum: Sive Varietas Atque Differentia Habitum Foeminei Sexus, Diuersorum Europae Nationum Hodierno Tempore Vulgo in Usu* (London: Peter Stent, 1643).

neckerchief, and a gown pinned black to reveal several under-layers and heeled shoes; Figure 2.9), and a citizen's daughter (wearing a linen hood, scalloped neckerchief, laced bodice, and plain gown; Figure 2.10). The second volume, *Aula Veneris* (The Court of Venus) (1643) included a drawing of the Lord Mayor's wife, in a multi-tiered and lace-edged ruff, feather fan, long gloves and extravagant fluffy cuffs, a striped stomacher, and a shiny stiff silk skirt (Figure 2.11), and an artisan's wife in a broad brimmed black hat, linen neckerchief and apron, a dark gown, and an ornately embroidered underskirt (Figure 2.12).

Hollar worked to capture the tactile qualities of dress and accessories, and published etchings of richly-rendered muffs, lace, and masks. He was also an astute observer of the city itself, drawing maps and views of London throughout his years in the city. His close observations of London and dress come together most intricately in his depiction of 'Winter' as part of his *The Seasons* series. Hollar located the female personification of 'Winter' in the city, in front of Cornhill, dressed in 'furs and wild beasts haire' (Figure 2.13). This lady, wrapped in a padded black hood, fur stole, and lace neckerchief, has covered her face with a velvet vizard as protection against the winter weather. She wears a large fur muff decorated with a small bow on one arm, and lifts her voluminous skirts to show off her heeled shoes trimmed with a large rosette, and an underskirt which is trimmed with neat scalloped lace. By positioning 'Winter' in front of Cornhill by the Royal Exchange, Hollar places her at the heart of fashionable London; as Ian Archer discovered, nineteen per cent of the establishments patronised by clothing-lover Samuel Pepys were on Cornhill and nearby Lombard Street and Threadneedle Street.<sup>16</sup>

From de Heere, Hoefnagel, and Hollar we are presented with a visual record of the most distinctive elements of London dress from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries, as recorded by some of the most accomplished artists of the era.

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<sup>16</sup> Ian W. Archer, 'Social Networks in Restoration London: The Evidence of Samuel Pepys's Diary', in *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*, ed. Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 79.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.7 (above left): A London merchant's wife.

Figure 2.8 (above right): A London merchant's daughter.

Figure 2.9 (below left): A citizen of London's wife.

Figure 2.10 (below right): A citizen of London's daughter.

All from Wenceslaus Hollar, *Theatrum Mulierum*, 1643, 9.3 x 6.1 cm, British Museum 1868,0822.

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**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.11 (left):  
The Lord Mayor of London's wife,  
from Wenceslaus Hollar, *Theatrum Mulierum*, 1649 edition, 9.0 x 5.8 cm, British Museum  
Q,5.151.

Figure 2.12 (right):  
A London artisan's wife,  
from Wenceslaus Hollar, *Aula Veneris*, 1649 edition, 9.0 x 5.7 cm, British Museum, Q,5.166.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.13:

'Winter', from *The Seasons* 1643, 26 x 19cm.

From the Fisher Hollar digital collection, University of Toronto, plate 609.

## Londoners in friendship albums

The continental fashion amongst learned and noble early modern German- and Dutch-speaking men of making *alba amicorum* (friendship albums) while travelling offers another perspective of London, from the outside. As well as collecting the signatures, mottos, and coats of arms of friends and noblemen they encountered on their travels, some men also paid local artists for small watercolours of landscapes, people, and sights. A number of visitors to London commissioned images for their albums, but Michael van Meer's friendship album, documenting his travels around Northern Europe, is notable for its large collection of images of London and Londoners (some unique, although often following conventional pictorial styles).

Van Meer was in London from 1614 to 1615, and while there he managed to collect an impressive array of signatures from notable figures like Thomas Howard (Lord High Treasurer), Ludovic Stuart (Lord High Admiral of Scotland), William Herbert (Lord Chamberlain of the Household), Christian IV (King of Denmark, who visited Somerset House in 1614), and even King James, Anna of Denmark, and their son, the future king, Charles. Little is known about van Meer, but he clearly made the most of his time in London, for not only did he manage to meet a number of illustrious noblemen and women, he also commissioned more than thirty watercolour paintings of views, events, and people in London.<sup>17</sup> As J. L. Nevinson noticed, album images are an underused resource for those interested in the history of dress, and although van Meer's album has been mined for what it depicts of London, a more thorough investigation of the visual appearances of Londoners reveals a range of styles worn by the elites, but also of citizens, porters, and servants.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>The artists who made friendship album paintings are mostly unknown, and the delicate and lively images within van Meer's book are unsigned apart from one depiction of Ceres, Bacchus, Venus, and Cupid standing on a golden pedestal, which bears the signature of Martin Droeshout.

<sup>18</sup>J. L. Nevinson, 'IX. Illustrations of Costume in the *Alba Amicorum*', *Archaeologia* 106 (1979): 167. The most thorough study of van Meer has been made by June Schlueter, 'Michael van Meer's Album Amicorum, with Illustrations of London, 1614-15', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69, 2 (2006): 301-14. Van Meer also forms a case study in June Schlueter, *The Album Amicorum & the London of Shakespeare's Time* (London: British Library, 2011), 29-39.

While paintings and sketches can rarely be trusted as indexes of the true appearance of clothing, they do reveal much about what the commissioner and artist wanted to record and remember. A unique view of King James and Prince Charles presiding over the House of Lords, annotated to point out notable figures like the Lord Chancellor and Sword Bearer, among the bishops, judges, barons, earls, and lawyers, suggests how striking the deep purples, scarlets, and crimsons gowns were compared to the duller tones worn by men assembled in the foreground (Figure 2.14).<sup>19</sup> Apart from this interior view, van Meer's London views are outdoors, and these images suggest how the clothes worn by Londoners visually appealed to and surprised visitors.

Some of the images in van Meer's album offer similarly revealing landscapes of the city. A view of the Tower of London suggests the tightly-packed architecture of the city, and also shows an anchored merchant vessel, hinting at London's role in international trade, although Londoners are illustrated as no more than faint vertical lines, their form and dress completely indistinguishable. A painting of London bridge, however, shows the river filled with small vessels, crewed by watermen in white shirts, transporting fashionably dressed Londoners (Figure 2.15). Other visitors to London commissioned similar, although less detailed, images. A comparable image in Jacob Fetzner's album, for example, shows people as impressionistic colourful blurs of blue, mauve, turquoise, and red.<sup>20</sup> Friedrich Reichlinger's image of two watermen rowing a well-dressed couple (the woman in a blue gown, wearing a head tire and a large feather fan, and the man in a red doublet and hose with a tall black felt hat with a floppy white feather) focuses in on the boat and passengers, removing the bridge or other boats from view (Figure 2.16). Perhaps, for Reichlinger, the dress of the people crossing the Thames was far more interesting than the city views.

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<sup>19</sup> The folios for this album are reported differently by various writers, the online catalogue, and the Edinburgh University Library. I have followed the pages as numbered by the Edinburgh University Library Handlist H5.1, accessed online 5 May 2017,

<https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/1842/21088/H5.1.pdf?sequence=35&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>20</sup> This image is reproduced in Schlueter, *The Album Amicorum & the London of Shakespeare's Time*, 44.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.14 (top):  
The House of Lords  
in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-  
1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283,  
f. 154v.

Figure 2.15 (middle):  
London Bridge  
in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-  
1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283,  
f. 408v.

Figure 2.16 (bottom):  
Watermen and passengers crossing the Thames  
in *Album Amicorum* of Friedrich Rechlinger,  
c.1598-1610, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 244,  
f. 49r.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.17:  
St George's Day procession of King James,  
Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University  
Library, La.III.283, fols 43v-44r.

Several illustrations in van Meer's album depict London as a royal space. The St George's Day procession, which took place on 23 April, is painted across a double-page spread, showing a range of livery gowns and fine garments (Figure 2.17). Notably, the king and some of his party wear blue garters, associating them with the order of the garter.<sup>21</sup> King James is also portrayed riding to Parliament in 1614 (this would turn out to be the two-month 'Addled Parliament'), and as van Meer was in London on this occasion there is no reason to doubt that he would have personally witnessed the king riding in a slashed white doublet, embroidered black paned hose, and tight purple stockings, accompanied by fashionably dressed men wearing slashed doublets and hose (Figure 2.18). Clothing and appearance clearly interested van Meer; the caption in this image reads: 'in this manner the King of England rides to Parliament'. The artist managed to provide great detail of the dress of these three noblemen: to the far left of the scene one wears a ruff propped up by a stiff rebato, a tight flat-fronted white doublet slashed vertically all over, baggy pink hose, tight white stockings, white slashed shoes, and carries a black cloak and beaver hat; to his right, another courtier in lilac stockings and dark trunk hose wears a black cloak laced with gold over a diagonally slashed blue doublet and a deep ruff set in regular folds; on the far right of the scene, the man leading James's white horse wears a long black cloak over a slashed doublet and hose made of changeable yellow and pink silk, and has a black garter laced with gold tied at his left knee. A similar diagonally slashed doublet and hose, made of changeable oyster and blue satin, is now in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figure 2.19). Exceptionally, this extant suit is depicted in a portrait, and so can be linked to Sir Rowland Cotton, and was possibly acquired by him when he was knighted in 1618 (Figure 2.20). The surviving suit and portrait, in combination with van Meer's image, suggests that such fashionable courtly attire was visible on London's streets, at least on special occasions.

Another unusual painting depicts a cockfight, attended by men sitting and standing underneath a canopied ring. The entirely male audience wear a diverse array of

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<sup>21</sup> For more on the clothes and garters of the order, see Stephanie Trigg, *Shame and Honor: A Vulgar History of the Order of the Garter* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 198-248.

colours, including green, pink, blue, red, purple, white, and black (Figure 2.21). Given the pervasive tradition of hat honour, which required people of lower rank to remove their headwear in the presence of superiors, the one figure dressed in white stands out as the only observer wearing a tall black feathered hat.<sup>22</sup> Given his facial hair and features, as well as the fact he appears to be seated at a throne, it seems likely that this is King James.

Unusually, van Meer himself is depicted in one scene, dressed all in white and being toasted by a fashionably-dressed couple wearing matching green outfits (Figure 2.22). This drawing is accompanied by the signature of Adam Gall von Krackwitz, and a note that states it was signed in London. The couple wear outfits in the style of the English elite: the woman has a large open collar, a feathered headpiece, and a wide skirt shaped by a drum farthingale, and the man a tight doublet, full hose, garters and shoes decorated with rosettes, and a matching hat with a feather. Van Meer's bright white outfit, from his white hat (possibly made of beaver felt and also topped with a feather), embroidered doublet, full hose, and draped cloak is striking, and suggests that he might have been frequenting some of London's most expensive and fashionable clothing vendors. His outfit is strikingly similar to the image of Henry Cary, also all in white (Figure 1.45).

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<sup>22</sup> Penelope J. Corfield, 'Dress for Deference and Dissent: Hats and the Decline of Hat Honour', *Costume* 23, 1 (1989): 64-79.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.18 (above):

King James riding to Parliament in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 149v.

Note the man on the far right in a slashed changeable satin suit.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.19 (left):  
Doublet and breeches, c.1618, English, Slashed satin over taffeta,  
Victoria and Albert Museum, T.28&A-1938. Image courtesy of Susan North and  
Melanie Braun.

Figure 2.20 (right):  
Paul van Somer (1576-1621), Portrait of Sir Rowland Cotton (1581-1634) of  
Alkington Hall, Whitechurch, and Bellaport Hall, Shropshire, 1618, oil on canvas,  
102.5 x 87 cm. The Weiss Collection.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.21 (above):

A cock fight in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 378v.

Figure 2.22 (below):

A fashionable couple with van Meer in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 134v

Van Meer also witnessed civic processions by the Lord Mayor, even managing to collect the signature of Thomas Hayes who was Lord Mayor in 1614. The signature is accompanied by a delicately rendered depiction of the procession, with the Lord Mayor at the centre of the image on a white horse caparisoned in gold and black. The Lord Mayor wears his scarlet robes and high black hat, and processes behind men on foot in black gowns and flat caps, the sword bearer who wears his distinctive cap of maintenance, and the mace bearer in a distinctive purplish red suit. Behind the Lord Mayor ride the sheriffs and aldermen, wearing similar red robes and black hats (Figure 2.23).<sup>23</sup> Van Meer also collected an image of the Lady Mayoress, wearing a red and black gown and a large white ruff, followed by a man in a black gown, who carries her red train (Figure 2.24). As June Schlueter has noted, this image is erroneously captioned as being of Queen Anne, but similar depictions of the Lady Mayoress survive that suggest this clothing was associated directly with the wife of London's mayor.<sup>24</sup> The scarlet robes of the Mayor and his wife were a distinctive sight in London.

Van Meer collected individual images of many notable people in the city, including a yeoman of the guard, a baron, and a bishop, but he also collected images of Londoners from different social strata, suggesting that he was interested in capturing a broad range of people that he had seen on his travels. One watercolour depicts a citizen's wife (wearing a black gown lined with red with tight sleeves and winged shoulders, a pink petticoat over a drum farthingale, a small black hat, large ruff, and head tire), her daughter (in a matching black gown and blue skirt, with a similar head tire and ruff but no hat), and their maid (carrying a basket and wearing a pink gown with a doublet-shaped upper body, a neat coif, ruff, and white apron) (Figure 2.25). A painting of porters carrying goods (one on a horse and cart, the other in a wicker basket), offers a rare view of working dress (Figure 2.26).

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<sup>23</sup> For the cap of maintenance, see Llewellynn Jewitt, 'Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office, Etc.', *The Art Journal* 6 (1880): 65-68.

<sup>24</sup> Similar watercolours (in albums owned by Reichlinger von Goldenstein, 1598-1610; Caspar Mittelstädt, 1589-1623; Frederic de Botina 1616-1618) and even more examples of Lord Mayor's processions were collected, although Van Meer's is the most detailed extant example. Schlueter, *The Album Amicorum & the London of Shakespeare's Time*, 55-66.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.23 (above):  
The Procession of the Lord Mayor in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*,  
c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 90r.

Figure 24 (below):  
The Lady Mayoress in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630,  
Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 221r.

These two men wear long white tunics, perhaps made of wool or linen, and coloured stockings in green, red, and yellow. The man with a horse – possibly transporting a bundle of wool or cloth, which bears a merchant’s mark – wears a brimmed black hat and black boots, as well as a tabard-shaped apron perhaps made of fur or leather. The other wears a linen cap and black shoes. Van Meer’s album also includes one of seven surviving depictions of a water-carrier found by June Schlueter.<sup>25</sup> Van Meer’s water-carrier is very similar to other depictions – his eyes are closed and he is led by a dog holding a lantern, suggesting that this was a stock figure of a blind water-carrier, reproduced by a number of London artists (Figure 2.27). He wears a distinctive outfit of a pale purple doublet, a black apron or tabard, red hose, with a black pocket, white stockings and canions, black shoes, a red cap, and a wide collar.

Van Meer was clearly interested in people, and even collected an image of the Native American, wearing a one-shouldered tunic and feathered headdress, whom he had seen at the Zoological Garden in St James’s Park (Figure 2.28).<sup>26</sup> His album, as well as others that contain images of the city, demonstrates the visual impact of courtly, civic, and mercantile Londoners, who could be identified and remembered as citizens wives, porters, courtiers, or aldermen largely by their distinctive dress.

### **Written accounts of the London look**

Other visitors to London recorded the fashions and styles that they noticed in written accounts. The Venetian merchant Alessandro Magno visited London in August 1562, and filled his journal with notes about the clothing and appearance of the men and women he saw. He thought the women ‘good looking’ and recorded that:

[t]hey wear dresses laced up to the neck, which make them appear very graceful, and they also wear leather shoes. Working women who are married wear veils on their heads and on top of these a round white cap, while the unmarried wear only the cap. The gentlewomen and ladies wear long-sleeved cloaks over their dresses, and on their heads velvet caps which hang down at the back in the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 119-25.

<sup>26</sup> Alden Vaughan has suggested that this was Eiakintomino, a native of Tsenacommacah; *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 53-55.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.25 (above):

(L-R) a citizen's wife, her daughter, and servant in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 146v.

Figure 2.26 (below):

London porters in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 494v.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 2.27 (above):

The blind waterman of London in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 471v.

Figure 2.28 (below):

A Native American in St James's Park in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 254v.

French style, and ruffs in the shape of water-lilies and violets which go right up to their ears.

Men, he noted, ‘dress mostly in the Italian fashion – except for the merchants who wear long garments that fall in folds from their shoulders’, and he noticed that they removed their hats ‘in front of their masters, or if their masters stop to talk with others, or urinate’.<sup>27</sup> Magno’s careful observations of dress, its indication of social status, and practices associated with honouring superiors show that visitors were struck by the same kinds of distinctions recorded by artists like de Heere and Hollar, and the anonymous artists of *alba amicorum*.

Following a visit to England in 1592, the secretary of Frederick, Duke of Württemberg recorded notes about their travels, but conflated London dress with English dress. His reports on clothing, however, are contained within his discussion of the city, and so it is likely that they relate to London attire. He was impressed enough to write that the ‘inhabitants are magnificently apparelled, and are extremely proud and overbearing’ and connected female dress to the heritage of the population: ‘All the English women are accustomed to wear hats upon their heads, and gowns cut after the old German fashion – for indeed their descent is from the Saxons’. He also allied female dress with their freedom: ‘women have much more liberty than perhaps in any other place; they also know well how to make use of it, for they go dressed out in exceedingly fine clothes and give all their attention to their ruffs and stuffs’. However, travellers’ accounts could be tainted by local prejudices. The secretary noted: ‘as I am informed, many a one does not hesitate to wear velvet in the streets, which is common with them, whilst at home perhaps they have not a piece of dry bread.’<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The Journal of Alessandro Magno, 1562, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS. V. a. 259 as published in Caroline Barron, Christopher Coleman, and Claire Gobbi, ‘The London Journal of Alessandro Magno 1562’, *The London Journal* 9, 2 (1983): 144, 146.

<sup>28</sup> Jacob Rathgeb, ‘A true and faithful narrative of the Bathing Excursion which his serene highness Frederick, Duke of Wirtemberg, Count Mümppegart, Knight of the Garter, made a few years ago to the far-famed Kingdom of England; as it was noted down daily in the most concise manner possible at his Highness’s gracious command by his private secretary, who accompanied him’ (Tubingen, 1602), as cited in William Brenchley Rye, *England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth & James the First. Comprising Translations of the Journals of the Two Dukes of Wirtemberg in 1592 and 1610; Both Illustrative of Shakespeare* (London: John Russell Smith, 1865), 7-8.

During his 1599 visit, Thomas Platter echoed the claim that women wear velvet even when they have no food at home. He did, however, write with precision enough to suggest that he had keenly observed London fashions among women, recording the colours, materials, and stiffenings used: ‘burgher women usually wear high hats covered with velvet or silk for headgear, with cut-away kirtles when they go out, in old-fashioned style. Instead of whalebone they wear a broad circular piece of wood over the breast to keep the body straighter and more erect. English women of the nobility dress very similarly to the French except for very long stomachers.’<sup>29</sup> The Ulm merchant Samuel Kiechel was less complimentary, reporting that English women were ‘somewhat awkward in their style of dress; for they dress in splendid stuffs, and many a one wears three cloth gowns or petticoats one over the other’.<sup>30</sup>

The consul for Dutch merchants in London, and a resident of Lime Street, Emmanuel van Meteren, wrote about the dress of Londoners, having spent much time living in the city. Like Frederick of Württemberg and Platter, he was also struck by female visibility in the city, describing how women who could afford to have servants were ‘well-dressed’ and sat ‘before their doors, decked out in fine clothes, in order to see and be seen by the passers-by’. When walking in the streets, he was surprised that unmarried women went without any head coverings, and only married women wore hats, both indoors and out. He reasoned that as the English were pale, women of all social standing wore hats, veils, and gloves to protect themselves from the sun. English dress, he claimed, was distinctive for being ‘elegant, light, and costly’ and the people ‘very inconstant and desirous of novelties, changing their fashions every year, both men and women’. Unlike other nations, he observed that the English ‘don their best clothes’ when they ‘go abroad riding or travelling’, and in contrast to his homeland, van Meteren noticed that ‘garments are usually coloured and of a light stuff, and they have not many of them like as they have in the Low Countries, since they change so easily’. In recent times, however, he noticed that ‘ladies of distinction have lately learnt to cover their

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<sup>29</sup> Clare Williams, ed., *Thomas Platters Travels In England 1599* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), 181-82.

<sup>30</sup> Samuel Kiechel, ‘England and the English’, 1585 as cited in Rye, *England as Seen by Foreigners*, 69-73.

faces with silken masks or vizards, and feathers – for indeed they change very easily, and that every year, to the astonishment of many'.<sup>31</sup>

The widespread interest in dress, and the difficulty of communicating the wide variety of styles, is captured in an account sent from London by the Venetian ambassador in 1618:

I have already written about the dress and costume of the women here, but as it seems to me that I did not do so thoroughly, I will in this very opportune place add a few words on the subject, especially as his Excellency broached this topic to-day at dinner. They are so variously adjusted and dress so well and lasciviously as to defy exaggeration; all ranks and conditions of persons being at liberty to invent new caprices. Thus some wear on their heads worked bands with fine lace which, falling over the forehead, form what our Venetian dames term 'the mushrooms' on the temples. Others wear a large piece of work above the ear, so that they look as if they bore the wings of Mercury's head gear; others wear hats of various shapes; others a very small top-knot. Some wear a moderate sized silk kerchief surmounted by a bit of crape planted in such a shape that it looks precisely like a woman's breast. Others have black velvet hoods turned over from the back of the neck to the forehead. Others wear embroidered caps, covering the whole head, whilst others, in conclusion, wear their auburn hair uncovered and curled all over, up to the very plait of the tresses, on which they place a chaplet of silk and gold, wearing moreover the plume on the head, sometimes upright, sometimes at the back of the head and sometimes even transverse. It would be impossible for me to speak scientifically about their clothes by reason of the variety of their texture, cut and colour. I have already mentioned that some lay their bosoms bare whilst others cover them. Some carry in their hands feather fans, others nothing; but all wear very costly gloves. This fashion of gloves is so universal that even the porters wear them very ostentatiously; going about dressed in good cloth with a linen over garment and with their sacks over their shoulders they look like so many standard bearers.<sup>32</sup>

While recording specific accessories, hairstyles, and fabrics that largely match up to the visual record, these written reports are able to go beyond the images that present what Londoners might look like, to explain why such styles were prevalent in the city, and how they could make a real difference to the way people were looked at. What a

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<sup>31</sup> Emanuel van Meteren, *Historie der Nederlandscher ende haerder Naburen Oorlogen ende geschiedenissen* (The Hague, 1614), as cited in *ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> 'Venice: July 1618, 16-31', in *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 15, 1617-1619*, ed. Allen B. Hinds (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1909), 266-79. *British History Online*, accessed May 23, 2017, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol15/pp266-279>.

difference a pair of gloves could make, for example, dignifying a porter in the eyes of a foreign ambassador. Visitors connected London clothing to behaviour, climate, gender relations, heritage, social distinction, and an ever-changing cycle of fashions, explaining why, as well as how, the London look was distinct and characteristic of the city.

## 2. Looking at one another

On the busy city streets, Londoners also made constant visual assessments of one another, and even those who were not able to afford to wear these fine or fashionable things could consume them with their eyes. Such an environment led some to feel competitive and take pleasure in being better dressed than others. Samuel Pepys recorded in 1661 that during dinner, he and his guests spoke ‘about the great happiness that my Lady Wright says there is in being in the fashion and in variety of fashions, in scorn of others that are not so, as citizens wife and country-gentlewomen’.<sup>33</sup> Expensive clothes were such a desirable fantasy that many London prostitutes kept a store of fine silk clothing for clients who wished to indulge the sensual feel and rustling sounds of the fabric.<sup>34</sup> Londoners understood that they could see and be seen, and many enjoyed the opportunity to show off their clothes in public.<sup>35</sup>

### Visibility: Travel, space, and clothing

Coaches transformed the ways people and goods travelled into and out of London, and they also changed transport within the city.<sup>36</sup> Most Londoners would have walked the city on foot, but travel by coach was an increasingly available and highly visible means of travel for those able to afford it. As Alan James Hogarth has shown, coaches were

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<sup>33</sup> 3 December 1661, Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A New and Complete Transcription*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, vol. 2 ((Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 226.

<sup>34</sup> Newman, *Cultural Capitals*, 140-42.

<sup>35</sup> On physical beauty, see Anu Korhonen, ‘To See and to Be Seen: Beauty in the Early Modern London Street’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 12 (2008): 335–60.

<sup>36</sup> On the improvement of roads and the introduction of the coach in the seventeenth century, see Stone, ‘The Residential Development of the West End of London in the Seventeenth Century’, 177-78.

highly disruptive, prompting a slew of satiric and critical literature, and Charles I even issued a proclamation against the ‘promiscuous use of coaches about London and Westminster’ as they got in the way, were noisy, and damaged the streets.<sup>37</sup> But coach travel was desirable among those passengers who could afford it, as a rapid way to travel through the city, elevated above street level where they were away from city dirt and could better see and be seen by others. Two wealthy visitors to the city, Edward Dering and Margaret Spencer, record payments for coach travel in their account books. Dering, obsessed with family heraldry and social display, even payed £1 to have his family arms – which he had forged – painted onto his own coach.<sup>38</sup> Van Meer commissioned an artist to make a lift-the-flap picture of a coach in his album (Figure 2.29).<sup>39</sup> A similar example exists, unbound, in the Folger Shakespeare Library, and when the flaps are lifted, both pictures reveal men in bright red cloaks and tall felt hats and women in shiny white gowns with large ruffs and black necklaces (Figure 2.30). That visitors to London like van Meer wished to remember coach travel in this way shows how closely they were connected to urban life. Such interactive images and Dering’s painted arms reveal the paradox that people inside coaches, while partly obscured, were strikingly visible. Like vizard face masks, coaches were a form of ‘conspicuous concealment’.

At once revealing and concealing passengers, coaches added to the excitement of seeing fashionable dress. Pepys followed Margaret Cavendish the Duchess of Newcastle (1623-1673) around London, hoping to catch a glimpse of her latest outfit through her coach. Cavendish was famous for her unique style; in April 1667, Evelyn wrote in his diary that he was ‘much pleasd, with [her] extraordinary fancifull habit, garb, & discourse’.<sup>40</sup> That same month, Pepys noted with delight that ‘[t]he whole story of this Lady is a romance, and all she doth is romantic’, describing her ‘antique dress’,

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<sup>37</sup> Alan James Hogarth, “‘Hide, and Be Hidden, Ride and Be Ridden’”: The Coach as Transgressive Space in the Literature of Early Modern London’, *Early Modern Literary Studies* 17, 2 (2014): 1-20.

<sup>38</sup> Edward Dering, ‘A Booke of Expences from Ye Yeare 1619 (being Halfe a Year before I Was First Married); unto Ye Yeare –’, 1619, Kent History and Library Centre, 9r.

<sup>39</sup> For Dering’s interest in heraldry, and forgery of his family arms, see Pitman, ‘Prodigal Years?’, 21-23.

<sup>40</sup> As cited in Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* ed. Latham and Matthews, vol. 8, 163.

Figure 2.29:

Coach with lifted flap in Michael van Meer, *Album Amicorum*, c.1614-1630, Edinburgh University Library, La.III.283, f. 256v.

Figure 2.30:

Coach with lifted flaps in 'Royal, military and court costumes of the time of James I, Folger ART Vol. c.91, no. 7a.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

including a ‘velvet-cap, her hair about her ears, many black patches because of pimples about her mouth, naked necked, without anything about it, and a black juste-au-corps’.<sup>41</sup> She was the talk of the town, he reported, and he regarded her as ‘a very comely woman’.<sup>42</sup> But by 30 May, Pepys had changed his mind. After her controversial visit to the Royal Society (she was the first woman to be invited), he wrote, ‘The Duchesse hath been a good comely woman; but her dress so antic and her deportment so unordinary, that I do not like her at all’.<sup>43</sup> A decade before Cavendish had written that she was ‘addicted to’ clothing, and ‘took great delight in attiring, fine dressing and fashions, especially such fashions as I did invent my self, not taking that pleasure in such fashions as was invented by others: also I did dislike any should follow my Fashions, for I always took delight in a singularity, even in acoutrements of habits.’<sup>44</sup> In London, she could be sure of an audience for her latest inventions.

Coaches moved fashionable Londoners across the city at a pace, making it hard for people like Pepys to catch a glimpse of those inside, but specific sites in the city became known for the presence of fashionable clothing. The central aisle of St Paul’s, ‘Paul’s Walk’, was often described as a catwalk along which the most flamboyant ‘guls’ flaunted and ‘published’ their latest outfits.<sup>45</sup> In his satirical advice book, Thomas Dekker advised the gallant man to take his tailor to Paul’s where he can take notes and ‘like a spy discover the stuff, colour, and fashion of any doublet or hose’.<sup>46</sup> Dekker could sympathise with these fashionistas, for he was sued at the King’s Bench by Thomas Cator, his tailor, who claimed Dekker had not paid the £4 6s. fee for a doublet and hose.<sup>47</sup> In Ben Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humour*, the foppish Fungoso urges his tailor to scribble down all the details of the latest ‘blush-coloured satin’ suit seen at

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<sup>41</sup> 11 and 26 April 1667, *ibid.*, vol. 8, 163, 186-87.

<sup>42</sup> 26 April 1667, *ibid.*, vol. 8, 186-87.

<sup>43</sup> 30 May 1667, *ibid.*, vol. 8, 243.

<sup>44</sup> ‘A true relation of my Birth, Breeding, and Life’ in Margaret Cavendish, *Natures Pictures Drawn by Fancies Pencil to the Life* (London: for J. Martin and J. Allestrye, 1656), 387.

<sup>45</sup> Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 103-28.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Dekker, *The Guls Horne-Booke* (London: Nicholas Okes for R. S., 1609), 19-20.

<sup>47</sup> Dekker was incarcerated from 1613 until 1619 for this debt and another to two money-lenders; Theodore B. Leinwand, *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 52.

Paul's, so that he can have one made up at once: 'Do you mark how it hangs at the knee there? [...] For God's sake, do. Note all. Do you see the collar, sir?'<sup>48</sup> There was humour in Fungoso's words, for moralists attacked those who used church as a place to see and be seen in new clothing. According to Barnabe Rich, women 'frequent the Church to see new fashions, [rather] then to gather good instructions, and a number of them rather to be seene themselves, then to seeke God'. Women were so 'starched', 'laced', and 'imbroidered', Rich claimed 'it is a hard matter in the church it self to distinguish between a good woman, and a bad. Our behauiours, our gestures, and our outward attyres, are tongs to proclaime the inward disposition of the mind'.<sup>49</sup>

There were plenty more opportunities to display clothing in London, while attending the theatres, drinking in inns, strolling in the parks or walking through the streets, and commentators both delighted in and recoiled from this culture of outward appearances. Such visibility was one of the reasons that people wished to visit the city, much to the dismay of Thomas Tuke, who moaned that 'once a yeere at least' Englishwomen wanted to 'see London', which meant 'to learne a new fashion, and to buy her a perwigge, powder, ointments, a feather'.<sup>50</sup> For Tuke, to see the city was to see fashionable clothing, and once fashions had been seen, they would immediately be consumed. Visitors to the city from overseas were particularly surprised by the visibility of women. Arriving in London in 1599, Thomas Platter noticed the 'blue-grey eyes' and 'fair and pretty' complexions of English women, but he was particularly struck by their freedom: they 'have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very gorgeous clothes'.<sup>51</sup> The visibility of women was a distinctive aspect of London life, for not only did they have more freedoms than their counterparts in European cities, as Laura Gowing has

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<sup>48</sup> Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, ed. Helen Ostovich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), Act 3, Scene 1, 280, 296-300.

<sup>49</sup> Barnabe Rich, *The Honestie of This Age: Proouing by Good Circumstance That the World Was Neuer Honest till Now* (London: Thomas Dawson for T. Adams, 1614), 15.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Tuke, *A Discourse against Painting and Tincturing of Women Wherein the Abominable Sinnes of Murther and Poysoning, Pride and Ambition, Adultery and Witchcraft Are Set Foorth & Discovered. Whereunto Is Added The Picture of a Picture, Or, the Character of a Painted Woman* (London: Thomas Creede and Bernard Alsop for Edward Marchant, 1616), 62.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, *Thomas Platters Travels In England 1599*, 181-82.

noticed, 'London women's daily lives were more public and more distant from the home than those of rural women'.<sup>52</sup> In some ways, this was a boon for city women. As Tim Reinke-Williams has demonstrated, clothing could be one of the most visible ways that a woman could demonstrate that she was hard working, and it mediated her social interactions with others who would be able to see at once if she was keeping herself and her family in clean and well-repaired garments.<sup>53</sup> But the visibility of clothing could also be problematic for the majority of Londoners unable to afford to change their wardrobe with every shifting fashion. Most working men and women owned a couple of outfits, and in the close-knit city parishes, would have been recognised and closely identified by their clothes. As both Gowing and Reinke-Williams have shown, neighbours recognised one another by their clothes as much as by their face and body shape, and court records show that when a Londoner dressed unusually, it attracted attention.<sup>54</sup> In court, missing people and thieves were described by what they were wearing, and clothing could give away someone's identity: Katherine Townsend identified her neighbour Joyce Holloway as being involved in a crime, stating she knew it was Holloway for she was 'in her white wastcoate'.<sup>55</sup>

### **Visibility and shame: Joan Beast and crossdressing**

The case of Joan Beast, a woman arrested for cross-dressing, demonstrates the lengths to which someone might go to avoid being recognised by neighbours. Historians and

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<sup>52</sup> Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 15. For more about the freedoms of London women, see Laura Gowing, "'The Freedom of the Streets': Women and Social Space, 1560-1640", in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 130-51; Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Women on the Threshold', *Shakespeare Studies* 25 (1997): 16-23; Capp, *When Gossips Meet*; Jean E. Howard, 'The Evidence of Fiction: Women's Relationship to Goods in London City Drama', in *Culture and Change: Attending to Early Modern Women*, ed. Margaret Lael Mikesell and Adele F. Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 161-76.

<sup>53</sup> Tim Reinke-Williams, 'Women's Clothes and Female Honour in Early Modern London', *Continuity and Change* 26, 1 (2011): 69-88. Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 157.

<sup>54</sup> Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 34; Reinke-Williams, 'Women's Clothes and Female Honour in Early Modern London', 72.

<sup>55</sup> Guildhall Library MS 33011/4, f. 40r, as cited in Reinke-Williams, 'Women's Clothes and Female Honour in Early Modern London', 72.

literary scholars have already offered many in-depth explorations and instances of real and fictional cross-dressing in early modern London.<sup>56</sup> There is no doubt that Londoners were fascinated, titillated, and worried by transvestitism. While it was accepted that on an all-male stage boys and men could dress as women, and the cross-dressing petty thief Moll Cutpurse became a celebrity, many people were prosecuted and punished for transvestitism. Cross-dressing was associated with prostitutes and vagrants, and women who adopted masculine fashions were seen as dangerous and suspect. In reality, the clothing of men and women was in many ways remarkably similar; ruffs, feathers, and beaver hats were fashionable accessories for both men and women, and clothing was tailored from the same materials and colours. In the 1570s, women's bodices even took on the fashionable shape of the male doublet, much to the disgust of many writers.<sup>57</sup> In the well-known pamphlet *Hic Mulier* (1620), masculine attire was presented as a particularly urban problem, blamed both on the women who dressed in male fashions and the tailors who obliged their desires:

call but to account the Taylors that are contained within the Circumference of the Walles of the City [...] they have raised more new foundations of this new disguise, and metamorphosed more modest old garments, to this new manner of short base and French doublet [...] in one moneth, then hath beene worse in Court, Suburbs, or Countrey.<sup>58</sup>

Historical narratives about early modern crossdressing have usually presented it as a transgressive act, enabling the crossdresser to sexually please others (in the case of prostitutes, such as Dorothy Clayton, who was made to stand in the pillory for two

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<sup>56</sup> See for example Jean E. Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, 4 (1988): 418-40; David Cressy, 'Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies* 35, 4 (1996): 438-65; Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Marjorie B. Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Bernard Capp, 'Playgoers, Players and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern London: The Bridewell Evidence', *The Seventeenth Century* 18, 2 (2003): 159-71; Simone Chess, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>57</sup> See for example the writings of William Harrison, George Gascoigne, Barnabe Rich, and Philip Stubbes, as cited in Denise Walen, *Constructions of Female Homoeroticism in Early Modern Drama* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 41-44.

<sup>58</sup> Anon., *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman: Being a Medicine to Cure the Coltish Disease of the Stagers in the Masculine-Feminines of Our Times* (London: I. Trundle, 1620), C1r-v. For more on the pamphlet debate sparked by *Hic Mulier*, see Sandra Clark, 'Hic Mulier, Haec Vir, and the Controversy over Masculine Women', *Studies in Philology* 82, 2 (1985): 157-83.

hours wearing men's apparel before being sent to Bridewell) or to commit crime (such as Moll Cutpurse).<sup>59</sup> But in a few cases, men and women claimed to cross-dress in order to escape notice. Alexandra Shepard has shown how the apprentice Robert Simpson dressed in a 'womans wast coate & a kertle' in order to conduct a sexual affair in secret, while Johanna Goodman was whipped and sent to Bridewell in 1569 for dressing as a male servant in order to accompany her soldier husband to war.<sup>60</sup> But in the unusual case of Joan Beast, arrested in 1580, crossdressing was a means to avoid social shame and to hide from neighbours.

On 17 June, two of the Queen's Justices, Thomas Howard and Edward Laurence, examined Joan Beast, and wrote a report of her response. They had caught up with her in Dorset, but she told them she had been born in London, brought up near Charing Cross, and married a minister named Thomas Crosse who filed for a divorce, believing that Beast was by 'Defect of nature not able for generacion'. Beast left and moved to Bishopsgate, but was 'asshamed as she saithe to live in London in so poore estate [...] being also by the naughtie defamacon of her husbunde so openly knowen to have this defect of nature'. Beast said that her neighbours insulted her for being infertile, they 'lewdlye disposed in most places where she wente contynuallye gave her great occacon of greves by pointting at her and using other wordes', and so she decided to escape London to serve Lady Cobham in France. In order to travel 'unknowen', she decided to dress as a man in a green kersey doublet, Venetian hose, and cloak, which she bought from a tailor in Bishopsgate (telling him she wanted a suit for a young boy 'of her bignes'). Beast asked a barber living without Bishopsgate to cut her hair (telling him she was troubled with headaches). But further bad luck struck. She failed to get work with Cobham and was robbed of everything other than her shirt, although she convinced a couple to give her another (undescribed) male suit that she was wearing upon her arrest. In order to corroborate her story, she said that she had confided in a poor woman named Goodwife Ward who lived without Bishopsgate, who

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<sup>59</sup> LMA, COL.CA.01.01.021 f. 93.

<sup>60</sup> Cambridge University Library, Cambridge University Archives, 'Examinations concerninge Vipens wife & Simpson', V.C.Ct. III.2, no. 261, as cited in Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 171-72; LMA, Court of Aldermen COL.CA.01.01.018 f. 522.

had washed her head after the haircut.<sup>61</sup> What became of Joan Best is not recorded, although there is a record of a ‘Jonathan Best’ examined in London fifteen years later, ‘supposed to bee a woman in the habitt of a man but found indeed to bee an hermaphrodite varying his habitt as himself thinketh good’.<sup>62</sup>

Whether Joan Best was Jonathan Best or not, her story was plausible. Despite high levels of immigration into the city and the density of people, London was made up of many small, intimate communities.<sup>63</sup> Its parishes were small, averaging four acres containing 137 households, so neighbours who prayed side-by-side at church would have regularly seen one another in the streets, and shared yards and buildings with one another.<sup>64</sup> Gowing has shown how vicious local disputes could be, with women often using their status as mothers as ammunition.<sup>65</sup> One London woman spat out the cruel words: ‘I have ten children, and thou hast never a one.’<sup>66</sup> In Buckinghamshire, one of Richard Napier’s patients who had not fallen pregnant after two years of marriage said that her neighbours ‘mock her for a barren woman’.<sup>67</sup> Such insults could have stung someone like Best, already suffering from the shame of poverty, divorce, and infertility. But childlessness was also viewed as suspect, as childbearing was the intended goal of Christian marriage, and impotence was legal grounds for an annulment, and almost always blamed on female fertility.<sup>68</sup> It is notable that throughout Best’s examination, the term ‘defect of nature’ appears three times over the 700-word account. That her name is ‘Best’ (was it in fact her real name?) only added to her depiction as an ‘unnatural’ woman. In language echoing reports about Joan Best and Jonathan Best, women dressed in masculine clothing were described by Truewit in Ben Jonson’s

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<sup>61</sup> Examination of Joan Best, a poor woman, before Lord Bindon and Edward Laurence, Esq. two of the Queen’s Justices, concerning her being found in man’s apparel, June 17, 1580. British Library Lansdowne 30, No. 24.

<sup>62</sup> 13 January 1595, London Metropolitan Archives, Remembrancia Vol II, COL/RMD/PA/01/002, 64 entry 131. My thanks to archivist Jan Pimblett, who sent me a photograph of this document.

<sup>63</sup> Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 18-22. See also Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>64</sup> Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 215.

<sup>65</sup> Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*.

<sup>66</sup> LMA, DL/C 220, f. 815 as cited in Gowing, *Common Bodies*, 114.

<sup>67</sup> Boolean, Ms. Ashmole 222 f. 262, as cited in *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Male infertility was rarely discussed in medical literature, while female fertility was the subject of frequent public discussion, in medical literature and sermons. *Ibid.*, 114-15; Jennifer Evans, *Aphrodisiacs, Fertility and Medicine in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 76-78.

*Epicoene* (1609) as taking on a ‘most masculine or rather hermaphroditical authority’.<sup>69</sup> The author of *Hic-Mulier* even described transvestitism as a ‘monstrous deformitie’ which made the woman ‘halfe beast, halfe Monster’.<sup>70</sup> The cases of *Beast and Best* enhance and substantiate our understanding of cross-dressing in early modern London, providing evidence for Rachel Trubowitz’s claim that anxieties about masculine dress were also connected to the ‘period’s revaluation of maternity’.<sup>71</sup> If Joan *Beast*’s story is to be believed, clothes were so closely connected to identity that the only way to escape the constant and close scrutiny of London neighbours was to completely change one’s appearance or flee the city.

### **Clothing and urban threats**

Londoners had to overcome more than just the scrutiny of their neighbours when getting dressed, for the city was a harsh environment that threatened many a fashionable textile or accessory. Jonson’s *Epicoene* not only staged the problems of cross-dressing; in one scene Mistress Otter vividly recounts her dreams ‘o’ the city’, which violently attacks her textiles and clothes; it stains her damask tablecloth, burns a black satin gown, drops wax onto her wire and ruff, and drives a coach over her masculine-style crimson satin doublet and black velvet skirt.<sup>72</sup> For the proud dresser, bad weather was a source of great anxiety. Sir Humphrey Mildmay’s diary, for example, is peppered with complaints about the weather, suggesting that the city became very muddy after a rainy spell, or oppressively dusty in the dry heat of summer.<sup>73</sup> Silks, metal threads, and carefully starched ruffs and cuffs would all be ruined by rain, and (then as now) London was a rainy city. On 5 July 1660, Pepys lamented the soggy spectacle of the King and

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<sup>69</sup> Ben Jonson, *Epicoene or The Silent Woman* (London: A&C Black, 2014), Act 1, Scene 1, lines 76–77, 14.

<sup>70</sup> *Hic Mulier*, A4r.

<sup>71</sup> Rachel Trubowitz, ‘Crossed-Dressed Women and Natural Mothers: “Boundary Panic” in *Hic Mulier*’, in *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500–1700*, ed. C. Malcolmson and M. Suzuki (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 186.

<sup>72</sup> Jonson, *Epicoene or The Silent Woman*, Act 3, Scene 2, lines 60–70, 67–68.

<sup>73</sup> For example, on 15 December 1635 Mildmay reported that he had been ‘abroade all day in the durte’ and on 2nd, 4th and 5th May 1636 reported that the city was ‘in the duste’; Mildmay, ‘Transcription of the Diary of Sir Humphrey Mildmay 3 July 1622 – 9 July 1652. British Library Harleian MS 454’, 47, 57.

Parliament ‘intertained by the City today with great pomp’, as the rain ‘bedaggled many a fine suit of clothes’. Poor Pepys was so worried about ruining his ‘Jackanapes coat with silver buttons’, new that very morning, that he was ‘forced to walk all the morning in White-hall, not knowing how to get out because of the rain’. On the day of Charles II’s coronation, Pepys was unable to find a coach to take him home; he refused to walk ‘because of the dirt’.<sup>74</sup> Getting one’s clothing wet was such a problem that Hugh Plat listed ‘[a]pparrell for rayne’ as one of the thirty-seven ‘[m]atters of most royall and present Expectation’.<sup>75</sup> In 1593 he announced that he had invented a solution, following a number of experiments on camlet, watered camlet, grosgrain, worsted, kersey, rash, taffeta, sarcenet, serge, calico, and Scottish cloth. Plat considered lining silk or velvet clothing with oiled, waxed, or rosined leather, and even speculated about protecting cloaks and riding garments with an amber varnish, or covering hats with thin parchment. But eventually he decided to treat garments with oil. One of his waterproofing recipes used turpentine scented with wormwood or cloves and damask powder. Plat was not alone in this endeavour; his friend Auditor Hill had also waterproofed a taffeta scarf, although it stopped water for just two minutes. Plat also sought advice from his friends about how black shoes and boots might be kept dry in rain and dew, while maintaining their colour.<sup>76</sup>

Necessity was the mother of invention, and London’s wet weather led to a number of waterproofing innovations not known in more clement cities. The Venetian Alessandro Magno was delighted with the ‘excellent boots for the rain’ which he had been forced to buy during his 1562 visit: ‘it often rained as evening drew on and during the night, so we wore shoes with a double layer of calf leather wherever we went. The English make these very well, and fit them with excellent soles’.<sup>77</sup> Ever the fashion-sceptic, Stubbes complained about how those who wore elaborately pinked and slashed

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<sup>74</sup> Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Latham and Matthews, vol. 1, 193.

<sup>75</sup> British Library Sloane MS.2216, f. 188v as cited in Ayesha Mukherjee, *Penury Into Plenty: Dearth and the Making of Knowledge in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 83.

<sup>76</sup> Plat’s friends offered a range of suggestions, from clarified butter to lamp black tempered with almond oil; Malcolm Thick, *Sir Hugh Plat: The Search for Useful Knowledge in Early Modern London* (Devon: Prospect Books, 2010), 314-18.

<sup>77</sup> Barron, Coleman, and Gobbi, ‘The London Journal of Alessandro Magno 1562’, 148.

shoes had to buy from six to twenty pairs a year, for they let in rain.<sup>78</sup> But as Sandra Cavallo, Tessa Storey, and Natasha Korda have shown, a focus on the highly elaborate decorative and fashionable shoes worn in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England and Italy has meant that historians have largely overlooked more practical footwear, despite the fact that urban walking was an increasingly popular leisure activity.<sup>79</sup> Some clothing was specifically made or protected for seasonal challenges. In December 1568, for example, John Petre purchased four pairs of ‘winter shoes’ for 4s. 8d., and spend 2d. more on mending shoes.<sup>80</sup>

The rain caused mud, much to the disgust of Horatio Busino, chaplain to the Venetian Ambassador, who wrote in 1617 that he had witnessed a Spaniard whose clothes were ‘fouly smeared with a sort of soft and very stinking mud, which abounds here at all seasons, so that the place deserves to be called Lorda (filth) rather than Londra (London)’.<sup>81</sup> Rain also caused problems for those who needed to wash and dry laundry, a particular challenge for poorer women without access to gardens. The Copperplate map shows women laying laundry and tenting cloth on Moorfields (Figure 2.31) and in 1607, a literary dialogue between a ‘Country Gentleman’ and a ‘London Citizen’ praised Moorfields as the ‘Garden to this Citty [...] for citizens to walke in to take the ayre and for Merchants maides to dry clothes in, which want necessary gardens at their dwellings.’<sup>82</sup> The citizen suggests that ‘further grace’ may be

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<sup>78</sup> Phillip Stubbes, *The Second Part of the Anatomie of Abuses Containing the Display of Corruptions, with a Perfect Description of Such Imperfections, Blemishes and Abuses, as Now Reigning in Euerie Degree, Require Reformation for Feare of Gods Vengeance to Be Powred Vpon the People and Countrie, without Speedie Repentance, and Conuersion Vnto God* (London: R. Ward for William Wright, 1583), F3r-F4v.

<sup>79</sup> Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 176-77; Natasha Korda, ‘“The Sign of the Last”: Gender, Material Culture, and Artisanal Nostalgia in The Shoemaker’s Holiday’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, 3 (2013): 573-97; Archer, ‘Social Networks in Restoration London’, 76-95; Henry Turner, ed., ‘Walking Capitals: Donne’s First Satyre’, in *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 203-21; Giorgio Riello, ‘The Material Culture of Walking: Spaces of Methodologies in the Long Eighteenth Century’, in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and Its Meanings*, ed. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 41-56.

<sup>80</sup> Accounts of John Petre, chiefly at the temple, 1567-70, Essex Record Office, D/DP A17. As transcribed at <http://www.elizabethancostume.net/cyte/node/30887>.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Venice: November 1617, 17-29’, in *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 15, 1617-1619*, ed. Hinds, 44-63. *British History Online*, accessed June 6, 2017, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol15/pp44-63>.

<sup>82</sup> Richard Johnson, *The Pleasant Walkes of Moore-Fields: Being the Guijt of Two Sisters, Now Beautified, to the Continuing Fame of This Worthy Citty* (London: W. Jaggard for Henry Gosson, 1607), A2r, A4v.

bestowed upon the fields in the form of ‘shelters for maidens having their clothes lying there a drying, if at any time it should chance to raine’, a suggestion praised by the country gentleman: ‘All England may take example at your London citizens’ who ‘strive to profit others, shewing themselves good common wealths men’ and ‘cherishers of the poor and succourless’.<sup>83</sup> Of course, a drying shelter would benefit the merchants employing the maids just as much, for it would be their clothes that were spared the rain.

Wind threatened to carry away the black woollen flat caps worn by ‘youthful citizens’, who (according to city chronicler John Stow) had to ‘tie them under their chins’.<sup>84</sup> Surviving caps bear evidence that ribbons were once attached, and many have been excavated with or alongside ear and cheek flaps that would have provided further protection from gusts (Figure 2.32). The fashionable tall felted hats were even more prone to blowing away. John Bulwer dismissed the high ‘Sugar loafe’ style as ‘so incommodious for use that every puffed of wind deprived us of them, requiring the imployment of one hand to keep them on’.<sup>85</sup>

Far worse than rain, mud, or wind, was the threat of disease. London suffered a number of vicious plague epidemics (1563, 1593, 1603, 1625, and 1665), decimating each generation of the urban population by tens of thousands of people.<sup>86</sup> While the exact cause of the disease was unknown, clothes were considered dangerous carriers. Dekker’s *The Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinarie* (1604), written after an epidemic which had killed more than a sixth of London’s population, describes how people ‘thought it very dangerous to deale with Sattin this plague-time for there was ‘as

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., A4v.

<sup>84</sup> Stow, *A Survey of London Written in the Year 1598*, 417.

<sup>85</sup> John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform’d: Or, the Artificiall Changeling Historically Presented, in the Mad and Cruell Gallantry, Foolish Bravery, Ridiculous Beauty, Filthy Fineness, and Loathsome Loveliness of Most Nations, Fashioning and Altering Their Bodies from the Mould Intended by Nature; with Figures of Those Transfigurations. To Which Artificiall and Affected Deformations Are Added, All the Native and Nationall Monstrosities That Have Appeared to Disfigure the Humane Fabrick. With a Vindication of the Regular Beauty and Honesty of Nature. And an Appendix of the Pedigree of the English Gallant* (London: William Hunt, 1653), 530-31.

<sup>86</sup> In 1665, 68,596 deaths were attributed to plague. For this and other figures, see Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24. See also Stephen Porter, *The Plagues of London* (Stroud: The History Press, 2008).

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Figure 2.31 (above):  
Moorfields and Shoreditch from The  
Copperplate Map, 1559.  
Image taken from copperplate, 37.7cm x  
50.5cm,  
Museum of London, ID Number 62.75.  
Note the women drying shirts and  
tenting cloth on Moorfields.

Figure 2.32 (below):  
Woollen cap with neckflap and ear or  
cheekpieces, sixteenth century, 11 inches  
x 24 inches, cheekpieces 7.75 inches x 6  
inches. Museum of London A7609a.

much perill betweene the wings and the skirts of one of their Doublets as in all the liberties of London'.<sup>87</sup>

Merging protectionist trade policy and xenophobia, critics speculated that imported Dutch cottons had brought the 1665 plague into London.<sup>88</sup> Plague orders suggested that the bedding used by plague victims be burnt, and their clothing be aired for at least three months before being reused. The second-hand trade (centred around Birchin Lane) and rag dealers (located on the outskirts of the city) were especially targeted, and the Privy Council ordered stocks of rags to be burnt and the paper mills which pulped rags for paper to be closed down.<sup>89</sup> Fashionable dress was also accused of causing God's wrath and bringing about the plague. Writing '[t]o London in time of Pestilence', Thomas Bancroft blamed fashionable ladies who 'goe | So Bedlam-like with Naked armes, and show | Shoulders and breasts, like Maremaids', and 'the roaring boyes I see | Put women downe with manlesse luxury, | Still to be fashion-sicke, and drinke, and sweare'.<sup>90</sup> Some fashionable clothing, however, actively protected its wearer. Herbs and sweet scents were thought to be effective preventatives for plague, and so highly decorative pomanders and sweet bags filled with rosemary, musk, civet, frankincense, juniper, bay leaves, or even onion, as well as gloves and jerkins that had been scented with oils, protected the body by covering the skin and purging the air from disease (Figure 2.33).<sup>91</sup> 'Shifting' the linens (smocks or shirts) that were worn

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<sup>87</sup> Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinarie: Or The Walkes in Powles* (London: T. Creede, 1604), B1v-B2r. For more on plague literature, see Ian Munro, *The Figure of the Crowd in Early Modern London: The City and Its Double* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 175-200.

<sup>88</sup> Nathaniel Hodges, *Loimologia: Or, an Historical Account of the Plague in London in 1665: With Precautionary Directions Against the Like Contagion*, as cited in Birsan Bulmus, *Plague, Quarantines and Geopolitics in the Ottoman Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 56.

<sup>89</sup> Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 202.

<sup>90</sup> Thomas Bancroft, *Two Bookes of Epigrammes, and Epitaphs Dedicated to Two Top-Branches of Gentry: Sir Charles Shirley, Baronet, and William Davenport, Esquire* (London: I. Okes, for Matthew Walbancke, 1639), G1v.

<sup>91</sup> Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 97-125.

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Figure 2.33a and b:  
Pomander closed  
(above) and open  
(below), made by  
'S.B.', c.1580,  
London, silver,  
6.4cm high, The  
Metropolitan  
Museum of Art,  
68.141.321.

The loop meant that  
this pomander  
could be hung from  
a ribbon or girdle.  
Each segment could  
hold a different  
herb or spice.

closest to the skin was considered a form of medicinal treatment, although physicians debated how frequently linens should be changed during an illness.<sup>92</sup>

Clean clothing and bodily care was thought to protect Londoners from plague, and could, Henry Peacham claimed, also protect newcomers to the city from the influence of ‘corrupt[ing]’ urban fashions. Peacham warned those in the city to look after their body and clothes, or else find ‘your linnen lost at the Landresses; in a word your selfe every where neglected’ and advised sober vigilance, warning that ‘Drunken men [...] are apt to lose their Hats, Cloaks or Rapiers’ and to lose track of what they have spent.<sup>93</sup> Naive visitors from the countryside, tempted by tailors and tricked by thieves, were mocked in broadside ballads like *A merry Progresse to London to see Fashions, by a young Country Gallant, that had more Money then Witte* (1615). The diary of Elizabeth Isham suggests that the clothing culture of London had a strong influence on visitors. At the age of eighteen, Isham stayed with relatives in the city, and when she returned home to Northamptonshire lamented that she missed ‘the company which I had at London’. However, she ‘passcified my selfe finding this place fitter to inrich my soule then adorne my body’. Urban fashions, she recalled, corrupted her so much that when her father gave her ‘a winter garment’ she said she disliked it ‘because it was not so hansome as I would’, telling him impetuously that ‘it was like a sheapards cote’. Later Elizabeth apologised to him and decided that she ‘cared not to follow the extremity of fashions to set fourth my selfe’.<sup>94</sup> Londoners looked at one another with a mixture of admiration, interest, and scrutiny, and while fashionable Londoners exploited opportunities to see and be seen, others suffered or recoiled from their high visibility.

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<sup>92</sup> Susan North, ‘Dress and Hygiene in Early Modern England: A Study of Advice and Practice’ (PhD Thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2012), 113-14. On clothing as a protective barrier, see Cavallo and Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy*, 105-6.

<sup>93</sup> Peacham, *The Art of Living in London*, A2v-A3r.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Booke of Remembrance’, Princeton University Library, Robert Taylor Collection, MS RTC01 no. 62, f. 21r, [http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/bor\\_p21r.htm](http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/bor_p21r.htm).

### 3. Cultivating the London look

Clothes were a means of cultural and social positioning, or in Rublack's words, a 'cultural argument'.<sup>95</sup> People who wished to be identified as part of the urban group had to carefully cultivate their appearance, and the city increasingly catered to this urge to acquire and maintain fashionable 'London' clothes and accessories. Wearing fashionable items of dress was, as Rublack has shown, a 'visual act which showed off new technologies and transformed people's ideas about what was possible', and so cities like London were stimulating both as places to see and be seen in new styles and materials of dress.<sup>96</sup> The opportunity and freedom of urban dress was explicitly noted as being one of the reasons young people were attracted to the city. When Adam Martindale described his sister Jane's motivation to move from Lancashire to London in 1625 in search of employment serving a lady, he explained:

Freeholders' daughters were then confined to their felts, petticoates and waistcoats, crosse handkerchiefs around their necks, and white cross-clothes upon their heads, with coifes under them wrought with black silk or worsted. 'Tis true the finest sort of them wore gold or silver lace upon their wastcoats, good silk laces (and store of them) about their petticoates, and bone laces or workes about their linens. But the proudest of them (below the gentry) durst not have offered to weare an hood, or a scarfe [...] noe, nor so much as a gown till her wedding day. And if any of them had transgressed these bounds, she would have been accounted an ambitious foole. These limitations I suppose she [Jane] did not very well approve.<sup>97</sup>

Like Jane, the vast majority of those living in the city were 'foreigners' (in the early modern sense of the word) themselves, among the thousands who migrated from English towns and villages each year.<sup>98</sup> Being a Londoner was less about one's place of

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<sup>95</sup> Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 211.

<sup>96</sup> Ulinka Rublack, 'Matter in the Material Renaissance', *Past and Present* 219 (2013): 52.

<sup>97</sup> Adam Martindale, *The Life of Adam Martindale, Written by Himself, and Now First Printed from the Original Manuscript in the British Museum*, ed. Richard Parkinson (Manchester: Charles Simms and Co. for the Chetham Society, 1845), 6-7. Also cited in Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23.

<sup>98</sup> Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer, 'Population Growth and Suburban Expansion', in *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*, ed. A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay (London and New York: Longman, 1986), 39, 501. While absolute numbers are hard to come by, Eleanor Hubbard found that 77.2% of London women who testified at the London consistory courts between 1570 and 1640 had been born outside the city Hubbard; *City Women*, 17.

birth, and more about the ability to transform oneself into an urban citizen, part of which required a certain mode of dress. Dressing well was part of the city's myth of itself, as Richard Johnson made clear in 1607: "The citizens hereof, wheresoever they become, bee regarded before all other Citizens, both for civilitie of manners, attire, companie, and talke."<sup>99</sup>

But while London fashions and dress freedoms were celebrated and enjoyed, many people, from satirists and critics, to the monarch and even the most fashion-hungry consumers, worried about the increasing consumption of clothes. Edward Dering, who recorded his expenses in a detailed account book, is a revealing case study of the ways clothes could be bought and maintained in London, as well as the opportunities and anxieties engendered by dressing according to the new urban style.

### **Edward Dering: a case study of a London consumer**

In 1619, twenty-one-year-old Edward Dering (1598-1644) began to record his expenses in a tall, vellum-bound account book. His first entry started the record with some style: 'Price of knightthoode Jan 22 160 [pounds]'.<sup>100</sup> Over almost a decade from 1619 to 1628, Dering noted other momentous expenses (such as the funeral costs for his first wife's premature death in June 1622, or the breeching of his son Anthony in March 1626), alongside the far more mundane purchases of tar, horsefeed, and household repairs.<sup>101</sup> Most scholars of Dering have focused on his impressive library, which included two volumes of Shakespeare's plays (he is the first recorded purchaser of the First Folio) and the dramatic works of Ben Jonson.<sup>102</sup> His account book records that between 1619

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<sup>99</sup> Johnson, *The Pleasant Walkes of Moore-Fields*, C3r.

<sup>100</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 4r.

<sup>101</sup> On reading Dering's account book as a proto-autobiography, see Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Adam Smyth, 'Money, Accounting, and Life-Writing, 1600-1700: Balancing a Life', in *A History of English Autobiography*, ed. Adam Smyth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 86-100.

<sup>102</sup> T. N. S. Lennam, 'Sir Edward Dering's Collection of Playbooks, 1619-1624', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 16, 2 (1965): 145-53; Nati H. Krivatsky and Natashia Yeandle, 'Books of Sir Edward Dering of Kent (1598-1644)', in *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and Early Stuart Book-Lists*, ed. R. J. Fehrenbach and E. S. Leedham-Green, vol. I (Marlborough: Adam Matthew Publications, 1992), 137-269; Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

and 1624 Dering made twenty-eight payments to see plays and bought over 225 playbooks. Nonetheless, frustratingly, he did not note the titles of the plays he was seeing or the theatres he was frequenting, and he often just listed books by their quantity.<sup>103</sup> In his records he paid far more attention to – and was clearly delighted by – the details of his attire, the vast majority of which was acquired, made up, and maintained in London.

Take, for example, this entry for an olive and gold buttoned and striped suit that Dering paid for in March 1623:

4 yds half qrter of oliue Coloured broade Cloath att 17s per yd to make one suite and Cloake	03 08 00
4 yds of Deuonshire bayes to lyne my Cloake att 3s 4d per yd	00 13 04
5 dozen of Chaine gold lace for suite and Cloake weighin 7 ounces qrter' att 5s 8d per ounce	02 01 00
2 dozen of haire coloured and gold pointes to this suite att 14s per dozen	01 08 00
Canuas and stiffening	00 02 06
An ell qrter' of taffaty to line doublett	00 16 04
two yds half qrter' of satten to edge this suite and Cloake att 13s 4d	01 08 00
3 ounces of stitching and sowing silke	00 06 00
An ell and half of holland to ye hose	00 04 00
Pocketts	00 01 08
Galloune to bind ye doublett and hose	00 01 00
hookes to ye suite	00 00 02

<sup>103</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 34r, 38v.

Drawing ye peeces of ye Cloake	00 01 08
Stiffning to ye Cape	00 00 04
ffor making this suite and Cloake edged and bottoned doune ye armes, and backe, and with stripes before on the hose	01 00 00
9 dozen of oliue colour and gold baskett buttons att 14d per dozen	00 10 06
15 dozen of larger buttons of ye same making att 18d per dozen	01 02 06
1 dozen of greate buttons for ye Cloake	00 10 00
A loope button with a gold head for ye Cloake	00 02 00

To the left of this list, he placed a wide-open bracket and noted ‘Summ of this suite 13-17-0’.<sup>104</sup> Dering’s precision in writing down each element of the suit – from the cheap stiffening (possibly card or animal hair, to give structure around areas such as the shoulders, back, and stomach) to the woven buttons – might reflect the manner in which he was compiling his accounts. If, while at his desk, Dering had the bill from his tailor in one hand and his pen in the other, it is possible that he copied the itemised list of costs directly into the account book. However, such precision and description of colour (olive, ‘haire coloured’, gold) was unnecessary. Why note down, or copy out from a bill, that the suit and cloak were ‘edged and bottoned doune ye armes, and backe, and with stripes before on the hose’, if not just to revel in the exuberant details of this new outfit?

Dering’s descriptive precision enables us to reconstruct a wardrobe at least as rich as his celebrated library. It incorporated the finest textiles – from ‘taffaty’ and ‘french silk’, to ‘spanish cloath’, plush, ‘satten’, ‘Philipp and cheiney’ (a worsted), fine

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<sup>104</sup> Dering, ‘A Booke of Expences’, 36v.

'holland' linen, 'mockado', and 'white Florence satten'. He owned stockings in a variety of hues, including 'willow colour', 'pearle', 'sky Colour', and 'yellow'. He had a 'peache coloured and green' scarf, a 'scarlett' doublet, a 'blew silke wast Coate', 'ashcolour' and 'olive coloured kentish broadcloath' suits, and 'orange Colour silke pointes' with which to tie his doublet to his hose. He bought feathers dyed yellow, black, and red, which he might have used to decorate one of his many beaver hats. Dering accessorised with a 'cuttworke falling band and cuffes', ruffs decorated with 'bone lace', a 'silver girdle and hangers', 'white spanish leather shoes', and an 'earinge with Rubyes'. While many of Dering's clothing items were costly, a new style or alteration could be relatively inexpensive. In January 1626, he bought '2 pendent pearles Counterfeited' for 5s. and in May paid 10s. 'for dying a flame Colour gowne into black'. For 13s. he had his 'greate ridinge Coate' altered 'into a small'. Dering usually commissioned a matching suit of clothing (doublet, hose, cloak, and points to attach the doublet to the hose), but he could have mixed elements of his suits to create new ensembles, and altered his look with a new hatband, different ruff, pair of coloured stockings, gloves, or a jewelled and feathered accessory. Such alterations remind us that once clothes had been purchased, the work and experimentation with dress was not over; early modern men and women conceived of their clothes as mutable investments, that could be recut, dyed afresh, and worn in new ways. Clothes also required careful laundering, and accessories like ruffs and cuffs demanded skilful and regular washing, starching and setting, as Dering's account book demonstrates. He paid his laundress 'for all her washing' at irregular although frequent intervals, bought starch, and spent 8 shillings on 'making up' two tiffany ruffs for his wife 'and starching them'.<sup>105</sup>

Dering's investment of time, money, and care in his wardrobe can be linked to his pursuit of social advancement and court connections. Through the support of the Duke of Buckingham, he was eventually able to take up positions as a Member of Parliament for Hythe and Kent and gentleman-extraordinary of the Privy Chamber. On

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<sup>105</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 4r, 5r-6r, 9v, 14v, 27r, 30v, 31v, 35r, 36r-36v, 41v-42r, 55v, 58r-58v, 67v-68r, 69r.

1 February 1627, he was made a baronet by Charles I.<sup>106</sup> As the son of a gentleman, and recipient of a substantial inheritance of land and money in Pluckley, Kent, Dering travelled often for business and pleasure: to court, and to the homes of friends and patrons. He bought some clothing, including pairs of stockings, from his local village and the nearby town of Ashford. But his attire was mostly sourced from further afield. On a trip to Calais and Gravelines in August 1620, he bought two bracelets and some thread, and while visiting his cousin in Ireland in 1621 purchased two handkerchiefs. Good clothes were clearly available outside of London, for during a two-month summer tour of Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire in 1624 Dering bought a sea-green satin doublet and matching velvet cloak, green and gold chain, laces and buttons, two shirts, a scabbard, 16 pairs of gloves, a set of knots, and a chain of ribbon as a gift for his sister Margaret.<sup>107</sup>

But it was in London where Dering really went on spending sprees. His account book records him dining with friends, attending the theatre, going to the barber, visiting the tombs at Westminster Abbey, and – above all – buying clothes. Dering’s marriage to Anne Ashburnham (1604/5-1628), his second wife, drove some of his most extravagant spending in London. This event – a clever match for an aspiring politician, given the Ashburnham family connections with the Duke of Buckingham – was hosted in Whitehall at the latter’s lodgings on New Year’s Day.<sup>108</sup> Dering relied on Buckingham, James I’s ‘favourite’, for social and political advancement, and his account book maps his attempts to curry favour – he visited the Duke regularly, presented him with two mastiffs in June 1625, and clearly dressed to impress at his own wedding.<sup>109</sup> Having

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<sup>106</sup> S. P. Salt, ‘Dering, Sir Edward’, *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7531>.

<sup>107</sup> Dering, ‘A Booke of Expences’, 9v, 16v, 38r-39r.

<sup>108</sup> Peter Lefevre and Andrew Thrush, ‘Dering, Sir Edward (1598-1644), of Surrenden Dering, Pluckley, Kent’, ed. Andrew Thrush and John P. Ferris, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1604-1629* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), [http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/dering-sir-edward-1598-1644#footnote23\\_dad9jze](http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/dering-sir-edward-1598-1644#footnote23_dad9jze).

<sup>109</sup> Dering, ‘A Booke of Expences’, 52r. As Ian MacInnes has shown, English mastiffs were highly regarded by Europeans, and were cultivated by the aristocracy, who regarded the dog’s courage, strength, and humoral properties as similar to the ideal masculine Englishman. Mastiffs were used in bear baiting, and were evidently highly prized as gifts amongst the elite – the East India Company gave one to the Mogul besieging Ormuz in 1615. See Ian MacInnes, ‘Mastiffs and Spaniels: Gender and Nation in the English Dog’, *Textual Practice* 17, no. 1 (2003): 21-40.

arrived in London on 25 October 1624, he spent two months there preparing for the event. Again, Dering had the corns on his feet cut, visited the barber and the laundress, and bought himself a looking glass, four tortoise-shell combs, another beaver hat, a hat band, a lace ruff and cuffs, a pair of buck leather gloves fringed with silver, a pair of 'etwizes' (tweezers), and some curling irons. Perhaps Dering was anticipating wedded bliss when he noted a two-pence purchase of lipsalve. He also had to spend two shillings to pay for the soft wax needed to seal two bonds for 'when I borrowed mony', which he presumably needed to fund his enormous outgoings. Three days before his wedding he paid £1 14s. for 'my wedding ring'. In the days after it, Dering lavished gifts of clothing and accessories on Anne (to whom he proudly referred as 'my wife') including a comb, twelve pairs of gloves, a fan, and, most spectacularly of all, seven diamonds, which were added to 'some of my old ones, at 15s a peece, for setting of them into the forme of a heart which I gave unto my mistress'.<sup>110</sup> As Hannah Greig has convincingly shown, giving and resetting diamonds was a common elite practice (particularly at marriages) in eighteenth-century London, with gift-giving often taking place in public spaces.<sup>111</sup> The metropolitan elite, Greig suggests, created a 'shared identity forged through material goods' aside from the marketplace.<sup>112</sup> Much of what Greig describes holds true for Dering and his milieu in the mid-seventeenth century, as diamonds, held in esteem above all other objects, circulated between families and favourites. Each borrowed or gifted jewel was expected to communicate the social status and connections of both the receiver and the giver. Dering's account book does not make clear whether he gave the diamond heart to his wife in private or in front of guests during wedding celebrations, but perhaps he hoped, through his combination of his 'old' diamonds with some new purchases, to demonstrate his ability to take part in elite gift exchanges in front of Buckingham and his circle. The shape of the heart would have been read as symbolising love for his new wife, but the diamonds themselves might have held an even greater symbolism.

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<sup>110</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 40v-42r.

<sup>111</sup> Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 32-62.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

Dering's wedding wardrobe, intended to convey his emotional and social connections, was comprised of the kinds of novel and luxurious goods only available on the London market. He bought an elaborate white satin doublet which he had 'printed', a technique whereby shapes were punched into the surface of the fabric to decorate it in regular textured patterns (Figures 2.34a and b). He paid £4 9s. 3d. for gold parchment galloon (a narrow braid) with which to trim his white doublet and his scarlet hose, and dozens of gold buttons for his suit. The account book paints a vivid picture of two stunningly luxurious suits: one white, gold, and scarlet, the other silver, black, and scarlet. Dering seemed resigned to the expense of all this: 'so the silkman had of me toward these two suites of Cloathes 26-19-3'. Perhaps this is because some of his costs were unavoidable. Dering needed to buy points to attach his doublet to his hose – he bought twenty-six in scarlet and gold at £1 14s. 8d. for his 'second suite'.<sup>113</sup> But he also had to buy points as wedding favours for his guests to take away.

As Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths have noted, there is a surprising lack of scholarship on gentry weddings.<sup>114</sup> But Dering's wedding resembles their account of Nicholas LeStrange's nuptials in September 1630, including his responsibility for purchasing traditional wedding gifts for guests.<sup>115</sup> Dering purchased five dozen scarlet and silver 'wedding points' at a cost of four pounds, and four dozen more for three pounds 'all given away'. In addition to those he had purchased specifically to give away, the guests must have asked for (or grabbed) his wedding accessories from his body, for Dering also had to spend £6 10s. on a 'per of black and sillver garters of ye very best knotts, 2 yrds of riband, and 2 dozen of pointes all alike, for my selfe after my wedding garters and points were gone'.<sup>116</sup> LeStrange spent similar sums to Dering on gloves and rings for his wedding guests (£19 9s.) and £2 for garters for the two bridesmaids.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 41v-42r.

<sup>114</sup> Like Whittle and Griffiths, I refer to the scholarship of David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); John R. Gillis, *For Better, for Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>115</sup> Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 168-69.

<sup>116</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 42r.

<sup>117</sup> Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender*, 169.

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Figure 2.34a and b  
(detail):  
Doublet and  
breeches, English,  
1630-1640,  
stamped satin,  
linen and buckram  
lining, braid and  
silk ribbon, V&A  
348&A-1905.

Dering also bought garters in 'pinke Colour and sillver', which he noted were 'of ye very best' for Lady Mary Villiers (the Duke of Buckingham's daughter) and Lady Elizabeth Feilding (Buckingham's niece). Dering calculated that all of 'this ware besides others gloves and girdles and hangers &c, comes to 29-15-0 whereof', he noted, £21 4s. was 'given away'.<sup>118</sup> Through these purchases and gifts, Dering demonstrated his style, taste, attention to detail, and social and emotional connections in the presence of influential society.

Dering totted up his expenditure at regular intervals. At the bottom of each page of his account book he recorded the total, and at the end of each half year and full year he worked out the amount he had spent in these periods. He also tallied up the total amount spent on each of his suits of clothing and on his trips to London, which suggests that he regarded both sorts of expenditure as discrete events in themselves. In these tallies we can see Dering attempting to scale down and justify his costs, for example over the course of his wedding he notes, 'Layd out in all this time of my being at London 258-3-0 wherein note 1-18s-0 lost att cards and 13-14s paid Master Draper, not sett downe within this compasse'. Dering concludes: 'So the true expence of this time hath been 242-11-0'. He was a savvy consumer, complaining when his purchases did not live up to his expectations. Dering was content to pay for expensive goods when he thought that they were worth their price, but his account book also records his frustration at undue expense: 'paid ye dyer for that that was not unto me worth 10s' £1 4s. 6d.<sup>119</sup> He was clearly a careful accountant and shopper, who continued to assess the worth of his clothing after its purchase.

Dering's most complicated and emotionally fraught accounting, however, was relegated to the final pages of the account book, in reference to his marriage to his first wife Elizabeth née Tufton. At length, Dering listed the clothing and accessories he had purchased for his wife, including a black silk and silver gown with a farthingale, a green and silver gown, the crimson satin petticoat (bought at the exchange in London), calico pockets, black beaver hat, a leather perfumed fan, three masks, a muff, ruff, chin cloth,

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<sup>118</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 42r.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 42v, 66r.

gloves, an apron, and hair tires from a 'tire woman'. Dering made his wife sign this list, and then wrote at length of how her parents had brought Elizabeth to London 'altogether unfurnished of cloathes, of every sort', compelling him to purchase these things on their behalf. Dering then made discursive calculations of how much had been provided by Elizabeth and her parents, finally deciding that he was still due £99 3s. 6d. from the Tufton family.<sup>120</sup> This list of masks, beaver hats, and hair tires calls to mind images of Hollar's well-dressed London women; Elizabeth was clearly dressed to fit the London look. A woman was expected to bring a comprehensive wardrobe to her marriage, and once married, as *feme covert* all of her belongings became the property of the husband, who was at liberty to pawn or sell them.<sup>121</sup> As Gowing has demonstrated, 'in the house, violent disputes often centred on material goods', and a number of court cases were filed in London by women who claimed their husbands had abused them by withholding or selling their clothes.<sup>122</sup> Even if, as Eleanor Hubbard has shown, London court witnesses 'spoke as though the goods in question [usually clothing] belonged morally to the wives, whatever the law had to say on the matter', a wife's wardrobe belonged to her husband and only reverted back into her possession at death.<sup>123</sup>

Dering's anxious calculations may be explained by his note at the very beginning of his account book that the year of his marriage 'sett me in debt 110li'. At the top of the page, he even deemed it 'My prodigall yeare', although at some point he scratched out this damning phrase with thick black strokes.<sup>124</sup> Anxiety about prodigal spending was a key feature of both satires and advice literature about the new seasonal visitors to the city. Justifying his spending on clothes, Samuel Pepys wrote in his diary that he was 'in a humour of laying out money; but not prodigally, but only in Cloaths, which I every day see that I do suffer for want of'.<sup>125</sup> Both Dering and Pepys would have been familiar

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 92r-93v.

<sup>121</sup> Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), 26.

<sup>122</sup> Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 213.

<sup>123</sup> Hubbard, *City Women*, 138.

<sup>124</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 3r-4r. For a suggestion as to when and why Dering changed his mind, see Sophie Pitman, 'Prodigal Years? Negotiating Luxury and Fashioning Identity in a Seventeenth-Century Account Book', *Luxury* 3, 1-2 (2016): 7-31.

<sup>125</sup> 21 October 1663, as cited in Kay Staniland, 'Samuel Pepys and His Wardrobe', *Costume: Journal of the Costume Society*, 39 (2005): 60.

with the parable of the prodigal son.<sup>126</sup> Intended to demonstrate God’s mercy and the importance of love and forgiveness, the story had many echoes in the popular culture of early modern England and was used and adapted by Renaissance dramatists as a shorthand for youth and folly. As Paul Bailey has noted, unlike the medieval plays which were often set in the countryside, the Renaissance prodigal son was associated with the city of London. This probably played well to audiences of young single men living in a metropolis full of apprentices, trainee lawyers, merchants, and maidservants. Although we do not know which plays Dering saw and read while in London, the extensive use of the motif of the prodigal son in Renaissance drama – including plays by Thomas Dekker, John Fletcher, Thomas Heywood, Ben Jonson, Phillip Massinger, Thomas Middleton, and John Webster – suggests that he would have been familiar with the scene on the London stage.<sup>127</sup> Cheaply printed broadside ballads with titles like ‘The Prodigal Son Converted’ (1640-1674?) and ‘The Extravagant Youth, Or, An Emblem of Prodigality’ (1671-1702?) also played with the trope of the prodigal son, at once casting him as a humorous loveable rogue and presenting men tempted by fine silks and feathered hats with a cautionary tale.<sup>128</sup> As a large number of critical writings warned, the pressure to keep up with the London look could easily tempt a man into overspending. In his *The Art of Living in London* (1642), Henry Peacham advised the ‘Gentleman living in the Citie’ to ‘have a care to keepe himsef out of debt, let him owe

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<sup>126</sup> From the book of Luke 15:11-32 in the King James Bible, the parable traces the fall of a young man who spends his father’s inheritance on the good life, and ends up a penniless swineherd, envious of the food he feeds to the pigs. The prodigal son sees the error of his ways, repents, and asks his father for forgiveness, and his father welcomes him home.

<sup>127</sup> Paul Douglas Bailey, ‘The Prodigal Son Motif in Medieval and Renaissance Drama’ (PhD Thesis, Ohio State University, 1983), 39, 42-43.

<sup>128</sup> Anonymous, *The Prodigal Son Converted, Or The Young-Man Return’d from His Rambles. Wit Ne’re till Now, Was Cry’d about the Street, | At the Low Rate O a Poor Penny Sheet; | Sharp Times Will Make Sharp Wits, Not Fear Sharp Tongues, | ‘Tis We Who Money Want Which Suffer Wrongs; | You Can’t Command a Poet with a Frown | To Write New Songs: But Yours, for a Crown: | Here’s That Will Please You Sure, and Much Befreind Ye. | You’ll Thank the Author, If the Devil Be N’t in Ye* (London: R Burton, 1640), <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30655/citation>; Anonymous, *The Extravagant Youth, | Or, | An Emblem of Prodigality. | Tho’ He Was Stout, He Can’t Get Out, | in Trouble He’l Remain | Young-Men Be Wise, Your Freedom Prize, | Bad Company Refrain* (London: J. Deacon, 1671), <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/35169/citation>.

as little as he can to his 'Taylor for following the fashion' else he may 'quickly take a nap upon penillesse bench'.<sup>129</sup>

Clothing caused Dering significant economic and social anxiety. In addition to worrying about appropriate expenditure on his wife's wardrobe and having to impress his social superiors, Dering had to be careful not to spend more than his income allowed. Dering's attitude to spending money, particularly his fear of 'prodigall' expenditure, changed as he realised how spending on clothing, heraldry, and portraiture helped him advance socially.<sup>130</sup> But Dering's account book is also clear evidence that shopping for clothing in London, with access to a wide range of materials, trimmings, and highly skilled craftsmen and laundresses, was clearly also a source of enjoyment.

### **Redefining the early modern consumer**

Dering's account book, then, confirms Rublack's claims that early modern individuals had constant involvement with the making and maintenance of their clothing. Historians have recently started looking at materiality as evidence of skill, knowledge, and what Rublack terms 'craft spectatorship' – that is, proof that people were used to looking at goods and valued their decorative elements.<sup>131</sup> A deep investment of time and knowledge was required of those who made and commissioned clothing and other material goods. Across the early modern world, '[a]lmost all members of society engaged in transforming matter in some way – whether through daily labour, their interests, or quotidian practices', Rublack explains, 'through everyday customer choice: fabrics and threads were chosen; designs were discussed with tailors, seamstresses and embroiderers; materials ranging from fabrics to metals were customized'.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Henry Peacham, *The Art of Living in London, Or, A Caution How Gentlemen, Countrymen and Strangers, Drawn by Occasion of Businesse, Should Dispose of Themselves in the Thriftiest Way, Not Onely in the Citie, but in All Other Populous Places. As Also, a Direction to the Poorer Sort That Come Thither to Seeke Their Fortunes* (London: for John Gyles, 1642), A2r-A3v.

<sup>130</sup> For an in-depth exploration, see Pitman, 'Prodigal Years?'

<sup>131</sup> Ulinka Rublack, 'Matter in the Material Renaissance', *Past & Present* 219, 1 (2013): 62.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-46.

A large team of skilled craftspeople made Dering's extensive wardrobe possible. Joan Thirsk has identified how by the mid-sixteenth century, consumers needed to have an 'almost encyclopaedic body of knowledge [...] about where the best markets were to be found for different types of goods'.<sup>133</sup> Mark Merry and Catherine Richardson also highlight the 'complex processes of planning' clothing, and 'the extent to which these processes relied upon a detailed knowledge of London and provincial markets and expertise', something clearly demonstrated through Dering's account book.<sup>134</sup> In it he named ten tailors and paid numerous unnamed ones (some of whom he refers to as 'my taylour' or 'my London taylour' and others who made or repaired clothing for his wife, household staff, and children), as well as making many payments to his shoemaker 'Arrowes', mercers, starchers, and a laundress. He reserved his most expensive and elaborate commissions for his London tailors, named William Henley and Master Draper, while his local tailor John Elnor did repairs and work for the family.<sup>135</sup> Dering also took care of his bodily appearance through visits to the barber and on one occasion, paid Arrowes six pence to cut his corns, suggesting that professionals might take care of both clothing and body.<sup>136</sup>

Skilled craftsmanship was highly valued, and customers cultivated their relationships with makers. In her account book Margaret Spencer, a wealthy young single woman who shopped in London between 1610 and 1613, noted straight after her bill of eight shillings 'for dieinge a hatt and a hatt band', that she gave six pence to 'the hatars man for stayinge soe long'.<sup>137</sup> If retailers were kept sweet, then they would be better placed to fill orders quickly, at good prices, and extend credit to their faithful customers. In 1658, Tom Verney was delighted that he could order a periwig from a

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<sup>133</sup> Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 119.

<sup>134</sup> Thomas Puckering, *The Household Account Book of Sir Thomas Puckering of Warwick, 1620: Living in London and the Midlands: With His Probate Inventory, 1637*, ed. Mark Merry and Catherine Richardson, vol. XLV (Dugdale Society, 2012), 67.

<sup>135</sup> Dering spells this name Elnar, Elnor, and Elmer variously. Although Draper's name might suggest that he is a cloth merchant, Dering calls him 'Master Draper, the Tailor' (38v). Other named tailors include Foster, Hart, and William Astell (who made clothes for his wife), Clark, Thomas Hamley, May, and Fowler.

<sup>136</sup> Dering, 'A Booke of Expences', 8v, 11r.

<sup>137</sup> Margaret Spencer, 'Account Book' c.1610, f. 14r, British Library.

Frenchman in the Strand who knew his style and the size of his head and could fulfil the order in just a week for 10 shillings.<sup>138</sup>

When buying a new item of clothing, customers usually provided their tailors or seamstresses with the materials, and so they needed to be knowledgeable about the material properties of different kinds of fabrics if the finished item was to achieve the desired effect. Far from being extravagant frippery, good quality clothing and skilful laundering was considered to be perhaps the most important priority for a young man, and shopping was an opportunity to cultivate useful knowledge. When Francis Osbourne published *Advice to a son, or Directions for your better conduct* (1655), he advised, '[w]eare your Cloathes neat, exceeding rather than comming short of others of like fortune [...] Therefore spare all other waies, rather than prove defective in this.' He added that it was worth spending time on shopping for clothing, for '[i]f you get nothing else, by going from one shop to another, you shall gaine experience'.<sup>139</sup> It was important to learn these skills, for consumers unfamiliar with assessing the quality or value of goods could be cheated by wily tradesmen and women. Francis Newton was discovered to be cheating his clients by manipulating the hook of his weight scale or adding lead under the weight pan when he sold starch. It was only when one of his suppliers, Joyce Dannize, accused him of cheating that it transpired that others had also been tricked.<sup>140</sup> A skilful customer was also better placed to get a good price, as an extract from a dialogue in the French and English language manual *The French Garden* (1605) reveals. In a scene at a sempster's shop, while haggling over 'the fayrest linnen cloath in London', a woman asks her master to buy a waistcoat that she has seen in another shop, as she worries that 'they will over price it me by the halfe', whereas 'they

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<sup>138</sup> F. P. Verney and M. Verney (eds), *Memoirs of the Verney family* (2 vols, 1907) vol. I, 552 as cited in J. F. Merritt, *Westminster 1640-60: A Royal City in a Time of Revolution* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2013), 209.

<sup>139</sup> Francis Osbourne, *Advice to a Son; or Directions for Your Better Conduct through the Various and Most Important Encounters of This Life. Vnder These Generall Heads I. Studies &c. II. Love and Marriage. III. Travell. IV. Government. V. Religion. Conclusion* (Oxford: Henry Hall, 1655), 17-18.

<sup>140</sup> Guildhall Library MSS 11588/3 211013 and II571/10, f. 463v as cited in Joseph P. Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade Guilds, Identity, and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 53.

knowe you have better skill in it'.<sup>141</sup> In 1589 Philip Gawdy wrote to his sister from London telling her that he had sent her some black velvet, white satin, and a pair of 'truncke sleeves' which he had purchased 'as well and as good cheape as my skill might afford me'.<sup>142</sup> The most skilful early modern consumers should be considered as collaborators or producers, working closely with trusted craftspeople and participating in the design choices about the materials employed in the construction of clothing.

### Shopping for clothes in London

Although Dering's detailed accounts of his clothing purchases are unusually descriptive, his enthusiasm for shopping visits to London was common among his peers. As F. J. Fisher noticed, '[a] significant feature of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was the increasing extent to which the revenues spent in London were the revenues of that junior branch of the nobility, the country gentry'.<sup>143</sup> In 1620, Sir Thomas Puckering, a baronet and member of parliament, bought three quarters of his clothing purchases in London, rather than in his hometown of Warwick.<sup>144</sup> Ian Warren has identified a London season emerging in the late sixteenth century which correlated with the legal terms and Christmas, in part thanks to the rise of litigation at central Westminster courts and the growing numbers of sons attending the Inns of Court to study law, that brought a rhythm to visits from out of town.<sup>145</sup> By 1605, John Wynn of Gwydir in Wales wrote that he was 'resolved to spend the greatest part of the rest of my lyf for the wynter and springe quarter aboutw london'.<sup>146</sup> Half a century later, Griffin Lewis

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<sup>141</sup> Pierre Erondelle, *The French Garden: For English Ladyes and Gentlewomen to Walke In. Or, A Sommer Dayes Labour Being an Instruction for the Attayning Vnto the Knowledge of the French Tongue: Wherein for the Practise Thereof, Are Framed Thirteene Dialogues in French and English, Concerning Diuers Matters from the Rising in the Morning till Bed-Time* (London: Edward White, 1605), the eighth dialogue, np.

<sup>142</sup> Philip Gawdy et al., *Letters of Philip Gawdy of West Harling, Norfolk, and of London to Various Members of His Family, 1579-1616* (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1906), 49.

<sup>143</sup> F. J. Fisher, *London and the English Economy*, ed. P. J. Corfield and N. B. Harte (London and Ronceverte: The Hambleton Press, 1990), 108; see also F. J. Fisher, 'The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 30 (1948): 37-50.

<sup>144</sup> Puckering, *The Household Account Book of Sir Thomas Puckering*, 67.

<sup>145</sup> Warren, 'The Gentry, the Nobility, and London Residence c.1580-1680', 6-7.

<sup>146</sup> Wynn MSS no. 348, The National Library of Wales, as cited in Fisher, 'The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', 43.

mocked those who seasonally shifted their clothing by allying fashions with the waxing and waning of the moon: 'If you cast your eyes upon his outside he seems *a kinsman to the man in the Moon*, for every month he is in a new fashion'.<sup>147</sup> The shift in the social identity of the gentry from 'lordship' to 'urbanity', as traced by Anna Bryson, had much to do with seasonal fashions and shopping.<sup>148</sup>

London's attractions proved so strong that between 1596 and 1640, seventeen royal proclamations were issued to force the gentry out of the capital and back to their country residences and responsibilities.<sup>149</sup> Despite these pleas, the pull of urban shopping was clearly too strong, for in 1632 over two hundred and fifty peers (a quarter of the peerage) were ordered by the Star Chamber to leave London, Southwark, and the new suburbs and return home, to halt their spending 'in the City in excessive Apparel'.<sup>150</sup> James I even wrote a poem in 1622 blaming women who 'dreame on nought but vizitts maskes and toyes | And thinke the cuntrey contributes no joys'. James's poem pointed the finger at gentry wives, who were so keen to 'be kept in fashion fine and gaye' that they 'Care not what fines there honest husbands pay'.<sup>151</sup> Dering's account book suggests otherwise. In fact, Dering recorded the purchase of five masks for his second wife Anne between 1625 and 1626, suggesting that he indulged her passion for London fashions while shopping for his own wardrobe.

As Linda Levy Peck has conclusively demonstrated, luxury retail shopping in London long predates the eighteenth century.<sup>152</sup> By the fourteenth century, small shops were open on London Bridge, and the city's central thoroughfare of Cheapside was celebrated as the 'starr and jewell of the land' with its expensive shops full of

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<sup>147</sup> Lewis Griffin, *Essayes and Characters* (London, 1661), 28.

<sup>148</sup> Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Clarendon Press, 1998), 62.

<sup>149</sup> Felicity Heal, 'The Crown, the Gentry and London: The Enforcement of Proclamation, 1596-1640', in *Law and Government under the Tudors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 211-12.

<sup>150</sup> John Rushworth, *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: 1629-38*, vol. 2 (London: D. Browne, 1721), 288-91, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/rushworth-papers/vol2/pp287-318> (accessed 1 June 2017), also cited in Fisher, 'The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', 43; Lawrence Stone, 'The Residential Development of the West End of London in the Seventeenth Century', in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J.H. Hexter*, ed. Barbara C. Malament (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 175.

<sup>151</sup> James I, as cited in Heal, 'The Crown, the Gentry and London', 214.

<sup>152</sup> Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 45.

‘inexpressibly great treasures’ kept by goldsmiths, mercers, and leather sellers.<sup>153</sup> But London was no match for its rivals Antwerp and Venice until Thomas Gresham built the Royal Exchange (opened officially by Queen Elizabeth in 1570 and inspired by Gresham’s time as a merchant at Antwerp’s bourse), which provided a free public meeting space where merchants could conduct business and discuss news, and visitors could stroll along the main and upper ‘pawns’ of shops. While reports suggest that the space was sometimes busy with ‘idle boys, beggars, cheaters and other people of base quality’, the Exchange was strictly controlled through bells which rang at opening and closing of official business, and was maintained by watchmen, keepers, and sweepers (Figure 2.35).<sup>154</sup> Never before had there been so many shopping opportunities to tempt the fashion-forward consumer with fine, often imported, luxury goods and services.<sup>155</sup>

The only extant inventory from the Royal Exchange – from a haberdashery rented by Thomas Deane – was made half a century before Dering’s London excursions.<sup>156</sup> However, if this list of silk threads, ribbons, clothes fastenings, and decorative handkerchiefs that remained in the shop’s stock at Deane’s death in January 1572 is at all representative of the goods available in subsequent decades, Dering’s taste for fine clothing and accessories would have made him Deane’s ideal customer.

What might be regarded as London’s first sweep of gentrification began in the West End, safely upwind and upriver of most of the fumes and rubbish of the city, and connecting the City to Westminster, in the early seventeenth century.<sup>157</sup> New developments like Covent Garden and Drury Lane took on a distinctly elite character.<sup>158</sup> With more space on this previously under-developed land, the Earl of Salisbury was

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<sup>153</sup> Vanessa Harding and Laura Wright, eds, *London Bridge: Selected Accounts and Rentals, 1381-1538* (London Record Society, 1995). An anonymous fourteenth century description and Thomas Platter’s 1599 diary, as cited in Paul Griffiths, ‘Politics Made Visible: Order, Residence and Uniformity in Cheapside, 1600-45’, in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 176-77.

<sup>154</sup> Minutes of the Exchange Committee, Gresham Repertories, I, 70 as cited in Ann Saunders, ‘The Organisation of the Exchange’, in *The Royal Exchange*, ed. Ann Saunders (London: London Topographical Society, 1997), 88.

<sup>155</sup> Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 25-72.

<sup>156</sup> Kay Staniland, ‘Thomas Deane’s Shop in the Royal Exchange’, in *The Royal Exchange*, ed. Ann Saunders (London: The London Topographical Society, 1997), 59-67.

<sup>157</sup> Stone, ‘The Residential Development of the West End of London in the Seventeenth Century’, 175.

<sup>158</sup> Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 481-96.

able to open up a competitor to Gresham's Exchange in 1609, offering larger shops at slightly lower rents, which were open until even later hours. The New Exchange was designed for comfort, the street was newly paved, and seats and benches were built into the walls. As Levy Peck has argued, the architecture of the Exchanges brought the space of the country house Long Gallery into an urban locale; it was a semi-private space away from the busy narrow city streets, but public enough to see and be seen. By the 1630s, most shops there were leased to those in clothing and accessory trades: male and female shopkeepers held leases as vendors, milliners, and seamstresses, making and selling feathers, perfume, tires, French haberdashery, and silks.

The Royal and New Exchanges were both filled with shops (120 and 100 respectively) which sold newly fashionable blue and white porcelain imported from China alongside the finest textiles, looking glasses, and Italian perfumes. Customers could stroll under grand covered walkways between shops that were open until late (the Royal Exchange closed at 6pm, while the New Exchange was open from 6am to 8pm in summer, and between 7am and 7pm in winter). Shopping was one of the new forms of refined socialising that could take place in a semi-private, refined urban space, just like attending the theatre or walking in the Mulberry and Spring Gardens in Hyde Park.<sup>159</sup> As shopping became a sociable leisure activity, new goods became increasingly visible and desirable.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, 51-60. See also Fisher, 'The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries'.

<sup>160</sup> Claire Walsh, 'Social Meaning and Social Space in the Shopping Galleries of Early Modern London', in *A Nation of Shopkeepers: Five Centuries of British Retailing*, ed. John Benson and Laura Ugolini (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 52-79.

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Figure 2.35:

Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-1677), *Royal Exchange*, 1644.

Etching on ivory laid paper, 290 x 391 mm.

Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 802887.

Note how almost all the figures wear tall beaver hats.

Account books suggest that shoppers conceptually connected some of these purchases with their foreign origins (even if many goods were, in fact, made up in London). In addition to buying a wide range of imported textiles, Dering consumed a range of foreign goods, including ‘Spanish’ shoes and a ‘Spanish’ ruff for his wife, a black ‘French’ coif, gold ‘Paris’ buttons, and beaver hats.<sup>161</sup> Spencer recorded a number of foreign items with explicit identifiers, including ‘French’ and ‘Italian’ cuffs, and a ‘French petycote’.<sup>162</sup> She also bought a white beaver hat, silks which may have come from Italy, Spain, China, or Turkey, and linens from Northern France and Flanders, and even a had a gown made from Indian calico.<sup>163</sup>

Neither Dering nor Spencer specified where they shopped in London, but both a married gentleman and a twenty-year old daughter of a baron with penchants for imported clothes and accessories would have been welcomed by the shopkeepers of both the Royal and New Exchanges. It is tempting to suggest that the ‘crimson satten petticoate embroidered with gold and silver, out of the exchange’, which Dering bought for his wife at the eye-watering price of £24, was from one of these shops.<sup>164</sup> He would also have been a regular at St Paul’s Churchyard, the heart of the book trade. Other London shoppers did record the locations of their purchases. In his account book, John Petre referred to most of those who made his clothing by name, but when recording the purchase of two pairs of shoes in October 1568, he instead recalled the sign of the shoemaker’s shop, rather than his name: ‘the shomaker of the foxe in St Martyns’. Other makers were noted by location, such as ‘Thorne by Fletebridge’ who supplied him with netherstocks (stockings for the lower leg) in March 1569 and February 1570. On 13 March 1570, he bought a pair of russet Levant taffeta garters for 3s. 6d. ‘at the blew bore by Ludgate’.<sup>165</sup> In and out of the Exchanges, customers relied on visual shop

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<sup>161</sup> Aside from these few imported items of dress, Dering also purchased Venetian glasses and tobacco, and also spent 6d. to see ‘the elephant’ – presumably the one presented to King James I in July 1623 by the King of Spain. J. E. Egerton, ‘King James’s Beasts’, *History Today*, 1 June 1962, 411-12; Dering, ‘A Booke of Expences’, 5r, 6r-v, 13r, 15v, 27v, 29r, 31v, 34r, 35v, 36r, 37v, 41r-v, 53r, 55r, 67r-v, 68v, 92v.  
<sup>162</sup> Spencer, ‘Account Book’, fols 16v, 17r.

<sup>163</sup> Edith Snook, ‘The Greatness in Good Clothes: Fashioning Subjectivity in Mary Wroth’s *Urania* and Margaret Spencer’s Account Book (BL Add. MS 62092)’, *The Seventeenth Century* 22, no. 2 (2007): 239-41.

<sup>164</sup> Dering, ‘A Booke of Expences’, 92r.

<sup>165</sup> Accounts of John Petre, chiefly at the temple, 1567-70, Essex Record Office, D/DP A17. As transcribed at <http://www.elizabethancostume.net/cyte/node/30887>.

signs to find retailers. Strolling along Cheapside, one would pass signs like the Cow Head (a leather shop), the Golden Key (a linen draper) and the Three Legs (a silk mercer).<sup>166</sup> Signs were so closely linked to the identity of the shop that shopkeepers were keen to protect them, as one dispute demonstrates. In 1656, Hugh Ratcliffe moved out of the premises where he had kept a haberdashery for the past twenty years and moved next door. Along with his wares, Ratcliffe moved his shop sign – a beaver – and hung it outside, assuming that his customers would follow the sign and come to his new shop. But much to Ratcliffe’s dismay, the lease of his old shop was taken up by another haberdasher named George Oldham, who reinstalled a sign of the beaver on site, attempting to confuse Ratcliffe’s customers and steal their business. Ratcliffe complained to the Court of Alderman who agreed that Oldham was violating city rules and ordered him to remove his beaver sign.<sup>167</sup>

### **Markets, street vendors, second-hand and ready-made clothing**

Clothing, its materials, and accessories were not only available from shops, much to the frustration of some. The luxury shops of the Exchanges and Cheapside stood cheek-by-jowl alongside markets and street sellers, and although the city government aggressively attempted to keep order, most of their efforts were fruitless.<sup>168</sup> One entrepreneurial Londoner, Hugh Alley (1556-1602), even sketched out plans for a new system of control, including with his report idealised drawings of neatly dressed vendors in clean orderly squares (Figure 2.36).<sup>169</sup> But London’s streets and markets were more of a cacophony.

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<sup>166</sup> Vanessa Harding, ‘Shops, Markets and Retailers in London’s Cheapside, c.1500-1700’, in *Buyers & Sellers: Retail Circuits and Practices in Mediaeval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruno Blondé et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 158-60.

<sup>167</sup> LMA Repertory 65, fos 11r-22r; Ward, *Metropolitan Communities*, 51.

<sup>168</sup> For two lively accounts of government controls, see Harding, ‘Shops, Markets and Retailers in London’s Cheapside, c.1500-1700’; Griffiths, ‘Politics Made Visible’.

<sup>169</sup> For more, see Hugh Alley et al., *Hugh Alley’s Caveat: The Markets of London in 1598: Folger Ms V.a.318*, 137 (London: London Topographical Society, 1988).

Figure 2.36 (above):  
'Cheapside Market' in Hugh Alley, *A caveatt for the citty of London, or, A forewarninge of offences against penall lawes*, 1598, f. 15r, Folger Library V.a.318.

Figure 2.37 (below):  
*The Common Cryes of London*. Published by John Overton c.1640 (this copy second state c.1660), etching. The British Museum, I7.86 17.8cm x 25.3 cm.  
Note the 'olde dublets' seller, top row third from left.

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Vocal street sellers of all kinds of goods, including second-hand ‘olde dublets’, pins, and thread, were so closely identified with the city that their cries were recorded in popular prints (Figure 2.37). Some street vendors were absorbed into the official structures, as in 1595 when the Cornhill wardmote jury was unable to expel women selling yarn from the ward and instead suggested that they occupy a space in the market.<sup>170</sup> Other vendors were deterred, at least temporarily, through fines. In June 1615, Jone Mathew was fined 7d. for hawking ‘Pickadilles’ on London bridge.<sup>171</sup> Pickadils, stiff collars which supported a ruff or band, were one of the new goods invented at the turn of the seventeenth century, so intimately connected with the ‘London look’ that it was ‘credibly reported that that famous place near St James called the Pickadilly, took denomination from [...] one Higgins, a Taylor’ who had got his living from selling them (Figure 2.38).<sup>172</sup>

Early modern London also had a lively second-hand market, about which little is known.<sup>173</sup> One of the fullest accounts is provided in the records of theatrical entrepreneur Philip Henslowe, who turned his hand to the second-hand trade as a pawnbroker, lending money to a wide range of customers in exchange for their fine damask gowns and remnants of broadcloth.<sup>174</sup> Henslowe’s records reveal that even wealthy Londoners pawned their belongings and bought goods second-hand. Corroborating these accounts, a few letters and account books offer examples of people pawning or buying second-hand goods. In 1629 Sir Francis Harris wrote to his aunt,

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<sup>170</sup> Guildhall Library, MS 4069/1 as cited in Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 54.

<sup>171</sup> Book of Fines, f. 256r.

<sup>172</sup> Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory, Or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon Containing the Several Variety of Created Beings, and How Born in Coats of Arms, Both Foreign and Domestick: With the Instruments Used in All Trades and Sciences, Together with Their Their Terms of Art: Also the Etymologies, Definitions, and Historical Observations on the Same, Explicated and Explained according to Our Modern Language: Very Usefel [sic] for All Gentlemen, Scholars, Divines, and All such as Desire Any Knowledge in Arts and Sciences* (Chester: for the author, 1688), Chapter 2, 17.

<sup>173</sup> Most studies of second-hand markets focus on the eighteenth century, but for an overview of shifts in the second-hand trade in Europe between 1600 and 1850, see Beverly Lemire, ‘The Secondhand Clothing Trade in Europe and Beyond: Stages of Development and Enterprise in a Changing Material World, C. 1600–1850’, *Textile* 10, 2 (2012): 144–63.

<sup>174</sup> Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe’s Diary*, ed. Reginald Anthony Foakes and R. T. Rickert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For analysis, see Natasha Korda, ‘Household Property/Stage Property: Henslowe as Pawnbroker’, *Theatre Journal* 48, 2 (1996): 185–95; Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 181–93.

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Figure 2.38:  
Picadil, *c.*1600-1615, English, silk satin, pasteboard, silk thread,  
26cm x 30.4cm x 4.5cm, V&A 192-1900.

Lady Barrington, saying that he had pawned clothes during a recent illness and hoped that ‘some freind reedemes me a doblett and hose of black which lyeth for 21s’.<sup>175</sup> In Thomas Middleton’s *The Fyve Wittie Gallants*, the site of a pawnshop is staged during a scene where a gentlewoman pawns all of her belongings, including a fine white beaver. Like many of his peers, Dering was happy to acquire second-hand goods.<sup>176</sup> In December 1624, he spent over £8 on six turkey-work stools and a carpet ‘at the second hand’.<sup>177</sup> Clothing tended to hold its value, and so was a very suitable item to pawn or resell. Pepys was content to pay an even greater sum for a velvet cloak than its previous owner, suggesting that clothing could even appreciate in value. In his diary, he noted ‘it will cost me £8 10s.’ – he bought it for £6 10s. – ‘but it is worth my money’.<sup>178</sup> The second-hand trade may even have enabled fast fashion, helping people to justify buying the latest style in the knowledge that they would be able to sell it on when they had worn it, as one character in Ben Jonson’s *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) suggests: ‘Here is a cloake cost fifty pound, wife, which I can sell for thirty, when I ha’ seene, all London in’t, and London has seene me’.<sup>179</sup>

Few clothes were available ready-made, and so the second-hand market was one way to buy a complete garment in an instant. Nevertheless, this period witnessed the emergence of the ready-made clothing market, stimulated by large orders, such as during the Civil War when London shoemakers and tailors struggled to produce thousands of ready-made shoes and clothes for the main armies.<sup>180</sup> There was probably a sense amongst the London population that they were living through changes in how clothing was made and sold, as by 1681 the anonymous author of *The Trade of England*

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<sup>175</sup> 23 December 1629, 113-14, Arthur Searle, ed., ‘Barrington Family Letters’, *Camden Fourth Series* 28 (1983): 29-252. Also cited in Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003), 190.

<sup>176</sup> See for example Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household*, 69-71.

<sup>177</sup> Dering, ‘A Booke of Expences’, 66v.

<sup>178</sup> 19 April 1662, as cited in Staniland, ‘Samuel Pepys and His Wardrobe’, 45-46.

<sup>179</sup> Ben Jonson, *The Devil Is An Ass*, ed. Peter Happé (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), Act 1, Scene VI, lines 28-30, 80.

<sup>180</sup> Ben Coates, *The Impact of the English Civil War on the Economy of London, 1642-50* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 93, 105-7; Margaret Spufford, ‘The Cost of Apparel in Seventeenth-Century England, and the Accuracy of Gregory King’, *Economic History Review* LIII, 4 (2000): 701-3.

*revived* reported: ‘many remember when there were no new garments sold in London as now there are, only old garments at second hand.’<sup>181</sup>

### Stealing clothes in London

Thanks to the second-hand trade, clothes were the items most commonly stolen by both men and women in the early modern period.<sup>182</sup> The 1630 *Proclamation for the Better Discovery and Prevention of Burglaries, Robberies, and Other Frauds and Abuses* directly blamed pawning and the second-hand market as the ‘ground and nursery of burglaries, robberies, felonies and frauds’.<sup>183</sup> London was seen as a particularly dangerous place for those without city smarts. During his perambulation of London, John Stow joked about how a country man who had ‘lost his hood in Westminster Hall’ found it hanging up on a stall in Cornhill, and was forced to buy it back.<sup>184</sup> Countless court records offer thick descriptions of clothes stolen from Londoners, and the men and women who appeared in court were able to offer confident assessments of the value of their lost goods. Punishments could be harsh. On August 7 1615, the Clerkenwell spinster Elizabeth Graves was found guilty for stealing sheets and a turkey grosgrain gown worth 40s., a stammell (coarse red wool) petticoat worth 10s., a black striped kirtle worth 5s., a cloak worth 5s., two felt hats worth 7s., a pair of whalebone bodies worth 2s., three ruff-bands worth 6s., and a pair of worsted stockings worth 2s. from a joiner named Richard Thomas. She was sentenced to hang.<sup>185</sup> Perhaps Graves had hoped to sell these goods on the second-hand market, but given each item was either a female or unisex garment,

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<sup>181</sup> Anon., *Trade of England Revived and the Abuses Thereof Rectified in Relation to Wooll and Woollen-Cloth, Silk and Silk-Weavers, Hawkers, Bankrupts, Stage-Coaches, Shop-Keepers, Companies, Markets, Linnen-Cloath: Also What Statutes in Force May Be Injurious to Trade and Tradesmen, with Several Proposals: Humbly Offered to This Present Parliament* (London: for Dorman Newman, 1681), 36.

<sup>182</sup> Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 162-66.

<sup>183</sup> *Proclamation for the Better Discovery and Prevention of Burglaries, Robberies, and Other Frauds and Abuses* (London, 1630), as cited in *ibid.*, 166.

<sup>184</sup> John Stow, *A Survey of London Written in the Year 1598*, ed. Antonia Fraser (Stroud: The History Press, 2005), 181.

<sup>185</sup> Session Rolls 545/175, 245, 263 and 549/72. G.D.R. 2/64d, 66, in *County of Middlesex. Calendar To the Sessions Records: New Series, Volume 3, 1615-16*, ed. William Le Hardy (London: Clerk of the Peace, 1937), 73-109. *British History Online*, accessed June 4, 2017, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/middx-sessions/vol3/pp73-109>.

maybe she had stolen them intending to wear them herself. Witnessing fine dress on the city streets each day must have been both tempting and frustrating to those of limited means, and in a large city like London Graves might have hoped to have got away with wearing stolen goods without being identified.

### **Lacking goods**

Poor Londoners were not forced to steal in order to clothe themselves. The city of London provided clothing for its poorest inhabitants, and wealthier Londoners donated clothes or money to pay for clothing in their wills.<sup>186</sup> The parishes took responsibility for this provision and their aid varied widely, although the wealthier parishes were not necessarily the most generous.<sup>187</sup> These variations caused Ian Archer some difficulty when calculating a suggested budget for the London poor, although he estimated that between thirteen and twenty per cent of expenditure went on clothing in the 1580s and 1590s.<sup>188</sup> Ann Saunders has charted the ways that clothing reached foster children, orphans, foundlings, and the adult poor. In the 1630s, foster parents in St Bartholomew by the Exchange received £1 per year to clothe their children, in addition to £4-5 for other expenses. Other parishes supplied children with the items or materials directly, as when St Botolph Aldgate paid 4s. 6d. for shoes and shirts and 6s. 6d. for coats and shoes in 1630.<sup>189</sup> The poor could almost certainly be identified as such, even when wearing new clothing provided by the parish, as recipients are likely to have received the same items (often a gown, shift or smock, and stockings) made of the same materials. Maria Hayward has shown how blue clothing was often associated with the poor, and St Mary's and Christ's Hospitals provided their children and orphans with blue coats that

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<sup>186</sup> See Chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>187</sup> Ann Susan Saunders, 'Provision of Apparel for the Poor in London, 1630–1680', *Costume: Journal of the Costume Society*, 40 (2006): 21–27.

<sup>188</sup> Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 193–94.

<sup>189</sup> Edwin Freshfield, ed., *The Account Books of the Parish of St. Bartholomew Exchange in the City of London 1596–1698* (London: Rixon and Arnold, 1895), 90, 92, 196; Guildhall Library Churchwardens' Accounts 9237 as cited in Saunders, 'Provision of Apparel for the Poor in London, 1630–1680', 22.

were so distinctive that they were often mentioned in chronicles and diaries.<sup>190</sup> Whether these clothes induced shame or pride (Saunders optimistically suggests that they elicited a ‘pleasant glow’), they would have been an identifier of poverty and were likely to be the bare minimum of clothing required by an individual.<sup>191</sup> But the burgeoning London consumer culture promoted new kinds of clothing and visually striking accessories, so it is likely that even though these items were not provided by the parish, poorer Londoners probably desired ruffs, cuffs, and structured bodices of their own.

The concept of ‘lacking’ the right kinds of goods, particularly clothing, altered peoples’ conceptions of their own value. As Shepard has noticed, while the majority of witnesses in court evaluated themselves according to how much money they were worth, ‘over time an increasing proportion referred to what they *lacked* rather than possessed’.<sup>192</sup> Shepard explains that witnesses in court often claimed to be worth little or nothing more than their clothing, and in the London courts, Eleanor Hubbard found that twenty-four per cent of maidservants who deposed between 1570 and 1640 referred to their clothing as their only possession, declaring that they were ‘worth nothing save the clothes on their back’.<sup>193</sup> Such statements suggest that the worth of an individual was regularly elided with their clothing.

On rare occasions, assessments of the value of clothing reveal the extent of an individual’s wardrobe, as when the maidservant Ellen Stone died in King’s Hospital in 1615. A servant there explained that Stone wore ‘an old petticoat, an old smock, a pair of shoes and stockings and a coif on her head’, together valued at twelve pence. But before she died, Ellen said she had left some belongings with the woman she served, including ‘a gown, a petticoat, a new pair of bodies, a pair of hose and shoes, a green apron, and bands and ruffs and other apparel’. These belongings must have been rather valuable, as one of Ellen’s acquaintances claimed that her possessions were worth a

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<sup>190</sup> See, for example, Henry Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A. D. 1550 to A. D. 1563*, ed. John Gough Nichols (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 305; Maria Hayward, ‘Dressed in Blue: The Impact of Woad on English Clothing, c. 1350–c. 1670’, *Costume* 49, 2 (2015): 168–85.

<sup>191</sup> Saunders, ‘Provision of Apparel for the Poor in London, 1630–1680’, 26.

<sup>192</sup> Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 115, 120–23.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 120–23; Hubbard, *City Women*, 59–60.

total of £6 6s. 8d.<sup>194</sup> But calculations about the value of clothing may be suspect: in court, when witnesses or defendants wish to appear creditworthy and not a burden to their parish, they might overstate the value of their clothing (it was even common for deponents to be asked if they appeared at court wearing their own clothes).<sup>195</sup> But if seeking sympathy or support, men or women may choose to downplay the worth of their clothing. London's Common Council took seriously the evidence that an old man had not been looked after due to his 'very unsemelie apparell without either hoose or shooes on his legges, havinge on him and olde leather dobllette an olde pare of leather breeches worne out at the knees'.<sup>196</sup> When fighting over money, there would be incentive to over- or under-value someone else's clothes, depending on whether one would profit from a lower or higher valuation.<sup>197</sup>

Shopkeepers in London exploited widespread anxieties by crying out 'What do you lack?' to passers-by on the streets at such regular intervals that it became a common refrain in plays set in the city, like Ben Jonson's *The Entertainment at Britain's Burse* (written for the opening of the New Exchange in 1609), and was noticed by the traveller Alessandro Magno, who wrote in his journal in 1562: 'One can see at the doors of many shops, and on the street outside, bareheaded young men asking passers-by if they want anything.'<sup>198</sup> London's streets were filled with both visual and aural provocations to buy new things.

### Shopping by proxy

Men and women who did not live in London or visit seasonally were still able to achieve the 'London look', as urban fashions reached into the English countryside

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<sup>194</sup> Agnes Baseley and Roger Arney, Elizabeth Stockwell c. Mary Wolley, 1615 (LMA, DL/C/223, fols 129v, 126v) Hubbard, *City Women*, 59-60.

<sup>195</sup> Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 122.

<sup>196</sup> London Metropolitan Archives CC.01.01.022 461r.

<sup>197</sup> Hubbard writes that 'maidservants are unlikely to have exaggerated their poverty' as witnesses 'usually presented themselves in the most favourable terms they could muster'; Hubbard, *City Women*, 58.

<sup>198</sup> This remarkable entertainment, played before James I on 11 April 1609, is reproduced in Knowles, 'Jonson's Entertainment at Britain's Burse', in *Re-Presenting Ben Jonson: Text, History, Performance*, ed. Martin Butler (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 114-51. Barron, Coleman, and Gobbi, 'The London Journal of Alessandro Magno 1562', 146.

through a widening network of carriers and routes. Those who had close relationships with London makers were able to write directly to commission goods. In 1595, for example, the travelling secretary Godfrey Aleyn wrote to his shoemaker Mr Fenner asking him to make him four pairs of Spanish leather shoes, four pairs of ‘drye’ leather shoes, one pair of walking boots ‘after the French fashion with elbowes at the knees’, and one pair of ‘wynter bootes very wyde at the topps and bigg eueywhere, and of very good leather’. Keen to reassure Fenner of his creditworthiness, Aleyn promised that either he or his father would pay him generously within six weeks, pleading ‘I pray you fayle not to send me them [...] Good Mr Fenner, lett me not fayle of them.’<sup>199</sup> That Aleyn wrote from France back to London to get ‘French’ fashions made shows how loyal customers could be.

Even those without a direct relationship with craftsmen could get London goods. Over the course of the seventeenth century, goods made or imported into the city trickled out to the rest of England, in the packs of petty chapmen, resulting in what Margaret Spufford has identified as ‘the great reclothing of rural England’.<sup>200</sup> Peddlers and small shops were able to stock a small but significant range of materials, bringing calicos, starch, and pocket mirrors to towns and villages in the countryside. Jon Stobart found that the closer a shop was to London, the more likely it was to stock goods imported from overseas.<sup>201</sup> But for the widest possible choice, those who had the money and access usually preferred to shop using a friend, family member, or agent living in London – as Claire Walsh has termed it, shopping ‘by proxy’.<sup>202</sup>

Just as new forms of coach travel enabled seasonal visits to London by the gentry and fashionable display within the city, they also provided a regular means for clothing, accessories, and textiles to be transported to those in the countryside. Such a

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<sup>199</sup> Letter of Godfrey Aleyn to Mr Fenner, Chauny France to St Martins, London, 20 November 1595, Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 652, no. 48, in Gustav Ungerer, *A Spaniard in Elizabethan England: The Correspondence of Antonio Pérez's Exile*, vol. II (London: Tamesis Books, 1976), 56.

<sup>200</sup> Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England Petty Chapmen and Their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 76-80.

<sup>201</sup> Jon Stobart, ‘Making the Global Local? Overseas Goods in English Rural Shops, c.1600–1760’, *Business History*, (2017): 1-18.

<sup>202</sup> Claire Walsh, ‘The Social Relations of Shopping in Early Modern England’, in *Buyers & Sellers: Retail Circuits and Practices in Mediaeval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruno Blondé et al. (1100-1800) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 331-51.

practice was even more important for women, who might make fewer trips to London than their husbands, fathers, and brothers. Spencer shopped for herself in London, but also transported her belongings back and forth by carrier. In 1611, she paid 4s. 'to the carier for bringe downe my whit saten gowne & verdingall with a boxe' and 2s. 6d. 'for bring[ing] my bodys from London & caringe them up a gane'.<sup>203</sup> As this entry suggests, precious goods needed to be carefully packed, creating new requirements for packing materials. Spencer mentioned trunks and a hamper in her account book, and records the purchase of round ruff box for 12d., designed to better protect a ruff's carefully-starched shape.<sup>204</sup> She was also well-connected enough to ask others to buy things on her behalf, and paid for the privilege, as shown by her gift of 10s. to Master Borman 'Sir Francis Fanes Man' in recompense 'for bieinge many thinges for me'.<sup>205</sup>

Those who had friends or family shop on their behalf often sought high quality, rare, and fashionable clothing, and the London origins of these goods was part of their appeal. Giles Moore (1617-1697), rector of Horsted Keynes in Sussex, proudly recorded in his account book that on 12 October 1664 he paid 'young Frank West' four shillings for 'a paire of Trowses which Hee bought for Mee at London'.<sup>206</sup> But distance shopping was much more difficult than in person.<sup>207</sup> Elizabeth Wortley's letter to her 'very good friend Mr John West in Warwick Lane in London', shows the difficulties of getting clothing and accessories to order. On 5 May 1597, Wortley wrote that she had received a dozen buttons, made according to a pattern which she had previously sent to West via the messenger Mason. While Wortley said that she 'lik[ed] them otherwise sufficiently', she was unhappy with their 'expensive price' given that they weighed less than her pattern. In Wortley's opinion, the 'excellent workman whom you so approve' was overcharging, and she returned the dozen buttons to West, with 'hearty thanks'. For

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<sup>203</sup> Spencer, 'Account Book', f. 5r, 6r.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., f. 21v.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., f. 8r.

<sup>206</sup> *The Journal of Giles Moore*, ed. Ruth Bird, Sussex Record Society, 68 (1971). For more, see Danae Tankard, 'Giles Moore's Clothes: The Clothing of a Sussex Rector, 1656–1679', *Costume* 49, 1 (2015): 32–54.

<sup>207</sup> See also Ulinka Rublack's lively account of the struggles of Hans Fugger to buy leather shoes of the right size, quality, and design in Rublack, 'Matter in the Material Renaissance', 41–85.

maker, customer, and proxy shopper, the exchange must have been frustrating, expensive, and time consuming.<sup>208</sup>

Proxy shoppers also had trouble acquiring things in the right size. William Calley wrote in detail to Richard Harvey about the fabrics, threads, points, buttons, and linings he wanted for his new suit, saying that he intended ‘to have these thinges made up in the Cuntrey’. Perhaps this betrayed frustration at a previous error, as recorded in a letter from his father to Harvey: ‘William Calleys new doublett collar was made an ynche to highe, and 2 ynches to narrow, and therefore the taylor shoulde have sent downe some peeces of the same cloth [...] to have amended any thinge which might have benee amisse’.<sup>209</sup> For Anne Williamson, London was the only place to get the pair of farthingale sleeves and French farthingale she so desired, ‘for yf there had bene anye to have gotten here’, she wrote to her husband, ‘I woulde nott have troubled you with yt’. These would be made up by her tailor, who knew her body shape, but as for the scale of the farthingale structure she simply said, ‘lett yt nott be toe bigge butt of a reasonable syse’.<sup>210</sup> Savvy shoppers tried to avoid errors in sizing. In 1624, when asking Lady Cornwallis (living at Charing Cross) to get a case made up for his pair of pistols, Nicolas Bacon ingeniously enclosed a piece of thread cut to their exact length.<sup>211</sup> Lady Cornwallis in turn was supported by her friends when living in Suffolk. In 1632, Dorothy, Lady Randolph wrote to her from London saying: ‘I have sent you some patterns of stuff such as is worn by many, but not much lace upon those wrought stuffs; but the newest fashion is plain satin, of what colour one will, embroidered all over with alcomedes [jewels and stones sewn into the cloth], but it is not like to hold past summer. They wear white satin waistcoats, plain, raised, printed, and some

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<sup>208</sup> Letter from Elizabeth Wortley to Mr John West in Warwicke Lane, London, 5 May 1597. National Archives, SP 46/21/101.

<sup>209</sup> PRO SP 16/458/10 and 16/400/62, as cited in Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 106-7.

<sup>210</sup> National Archives, SP/46/49 f. 55. Many thanks to Sarah Bendall for sharing photographs of this source this with me.

<sup>211</sup> Joanna Moody, ed., *The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis Bacon, 1613-1644* (London: Associated University Presses, 2003), 113. Also cited in Merritt, *Westminster 1640-60*, 155.

embroidered with lace, more than any one thing, and white Holland ones much'.<sup>212</sup> New clothes from London often arrived with news of the latest city fashions.

Proxy shopping, then, was a means by which social connections were maintained and developed between equals.<sup>213</sup> But when undertaken by a social inferior on behalf of a superior, it could be fraught with worry, as letters from Stephen Smith, who lived in London and shopped for his godfather Sir Hugh Smith demonstrate. Writing to Hugh, who lived at Long Ashton near Bristol, Stephen's words veered from humble to sycophantic as he stumbled between updating his godfather on the latest fashions ('it is accounted somewhat piebald to trim a white doublet with trimming of different colour'), explaining his credit ('I have sent you one as good & Fashionable as my credit could procure'), and passing on words from trusted London tradesmen ('Mr Samuells tells me you are too good a customer to loose').<sup>214</sup> While positioning himself as his godfather's 'poor servant', Stephen had to make bold decisions, in close collaboration with Hugh's tailors, mercers and shoemakers, and took a position of authority on matters of style. On 14 June 1620 Stephen sent a canvas doublet trimmed with lace, which he reported was 'now much in request', but it clearly went against Hugh's request for a doublet appropriate to wear under a cassock. Nevertheless, Stephen asserted his superior knowledge of dress and overruled his godfather, writing, '[i]f I cold have contrived it soe as to have made this canvas doublet fit to have bene worn under a winter cassacke I had done it: but it is not a winter weare and therefore I shall put you to the charges of a new Sattin doublet against winter'. Three days later, Stephen 'trouble[d]' his godfather with an update on his proxy shopping: he had sent 'a ruffe with cuffs, a girdle and pair of hangers of the newest fashion, and such as are now in use by men of the best fashion'.<sup>215</sup> Hugh clearly trusted his godson's judgement,

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<sup>212</sup> Joanna Moody, *The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis Bacon, 1613-1644* (London, 2003), 215. As cited in Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London'; John Styles, 'Fashion and Innovation in Early Modern Europe', in *Fashioning the Early Modern: Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500-1800*, ed. Evelyn Welch, *Pasold Studies in Textile History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 39.

<sup>213</sup> For a full and reasoned account of this, see Walsh, 'The Social Relations of Shopping in Early Modern England', 331-51.

<sup>214</sup> Letters from Stephen Smith to Sir Hugh Smith, 14 June 1620, Folger X.c.49 (2) and 5 July 1620, Folger X.c.49 (4).

<sup>215</sup> Letter from Stephen Smith to Sir Hugh Smith, 17 June 1620, Folger X.c.49 (3).

letting him choose the style for a new beaver hat, but Stephen fretted about sizing and cleverly negotiated an exchange policy: 'Bycause I did not directly know the size of your head I have made my bargaine for that if it fit you not I shall have the money backe again'. Although not confident about size, when ordering two pairs of the 'finest' boothose in London, Stephen offered a surprisingly intimate assessment of his godfather's body: 'I caused them to be made with long tops because I know that you have a good leg, and know also that good legs wear very short hose'.<sup>216</sup> Knowledge and access to the best quality and most fashionable clothing were so valued by men and women like Sir Hugh Smith and Lady Cornwallis that urban social inferiors were emboldened to make selections on their behalf, and send advice and judgments along with fashion news.

### **Achieving the London look**

Access to London's clothing culture also emboldened those in the city to try out new styles. Ever the sharp dresser, Pepys recorded in his diary his experiments with the latest fashions, and wrote with revealing anxiety about his efforts to fit in with the London look, and please his own (and his wife's) tastes. On Sunday 11 June 1665, Pepys recorded in his diary that he had received a new suit of 'Colour'd Farrinden' but that his wife did not like it. Pepys reasoned this was due to its brightness and novelty: 'I think it is only my not being used to wear Colours, which makes it look a little unusual upon me'. London was a stage on which Pepys could test out these new fashions, and later that day he went 'out of doors a little to show forsooth my new suit, and back again'. Six weeks later, he reported that he wore it on a journey across the river, and felt 'very rich and fine'.<sup>217</sup>

Pepys was one of many Londoners who experimented with brightly coloured clothing. Already in 1577, Harrison praised London citizens for wearing sober attire, but mocked their wives for their greedy desire for any newly invented colour: 'I might

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<sup>216</sup> Letter from Stephen Smith to Sir Hugh Smith, 14 June 1620, Folger X.c.49 (2).

<sup>217</sup> 11-12 June and 31 July 1665, Robert Latham and William Matthews, eds, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: 1666*, vol. 7 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 124, 175.

here name a sort of hues devised for the nonce wherewith to please fantastical heads, as gooseturd green, pease-porridge tawny, popinjay blue, lusty gallant, the-devil-in-the-head'.<sup>218</sup> Thomas Coryate commented on the black clothing worn by Venetians ('a colour of gravity and decency') and reported that the Italians viewed colourful dress as 'phantasticall', for 'whereas they have but one colour, we use many more then are in the Rain-bow, all the most light, garish, and unseemly colours that are in the world'.<sup>219</sup> Despite these detractors, as Jane Schneider has shown, colourful clothing was popular amongst London men and women, and imported dyestuffs and improvements in dye techniques widened the available palette of hues.<sup>220</sup> While a full suit in a bright colour represented a large financial investment, accessories like ruffs could be temporarily starched with colour. Purchas described the chromatic range of ruffs in fantastical terms: 'some Livid and Blew, some Red, some Dunne, Dusky, Ash-coloured, Pale, Greenish, Yellow, Muddy, and all the colours of the Moon'.<sup>221</sup> When Spencer bought blue pins for 2s. 6d., perhaps she was planning to match them with a blue starched ruff.<sup>222</sup> A supportasse, now in the care of the V&A, is stiffened with whalebone, straw, card, and wire to hold up a fine linen falling band. It is covered in blue linen, which would have given a delicate shade of blue to the linen falling band, itself possibly starched blue (Figures 2.39a and b). In 1599, Thomas Platter reasoned that London women 'lay great store by ruffs and starch them blue, so that their complexion shall appear the whiter'.<sup>223</sup>

By the 1610s and 20s, yellow was a highly fashionable tone, thanks in part to the local production of saffron. Introduced to England in the middle ages, saffron was increasingly cultivated in the sixteenth century thanks to a recognition of its medicinal

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<sup>218</sup> William Harrison, *The Description of England: The Classic Contemporary Account of Tudor Social Life*, ed. Georges Edelen (Washington, DC and New York: The Folger Shakespeare Library and Dover Publications, 1994), 148.

<sup>219</sup> Thomas Coryate, *Coryats Crudities, Hastily Gobbled up in Five Monthes Travells* (1611), 2 vols, ed. MacLehose, 1905, 260, as cited in Anne Geoffroy, 'English Perceptions and Representations of Venetian Chromatic Variations', *E-Rea. Revue électronique D'études Sur Le Monde Anglophone*, 12.2 (2015): np.

<sup>220</sup> Schneider, 'Fantastical Colors in Foggy London', 109-27.

<sup>221</sup> S. Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrim: Microcosmus or The Historie of Man*, (London, 1619), 255 as cited in Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (London: Batsford, 1986), 75.

<sup>222</sup> Spencer, 'Account Book', 14r.

<sup>223</sup> Williams, *Thomas Platters Travels In England 1599*, 181-82.

benefits and an appreciation of its colour in textiles and foods. By the seventeenth century, saffron-growing was concentrated in East Anglia (its importance to the area is evident in the name of the Essex market town Saffron Walden), with most of the harvest destined for London. Nicholas Bacon of Stiffkey, for example, cultivated saffron on his estate and became a merchant by purchasing saffron grown by others nearby and sending it all to London.<sup>224</sup> Few portraits depict coloured ruffs, perhaps because later generations of conservators mistook intentional colour for deteriorated pigments or yellowing varnishes, and cleaned or ‘repaired’ colourful ruffs white, although one portrait of an unknown woman shows the distinctive yellow tint of saffron in her cuffs and lace collar (Figure 2.40).<sup>225</sup>

Yellow starch became highly suspect, thanks to its associations with the poisoner Anne Turner (hanged in 1615 for murdering Thomas Overbury) and with the Irish.<sup>226</sup> But as Michel Pastoureau has noted with regards to black, colours could have a ‘dual nature’, signifying more than one kind of emotion, alliance, or fashion.<sup>227</sup> Blue, as Maria Hayward has shown, was associated with loyalty and faith, and was worn by a wide range of people from the higher ranks of the nobility (sumptuary laws restricted the wearing of blue ribbons and velvets), to London apprentices (John Stow reported that apprentices wore blue cloaks in summer and blue gowns in winter), servants who wore livery, and the orphans at St Mary’s and Christ’s Hospital.<sup>228</sup> Philip Massinger’s *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625) even referenced ‘London blue’ as a contrast to noble ‘scarlet’. Whether ‘London blue’ was a hue or a particular kind of dyed cloth, it is clear that colours in London could take on a range of meanings. The concept of ‘early modern colour worlds’ can be applied to the cultural meanings of colourful dress in

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<sup>224</sup> Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, 66-69.

<sup>225</sup> Janet Arnold, Jenny Tiramani, and Santina Levey, *Patterns of Fashion 4: The Cut and Construction of Linen Shirts, Smocks, Neckwear, Headwear and Accessories for Men and Women C. 1540 - 1660* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2008), 14.

<sup>226</sup> Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 59-85; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, “‘Rugges of London and the Diuell’s Band’: Irish Mantles and Yellow Starch as Hybrid London Fashion”, in *Material London, Ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 128-49.

<sup>227</sup> Michel Pastoureau, *Black: The History of a Color* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 132.

<sup>228</sup> Hayward, ‘Dressed in Blue’, 168-85.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 39a and b (detail (above)):  
Supportasse, *c.*1595-1615, English, linen, silk whalebone, card, wire, linen thread, 41cm x 26cm. V&A T.62-1900. Note the original bright blue colour, preserved in the seams.

Figure 40 (below):  
Anonymous, Portrait of a woman, *c.*1620, oil on canvas. Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 406064.

h early modern London.<sup>229</sup> While clothing is not examined by Tawrin Baker, Sven Dupré, Sachiko Kusukawa, and Karin Leonhard, their work demonstrates that artistic, humanistic, medicinal, and optical knowledge in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries led to connected yet distinctive understandings and uses of colour. As we have seen in the case of blue, apprentices, citizens, and charities used colour in different ways. London's urban 'colour worlds' certainly overlapped with that of the royal court (courtiers spent time in the city, purchased their clothing largely from city makers and influenced fashions) but were also distinct from it.

Londoners were also acutely aware of the importance of coloured dyes, as it was thought that the decline in the English cloth trade might be stalled if better dye techniques were developed. English cloths were usually transported unfinished, and other countries (particularly the Netherlands and Germany) made a profit by dyeing and finishing them. In 1601, John Manningham noted the debate in his diary:

Peter Courthope said it would be more beneficiall if our woll and cloth were not to be transported but in colours; but my cosen said we may as well make it into clokes and garmentes, as dye it in colours before we carry it ouer; for both variable, and as much change in colour as fashion.<sup>230</sup>

Diary entries like this reveal that the production, shopping, and wearing of new clothing was an activity taken seriously, and London was a place in which new things could be tried and tested. The gentleman Sir Humphrey Mildmay, aged forty-one and renting lodgings in St John's Clerkenwell, recorded his clothing purchases and their first outings regularly; these were notable events.<sup>231</sup> Mildmay's diary also functioned in part as an account book, as he often recorded the prices he had spent at the tailors or mercers, and assessed the value of these things.<sup>232</sup> Mildmay travelled widely around the city, going to Westminster almost daily as well as regularly visiting both the Royal and New Exchanges, Cheapside, Smithfield, and Hyde Park 'to see the Ladyes', and his diary entries offer a vivid picture of him rushing around the city, spending on clothing,

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<sup>229</sup> Tawrin Baker et al., eds., *Early Modern Color Worlds* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015).

<sup>230</sup> John Manningham, *The Diary of John Manningham*, ed. John Bruce (Westminster: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1868), 12.

<sup>231</sup> For more about Mildmay, see Philip Lee Ralph, *Sir Humphrey Mildmay: Royalist Gentleman: Glimpses of the English Scene, 1633-1652* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1947).

<sup>232</sup> Indeed, Pepys's diary began as an account book. Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England*, 59.

visiting friends, and commenting (often grumpily) on the weather.<sup>233</sup> One joyful entry on 3 June 1638 records ‘a fine Cleere & blessed Morneinge Tho[mas] Colly putt me onn a stufte Newe Suite’.<sup>234</sup> Dressing in new clothes and maintaining a neat appearance was obviously important to Mildmay, as he also recorded when he was ‘barbed’ or ‘combed’ by the barber. London’s shops were tempting to such a sharp dresser: on 3 February 1636 Mildmay allied his travels with spending on clothes, reporting ‘this after Noone I have beine in 20 places & have spente more Monny in Apparrell’, and on 27 September 1637, ‘my wife & I wente into Sundry shoppes & bought Manny thinges’.<sup>235</sup>

The ‘London look’ was cultivated through hard work, careful planning, access to people and places, and experimentation. London’s shopkeepers and vendors diversified over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and new shopping spaces were designed to make shopping pleasurable, sociable, and identifiably urban. While richer Londoners had money to spend on the finest textiles, best craftsmanship, and novel imported goods, a thriving second-hand trade and lively marketplace made clothes available to a wider range of the population. The poorest Londoners were well-aware of what they ‘lacked’, as they would have seen new fashions on people and in shops every day in the city. It was no coincidence that the Royal Exchange was called the ‘eye of London’; there, people and their clothes were made visible.<sup>236</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion: Learning to look

More than ever before, early modern London was a city that looked at itself. Londoners were confronted with exaggerated fictionalised versions of themselves on the pages of printed ballads and satirical pamphlets, and played on stage in city comedies. Jean Howard has argued that theatre helped Londoners make sense of profound urban

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<sup>233</sup> 1 May 1635, Humphrey Mildmay, ‘Transcription of the Diary of Sir Humphrey Mildmay 3 July 1622 – 9 July 1652. British Library Harleian MS 454’, trans. Dr Steele n.d., 35, W.b.600, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.

<sup>234</sup> 3 June 1638, *ibid.*, 88.

<sup>235</sup> 3 February 1635/6 and 27 September 1637, *ibid.*, 51, 74.

<sup>236</sup> John Stow, *The Annales, or a Generall Chronicle of England, Begun First by Maister Iohn Stow, and after Him Continued and Augmented with Matters Forreyne, and Domestique, Auncient and Moderne*, ed. Edmund Howes (London: Thomas Dawson, 1615), 868.

changes, and it is clear that shopping and fashionable dress became key concerns in plays around the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>237</sup> The city itself became a stage during royal processions, coronations, and civic events, and everyone would have been able to see the finest court and livery dress. The day before Charles II's coronation, Pepys was surely not alone in his claim that 'the glory of that this day [...] was] expressed in the clothes of them that rid'. He singled out Lord Sandwich's embroidery and diamonds which he praised for being 'not ordinary among them'. When faced with so much splendour, Pepys admitted that '[s]o glorious was the shew with gold and silver, that we were not able to look at it, our eyes at last being so overcome'.<sup>238</sup> The highly elaborate, heavily decorated clothing of the royals and city livery were so respected that people like Henry Machyn and John Stow made careful lists of the colours, lengths, and textiles used on each gown.<sup>239</sup> London was a feast for the eyes.

We have seen how visitors like van Meer and immigrant artists like de Heere, Hoefnagel, and Hollar made detailed visual records of the urban dress they saw on London's streets. English visual culture had a distinct character, and fewer English artists made drawings or paintings of the city, but is no coincidence that over the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the urban elite increasingly commissioned and owned portraits.<sup>240</sup> Many, including Dering and Pepys, bought or rented new clothing specially for the occasion.<sup>241</sup> Formal portraits did not truthfully record the sartorial achievements of Londoners; while some sitters rented clothing, others wore what Tarnya Cooper has described as a homogenous 'uniform', such as the black cloaks and hats typically worn by London merchants.<sup>242</sup> But while the clothing worn in portraits might have been rented or chosen to fit the expected 'uniform', the

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<sup>237</sup> Leslie Thomson, "'As Proper a Woman as Any in Cheap': Women in Shops on the Early Modern Stage", *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 16 (2003): 141-61.

<sup>238</sup> 22 April 1661, Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol. 2, 82-83.

<sup>239</sup> Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn*; Stow, *A Survey of London*, 416-18.

<sup>240</sup> Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 55-63.

<sup>241</sup> Robert Tittler, 'George Cottington and the Dering Family Portraits of 1626', *The Burlington Magazine* 151, 1273 (2009): 208-11; Pitman, 'Prodigal Years?', 21, 28; Diana De Marly, 'Pepys and the Fashion for Collecting', *Costume* 21, 1 (1987): 42.

<sup>242</sup> Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 81-101.

increasing interest in portraiture suggests that some Londoners wanted to capture their own appearances.<sup>243</sup>

On the city streets, and in London's shops, the diversity of colourful textiles, shapes, and designs seduced visitors and appealed to those in the city, rich and poor alike. While shifting fashions were hard for letter writers and diarists to define, Londoners were able to admire themselves in small mirrors. Spencer paid 2s. 6d for a 'litell lookeinge glass' in 1612, but cheaper ones were available from petty chapmen and street sellers.<sup>244</sup> In 1559, £667 worth of looking glasses were imported into London, but by the early seventeenth century the English had learned the Venetian innovation of coating glass with a metallic backing, and in 1644, the company of Glass-Sellers and Looking-Glass Makers was incorporated in London.<sup>245</sup> The mirrors themselves, held in the hand or worn on a girdle, became fashion accessories in themselves, and were thought to train the viewer to dress well. In literature, mirrors were a metaphor connecting the ideal with the material, as in Thomas Salter's 1579 *Mirrhor of Modestie*, which described how crystal mirrors 'teacheth how to attire the outwarde bodie' while his book 'guideth to garnish the inwarde mynde'.<sup>246</sup>

As people increasingly looked at themselves and each other, urban culture became ever more focused on training manners and bodily discipline. Bodily comportment and gestures were emphasised by tight-fitting stockings and elegantly shaped sleeves, and refined at dancing schools and fencing academies.<sup>247</sup> Other senses were also cultivated, particularly smell, as perfumes were commercialised and made fashionable, as Rich noted: '[gallants are] so perfumed, be spiced, and be poudered, that a man may well vent them the breadth of a streete'.<sup>248</sup> This sensory and bodily training led to an 'emerging metropolitan awareness' among the elite, but those who could not

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<sup>243</sup> For more, see Robert Tittler, *The Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

<sup>244</sup> Spencer, 'Account Book', 18v; Spufford, *Great Reclathing*, 66, 88-105, 124.

<sup>245</sup> Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, 183; Antony Buxton, *Domestic Culture in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 204.

<sup>246</sup> Thomas Salter, *A Mirrhor Mete for All Mothers, Matrones, and Maidens, Intituled the Mirrhor of Modestie No Lesse Profitable and Pleasant, Then Necessarye to Bee Read and Practiced* (London: J. Kingston, 1579), A6v.

<sup>247</sup> Howard, *Theater of a City*, 162-208; Gallagher, 'The Italian London of John North', 101-4, 111-18.

<sup>248</sup> Rich, *The honestie of this age*, 35.

afford dancing classes, portraits, or coach travel were still well aware of the ways they looked to others, and worked hard to appear in clean, neat, and stylish attire.<sup>249</sup>

All Londoners dressed with trained eyes, care, and interest. Whether shopping in the Royal Exchange's most expensive boutiques or buying a pickadil on London Bridge, the city catered to these knowledgeable consumers by expanding shopping opportunities which, in turn, completely transformed the shape of the city. London consumers, when understood as collaborators or consumers, shared the 'material literacy' identified already amongst London's vibrant community of makers.<sup>250</sup> The poet and waterman John Taylor joked that despite his surname, he had no skill in making clothes. His punning verse, however, reveals the material knowledge that everyday Londoners would have shared:

for silke and facing,  
For cutting, edging, stiffning, and for lacing:  
For bumbast, stitching, binding, and for buckram,  
For cotton, baies, for canvas and for lockram.

All these I know, but know not how to use them.<sup>251</sup>

Even if they did not 'know' how to cut and stitch fashionable dress, even London's watermen were able to identify textiles like silks from baize or lockram, and understood stiffening technologies like bumbast and cotton. John Bulwer, who observed London's traders closely, thought that careful looking was of benefit, particularly to those in the tough urban environment: '[g]esture speaketh to the Eye, and therefore a number of such persons whose Eyes doe dwell upon the Faces and fashions of men, do well know the advantage of this observation, as being most part of their ability [...] it is a great discoverer of dissimulation, and great direction in businesse'.<sup>252</sup> It is no wonder that the

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<sup>249</sup> Hristomir A. Stanev, *Sensory Experience and the Metropolis on the Jacobean Stage (1603–1625)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 16; Bert Watteuw, 'Framing the Face. Patterns of Presentation and Representation in Early Modern Dress and Portraiture', in *Disembodied Heads in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. Barbara Baert, Anita Traninger, and Catrien Santing (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 245-70.

<sup>250</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>251</sup> John Taylor, *The Nipping and Snipping of Abuses: Or The Woolgathering of Witte with the Muses Taylor, Brought from Parnassus by Land, with a Paire of Oares Wherein Are Aboue a Hundred Seuerall Garments of Diuers Fashions, Made by Nature, without the Helpe of Art, and a Proclamation from Hell in the Devils Name, Concerning the Propogation, and Excessiue vse of Tobacco* (London: Edward Griffin for Nathaniel Butter, 1614), B3v.

<sup>252</sup> John Bulwer, *Chirologia, Or, The Naturall Language of the Hand Composed of the Speaking Motions, and Discoursing Gestures Thereof* (London: Thomas Harper, 1644), preface, np.

clothes most commonly associated with an urban 'London look' – bright cloaks, beaver hats, vizard masks, pickadils, tinted starched ruffs, sturdy shoes, and colourful suits – were all clothes suitable to be worn outdoors, that could endure urban perambulations while catching the eye of others.

## Chapter Three

### Redressing London

On January 24, 1565, Richard Walweyn was apprehended in the City of London. He was immediately brought before the Court of Aldermen, his case the first order of the day. While Walweyn awaited punishment, the court scribe jotted down details of the crime in the official repertories: wearing ‘a very monstrous & outraygyous great payre of hose’.<sup>1</sup>

While precise details of the offending leg garments escape the historical record, Walweyn had transgressed the 1562 clothing proclamation which attempted to curb the fashion for the stuffed and decorated stockings that had ‘crept alate into the realm to the great slander thereof’.<sup>2</sup> This edict was one of many attempts made in the early modern era to restrict the consumption and wearing of dress. As a servant, Walweyn was prohibited from wearing velvet, taffeta or satin hose, or over-stuffed legwear (Figure 3.1). Whether Walweyn’s ‘outraygyous’ hose were too sumptuous, too voluminous, or both, the Court of Aldermen went to some pains to punish him. First, they stripped Walweyn of his hose, which were to be held up ‘in some open place’, where any passer-by would see his ‘example of extreme folye’. Walweyn was detained until he could purchase a new pair of ‘decent & lawfyll facyon & sort accordynge to the form of the quenes highness proclamacyon’. His presumptuousness in wearing hose above his status was a lesson to the people of London. Walweyn escaped long-term incarceration or a fine, but he had been redressed by the city.

This chapter will explore how Londoners were *redressed* in accordance with the law during the early modern period. It will challenge notions that sumptuary law was no more than a historic peculiarity and will argue that the repeated attempts to control dress by law are important for understanding the cultural importance of clothing. It will investigate the forms that sumptuary legislation took in England, tracing its roots in medieval law and plotting the Elizabethan use of proclamations before a final repeal of

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<sup>1</sup> LMA, COL/CA/01/01/17, 414v.

<sup>2</sup> 6 May 1562 Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, eds, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, vol. 2 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), 187-92.

Figure 3.1:

This proud gentleman, thought to be English, wears expensive silks and velvets. He has a small neat ruff collar. Note his voluminous velvet hose with silk lining; these might have been of the style, size and shape worn and removed from the servant Richard Walweyn. Mor's Gentleman was clearly of noble enough status to proudly wear such stuffed hose in his portrait.

Antonis Mor, Netherlandish, (1519-1576), *Portrait of a Gentleman*, 1569, oil on canvas, 119.7 x 88.3 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Andrew W. Mellon Collection, 1937.1.52.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

legislation in 1604. Furthermore it will argue that the control – or rather, the attempted control – of clothing did not end with the repeal. Most importantly, this chapter, focusing on London, will challenge recent claims that sumptuary legislation was not enforced.

Early modern English dress code was established and developed through a combination of laws, moral and social pressures, and markets that sometimes promoted but often limited innovative fashions; masters and ministers controlled clothing, as well as magistrates. Sumptuary code focused on tangible, multi-sensory things, so this chapter will refer to extant garments to demonstrate that clothing's allure – and its danger – lay in its materiality.

### **Dangerous stuffe**

Walweyn was not the only man to have his hose scrutinized at court. In his *Anthropometamorphosis* (1653), John Bulwer relates the humorous tale of

a Prisoner [...] who being to go before the Judge for a certaine cause he was accused of, it being at that time when the Law was in force against wearing Bayes stuffed in their Breeches, and he then having stuffed his breeches very full, the Judges told him that he did weare his breeches contrary to the Law: who began to excuse himselfe of the offence, and endeavouring by little and little to discharge himselfe of that which he did weare within them, he drew out of his breeches a paire of Sheets, two Table Cloaths, ten Napkings, foure Shirts, a Brush, a Glasse, and a Combe, Night-caps, and other things of use, saying, (all the Hall being strewed with furniture) your Highnesse may understand, that because I have no safer a store-house, these pockets do serve me for a room to lay up my goods in.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd: Or, the Artificiall Changling Historically Presented, in the Mad and Cruell Gallantry, Foolish Bravery, Ridiculous Beauty, Filthy Finenesse, and Loathsome Loveliness of Most Nations, Fashioning and Altering Their Bodies from the Mould Intended by Nature; with Figures of Those Transfigurations. To Which Artificiall and Affected Deformations Are Added, All the Native and Nationall Monstrosities That Have Appeared to Disfigure the Humane Fabrick. With a Vindication of the Regular Beauty and Honesty of Nature. And an Appendix of the Pedigree of the English Gallant* (London: William Hunt, 1653), 542-43.

The prisoner's stuffing fulfilled the dual purpose of padding out his breeches into the fashionable shape and safekeeping his belongings. His attachment to these possessions was so 'accepted and well laughed at' that the court decided not to prosecute.

For all the joy that new things brought to consumers, governments and rulers were anxious about their economic, social, religious, and cultural impact. Objects filled courtrooms, as governing bodies issued 'sumptuary laws' in an attempt to control the purchasing and use of certain goods. Such laws were passed in virtually every type of political system across medieval and early modern Europe, in centralised states as well as cities and communes and in both Catholic and Protestant societies. They took many forms, from limiting the number of guests at a Paduan feast, to demanding that Nuremberg men should not part their hair in the centre of their heads.<sup>4</sup> What we now understand as 'sumptuary legislation' (from the Latin word *sumptus*, meaning expense) encompasses a diverse range of laws that controlled food, ceremonies, appearance, and dress. Each law and location deserves its own historical inquiry. For, as we shall see with the English laws, legislation and policing took on a local character that had as much to do with regional trades, economic fluctuations, and the relationship between lawmakers and law enforcers as it did with larger questions of social status, hierarchy and the moral status of luxury. Cultural attitudes and local circumstances shaped the laws and their implementation. Not all sumptuary legislation was concerned with clothing, and not all legislation about clothing was concerned solely with expenditure. This chapter will investigate laws about clothing, many of which could be defined as 'sumptuary' laws, but some of which were economic and protectionist, and others local in focus.

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<sup>4</sup> Catherine Kovesi Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500* (Oxford and New York: OUP Oxford, 2002), 69; Kent Roberts Greenfield, *Sumptuary Law in Nürnberg: a Study in Paternal Government* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1918), 109.

## Sumptuary studies

As Ulinka Rublack has noticed, sumptuary legislation across the early modern world has been ‘chronically understudied’. For Rublack, the lack of scholarly investigation is explained by the breadth of sources the sumptuary historian must explore; ‘this involves more than looking at ordinances. It implies the much more laborious task of reconstructing the implementation of these laws through council minutes and court records in different cities and territories, and also of finding out what garments, fabrics and accessories exactly were referred to.’<sup>5</sup> Scholars who have explored sumptuary laws often dismiss them as ineffective, odd, and a barrier to modernity. G. R. Elton deemed them ‘peculiar’ and ‘extraordinary’, and, for Lawrence Stone, debates on apparel in the Commons were ‘absurd’.<sup>6</sup> Even while pioneering the study of clothing for social and economic historians, Daniel Roche allied sumptuary laws with a ‘sartorial *ancien régime*’ marked by ‘inertia and immobility’ and ‘conformity to custom’.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to Roche, Alan Hunt’s unparalleled survey of sumptuary legislation connected the laws to the emergence of a proto-modern urban society in line with Foucault.<sup>8</sup> Sumptuary law, Hunt claimed, ‘was a response to at least three of the most distinctive features of modernity [...] urbanization, the emergence of class as the pervasive form of social relations and the construction of gender relations’.<sup>9</sup> A few regional studies have successfully charted the laws and their impress, particularly in the

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<sup>5</sup> Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 265.

<sup>6</sup> G. R. Elton, *The Parliament of England 1559–1581* (Cambridge, 1986), 273, 253; Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558–1641* (Oxford, 1965), 566, cited in Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 117.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Régime*, originally published in French as *La Culture des apparences*, 1989. First published in England in 1994 (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 56.

<sup>8</sup> Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, 12–14.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Hunt, ‘The Governance of Consumption: Sumptuary Laws and Shifting Forms of Regulation’, in *The Consumption Reader*, ed. David B. Clarke, Marcus A. Doel, and Kate M. L. Housiaux (London: Routledge, 2003), 62.

Italian states.<sup>10</sup> The English laws have received several focused studies,<sup>11</sup> although none which attempt to connect them to extant items of clothing.<sup>12</sup> Maria Hayward studied portraits and clothing bequests in wills and found widespread compliance with the laws during the reign of Henry VIII.<sup>13</sup> Hilary Doda, in her study of the laws until 1533, also argued for compliance.<sup>14</sup>

This chapter challenges Roche's claim by arguing that sumptuary legislation did not impose a sartorial 'regime' in early modern England, and builds on the work of Hayward and Doda by exploring infractions as well as pressures to comply with the law. Sumptuary laws must be studied alongside other social and economic pressures that prompted Londoners to dress in a particular manner. In letters, reports, and court records, it seems that few ignored or flouted them outright. Rather, the law left scope for ingenuity and innovation, and infractions could be the result of individuals exploiting legal ambiguities.

## The laws in England

Controlling dress through law was not a new phenomenon in Elizabethan England. The first English statute of apparel, issued in 1337, prohibited fur and foreign cloth for all but the most elite. Subsequent acts appeared in 1363, 1463, 1483, 1510, 1515 (twice), 1533, and 1554, each specifying textiles prohibited to those lower down the social order.

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<sup>10</sup> Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500*; Emanuela Zanda, *Fighting Hydra-like Luxury: Sumptuary Regulation in the Roman Republic* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Hooper, 'The Tudor Sumptuary Laws'; Frances Elizabeth Baldwin, 'Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England' (Johns Hopkins University, 1923); Sylvia A. Miller, 'Old English Laws Regulating Dress', *Journal of Home Economics* 20, 2 (1928): 89-94; Clifford R. Bell and Evelyn Ruse, 'Sumptuary Legislation and English Costume, An Attempt to Assess the Effect of an Act of 1337', *Costume* 6, 1 (1972): 22-31; Harte, 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England'; Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 117-52; Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Hilary Doda, "'Saide Monstrous Hose': Compliance, Transgression and English Sumptuary Law to 1533", *Textile History* 45, 2 (2014): 171-91.

<sup>12</sup> This focused study offers an excellent example of how sumptuary legislation can be closely connected to clothing, although sadly no guardainfante survive, so the study lacks extant examples. Amanda Wunder, 'Women's Fashions and Politics in Seventeenth-Century Spain: The Rise and Fall of the Guardainfante', *Renaissance Quarterly* 68, 1 (2015): 133-86.

<sup>13</sup> Hayward, *Rich Apparel*.

<sup>14</sup> Doda, "'Saide Monstrous Hose'".

Elizabeth herself did not pass any statutes; her authority rested upon the 1533 and 1554 Acts, to which she repeatedly referred. Elizabeth's legal involvement in sumptuary legislation was more urgent and insistent than any other English monarch. She passed twelve proclamations relating to the statutes of apparel during her reign, more than any other ruler before or since, the first of which was announced less than a year after her coronation.<sup>15</sup> In addition, Elizabeth issued six proclamations regarding the making of caps, following the successful passage of the 1571 Cappers Act.<sup>16</sup>

Elizabethan proclamations often extended earlier statutes by adding regulations and amendments to include new fashions such as ruffs and large hose, or to introduce allowances or prohibitions to new sections of society. Women, for example, had been exempted from sumptuary legislation in 1514, but in 1574 Elizabeth imposed restrictions upon them, in line with their familial status.<sup>17</sup> Although she purported in the 1574 proclamation to refer to the 1533 Act, limitations on women had no precedent there.<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth's sumptuary proclamations were based, therefore, on the authority of statutes passed during the reigns of Henry VIII and Philip and Mary, and upon the royal prerogative.

Few members of the English population would have had the opportunity to hear their monarch speak, but through the proclamations, English subjects could access the thoughts and voice of the Queen herself. For this reason, proclamations held a certain power and aura. Their announcement was accompanied by a great deal of ceremony, often including local dignitaries processing on horseback. In London, proclamations were read aloud to reach the illiterate population in various busy

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<sup>15</sup> 1559, 1562 x 3, 1566, 1574, 1577, 1580 1588, 1597 x2, 1597, in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*; Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, eds, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1588-1603)*, vol. 3 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969).

<sup>16</sup> 1572, 1573, 1570, 1575, 1590, 1597, in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*; Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1588-1603)*. The 19 November 1595 proclamation enforcing statutes on hats and caps is not included in Hughes and Larkin, but is identified in Frederic A. Youngs, *The Proclamations of the Tudor Queens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 259.

<sup>17</sup> Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 320-21.

<sup>18</sup> 15 June 1574 in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, vol. 2, 381-86.

locations (many of which were important areas of clothing retail) such as the great cross on Cheapside, St Magnus in Fish Street, Leadenhall, the conduit in Fleet Street, and Lombard Street. For those who could read, the proclamations were printed on parchment by the Queen's printer, and then mounted on posts throughout the city to remind Londoners of their obligations (Figure 3.2).<sup>19</sup>

Rule by proclamation was a tactical and practical approach. Despite at least five attempts to introduce new bills during Elizabeth's reign, efforts to issue new statutes of apparel were unsuccessful in both the Houses of Commons and Lords.<sup>20</sup> One case reveals why the Commons put up significant resistance to Elizabeth's attempt to push a bill through Parliament in March 1575. While the Commons agreed 'disorder of apparrell is very greate in this tyme', they posed five objections. Some regarded the proposed punishments as too harsh, or worried that subjects would not be given enough time to reform their wardrobes, but the most critical question focused on the legislative power that the crown would gain from passing the bill. One member summed up: 'Th' effect of the bill was that the Quene's Majestie from tyme to tyme might by her proclamacion appoynt what kynde of apparrell every degree of persons within the realme should weare.' This might, it was feared, 'prove a dangerous precedent in tyme to come'.<sup>21</sup> When James I took the throne, he repeated this attempt to rule by proclamation, and started by wiping the legislative slate clean, repealing all former apparel laws. In 1604 his bill was sent from the Lords to the Commons, but failed on first reading. Only one clause passed: the repeal of former apparel acts. Sumptuary acts ended in England not because of the failure to police the laws, or because the ruler recognized them as ineffective. Rather, they ended because they became bound up with questions about royal authority.<sup>22</sup>

Dress was not only controlled by statute and royal proclamation. In London, the Courts of Aldermen and Common Council, with the authority of the Lord Mayor,

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<sup>19</sup> Youngs, *The Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, 25.

<sup>20</sup> For more on these efforts in 1566, 1571, 1575, 1589, and 1597-8 see *ibid.*, 162.

<sup>21</sup> T. E. Hartley, ed., *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I: Volume I 1558-1581* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981), 454-56.

<sup>22</sup> Hooper, 'The Tudor Sumptuary Laws', 448-49; Harte, 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England', 148-50; Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 118-19.

tackled civic issues by taking matters into their own hands. For example, seven years after sumptuary laws had been finally repealed, a Common Council Act prohibited all apprentices from wearing ‘strange fashion of Apparrell’ such as ruffs of over three yards in length ‘before it be gathered & sett into the stocke nor two inches in depth’, or hats broader than three inches, lined, faced, or tufted with velvet, silk, or taffeta, or that cost above five shillings. The 1611 Act limited the fabrics of apprentices’ doublets, hose, cloaks, coats, and jerkins, and stated that gloves had to be plain and not worth above twelve pence a pair. Silk or ribbon garnishing, girdles, points, garters and shoestrings – any ‘suchlike toyes at all’ – were prohibited. Spanish leather shoes or those ‘with Polonia heels’ were likewise forbidden. Rather, apprentices were charged to be ‘contented with suche decent Apparrell as is fittinge & their Masters well able to afford to them’.<sup>23</sup> A clause was later inserted stipulating that hair must be ‘cut short in decent and comelie’ with no fashionable ‘tuft or lock’.<sup>24</sup> The master would ‘admonish & rebuke his apprentice’ for a first offence. A second offence was dealt with more harshly, and both master and apprentice suffered. The apprentice would be put in ‘Little Ease’ – a prison in the Guildhall too small to stand upright in – for at least eighteen hours, while the master would be fined the hefty sum of three shillings and fourpence for each day that the apprentice had dressed inappropriately.<sup>25</sup> The fine was split between the parish and the informant.<sup>26</sup> Londoners were expected to take care of their own clothing issues.

## Livery

When Walweyn entered court in his ‘outraygyous’ hose, he came face to face with London’s leading men. Throughout Elizabeth’s reign, the Court of Aldermen was made up of twenty-six men, one from each of the city’s wards, who had risen through the ranks of the livery companies and paid substantial sums of money to acquire the

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<sup>23</sup> COL/CC/01/01/29/01 161r-162v.

<sup>24</sup> COL/CC/01/01/29/01 186r.

<sup>25</sup> ‘little-ease, n.’. *OED Online*. December 2015. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109252?redirectedFrom=little+ease> (accessed January 23, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> COL/CC/01/01/29/01 161r-162v.

position.<sup>27</sup> The Aldermen were strikingly visible on the city streets, wearing fine red or violet gowns, which marked out their office in processions and official ceremonies. In 1622, John Earle praised a London alderman: 'He is Venerable in his gowne [...] wherewith he setts not forth so much his owne, as the face of a City [...] His Scarlet gowne is a Monument, and lasts from generation to generation.'<sup>28</sup>

Such praise helps to explain why clothing was subject to regulation. Earle's alderman loses individual identity when he wears his gown and becomes the city personified. His gown is understood as a civic 'monument', which will outlive the alderman himself. Here, a garment is not just a powerful sign of office; it *is* the office.<sup>29</sup>

This power is explicit in the meaning of the term 'livery'. From the late twelfth century, livery referred to the payment of dependents in food, lodging, and clothing.<sup>30</sup> Early modern London was a livery economy, with many members of society such as apprentices and servants being paid in some combination of cash, housing, food, and apparel. The word 'livery' increasingly referred to the clothing itself, not only as payment, but as a uniform or a badge of office. London's trade guilds were known as 'livery companies' and were so closely allied with their ceremonial garb that it was synonymous with the membership; when a Londoner became a member or freeman of the city, he was said 'to be clothed'.<sup>31</sup>

Under the authority of the Lord Mayor and in conjunction with the 212 members of the Common Council, the Aldermen controlled London. Court business often focused on London's services and the pressure of the expanding city: the need for cleaner streets, avoiding the plague, and controlling migrant workers. But the Alderman

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<sup>27</sup> Richard Wunderli, 'Evasion of the Office of Alderman in London, 1523-1672', *The London Journal* 15, 1 (1990): 3-18.

<sup>28</sup> John Earle, *Microcosmographie, or a Peece of the World Discovered* (1622), part 5, as cited in Robert Tittler, *The Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 120.

<sup>29</sup> For more on clothing as a 'material memory' and store of identity, see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> 'livery, n.'. *OED Online*. September 2015. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109344?rskey=saffH7&result=1&isAdvanced=false>.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Stallybrass, 'Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity on the Renaissance Stage', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 289.

were also beneficiaries of London's growth. By custom, they had to be members of one of the twelve great livery companies and in practice, the majority belonged to the cloth-exporting Merchant Adventurers (not one of the great livery companies themselves). As key members of the livery companies, they benefitted from economic, legal, and political privileges in regulating and controlling the craft trades; some of the very Aldermen who punished Walweyn for his illegal hose were lining their own pockets from the profits of clothing exports and imports.<sup>32</sup>

The Court of Aldermen policed the correct use of livery. John Aldriche was imprisoned for wearing the livery of the Lord President of Wales, 'being not his servant'.<sup>33</sup> In 1562, a minstrel named Sherman was apprehended in Bishopsgate ward for 'wearing velvet in his dagger shethe contrary too the forme of the Statute'. Sherman claimed to be a servant of Lord Windsor but when examined by the Court 'did pleny confesse that he had neither mete drink wage or livery of hym'.<sup>34</sup> Sherman claimed that Lord Windsor had allowed him to wear livery if he paid for the clothing himself, suggesting it was not a negative marker of servitude. An individual might aspire to wearing the sumptuous livery of a superior, even paying for its purchase himself.

### **Motivations I: Social differentiation – breeches**

English Sumptuary law encoded a widespread belief neatly summarised by the poet Barnabe Barnes in 1606, that 'all garments should be neat fit for the body, and agreeable to the sex which should wear them: in worth and fashion correspondent to the state, substance, age, place, time, birth, and honest custome of those persons which use them'.<sup>35</sup> But while a livery culture expected that each individual should express his social status and affiliations through dress, new fashions enabled men and women to stand

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<sup>32</sup> Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 18-57, 100-148.

<sup>33</sup> COL/CA/01/01/19/330v.

<sup>34</sup> COL/CA/01/01/17/78.

<sup>35</sup> Barnabe Barnes, *Four Bookees of Offices: Enabling Privat Persons for the Speciall Service of All Good Princes and Policies* (London: A. Islip, 1606), 15.

Figure 3.3a&b:

Even off the body, this pair of hose extends far wider than the shoulders of the matching doublet, a style that many found 'monstrous' and 'outraygyous'. Doublet and Trunk Hose with Canions, uncut silk velvet on a voided satin ground, English, c.1604, Grimsthorpe and Drummond Castle Trust.

Pencil drawings by Janet Arnold, © The School of Historical Dress, London.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

out from the crowd. And nowhere in England was more crowded, or fashionable, than London.

The Grimsthorpe and Drummond Castle Trust own one of the few pairs of English breeches or hose to survive from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>36</sup> Too fragile for display, and undergoing extensive conservation, the hose are no longer mounted with their matching doublet and canions (extensions to hose that taper to the leg). Thanks to costume historian Janet Arnold's close observation and pattern taking, we have a great deal of information about this rare survival of a once popular fashion, offering a sense both of the allure and legal issues of such a style (Figure 3.3a). The uncut brown velvet and voided satin were probably once bright mulberry with a detailed design of leaf sprays and curving stems, which have all but worn away (Figure 3.3b). The hose are lined with layers of springy white wool, white fustian, and coarse linen or hemp. Large fustian pockets hang between these two linings, which could be stuffed to further inflate the size of the hose.

When worn, these mulberry hose would have created a striking large round silhouette (Figure 3.1). As Elizabeth reminded her subjects in the 1562 proclamation, no man under the degree of a baron was allowed to wear velvet or satin, so these hose were only appropriate for nobility. Such ornate velvet was an expensive Italian import.

But the London authorities not only scrutinised the outer visible layer of these hose. The law dictated that only one fabric lining, in addition to linen cloth, be used 'next to the leg [...] as in ancient time was accustomed' and that this lining could not lie loose. There are two layers – fustian and wool – in addition to the linen lining of the mulberry hose, but the tailor worked the velvet outerlining and woollen interlining together. This clever technique forced the breeches to stand away from the leg in the fashionable shape. Whether this would have been allowed within the terms of Elizabeth's proclamation is unclear.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For an image of the doublet, hose, and canions, while on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum see Madeleine Ginsburg, Avril Hart, and Valerie Mendes, *Four Hundred Years of Fashion*, ed. Natalie Rothstein (London: V&A Publications, 1992), 144.

<sup>37</sup> For the terms of the proclamation, see 6 May 1562, Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, vol. 2, 187-92.

Contemporaries also had trouble making sense of the proclamations. Richard Onslow, the Recorder of London, wrote to Sir William Cecil from his house in Blackfriars in February 1565 to ask about this very issue: could ‘a lynnyng of Cotton stytyched to the Sloppe, over & besides the lynnen lynnyng’ be permitted within the terms of the proclamation? Onslow reported that the question was on the minds of many hosiers who had asked him for advice. He had answered them that ‘upon consyderacion of the words of the proclamacion’ this was not allowed. But the hosiers returned, reporting that their customers had moved their business to hosiers ‘dwelling without Temple Barr’ who were prepared to include additional lining.<sup>38</sup> Onslow felt it his duty to report to Cecil for clarification so that the London citizens for whom he was responsible may not ‘be sore hindered & impoverished by losse of ther customers’ to ‘foryners’.<sup>39</sup>

The ingenious tailoring in these mulberry hose might have placed their fustian lining (just) within the compass of the law, or perhaps they were made by a hosier from outside Temple Bar, but in cultural terms fustian had something of a negative reputation. In the late sixteenth century ‘fustian’ referred to a cloth made of both cotton and linen threads to resemble velvet, one of the ‘new draperies’ introduced into English manufacture by Walloon and Dutch immigrants. Later it became a reference term for a twilled thick cotton cloth. While the term switched from defining one kind of cloth to another, by the 1590s it had also acquired the derogatory meaning of inflated turgid language, as did ‘bombast’, another kind of padding for trunk hose and stuffed peasecod bellies.<sup>40</sup> In John Marston’s *Jacke Drum’s Entertainment* (1601), the satiric

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<sup>38</sup>The Lord Mayor’s jurisdiction covered an area that extended beyond London’s ancient walls. The city boundary was marked with bars, one of which was Temple Bar. Those who dwelt or traded outside of the City’s jurisdiction – i.e. without Temple Bar – were regulated by other authorities. For a sense of the cultural impact of such divisions, see Joseph P. Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade Guilds, Identity, and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), in particular 7-26.

<sup>39</sup>Foreigners here refers to those who were not members of the London livery companies and dwelt outside London jurisdiction. British Library MS Lansdowne 8. art 64. As transcribed in Henry Ellis, ed., *Original Letters, Illustrative of English History: Including Numerous Royal Letters; from Autographs in the British Museum, and One or Two Other Collections*, vol. 2, 2 2 (London: Harding and Lepard, 1827), 306-7; also quoted in Hooper, ‘The Tudor Sumptuary Laws’, 442-43.

<sup>40</sup>Nancy Cox, *Retailing and the Language of Goods, 1550–1820* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 17-22.

commentator Planet claims to ‘hate these bumbaste wits, That are puft up with arrogant conceit of their owne worth’, while a barber in Robert Greene’s satirical pamphlet was accused of using ‘fustian eloquence’ to flatter his clients.<sup>41</sup> These materials, which enabled the shaping and stuffing of breeches, rapidly became allied with claims of exaggeration, dishonesty, and social pretence.

Clothing had multisensory allure. The prohibited shapes and fine textiles reserved for elites had significant visual and aural impact. When Philip Stubbes described men and women in their finery, he highlighted the sound effects of the fine textiles reserved for nobility in the Statutes of Apparel: ‘some [...] ruffle now in silks, Velvets, Satens, Damasks, Gold, silver and what not else.’ Stubbes noticed that ‘it is impossible for a man to weare precious apparrell and gorgeous attire and not to be proud therof. Overstuffed hose physically inflated their wearer, making noise as they moved, allowing them to feel socially superior and make their presence known. As Stubbes put it, ‘by wearyng of Apparel more gorgeous, sumptuous and precious than our state, callyng or condition of lyfe requireth, whereby, we are puffed up into Pride, and inforced to think of our selves, more than we ought’.<sup>42</sup>

In the later sixteenth century fashionable men began to wear pear-shaped breeches known as ‘Venetians’. As fashions changed, accusations of monstrousness shifted from rounded trunk hose to this new style. In the pamphlet *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592), a ‘costly paire’ of breeches are not just deemed monstrous, they are mistaken for a ‘monster’. Despite ‘wanting a body,’ the breeches are anthropomorphised as an ‘artificial braggart [...] passing pompous in their gestures’, their arrogance bolstered by ‘best Spanish satine’. They are likened to a ‘Florentine’ flaunting ‘up and down the streetes before his mistresse’. Their monstrousness lies in

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<sup>41</sup> John Marston, *Jacke Drum’s Entertainment: Or The Comedie of Pasquill and Katherine As It Hath Bene Sundry Times Plaide by the Children of Powles* (London: Richard Olive, 1601), Act IV; Robert Greene, *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier: Or, A Quaint Dispute Between Veluet Breeches and Cloth-Breeches Wherein Is Plainely Set Downe the Disorders in All Estates and Trades* (London: John Wolfe, 1592), C3v.

<sup>42</sup> Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses Contayning A Discoverie, or Briefe Summarie of Such Notable Vices and Imperfections, as Now Raigne in Many Christian Countreyes of the Worlde: But (especiallie) in a Verie famous Ilande Called Ailgna: Together, with Most Fearefull Examples of Gods Iudgements, Executed Vpon the Wicked for the Same, Aswell in Ailgna of Late, as in Other Places, Elsewhere. Verie Godly, to Be Read of All True Christians, Euerie Where: But Most Needefull, to Be Regarded in Englande* (London: John Kingston for Richard Jones, 1583), BVII.

their foreignness, visual allure and social pretension; they are ‘exceeding sumptuous to the eie’ and ‘pompous’.<sup>43</sup> Although the frontispiece to *Quiip* depicts two men wearing breeches, the pamphlet is about breeches that walk and talk without a body. Clothing is so powerful that it can speak for itself, threaten hierarchies, and challenge identities without even being worn by a person.

These breeches are a metaphor for the city-dweller, and the protagonist dismisses them in favour of ‘a plaine paire of Cloth breeches’, which remind him of the time of his ‘great Grandfathers’, when ‘neighbourhood and hospitality had banished pride out of England’.<sup>44</sup> As *Quiip* suggests, clothing was a scapegoat for London troubles. Londoners were succumbing to ‘pride’, which in turn destroyed all social obligations in the form of ‘hospitality’ and community. Sumptuous clothing here embodies those aspects of London that unsettled its critics: shifting social status, immorality, and foreignness. This moral must have had some currency in early modern England, for *Quiip* went through six editions in its first year of publishing alone.<sup>45</sup>

Clothing was supposed to permit social differentiation. Cloth breeches were for humble countrymen, whereas sumptuous velvets were the mark of a courtier. Sumptuary legislation codified this belief, creating a hierarchy of fabrics and colours. A printed copy of the statutes issued with the proclamation in February 1577 depicts this hierarchy in a complicated table full of brackets, lists and exceptions, structured ‘None shall weare [...] except [...]’ (Figure 3.2). At the very top, purple silk and cloth of gold or tissue are reserved for the King, Queen, and their immediate family, and in a final bracket neatly packed just inside the far margin, ‘Dukes & Marquesses, who may weare in dublets and sleevelesse cotes, Cloth of Gold, of Tissue’. The table descends through the ranks of the nobility past Earls, Viscounts, and Barons (who may only wear cloth of gold, silver, or tinsel in their doublets or sleeveless coats), past Dukes, Marquesses, Earls and their children, Barons, and Knights of the

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<sup>43</sup> Greene, *A Quiip for an Vpstart Courtier*, A4v-B1r.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, B1r.

<sup>45</sup> For more on *Quiip* and the links between plain cloth and English identity, see Hilary M. Larkin, *The Making of Englishmen: Debates on National Identity 1550-1650* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014), 40-43, 90; Roze Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England: Textual Constructions of a National Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 103-28.

Figure 3.2:

The printed apparel proclamations clearly show a visual hierarchy of social groups, fabrics, and colour, from purple silks and cloth of gold at the top for the royal family to silk doublets and taffata linings in jackets, caps, and purses 'being not of colour scarlet, crimson, or blewe' for the sons of knights at the bottom. Even for the illiterate population, these tables showed clearly that clothing and social status were hierarchical. 'The brief content of certayne Actes of Parliament' from 16 February 1577 Proclamation Enforcing Statutes of Apparel (London: R. Jugge, 1577), G.6463.(205), page 54. © The British Library Board.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Garter (who may wear crimson, scarlet or blue velvet, bonnets of woollen cloth made outside of the realm, certain furs, and embroidery), down to the lesser nobility and men who spend £40 per year (allowed silk other than satin, damask, taffeta, or sarcenet in doublets, and velvet in sleeveless coats, jackets, jerkins, coifs, caps, purses, or partlets 'being not of colour scarlet, crimson, or blewe').<sup>46</sup> The vast majority of the population is not included in this table, but they were expected to listen to the proclamations, view the tables in public (where even the illiterate could recognise the tabulated visual hierarchy) and avoid the listed textiles and colours. In preambles to the proclamations, the non-elite were targeted for their transgressions, with the accusation 'no sort of people have so much exceeded, or do daily more exceed in the excess of apparel, contrary to the said statutes, than such as be of the meaner sort'.<sup>47</sup> As Stubbes protested, 'there is such a confuse mingle mangle of apparell in Aligna [England], and such horrible excesse thereof, as euerie one is permitted to flaunt it out, in what apparell he listeth himself, or can get by any meanes. So that it is very hard to knowe, who is noble, who is worshipfull, who is a Gentleman, who is not'. This, Stubbes decried, led to 'generall disorder in a Christian common wealth'.<sup>48</sup>

This visual hierarchy, encoded in law and repeated in literature, was also preached from pulpits across the realm and supported with reference to the bible. The 'Homily Against Excess of Apparel' (1563), ordered to be sermonised to congregations across England, claimed, 'all may not look to wear like apparel, but every one, according to his degree, as God hath placed him'.<sup>49</sup>

## **Motivations II: Moral – ruffs**

Clothing matters infused religious, as well as legal, discussions throughout the early modern world. As Peter Goodrich has argued, as religious leaders across Europe

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<sup>46</sup> 16 February 1577, printed by R. Juge (London, 1577).

<sup>47</sup> 6 May 1562, in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 187-94.

<sup>48</sup> Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, CIIv.

<sup>49</sup> 'An Homily Against Excess of Apparel', Church of England, *Sermons or Homilies Appointed to Be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1802), 260.

questioned the importance of images and symbols, it is unsurprising that the governance of appearance was closely allied with morality.<sup>50</sup> In Elizabeth's early reign, clothing was at the heart of religious debates and was a significant factor in the emergence of Puritanism as a distinct movement.<sup>51</sup> The 'vestiarian controversy', as it has come to be known, erupted over disagreements about the appropriate rites, ceremonies, and apparel for clergy; in short, how English Protestant ministers should dress.<sup>52</sup> Debates centred on whether the ecclesiastical garments established in the Roman Catholic medieval church were appropriate for a post-Reformation Church of England. Many English ministers, particularly those returning from Marian exile who had seen Continental Protestant clergyman in plain black gowns, associated their old caps, chasubles, and surplices with popery. In 1565, in response to 'open and manifest disorder', Elizabeth commanded Archbishop Parker to restore 'uniformity of order' in church dress. Parker responded with a 'book of articles' and the *Advertisements* (1566), which demanded that outdoor apparel remain as caps and gowns, and the white alb, chasuble, stole, and cope be worn in Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches, but be reduced to a white linen surplice in parish churches.<sup>53</sup> For many, this was not reform enough. In London, thirty-seven preachers refused to sign their conformity to the *Advertisements*, believing that the garments had the symbolic power to damage the reputation of the Church and the confidence of their congregations. As Robert Crowley argued in *A Briefe Discourse Against the Outwarde Apparell of the Popishe Church* (1566), while the material garments 'of themselves, they be things indifferent [...] when the vse of them will destroy, or not edifie, then cease they to be so indifferent'.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>50</sup> Peter Goodrich, 'Signs Taken for Wonders: Community, Identity, and "A History of Sumptuary Law"', *Law & Social Inquiry* 23, 3 (1998): 709.

<sup>51</sup> For the foundational text on the emergence of Puritanism and the vestiarian controversy's role in this development, see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967).

<sup>52</sup> For more on the 'vestiarian controversy' see John Henry Primus, *The Vestments Controversy: An Historical Study of the Earliest Tensions within the Church of England in the Reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1960); Leo F. Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England, 1509-1640* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 83-85; Hilary Doda, 'Rounde Heades in Square Cappes: The Role of the Vestments in the Vestiarian Controversy', *Dress* 39, 2 (2013): 93-110.

<sup>53</sup> As quoted in Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England, 1509-1640*, 83-84.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Crowley, *A Briefe Discourse against the Outwarde Apparell and Ministring Garmentes of the Popishe Church* (Emden: Egidius van der Erve, 1566), Aiiiir-v.

they had a signifying purpose. For just as ecclesiastical garments were intended to distinguish the clergy from the laity, so they should distinguish Protestants from Catholics: ‘as we wolde haue a diuers shewe of aparel to be knowe[n] from the comon people, so is yt necessary in aparell, to haue a shew, howe a protestante is to be knowen from a papiste.’<sup>55</sup> It has been argued that the vestiarian controversy was predominantly an urban issue, only taken up in London, the university cities, and the diocese of Durham.<sup>56</sup> In any case, Elizabethan Londoners witnessed their religious ministers debating the material terms of their reformed church and the symbolic power of a physical garment.

While some shunned the flowing white gowns of the clergy, others were more concerned with the increasingly elaborate linen neckwear in vogue at court and amongst the urban populace. In the sixteenth century it became fashionable to gather excess volumes of linen at the neck and wrists of the undershirt so that they protruded from beneath the overgarments. Innovative seamstresses added lace or decorative embroidery to these visible edges, and sometimes added another layer of linen to increase the volume of the edge ruffles. By 1562, Elizabeth noticed ‘the outrageous double ruffs which now of late are crept in’ and added them to the list of controlled garments in her proclamation, which declared that ‘ruffs shall not be worn otherwise than single, and the singleness to be used in a due and mean sort, as was orderly and comely used before’.<sup>57</sup>

Ruffs and cuffs quickly became associated with sin. On April 11, 1562, Henry Machyn recorded in his chronicle that ‘a pyde calf’ had been brought to London ‘with a grett ruffe [about] ys neke’. Machyn was not recording some instance of a cow in costume, but rather the birth of a deformed calf with excess skin at the neck, which he regarded as a symbol, or in his words, ‘a token of grett ruff that bowth men and women [wear]’. On May 8, one day after the Queen’s proclamation had been announced,

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<sup>55</sup> Anthony Gilby, *To My Louynge Brethren That Is Troublyd About the Popishe Apparrell, Two Short and Comfortable Epistels* (Emden: Egidius van der Erve, 1566), Ciir.

<sup>56</sup> Brett Usher, *William Cecil and Episcopacy, 1559-1577* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 128-29.

<sup>57</sup> 6 May 1562, in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, vol. 2, 439.

Machyn summarised it in an entry that read simply, ‘a proclamation of the aht [act] of a-ray, and grett ruffes and grett breechys, and that no man to have butt a yerd and a half of kersey’.<sup>58</sup> Not only does this entry show how rapidly news of each proclamation reached the metropolitan population, and that it could be quickly condensed and summarised, it also shows that Machyn considered these two events significant enough to be included in his chronicle of religious events and local news. The proximity of the two entries in the chronicle almost certainly struck Machyn, a deeply religious parish clerk in Holy Trinity-the-Less, as a religious sign.<sup>59</sup>

A number of children and animals born with ‘ruffs’ featured in popular broadside publications and histories which presented these deformities as evidence of God’s displeasure with pride in fashions.<sup>60</sup> John Hayward made this explicit when he described a child born in Chichester with ‘a collar of fleshe and skinne, pleighted and foulded like a double ruffe, and rising up unto the eares, as if nature would upbraide our pride in artificiall braverie, by producing monsters in the same attires’.<sup>61</sup> These monstrous births and the proclamations did little to halt the fashion for large elaborate ruffs, for in the proclamation enforcing statutes of apparel dated 12 February 1580, Elizabeth announced that ‘no person shall [...] use or wear such great and excessive ruffs in or about the uppermost part of their necks as had not been used before two years past; but that all persons should in modest and comely sort leave off such fond disguised and monstrous manner of attiring themselves’.<sup>62</sup> Stubbes went a step further

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<sup>58</sup> Henry Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A. D. 1550 to A. D. 1563*, ed. John Gough Nichols (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 280-81.

<sup>59</sup> For Machyn’s biography, which suggests he had Catholic tendencies, see Ian Mortimer, ‘Machyn, Henry (1496/1498–1563)’, in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17531>.

<sup>60</sup> For more about this phenomenon in England, see Julie Crawford, *Marvelous Protestantism: Monstrous Births in Post-Reformation England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). Similar phenomena were recorded across Protestant Europe. See, for example, Jennifer Spinks, *Monstrous Births and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>61</sup> John Hayward, *Annals of the First Four Years of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. John Bruce, vol. 7, Camden Society 1 (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1968), 242v; as quoted in Crawford, *Marvelous Protestantism*, 46.

<sup>62</sup> 12 February 1580, as in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, vol. 2, 462.

when he declared that ruffs had been invented by the Devil. Ruffs had become so ‘great and monstrous’, standing ‘a full quarter of a yarde (and more) from their necks’ that, according to Stubbes’ character Philoponus, they could not stand up by themselves. The Devil ‘underpropped’ his ‘kingdom of Pride’ with the very supports that held up large ruffs – wire and cardboard underproppers, supportasses, and also a ‘certaine kind of liquid matter, which they call Starch, wherin the Deuil hath learned them to wash and dive their ruffes wel, which being dry, wil then stand stiffe inflexible about their neckes’.<sup>63</sup> In pamphlets, diaries, broadsides, and proclamations, the great size of ruffs particularly attracted attention from ruff critics.

Only a few English ruffs are known to have survived. An extant example now in the collections of the Rijksmuseum shows the visual effect, scale, and allure of vast amounts of pleated linen (Figure 3.4). Portraits may illustrate how ruffs were worn as part of an outfit, and how they might be pleated, but the sheer materiality of the Rijksmuseum ruff demonstrates that these tactile, soft accessories could be transformed to stiff sculptural neckwear by careful washing, starching, and setting. It is appropriate to use a Dutch example, as both the materials and techniques of ruff maintenance were imported to England from the Netherlands. The finest ruffs were made of ‘holland’ linen from Holland, ‘lawn’ from Laon in France, and ‘cambric’ from Cambray in Flanders. According to John Stow, Queen Elizabeth’s first starcher was the wife of her Dutch coachman Guillan. In 1564, an enterprising Protestant immigrant from Flanders, ‘Mistris Dinghen’, set up a London-based starching business and taught women to starch and seeth for a fee.<sup>64</sup> That female immigrants, rather than the Devil, introduced ruffs to London, indicates something about xenophobia in this period. That the ruff’s size was policed tells us much about the motivations for this act of legislation.

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<sup>63</sup> Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses*, DVIIv.

<sup>64</sup> John Stow, *Annales, or a General Chronicle of England*, ed. Edmund Howes, 1631, 868-69. For more on women and the starching industry, see Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women’s Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 93-143.

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Figure 3.4: This large ruff is marked with the initials 'CY' in small red silk stitch. It is common for ruffs and other linen clothing to be marked, as they would be laundered repeatedly, and owners would want to ensure the safe return of their own belongings. This ruff could be starched in many different configurations, but it would have taken a great deal of skill and starch.

Ruff, c.1615-1635, linen, h3cm x c38cm, l1950cm x w13cm, Rijksmuseum, on loan from H. G. Rahusen, 1923, BK-NM-13112.  
Courtesy Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Ruffs could be set in numerous different arrangements – one band could be styled in regular figures of eight on one day and irregular soft folds the next, enabling a great degree of experimentation. Starches were sometimes coloured blue or yellow to enhance the look of their wearer’s complexion, although efforts were made by Elizabeth, James, pamphleteers, and clergy to taint these by associating them with the Scots, the Irish, and treachery.<sup>65</sup> Made from wheat, starch was a valuable commodity, particularly during times of hunger. Although other materials could be used for cleaning and stiffening linens and other textiles – including milk, gum arabic, glue, and stew made from parchment cuttings – starch was preferred, and was used in vast quantities by domestic staff and professional laundresses alike.<sup>66</sup> Between 1594 and 1601, 600 quarters were sold in London every week.<sup>67</sup> Such rapid consumption provided employment for large numbers of craftspeople, but put strain on grain supplies.

In 1585, William Cecil, Elizabeth’s Lord High Treasurer, raged that starch was used ‘to the setting forth of vanity and pride which would staunch the hunger of many that starve in the streets for want of bread’. In response, Cecil issued a monopoly to patentees in 1588 and later prohibited production. Starch-making became illicit and was pursued by an inestimable number of illegal English traders.<sup>68</sup> A ruff of the Rijksmuseum’s size – containing 1,950cm of linen – would have absorbed large quantities of starch each time it was washed and reset. It would have needed re-starching regularly – after exposure to water (a common problem in rainy London), whenever it became soiled with sweat, cosmetics, or food, or after repeated use.

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<sup>65</sup> Alastair Bellany, ‘Mistress Turner’s Deadly Sins: Sartorial Transgression, Court Scandal, and Politics in Early Stuart England’, *Huntington Library Quarterly* 58, 2 (1995): 179-210; Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 59-86; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, ‘“Rugges of London and the Diuell’s Band”: Irish Mantles and Yellow Starch as Hybrid London Fashion’, in *Material London, Ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 128-49.

<sup>66</sup> Ayesha Mukherjee, *Penury Into Plenty: Dearth and the Making of Knowledge in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 165–6.

<sup>67</sup> A quarter was approximately eight bushels, although quantity varied according to different localities and what was being measured. See ‘quarter, n.’. *OED Online*. December 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/156027?rskey=P6swwo&result=1&isAdvanced=false>; Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 92.

<sup>68</sup> Lansdowne MS. 43. 73, as cited in Mukherjee, *Penury Into Plenty*, 166; Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects*, 89.

Economic and moral concerns converged in this one garment. The ruff was the target of sumptuary legislation (it being one of the garments added by Elizabeth, not in the original Acts of Apparel), indirect legislation on starch, and attacks from the church and pamphleteers. Yet ruffs and linen falling bands only became more fashionable, and were worn by male and female Londoners from the elite down to young aspiring apprentices, throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

### **Motivations III: Economic – caps**

Many items of clothing besides ruffs were attacked for misusing national resources and impoverishing the nation. In *A Discourse of the Common Weal of this Realm of England* (1549), Sir Thomas Smith blamed imported luxuries for the decline of local economies. As Cecil put it, any law that enabled an increase in the consumption of foreign goods such as ‘the excess of silks [...] wyne and spyce’ was ‘consent to the robbery of the realm’.<sup>69</sup> This belief still circulated a century later when John Evelyn lamented that the English taste for French fashions damaged English national morale as well as the economy.<sup>70</sup> Correspondingly, sumptuary legislation often controlled what it called ‘the superfluity of unnecessary foreign wares’ and prohibited foreign textiles such as woollen cloth ‘made out of this realm’, fur ‘whereof the kind growth not within the Queen’s dominions’, and fine silks, damasks, and taffetas.<sup>71</sup>

While other legislation sought to limit the purchasing and display of sumptuous attire and foreign textiles, one act alone prompted the acquisition and wearing of apparel. The ‘Cappers Act’ of 1571 obliged all non-gentry men (excluding office holders in cities and towns and those belonging to a London company) to wear a knitted woollen cap made in England, on Sundays and holy days.

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<sup>69</sup> Richard H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds, *Tudor Economic Documents: Being Select Documents Illustrating the Economic and Social History of Tudor England*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953), 124.

<sup>70</sup> John Evelyn, *Tyrannus, Or, The Mode in a Discourse of Sumptuary Lawes* (London: G. Bedel, T. Collins, and J. Crook, 1661).

<sup>71</sup> 15 June 1574, in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, vol. 2, 381, 383-84.

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Figure 3.5:

This is a simple split-brim knitted cap. It would have fulfilled the requirements of the 1571 'Cappers Act'. Many extant caps show signs of personalization – with exuberant slashing, colourful dyes, ribbons, and trim.

Knitted cap, sixteenth century, English, wool, 23.5 cm wide. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bashford Dean Memorial Collection Funds from Various Donors, 1929, 29.158-485.

The motivations behind this act were clear. Woollen caps, which ‘of late days [...] men have [...] left the using and wearing of’, were no longer in vogue, and a 1566 Act banning felt and cloth caps had clearly not prompted enough sales of the woollen style.<sup>72</sup> The Act stated that the trade employed 8000 Londoners, and was suffering because of shifts in fashion.<sup>73</sup>

Until its repeal in 1597, the act was repeated six times by proclamation,<sup>74</sup> each time lambasting those who for ‘disobedience and wanton disorder of evil-disposed and light persons more regarding private fancy and vanity than public commodity’ refused to support the trade and so sent ‘multitudes’ of cappers into ‘idleness and misery’.<sup>75</sup>

This flat knitted cap, now muddy brown, was a familiar sight on sixteenth-century London streets (Figure 3.5). In their survey of eighty-six caps in the Museum of London, Jane Malcolm-Davies and Hilary Davidson found that the split-brim style was most common, with thirty-three of the caps made with two overlapping brims with rounded ends.<sup>76</sup> Other caps, some brimless, others with single brims, earflaps, or neck flaps, show a diversity of styles and functions. This example, now in the stores of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was probably discovered during building work and excavations in early twentieth-century London. Unfortunately, the precise provenance of these items, their location in the ground, and the context of their discoveries is now lost. The relatively large numbers of surviving examples indicate their ubiquity.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> 13 Eliz. I, c.19 (1571), in Harte, ‘State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England’, 138.

<sup>73</sup> The Act mentions fifteen specialists involved in the ‘capping’ trade: carders, knitters, wool parters, forcers, thickers, dressers, walkers, dyers, buttelers, shearers, pressers, edgers, liners, bandmakers, and other exercisers; see Jane Malcolm-Davies and Hilary Davidson, ‘“He Is of No Account ...if He Have Not a Velvet or Taffeta Hat”: A Survey of Sixteenth Century Knitted Caps’, *NESAT XII* (2015): 224.

<sup>74</sup> 1572, 1573, 1570, 1575, 1590, 1597, in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*; Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1588-1603)*. The 19 November 1595 proclamation enforcing statutes on hats and caps is not included in Hughes and Larkin, but is identified in Youngs, *The Proclamations of the Tudor Queens*, 259.

<sup>75</sup> 28 April 1573, in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, vol. 2, 369.

<sup>76</sup> Malcolm-Davies and Davidson, ‘He Is of No Account ...if He Have Not a Velvet or Taffeta Hat’, 227.

<sup>77</sup> No comprehensive survey has been done of these hats, but they appear in collections across British, Irish and North American institutions, including the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Many examples show evidence of personalization with ribbons, slashed brims, colourful dyed linings, and room for feather accessories, demonstrating that even those London men with limited income and social status were keen to dress individually and exuberantly, in spite of this law which seemed to force a uniformity of dress on the majority of the male populace. Other men resisted the law rather than decorating their ‘statute cap’, the most famous case being William Shakespeare’s Uncle Henry, who showed up to church without his woollen cap and then failed to appear in court to pay his fine. The Stratford Court Leet records list his fine of 10d. (8d. for the cap, 2d. for his failure to attend court). Other men also disobeyed, as church records report collections of 10s. 8d., 14s., 7s. 5d., and 3s. 7d. ‘for the Statute of Caps’.<sup>78</sup>

### **Enforcement: Legal**

One central question regarding sumptuary law is whether it was substantially enforced. Most historians have assumed that no concerted efforts were made in England, and that this was one of the reasons for its early repeal, in comparison with other European countries and city-states.<sup>79</sup> Both Frances Baldwin and N. B. Harte, in their extensive research, concluded that that ‘it seems unlikely [...] that many people were actually brought before the law courts for wearing fabrics or garments made illegal by the Acts of Apparel or the subsequent Proclamations’.<sup>80</sup> Hunt, too, could not find evidence ‘writ in official black ink’ and stated that even other sources ‘throw up scarcely the faintest whiff of enforcement of these laws’.<sup>81</sup> Certainly, the preambles to many of the proclamations complain of a lack of enforcement.<sup>82</sup> But as we have seen, many parties were responsible for policing apparel and, in the case of London, efforts were made by

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<sup>78</sup> As in Kate Pogue, *Shakespeare’s Family* (London: Praeger, 2008), 28.

<sup>79</sup> Laws in Venice and Switzerland, for example, lasted until the end of the eighteenth century; Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, 28-38.

<sup>80</sup> Harte, ‘State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England’, 147. For Baldwin’s claims, see Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England*, especially 117-18, 314.

<sup>81</sup> Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, 326-27.

<sup>82</sup> The 7 May 1562 blamed the ‘negligence of officers’ for the increase in offences against the ‘good laws and orders for redress of many enormities’; Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations: The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, vol. 2, 192.

the authorities to establish controls. Individuals were brought to court here, as we have seen with the cases of Walweyn, Aldriche, and Sherman. Additional examples of both court records and other sources will demonstrate how London apparel was subject to legal, religious, and familial enforcement.

The 1562 proclamation ordered each London ward to appoint '4 substanciall & well meanyne men' to examine offenders, and similar measures were demanded of the Inns of Court and Chancery, Westminster, and London's suburbs, and other cities and towns throughout England.<sup>83</sup> Officers were given 'abbreviats' of the statutes (lists summarising banned apparel), which were issued from 1561 and appended to later proclamations.<sup>84</sup> But such measures were insufficient. Instead of four men for each ward, by February 1565/6 two men were appointed to watch in each parish.<sup>85</sup> The livery companies were ordered to appoint four men to guard the entrance gates to the city from seven until eleven in the morning, and from one in the afternoon until six at night.<sup>86</sup>

The Lord Mayor's courts prompted surges of enforcement in the city. Walweyn's appearance before the Aldermen initiated a period of concerted effort to crack down on hose in the city. Immediately after his hearing, the court charged all those in attendance to 'dilygently' search their whole wards 'this afternoon'. They were told to focus on drapers and tailors, and any other makers of hose 'contrary to the some of the proclamacion lately sett oute' in order to 'remove & take' any great hose 'from there shoppes and stalls & not to putte them [...] to sale'.<sup>87</sup> The searches worked, as next day William Pole appeared in court for both great hose and 'sylk & other apparell of the bodye'.<sup>88</sup> Thomas Weaver, a master of fence, appeared with his two servants and agreed to reform his hose 'without delaye'.<sup>89</sup> On January 30, just six days after Walweyn's case, the Aldermen placed a £20 bond on Robert Worsey to ensure that he would 'leave of &

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<sup>83</sup> 6 May 1562, in *ibid.*, 188.

<sup>84</sup> Hooper, 'The Tudor Sumptuary Laws', 439.

<sup>85</sup> There were 110 parishes in London. COL/CA/01/01/18, 13v and in *ibid.*, 444.

<sup>86</sup> COL/CA/01/01/17, 414v and in *ibid.*, 443.

<sup>87</sup> COL/CA/01/01/17, 414v (their appearance is recorded on 415v).

<sup>88</sup> COL/CA/01/01/17, 415r.

<sup>89</sup> COL/CA/01/01/17, 416v.

putte away aswell his great & monsterous hoase as also all other his apparell of sylke' as 'the wearynge whereof he ys not able to justyfye by the lawe'. As a gentleman, Worsey was treated with more respect than Walweyn, and so was charged to 'personally appeare' before the Lord Mayor in 'comelye & decent apparrell as the lawes do permytte him to use & wear'.<sup>90</sup> On February 23, the court filled with offenders seized by constables from the parish of St Magnus and on London Bridge: Edmund Dancye, Master of Fence, for his silk doublet and girdle, Martyn Baskyn for a velvet cap, a silk girdle, and a pair of hose trimmed with silk, John Mortymer for hose lined with silk, Edmund Foster in a pair of hose with silk and with a velvet-covered dagger sheath, John Gyllon wearing a pair of hose lined with silk, John Haywood in hose lined with silk and a double ruff on his shirt, and an apprentice named Henry whose sartorial transgressions were not noted.<sup>91</sup>

This wave of enforcement, which focused primarily on hose, and later surges targeting apprentices, seem to have been prompted by particular pressure placed on the Lord Mayor by the Queen and the Star Chamber. On May 21 1592, the Lord Mayor reported to his Common Council that he had been in the Queen's presence at court and 'by her owne mouth geve [him] expresse chardge and commandment to see the abuses of Apparell reformed' in London.<sup>92</sup> This prompt spurred the Mayor to action, and he ordered all freemen to ensure that their apprentices were dressing according to the proclamation. The Mayor reminded his court again on May 30 to police the dress of their freemen 'and their wives'. Those who refused were to answer 'att your uttermost perille'.<sup>93</sup>

London sometimes resisted this legal enforcement. In 1571 Lord Mayor William Allyn wrote to Lord Burghley to explain that the £40 bonds imposed on each tailor and hosier were too costly. Bonds were a clever way of attempting to limit troublesome hose; if demand could not be stifled, supply might be curtailed. But as Allyn explained

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<sup>90</sup> COL/CA/01/01/17/,416v.

<sup>91</sup> COL/CA/01/01/17/,420v.

<sup>92</sup> COL/CC/01/01/22, 206v.

<sup>93</sup> COL/CC/01/01/22, 210v.

in his letter, most tailors and hosiers were ‘verie poore men’ and the ‘extremitie of these bonds’ would leave them ‘utterlie undone’.<sup>94</sup> The Lord Mayor also had trouble prosecuting certain offenders. In 1579 he wrote to the Lord Treasurer stating that when members of the Companies of Haberdashers and Leathersellers had been watching Aldersgate on March 8, they had stopped Lord William Howard for wearing ruffles ‘much out of order’. One of his men was also carrying a sword of forbidden length with the point upwards. The citizens ‘in respect of his quality’ did not apprehend Howard, brother of the Earl of Surrey, but simply ‘reminded’ him that he and his servant were in violation of the law, and requested that the servant cut his sword shorter. In response, the servant offered to strike the citizens and Howard called them ‘odious names of culines, rascals, and such like’. This was the third time Howard had been in contempt of the law, and so the Mayor felt compelled to write to the Treasurer so ‘that the citizens might not be discouraged in their duty’.<sup>95</sup> Again, on May 15 1580, the Lord Mayor wrote to the Treasurer for support when Mr Hewson, son-in-law to the Lord Chief Baron, wore ‘excess of Ruffs, in the open street’. Hewson had taken ‘great offence’ to being ‘friendly admonished’ by the Mayor. Roger Ascham also witnessed ‘honest citizens’ watching ‘at everie gate, to take misordered persones in apparell’ and reported ‘with som greife, that som Courtlie men were offended with these good men of London’.<sup>96</sup> Sumptuary policing could be risky business when those on watch were of inferior social status to the offenders.<sup>97</sup>

In addition to active watch, offenders who appeared in court for other reasons could also find themselves punished for dressing against the law. On 11 January 1591, a ‘presumptuous’ attorney was dismissed from his office when he appeared before the Privy Council ‘in apparrell unfitt for his calling, with a guilt rapier, extreame greate

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<sup>94</sup> William Allyn to Lord Burghley, Nov. 1 1571, The National Archives, State Papers 12/83 f.5. Accessed through State Papers Online.

<sup>95</sup> 8 March 1579, in ‘Watch and Ward’, *Analytical Index to the Series of Records Known as the Remembrancia. Preserved among the Archives of the City of London, A.D. 1579-1664. Prepared by the Authority of the Corporation of London, under the Superintendence of the Library Committee* (London: E. J. Francis & Co., 1878), 549-50.

<sup>96</sup> Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster or Plaine and Perfite Way of Teachyng Children, to Vnderstand, Write, and Speake, the Latin Tong but Specially Purposed for the Priuate Brynging vp of Youth in Ientlemen and Noble Mens Houses, and Commodious Also for All Such, as Haue Forgot the Latin Tonge* (London: John Daye, 1570), 22.

<sup>97</sup> 5 May 1580, in ‘Costume’ in *Analytical Index*, 117.

ruffles and lyke unseemlie apparel'.<sup>98</sup> Active and passive watch by the courts were both effective, albeit irregular, means of policing apparel in Elizabethan London.

### **Enforcement: Households and companies**

Although it was politically difficult to police the elites, top-down enforcement was key. As Burghley put it, 'I doubt much that the length of all these commandments and provisions will hardly be executed abroad until there be some good example in the Court and the city'.<sup>99</sup> Even in the Jacobean period, when the reinstatement of sumptuary law was being discussed, a committee on trade suggested the nobility and gentry wear English cloth in winter 'by example rather than by comaund'.<sup>100</sup>

Within households, the authorities emphasised that it was important to set a good example. Masters were expected to police their servants and apprentices. Thomas Foxdayle, for example, brought his apprentice Phillip Wood to the Tailors Hall 'to be punished' by the wardens of the Merchant Tailor for wearing 'grete hosen'.<sup>101</sup> Wives were to dress according to their husband's status.

The enforcement and anxieties surrounding sumptuary control hint at significant generational conflict. This was a particular problem in London, a youthful city dominated by single men – apprentices, law students, and the sons of noblemen – on the make.<sup>102</sup> In his tract on youth, Francis Lenton depicted a young student wearing 'Embroidered suits such as his father never knew' and spending the money which 'His parents him supply to buy books' on 'alluring hooks'.<sup>103</sup> Describing sumptuous dress as an 'infection' which had 'spread amongst the youth', the 1588 clothing proclamation

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<sup>98</sup> John Roche Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, vol. XXII (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1901), 175.

<sup>99</sup> As quoted in Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 142.

<sup>100</sup> British Museum (now in British Library collections) Stowe MS. 554 f. 48v, as in Joan Kent, 'Attitudes of Members of the House of Commons to the Regulation of "Personal Conduct" in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England', *Historical Research* 46, 113 (1973): 51.

<sup>101</sup> COL/CA/01/01/17 83v.

<sup>102</sup> For more on the exuberance and challenges of young men in London, see Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>103</sup> Francis Lenton, *The Young Gallants Whirligigg; or, Youth Reakes* (London, 1629), B3, as quoted in Bailey, *Flaunting*, 31.

singled out young people as most problematic. The proclamation was drafted after a meeting between the Lord Chancellor and the heads, ancients, and principals of the houses of Court and Chancery, the Inns of Court, and Cambridge and Oxford, and referred to the Lord Mayor's discussions with the Queen. These authorities were in regular contact with the students, apprentices, and young noblemen who had the time, inclination and often money to dress extravagantly.

Livery companies sometimes enforced clothing laws. The ordinances of the Merchant Taylors reminded young householders that if they dressed counter to law they could be fined three pounds by the company. In July 1562 they fined a man named Elliatt for wearing a 'cloke contrary to the Ordinance' and committed Robert Maltby to prison for wearing 'a shirt edged with silver', while in March 1575 Richard Symson was given a warning for 'having on apparell not thoroughly meet for him to weare'.<sup>104</sup>

### **Enforcement: Religious**

Legal measures and controls from the heads of households and institutions were reinforced by religious invective. Preachers often criticised their congregations for lusting after new and sumptuous fashions. Henry Smith, preacher at St Clement Danes, deemed covetousness 'the Londoners's sin'.<sup>105</sup> Nathaneall Cannon asked those who attended his sermon at St Paul's Cross, 'Of what nation and country doth not your City borrow pride? And for your fashions as they are many, so they are monstrous.'<sup>106</sup>

Whether or not Londoners took this message to heart is questionable. Sir John Harrington's epigram seems to suggest that the message fell on deaf ears: 'Our zealous

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<sup>104</sup> C. M. Clode, ed., 'Memorial XXXVIII: Ordinances of the Company, 1507 and 1613', in *Memorial XXXVIII: Ordinances of the Company, 1507 and 1613*, in *Memorials of the Guild of Merchant Taylors of the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist in the City of London* (London: Harrison, 1875), f.n. 15, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/taylors-guild-london/pp199-227>.

<sup>105</sup> Henry Smith, *Sermons* (London, 1591), 231, as quoted in Ian W. Archer, 'Material Londoners?', in *Material London, Ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 178.

<sup>106</sup> Nathaneall Cannon, *The Cryer. A Sermon Preached at Pauls Crosse* (London: Felix Kingston, 1613), 30.

preachers that would pride repress, Complain against Apparells great excess, | For though the laws against yt are express, | Each lady like a Queen herself doth dress.’<sup>107</sup>

After sumptuary legislation had been repealed, James I continued to order the London clergy to preach against immoral dress, in 1620 targeting women who dressed in masculine fashions such as broad brimmed hats, pointed doublets, stilletos (short daggers), and short hair.<sup>108</sup> The Dean of Westminster, Robert Townson, even prevented women wearing yellow ruffs from taking a seat in one of his pews.<sup>109</sup>

The ‘Homily Against Excess of Apparel’ (1563), sermonised to congregations across England by royal order, restated sumptuary law and allied it with God’s will. In addition to targeting young men who spent their fathers’ money on inappropriate fripperies and chastising women for unnecessary and dissembling ornamentation, the sermon focused on national pride. It told the tale of a painter who found it impossible to depict a clothed Englishman, for he changed his clothing so regularly that the artist could not keep up with the fashions.<sup>110</sup> The painter instead depicted the Englishman with a bolt of cloth under his arm, so that he could ‘make it himself as he thought best’. The sermon allied this fickleness with a loss of national identity, and claimed that it

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<sup>107</sup> Sir John Harington, *The Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, ed. Gerard Kilroy (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 183.

<sup>108</sup> Chamberlain to Carleton, 25 January 1620, in *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1939), 2: 286-87, as in Bellamy, ‘Mistress Turner’s Deadly Sins’, 205.

<sup>109</sup> Chamberlain to Carleton, 11 March 1620, in *Letters*, 2:294, as in *ibid.*, 206.

<sup>110</sup> The tale correlates with an account of the Flemish painter Lucas de Heere, a Protestant refugee who lived in England in the 1560s and ’70s. Karel van Mander, a student of de Heere’s, recounted a commission to paint the gallery of the Lord High Admiral Edward Clinton, ‘in which he [De Heere] had to paint all the costumes or clothing of the nations. When all but the Englishman were done, he painted him naked and set beside him all manner of cloth and silk materials, and next to them the tailor’s scissors and chalk. When the Admiral saw this figure he asked Lucas what he meant by it. He answered that he had done that with the Englishman because he did not know what appearance or kind of clothing he should give him because they varied so much from day to day; for if he had done it one way today the next day it would have to be another – be it French or Italian, Spanish or Dutch’; Karel van Mander, ed. H. Miedema, J. Pennial-Boer and trans. C. Ford, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters* (Doornspijk, 1994), 281 as quoted in Michael Gaudio, ‘“Counterfeited According to the Truth”: John White, Lucas de Heere, and the Truth in Clothing’, in *European Visions: American Voices*, ed. Kim Sloan (London: The British Museum, 2009), 24-32.

made the English ‘laughing stocks to other nations’.<sup>111</sup> It critiqued this constant search for novelty, ‘new toys, and inventing new fashions’.<sup>112</sup>

### **Impact: Innovations**

While proclamations, sermons, and pamphlets critiqued shifting fashions, the clothing laws did not prevent the emergence of many innovative new fabrics, colours, and shapes. Far from imposing a ‘sartorial regime’ in Roche’s terms, legal confines spurred fashionable men and women to find clever alternatives, mimetic substitutions, and new styles not covered by proclamations. Many Elizabethan fashions were not reliant on expensive imported and prohibited textiles at all. The fantastical shapes – rounded peascod bellies for men or flat elongated torsos and hooped underskirts for women – were made by paddings of horse- and pig-hair, reeds, pasteboard, and wires, as well as costly whalebone. Stockings made of English wools – dyed bright colours, and knitted in patterns or stripes – replaced more expensive imported silk hose.<sup>113</sup> Simple pasteboard ‘vizard’ masks covered with fabric were wildly popular, despite their quick construction and relatively cheap materials.<sup>114</sup> Bridewell apprentices dyed their hats black, much to the infuriation of their governors, and as we have seen, extant caps show traces of bright dyes, slashes, and ribbons.<sup>115</sup> The simple woollen cap, staple of the wardrobe of many young, male, non-elite Londoners, could be personalised quickly and cheaply (Figure 3.5). The wide variety of clothing accessories – pins, hooks, laces, points, coloured silk threads – found in the sole surviving Royal Exchange inventory

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<sup>111</sup> ‘An Homily Against Excess of Apparel’, in *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to Be Read in Church in the Time of the Late Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1840), 278. In fact, the naked countryman was something of a trope. Rublack refers to a naked German in Wilhelm IV of Bavaria’s Book of Court Costumes (Hofkleiderbuch), in Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 145.

<sup>112</sup> ‘An Homily Against Excess of Apparel’, 278.

<sup>113</sup> Joan Thirsk, ‘The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: The English Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500-1700’, in *The Rural Economy of England* (London: The Hambleton Press, 1984), 235-58.

<sup>114</sup> Evelyn Welch and Juliet Claxton, ‘Easy Innovation in Early Modern Europe’, in *Fashioning the Early Modern: Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500-1800*, ed. Evelyn Welch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 87-110.

<sup>115</sup> Courtbooks of the Court of London Bridewell 7, 377v, as in Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 224.

from this period attests to the range of possibilities available to the London consumer.<sup>116</sup> No wonder young students might spend their book money on ‘alluring hooks’. Leather shoes, jerkins and purses were punched through with decorative shapes for the cost of a penny or two at the tailors, or slashed with a knife by their owner.

While they did not curtail the invention of and appetite for new fashions, the proclamations did alter the price and circulation of goods. One letter offers a rare glimpse into the short-term economic impact of a proclamation on the substitution goods to which Londoners turned when fine fabrics were being actively policed. On July 6, 1574, John Knyveton wrote to the Earl of Shrewsbury from Cold Harbour in London to tell him that he was sending fringes by messenger, but was unable to purchase other goods that the Earl had demanded. Knyveton explained, ‘all kyndes of tufted mockadoes be so deare because of the proclamation for apparel, that now paye xd in every yarde more than before and therefore I staye to bye any till the price be better’.<sup>117</sup> Mockado was a fabric designed to resemble velvet, usually made with wool rather than silk, to provide a cheap simulation of a luxurious imported textile (Figure 3.6).<sup>118</sup> Surviving fragments of wool velvet show that their detailed patterns mimicked the more expensive silk velvets and provided a fairly convincing substitute. Knyveton’s letter was sent less than a month after the June 15 proclamation, and it seems that the law spurred Londoners to buy and sell textiles that mimicked the velvet restricted to the likes of Dukes and Marquesses. As an Earl, Shrewsbury would have been legally allowed to buy silk velvet, but his choice to purchase mockado suggests that this fabric was desirable to even those who were at liberty to acquire the real thing. While the proclamation had a significant impact, pushing prices up by 10d. per yard, Knyveton’s note also suggests that this would only be a temporary increase.

Even after the repeal of sumptuary law, the clothing trade was still influenced by rumours of new legislation. In November 1616, Nathaniel Brent explained, ‘every houre

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<sup>116</sup> Staniland, ‘Thomas Deane’s Shop in the Royal Exchange’, *passim*.

<sup>117</sup> Shrewsbury Papers MS.697 Folio 47, Lambeth Palace Archives.

<sup>118</sup> ‘mockado, n.1 and adj.’. *OED Online*. December 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/120532?rskey=1BdayV&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed January 23, 2016).

we expect a proclamation about wearing of clothe, which because it hath bin long talked of hath made a great number of people forbear to buy stufes and silks, and hath caused a deadnesse of merchandise in Cheapside'.<sup>119</sup>

### **Impact: The legacy of sumptuary legislation**

Brent's comment came in 1616, suggesting that contemporaries still anticipated a return to sumptuary control over a decade after its 1604 repeal. On 5 July 1620, Stephen Smith wrote to his godfather Sir Hugh Smith to tell him that he was sending him a beaver hat from London. However, he noted, because the import of beaver had 'growen extraordinary deare' it was 'reported most certaine' that there would be an 'proclamation that noe beavers shall be worn but by men of certain quality'.<sup>120</sup> That the laws were not revived was not for lack of trying; bills were read, debated, and rejected by the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the monarch in 1604, 1610, 1614, 1621, 1626, and 1629.<sup>121</sup> The London authorities continued to police the dress of certain communities. From 1610 to 1611, the Court of Common Council put in place new rules governing the clothing and hairstyles of apprentices and maidservants.<sup>122</sup> These regulations, which were even more specific than many of the Elizabethan proclamations, targeted some new fashions and prohibited fine linens, stomachers decorated with silks, and farthingales, bodies, and sleeves shaped with whalebone or any other form of stiffening except canvas or buckram.<sup>123</sup>

Sumptuary laws were discussed and debated for decades after their repeal, which suggests that some believed this kind of control was both necessary and effective.

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<sup>119</sup> PRO SP 14/89/55, as cited in Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 227.

<sup>120</sup> Letter from Stephen Smith to Sir Hugh Smith, 5 July 1620, Folger X.c.49 (4).

<sup>121</sup> For brief summaries of these attempts, see Kent, 'Attitudes of Members of the House of Commons to the Regulation of "Personal Conduct" in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England', 63-64; Harte, 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England', 816.

<sup>122</sup> COL/CC/01/01/29/01 119r, 161r-162v, 186r.

<sup>123</sup> 'Bodies' or a 'pair of bodies' were stiffened supportive undergarments, designed to shape the body, from which the term 'bodice' is derived.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 3.6:

This piece of woolen velvet might have been termed 'mockado' in the early modern period. It was a cheaper imitation of the expensive – and prohibited to many – silk velvet.

Piece of woolen velvet, sixteenth century, Flemish, 27.9 x 30.5cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1909, 09.50.1075.

Courtesy [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org).

For instance, in 1616 Francis Bacon wrote to James I urging him to issue a proclamation for the wearing of cloth in order to support this declining local trade. A proclamation was drawn up but never published.<sup>124</sup> Even in 1668, members of the House of Lords – a generation who had grown up without sumptuary laws – considered the reinstatement of ‘Sumptuary Laws, and the Fashions of Apparel’ and ‘the Distinction of Degrees of Persons by Habits’.<sup>125</sup> Elements of clothing control remained in place. Protectionist economic measures limiting exports and controlling foreign imports and luxury goods continued throughout the early modern period. Even deceased Londoners were dressed in accordance with the law. From 1666 until 1814, the Burying in Woollens Act required that the dead be buried in English woollen shirts, shifts, or sheets in order to limit imports of foreign linens.<sup>126</sup>

Critics were vocal about the social and economic effects of sumptuary law, even a century after its repeal. In *The Fable of the Bees; or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (1714), Bernard Mandeville argued that the conspicuous consumption of luxuries increased national wealth and international trade. Adam Smith declared in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776) that it was ‘the highest impertinence and presumption [...] in kings and ministers, to pretend to watch over the economy of private people and to restrain their expense, either by sumptuary laws or by prohibiting the importation of foreign luxuries’.<sup>127</sup>

Sumptuary legislation remained in the cultural and legislative memory throughout the early modern era, but most commentators looked for alternative measures to control clothing. John Evelyn noted on October 18 1666 that he had presented his pamphlet, ‘Tyrannus or the Mode: in a Discourse of Sumptuary Lawes’ to

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<sup>124</sup> *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, ed. J. Spedding (7 vols, 1862-74), vol. vi, 74, as in Kent, ‘Attitudes of Members of the House of Commons to the Regulation of “Personal Conduct” in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England’, 57.

<sup>125</sup> Journals of the House of Lords, XII, 228 as quoted in Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 126.

<sup>126</sup> See for example James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, eds., *Stuart Royal Proclamations, Vol. 1: Royal Proclamations of King James I 1603–1625: Royal Proclamations of King James I 1603–1625* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1973), 545-48, 581.

<sup>127</sup> Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (ed. E. Cannan, 1904), 328, as cited in N. B. Harte, ‘Silk and Sumptuary Legislation in England’, in *La Seta in Europa, Sec. XIII-XX*, ed. Simonetta Cavaciocchi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1993), 802.

Charles II, urging him to ‘fix a Standard [of dress] at Court’ in order to halt the ‘slavish defference of ours to other Nations’. If a ‘constant’ form of dress was set, Evelyn argued, ‘there will need no Sumptuary lawes to repressse and reform the Lux’.<sup>128</sup> Just ten days before, Samuel Pepys noted that the King had declared ‘his resolution of setting a fashion for clothes, which he will never alter. It will be a vest, I know not well how. But it is to teach the nobility thrift, and will do good.’<sup>129</sup> This vest did ‘alter’ however, when it fell from fashion in the 1670s.<sup>130</sup>

Any effort to control dress, particularly in the vibrant, growing, and fashionable city of London, was a temporary fix. Londoners craved innovations, new shapes, colours, and textures in their dress, so laws or economic measures designed to prohibit one style merely encouraged traders, tailors, and consumers to look elsewhere for mimetic or novel substitutions. While London authorities – the courts, the church, and crown – might try to redress London upstarts, the very people who were transgressing the laws – merchants, artisans, craftswomen, and servants – were largely responsible for the economic and cultural success of the city. Like them, London was constantly reinventing itself.

The case of Thomas Bradshaw, a Merchant Tailor arrested in 1570, demonstrates the contradictions of clothing in the early modern city. On November 24, Bradshaw was caught strolling through London, ‘contrary to good order’, in a ‘payre of monstrous great hose’.<sup>131</sup> As a member of the largest guild in the city, the guild partly responsible for the increasing rapidity of fashion, the making of much clothing, and trade of foreign cloth, Bradshaw embodied a positive and negative ‘mingle-mangle’ of London’s changing identity in the period. He not only represented all that was driving London’s growth in size and wealth, but also the anxieties about foreign influence and

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<sup>128</sup> Evelyn presented his pamphlet at Arundel House on December 7, 1661, and on October 18, 1666 he noted he had ‘sometime before’ presented it to the King to read. John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. Austin Dobson, vol. II (London: Macmillan, 1906), 180, 262; Evelyn, *Tyrannus, Or, The Mode in a Discourse of Sumptuary Lawes*, 14.

<sup>129</sup> 8 October 1666, Robert Latham and William Matthews, eds, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: 1666*, vol. VII (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 315.

<sup>130</sup> Some credit Charles’s fashion with originating the three-piece suit. For more on Charles II and the vest, see Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 1-4; David Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550–1850* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), 1-2.

<sup>131</sup> COL/CA/01/01/19, 78v.

social climbing. As a young member of the urban nouveau riche, he could evidently afford to dress above his social status. The Court of Aldermen, keen to put Bradshaw in his place, ordered, 'that all the stuffinge & lyninges of one of his said hose shalbe cutt and pulled out presently' and he was to be led home through the streets to his Master's house, literally deflated.

Each time an apprentice lined his hose with silks or 'new draperies' and filled his pockets with stuffing, he lined the pockets of London merchants, shopkeepers, and traders. London authorities might temporarily redress stylish Londoners, but despite fines, protectionist policies, and the watchful eyes of the Church and the law, very little could stop Bradshaw from lining and restuffing his hose in an even more fashionable manner the following day. Nothing and no one could stop the increasingly inflating fashion industry and city of London itself.

## Chapter Four

### Owning and Bequeathing Clothes

In a unique seventeenth-century English painting, a deathly pale man sits up in bed, wearing only a loose-fitting white linen shirt (Figure 4.1). His eyes are downcast, looking towards his hands, which clutch a quill and a piece of paper with the words, ‘In you, O god, he hoped; in you did not despair; In you, O God, he was victorious, he wrote his last...’. We are witnessing the final hours of a dying man – whom an epitaph at the head of the bed reveals to be Thomas Braithwaite ‘of gentry stock, died 22 December, 1607, aged 31’. Our role as witnesses is an important one, for this painting records the moment Braithwaite began to write ‘his last...’ will and testament, the document that determined the manner in which his worldly goods would be distributed to friends and family. To Braithwaite’s left, his friend George Preston of Holker (identifiable by the coat of arms above his head) leans in, his rosy cheeks contrasting with Braithwaite’s pallor, and his unbuttoned coat and purple doublet signalling that this is an intimate moment in a private sphere.

Scenes like this must have occurred countless times in seventeenth-century England; Peter Spufford estimates that two million wills survive from between the mid-sixteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Larger studies are needed to estimate the proportion of people who made wills – it was clearly a more common practice amongst wealthier social groups, and for men rather than women – but various historians have estimated that they were made by between ten per cent and one third of adults.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Spufford, ‘A Printed Catalogue of the Names of Testators’, in *The Records of the Nation*, ed. G Martin and P Spufford (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), 169-70.

<sup>2</sup> In early seventeenth century Reading, approximately ten per cent of adults left wills, while in Kirkby Lonsdale in Cumbria, one third of adults buried in the early-seventeenth century left a will. These figures, from Nigel Goose, ‘Fertility and Mortality in Pre-Industrial English Towns from Probate and Parish Register Evidence’, in *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, ed. Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans, and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard’s Head Press, 2000), 193-95 and S. Coppel, ‘Wills and the community: a case study of Grantham’, in P. Riden, ed., *Probate records and the local community* (Gloucester, 1985), 78, are cited in Nigel Goose and Nesta Evans, ‘Wills as an Historical Source’, in *When Death Do Us Part*, ed. Arkell et al., 38-47.

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Figure 4.1:  
Unknown, *Thomas Braithwaite of Ambleside Making His Will*, 1607, oil on canvas,  
66 x 58.5cm, Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Cumbria.

This, however, is the only example of a painting of a will being made on a deathbed from this period.

Unmarried and childless, and head of a prominent family, Braithwaite distributed the majority of his property to Gawen, his younger brother. He also left sums of money to sisters and nieces, and books and paintings to his cousins and aunts. To his ‘old ancient servant Robt’ he left ‘a whole suit of apparell’ and to his servant William Bowel ‘likewise a suit of my apparell’. To Preston, who was appointed a supervisor of the will, he gave ten pounds.

Art historians have debated whether this extraordinary portrait was commissioned as proof that a will was made or as a *memento mori*.<sup>3</sup> Two additional versions of this scene survive, which probably predate this portrait and have a clear memorial function. While the portrait has limited provenance, it is clear that Preston spent his ten-pound legacy from Braithwaite on an expensive *Geneva Bible*, embellishing the front page with a miniature watercolour depicting this scene of his experience of witnessing his friend’s will. The third version, a wood panel after the miniature, was originally part of the panelling of the Brown Room at Holker Hall, Preston’s house.<sup>4</sup> Preston’s memorialisation of his friend, through a miniature and a panel – and perhaps also the larger painting – suggests how powerful the act of will-making could be, and how a meaningful bequest could have a strong impact on the recipient.

Keeping in mind this extraordinary image – a testament to the power of a will to transfer not only property but also strong emotional connections – this chapter explores the decisions made by Londoners in their wills about what to do with their clothing after death. As we saw in Chapter 2, the emergence of the idea of a ‘London look’ drove desire-led consumption. But what did Londoners think about the clothing they owned? How did

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<sup>3</sup> Nigel Llewellyn, *Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual C.1500 - C.1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991), 38; Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23-24.

<sup>4</sup> V30, ff 61-612 Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, York as cited in Robert Harding, ‘The Art of Dying: The Braithwaite Bible Miniature’, *The British Art Journal* 1, 1 (1999): 16-19.

they value it and describe it? Although it was often among the most valuable possessions, clothing is not often mentioned in great detail in probate inventories, either because it had already been given away before an inventory was taken, or because it was valued together as ‘all apparel’.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, probate inventories were not made by the owner of the goods, but rather by an appraiser valuing the goods of a deceased person. While household accounts, letters and diaries from Londoners show that clothing was considered and appreciated, not enough sources of this kind survive for a qualitative study. Documenting the moment the ownership of an object was transferred from one person to another, wills are useful sources for this kind of investigation, and as Jonathan Willis notes, they ‘sit at the intersection of the ecclesiastical, the personal and the legal’.<sup>6</sup> The church courts were responsible for the oversight of probate, although there was no uniform pattern of administration or format required for a will.<sup>7</sup> Usually dictated to a scribe and following a common formula that was adapted for the individual, wills offer a mediated but personalised sense of the wishes of the testator.<sup>8</sup> They also show how Londoners shared patterns of behaviour while having the freedom to decide how to describe and disperse their belongings.

### **About wills**

Take, for example, the will of London citizen and woolman Patrick Meake. In its format, it is representative of the majority of wills in this sample, but its content demonstrates the way that testators could use their last will and testament to communicate their final wishes

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<sup>5</sup> Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1996), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Willis, ‘Ecclesiastical Sources’, in *Understanding Early Modern Primary Sources*, ed. Laura Sangha and Jonathan Willis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 70.

<sup>7</sup> For a brief overview see Tom Arkell, ‘The Probate Process’, in Ariel, Evans, Goose, eds, *When Death Do Us Part*, (2000), 3-13.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Spufford has elegantly shown how personal and shared religious attitudes can be decoded in wills: Margaret Spufford, ‘Religious Preambles and the Scribes of Villagers’ Wills in Cambrigesgure, 1570-1700’, in Ariel, Evans, Goose, eds, *When Death Do Us Part*, (2000), 144-57. Susan James reads forceful subjectivity in women’s wills in Susan E. James, *Women’s Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485–1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

in a deeply personal way. And, as Meake's will demonstrates, many of these wishes were to do with clothes. He prepared his will in February of 1560 and began by stating his name and the date, and declaring that although he was 'sicke of boddie' he was still 'perfecte of mynde' and so was fit enough to declare his last will and testament.<sup>9</sup> As was conventional, Meake's first bequest was of his soul, which he offered to God.<sup>10</sup> This bequest was followed by several lines of religious statement (often a preamble decided by the scribe rather than the testator).<sup>11</sup> In this case, Meake mentioned the mercy that is shown to penitent sinners who rest 'unworthy' alongside Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He then bequeathed his 'carcas unto the yerth from whence hit cam' and asked to be buried alongside his late wife in the Church of All Hallows Barking 'nere to the Tower of London'. For his funeral, Meake requested that ten clerks accompany his body to the church, asking that the parson of St Peter Upon Cornhill say a few words to those in attendance. It makes sense that Meake should wish to be buried in his parish church, situated at the end of the street he lived on. But his wish to have the parson of St Peter Upon Cornhill attend the burial nods to his occupational identity as a woolman, for this church stood across the street from Leadenhall Market where wool was weighed, packed, stored, and sold (see Figure 4.2 for a map of locations mentioned in Meake's will).<sup>12</sup>

Having dealt with his body and soul, the rest of the will is dedicated to the dispersal of Meake's 'wordly goods'. As was common, he began by giving away his most valuable items; in this case, a 'broche of gold that ys in my hate' to his sister Elizabeth, and a gold ring with a white and black stone 'which was once my brother Robertes'. Such personal

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<sup>9</sup> Patrick Meake, 1560, The National Archives, PROB 11/43/620. Unless specified, all further wills are from this collection, and will be referenced by name, date proved, and catalogue number.

<sup>10</sup> Nigel Goose and Nesta Evans, 'Wills as an Historical Source', in Ariel, Evans, and Goose, eds, *When Death Do Us Part*, 47-50.

<sup>11</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, C.1400-c.1580*, Second (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 505-15; Margaret Spufford, 'Religious Preambles and the Scribes of Villagers' Wills in Cambridgeshire, 1570-1700', in Ariel, Evans, and Goose, eds, *When Death Do Us Part*, (2000), 144-157.

<sup>12</sup> John Stow records that in his youth, Leadenhall contained common beams for weighing wool and space for stowing wool sacks, and in the lofts above painters worked on pageant materials, and wool winders, packers, and merchants rented loft space to wind, pack, and store their woollens. *A Survey of London written in the year 1598 by John Stow*, ed. Antonia Fraser (Stroud: The History Press, 2005), 150.

details – mentioning that the brooch was worn in his hat and that the ring was associated with his brother – show how dress accessories were more than just fashionable or valuable pieces. In addition, they could carry personal memories and meanings known to those who inherited them. Clothing and dress accessories also acquired meaning through being given in wills – Meake gave these two items to his sister in thanks for the ‘greate paines she hath taken with me in my sickenes’, along with £3 in ‘currante monney’. Next, he gave his ‘best furred gowne’ and two shirts to her husband, his brother-in-law Arture, stating that these items had already been ‘appointed for him whiche my sister doe knowe’. Such a statement indicates how testators might prepare for death by discussing their plans for their wardrobes with family and friends. To his brother George, Meake gave his ‘furred cassocke’. He then disposed of his other valuable household goods – a bed ‘which was once my mothers’ and a silver goblet – before returning to gifts of clothing. To Thomas, one of his brother Robert’s servants, who had cared for him in sickness, Meake gave two doublets with his trus of white fustian, and his petticoat ‘all this beinge upon my backe in my syckenes tyme’, along with a black cloth coat with sleeves, his ‘late’ morning coat, and a ‘paire of blacke hosen which the botcher made wyder for me in the legge.’<sup>13</sup> Such a large bequest – of seven garments – suggests how indebted Meake felt to the servant Thomas, who would have been able to either wear them himself or sell on these items. The close association between Meake and Thomas is suggested by the proximity of these particular garments to Meake’s sick body – a petticoat would have been worn under his doublet, next to his shirt – and given that they were worn in ‘syckenes tyme’ were probably the garments Meake died in.<sup>14</sup> Along with the outer garments of a sleeved coat and mourning gown, the

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<sup>13</sup> In this case ‘trus’ probably refers to a close-fitting jacket, although in the plural ‘trusses’ denote tight short breeches which held up the stockings. ‘truss, n.’. *OED Online*. December 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/206993?rskey=pObN2l&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed December 31, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> The word petticoat, when referring to male dress, relates not to a skirt but to a short coat or waistcoat. Valerie Cumming, C. W. Cunnington, and P. E. Cunnington, *The Dictionary of Fashion History* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 155-56.

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Figure 4.2:

The locations mentioned in Patrick Meake's will on the Agas Map in detail (left), and in the wider perspective of the city with selected area outlined (right).

*Civitas Londinvm* (1562?), 'The Agas Map'. *The Map of Early Modern London*, ed. Janelle Jenstad (*MoEML*, 2012), <https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/agas.htm>.

bequeathed black hose, already altered by a botcher, completed a full outfit for Thomas. Although Meake did not bequeath new gowns to his family or friends for mourning, the gift of his own mourning gown to Thomas might have been intended to give the servant an appropriate garment to wear to the funeral. To his brother William, named executor of the will, Meake left ‘thre yardes one quarter of blacke satten that is in one of my chests amongst my books and also my dagger’, stating that this bequest was conditional on William acting as a guardian: ‘trustinge that he will set my ij daughters [...] to see them bounde prentice whereby they maye have some knowledge to helpe to gett their lyvinge in this worlde’.<sup>15</sup> With such an amount of satin, William might have made a doublet or cloak.<sup>16</sup> The rest of Meake’s goods, and his house in Seething Lane were to be sold and the money left to these two daughters, Christian and Mary. The will was then signed by two witnesses: Arthur Gibbyns, presumably a neighbour, friend, or brother-in-law, and Meake’s brother George. In November, sometime after Meake’s death, William proved the will at court, and would have also submitted an inventory of Meake’s possessions and debts along with it.<sup>17</sup> William’s responsibility was to ensure that his brother’s wishes were carried out, and whatever he chose to do with his three and a quarter yards of satin, this textile would have reminded him of his relationship with his brother and his obligations to his family.

Meake’s will is illustrative of how much information about clothing is contained in early modern wills, not least that it was a popular bequest; fifteen of the eighteen bequests of ‘worldly goods’ given by Meake were clothes, clothing textiles, or accessories. Wills show that clothes were economically and emotionally valuable, and could be given in various

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<sup>15</sup> This seems to be a rare request. For more on female apprentices, see Laura Gowing, ‘Girls on Forms: Apprenticing Young Women in Seventeenth-Century London’, *Journal of British Studies* 55, 3 (2016): 447-73.

<sup>16</sup> This would also depend on the width of the satin. Juan de Alcega’s printed tailoring manual includes patterns for a doublet which requires 2 yards 27 inches of silk 22 inches wide, and a cloak that requires 2 yards 32 1/2 inches of cloth 66 inches wide. Juan de Alcega, *Libro de Geometria, practica y traça* (1589) as cited in Janet Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion 3: The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women, c1560-1620* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1985), 4-5.

<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, as the National Archives states, ‘the vast majority of inventories compiled before 1661 and exhibited in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, have not survived’, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C12113>.

states of repair. Clothing was sometimes described in wills by its textile, colour, decoration, storage or even past alterations. Meake's will reveals that a man might store his satin in a chest alongside his books, and indicates that clothing was sometimes put aside by a testator for the intended recipient prior to death. As a gift, clothing might carry an obligation to support the surviving family, or be in thanks for care already given in a time of sickness. Wills sometimes give us a fleeting but sharp image of what a sick man was wearing on his deathbed to keep warm, or record the intimate conversations between a dying man and his sister about which two shirts would be given to her husband. Bequeathed clothing may call to mind the personal style of its former owner, or may be associated with a long line of former owners who had passed the object on through family, friends, or even servants and carers.

This chapter explores the decisions made by Londoners about what happened to their clothing after death. It looks at patterns of bequests to find out how men and women described their garments and chose to leave them to friends and family. It also discusses the range of garments and accessories, textiles, colours, and decorative embellishments recorded in wills. But as we have seen with Meake's will, other information about clothing – its making, alteration, storage, and the way it was worn – is also included in some wills and will also be discussed. The chapter will combine qualitative and quantitative evidence from wills to discover how Londoners connected to one another and their city through their clothes. Paying close attention to the ways they described and distributed clothing through wills, it incorporates scholarship from the emerging field of the history of emotions to discover how clothing conveyed emotional connections in life and death. Finally, it looks at the afterlife of garments, exploring how bequeathed clothes were accepted, understood, worn, and valued by legatees.

The sample was selected from those catalogued in the National Archives as being from the 'City of London', taking twenty wills proved from the '0' year of each decade between 1560 and 1660. Wills were selected at random, with no preference for gender, status, or occupation. A total sample of 220 wills was taken from a possible total of 875

wills from these years, so the sample represents approximately a quarter of the extant wills.<sup>18</sup> Wills that were illegible or incorrectly listed as being from the City of London were discarded.

All of these wills (Meake's included) are the clerical copies of wills proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, the highest court in which to prove a will in England. In theory, although not always in practice, each testator at the court needed to be worth more than £5 (£10 in London and Lincoln) or own property in more than one diocese.<sup>19</sup> These wills, therefore, predominantly represent the middling to wealthier inhabitants of London.<sup>20</sup> The benefit of using Prerogative Court wills is that the sample captures Londoners from across the city. A map of all of the named locations mentioned in the wills (streets, parish churches, and sites) shows that this sample covers the broad span of the city from St Martin's Field and Charing Cross in the west to East Smithfield and from Bankside in Southwark to Shoreditch in the north (Figure 4.3). The majority of testators, nearly 68%, were members of one of London's companies, six identified themselves as gentlemen, and two men defined themselves as servants (Table 4.1).

## Custom

Of the 46 women in the sample (21%), 38 were widows, 5 were unmarried maidens or spinsters. Only two women were 'wives', which is unsurprising, given that married women had to ask for their husband's permission before making a will.<sup>21</sup> As a *feme covert* under

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<sup>18</sup> My sample was gained by searching 'City of London' in the 'place' category of the PRO 11 collection, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/wills-1384-1858/>. Twenty wills for each '0' year were taken. In 1560 25 wills were available, 1570 36, 1580 23, 1590 56, 1600 36, 1610 87, 1620 64, 1630 72, 1640 100, 1650 166, and 1660 210.

<sup>19</sup> Miriam Scott, *Prerogative Court of Canterbury: Wills and Other Probate Records*, Public Record Office Readers' Guide 15 (Surrey: PRO Publications, 1997), x-xi.

<sup>20</sup> On using wills to learn more about clothing of the poor, see Danae Tankard, "'A Pair of Grass-Green Woollen Stockings': The Clothing of the Rural Poor in Seventeenth-Century Sussex", *Textile History* 43, 1 (2012): 5-22.

<sup>21</sup> Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), 139-43.

common law in England, a woman's legal identity was 'covered' or subsumed by her husband. Upon marriage, all of the wife's moveable goods became the property of her husband. 'Paraphernalia' – a woman's clothes, jewels, bed linens, and plate – could be sold or given away by a husband at any time after marriage, but upon his death these goods reverted to the wife.<sup>22</sup> Some wills include reference to this practice, such as when the haberdasher Edward Hussey specifically noted that he would leave his wife 'her owne Wearinge Apparrell bothe woollen and linnen'.<sup>23</sup> Hussey's decision to grant his wife 'her owne' clothes in his will marks the legal transition of her wardrobe into her possession, even if through his language it is clear that he already considered these garments to be 'hers'. Given the high rate of remarriage, a result of the surplus of men in late-sixteenth and early seventeenth century London, many women brought their former husband's property into their next marriage.<sup>24</sup> Gerrarde Jansson, dwelling in east Smithfield, left his wife £100 'being by her broughte into marriage together with all her apparrell linnen and woollen servinge her bodie'.<sup>25</sup> Edward Lister mentioned that his wife would inherit all goods that she had brought with her into the marriage, including that 'which shee did enjoye from her former and hir (too often remembred) kynde husband'.<sup>26</sup>

Ecclesiastical law of the City of London (and also York and Wales) obliged freemen and citizens to leave 'reasonable parts' to their wives and offspring. If married and childless, a man could only bequeath half of his moveable goods as he wished; the other half belonged by law to his widow. If he had children, the wife was entitled to a third, the children to a third, and the final third was to be bequeathed as the man wished. As Robert

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<sup>22</sup> Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, 24-26, 28.

<sup>23</sup> Edward Hussey, 1630, PROB 11/158/553.

<sup>24</sup> See Vivien Brodsky, 'Widows in Late Elizabethan London: Remarriage, Economic Opportunity and Family Orientations', in *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure*, ed. Lloyd Bonfield et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 122-54; Jeremy Boulton, 'London Widowhood Revisited: The Decline of Female Remarriage in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Continuity and Change* 5, 3 (1990): 323-55.

<sup>25</sup> Gerrarde Jansson, 1590, PROB 11/75/431.

<sup>26</sup> Edward Lister, 1620, PROB 11/135/365.

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Figure 4.3:  
 Map highlighting all the named places in the sample of 220 wills.  
*Civitas Londinum* (1562?), ‘The Agas Map’. *The Map of Early Modern London*. ed. Janelle Jenstad (MoEML, 2012), <https://mapoflon-don.uvic.ca/agas.htm>.

Table 4.1 Occupations in the London sample

<b>Table 4.1</b>		
<b>Occupation / Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage of sample</b>
<b>Alderman</b>	2	0.9
<b>Member of a company</b>	149	67.7
<b>Gentleman</b>	6	2.7
<b>Servant</b>	2	0.9
<b>Strangers (both merchants)</b>	2	0.9
<b>Unknown male</b>	13	5.9
<b>Total men</b>	174	79
<b>Wife</b>	2	0.9
<b>Spinster / Maiden</b>	5	2.3
<b>Widow</b>	38	17.3
<b>Unknown woman</b>	1	0.5
<b>Total woman</b>	46	21
<b>Total</b>	220	100

Smarte noted in his will, this discretionary third was ‘comonly called the deade [man’s] parte’.<sup>27</sup> Many London wills referred to this custom of ‘thirds’ or ‘reasonable parts’, and its link to the City. Thomas Onslowe, a grocer, decided ‘yf it shall hereafter happen or chance me the saide Thomas Onslowe to die and departe this lief within the Citte of London and to inhabite or dwell within the same Cittie at the tyme of my deathe then I will my gooddes to be devided & parted amongst my wife children and executers according to the laudable custome of the same Cittie’. If he died outside of London, it is unclear how his goods were to be divided.<sup>28</sup> Thomas Tirrell elided the custom of ‘thirds’ with ‘paraphernalia’ in his will when he declared: ‘Herein also I doe not forgett but doe will and leave according to the laudable custom of London unto my lovinge wife all her wearing apparrell, her wearing linnen and other necessaries which by custome she ought to have.’ Even though some of her ‘Apparell, necessaries and chamber furnished’ were in Essex and so lay outside City jurisdiction, Tirrell stated that he was happy to include them: ‘I mention them in this place [i.e. Woodford in Essex] yet are to be taken out of my estate before the devisions thereof into thredes [thirds] and it is to be accompted as hers by custom and whereto I willingly yeeld.’<sup>29</sup>

Although many testators referred to the custom as ‘laudable’, the emotional impact of such restrictions bubbles under the surface of some wills. Butcher Robert Pepper did not mention clothing in his will, though the charged language and explicit threats demonstrate how such a custom might impact both wife and offspring. His eldest sons Robert and John, Pepper explained, ‘hath bene unto me verie costlie children in manie wayes and have expended me great somes of money farre exceedinge that porcion which as they mighte by any ways clame by the custome of the cittie’. First Pepper declared that he did not want either of them to ‘have ainie parte or portions of my goodes chattells or

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<sup>27</sup> Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, 170-71; Robert Smarte, 1570, PROB 11/52/533.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Onslowe, 1560, PROB 11/43/323.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Tirrell, 1600, PROB 11/95/232.

debtes by the custome of the said Cittie of London'. But then Pepper's fatherly attachment softened his resolve and he changed his mind: 'yet for that they are my sonnes and children of my bodie begotten and for that they nor neither of them shall after my decease molest vexe nor trouble my saide wief nor my little children of her bodie begotten I will and bequeathe unto either of them Twentie poundes.' Such money was emotionally loaded, given in acknowledgement that his sons were flesh and blood, from his 'bodie begotten', and as a bribe to prevent them from 'vex[ing]' their stepmother and stepsiblings.<sup>30</sup>

Goods, including clothing, were not, then, entirely free to give away, and so wills are evidence of individuals working within restrictions or attempting to subvert the laws and prevent future discord. Any bequests should be read as carefully considered wishes, even if they were a compromise.

### **Making a will**

Making a will was an important activity, expected of all good Christian men. Thomas Onslowe explained that although he was 'in good helth of my boddie thanks be to god' he decided to write his will in August 1556 'remembringe the uncertaine hower of death which most certainly shall come'. His will was proved on 15 May 1560, meaning that he died less than four years after making this declaration.<sup>31</sup> Although Onslowe's preparedness was encouraged by the church, he was unusual. The majority of wills were written when the testator was sick and dying. Of this sample, only 11% of testators declared that they were writing a will when they were not sick. 76% of testators declared that they were unwell and one testator named George Wimbishe explained that he was writing his will before a dangerous sea voyage.<sup>32</sup> Some testators went into further details about their health. John Newton of St Dunstan in the East made his will in 1619 declaring that he was 77 years old

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<sup>30</sup> Robert Pepper, 1580, PROB 11/62/470.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Onslowe, 1560, PROB 11/43/323.

<sup>32</sup> George Wimbish, 1620, PROB 11/135/281.

and sick.<sup>33</sup> The haberdasher Emmanuel Stallin said that he was ‘aged and feeble’.<sup>34</sup> Robert Potkins was compelled to make a will ‘feeling sicknes and weaknes to contynue uppon me’,<sup>35</sup> while Elizabeth Rippin of St Sepulchre (without Newgate) was ‘aged and weake and crazie in bodye’.<sup>36</sup> Over 82% testators in this sample made their wills within a year of their will being proved at court, suggesting that they correctly anticipated their death.

A number of printed manuals advised men and women how to die well. One manual, Thomas Becon’s *The Sick Man’s Salve* (1558), was so popular that it went through at least twenty-nine editions and directly influenced the wording of wills.<sup>37</sup> It is written as a fictional dialogue between a dying man and his visiting friends and neighbours who advise him on how to write a last will and testament, help him to make a final confession, and allay his fears about death. One of his neighbours, Philemon, asks the sick man whether he has made a will ‘for such things ought to be considered, when we be most perfect in health’, but the dying man has not made a will: ‘I thought not that the time of my life had bene so short’.<sup>38</sup> Andrew Rudd’s nuncupative will – a verbal account given when there was not enough time to prepare a written will – made on his deathbed at home in St Sepulchre (without Newgate) demonstrates that Londoners really did encourage their neighbours to settle their estates before death. Four days before he died:

being demanded by one Samuell Brooke a neighbour of his whether he had settled things (meaning whether hee had made a will or otherwise disposed of his estate) [Rudd] answered what would you have me to do for what estate I have I will give it all unto my wife and my child for I knowe she wilbe a good mother unto her. And

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<sup>33</sup> John Newton, 1620, PROB 11/135/274.

<sup>34</sup> Emmanuel Stallin, 1640, PROB 11/182/149.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Potkins, 1640, PROB 11/184/563.

<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth Rippin, 1660, PROB 11/297/122.

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Marsh surveyed wills from the diocese of Ely between 1586 and 1693, finding sixty-seven wills that used Becon’s preamble. Christopher Marsh, “‘Departing Well and Christianly’: Will-Making and Popular Religion in Early Modern England”, in *Religion and the English People: New Voices, New Perspectives*, ed. Eric Carlson (Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1998), 201-45. See also Mary Hampson Patterson, *Domesticating the Reformation: Protestant Best Sellers, Private Devotion, and the Revolution of English Piety* (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), 103-5.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Becon, *The Sicke Mans Salve Wherein the Faithfull Christians May Learne Both How to Behaue Them Selues Patiently and Thankefully in the Tyme of Sickenes, and Also Vertuously to Dispose Their Temporall Goods, and Finally to Prepare Themselves Gladlye and Godlye to Die* (London: John Day, 1568), 117-18.

the said Samuell Brooke demanded further whether he had any kindred or friends that he would give any thinges unto, the said Andrewe Rudd answered noe.<sup>39</sup>

Even if they had not managed to write a will before death, many Londoners discussed their plans with friends and family. When in December 1650 Roger Greendon made a nuncupative will on his deathbed, his wife gently reminded him, ‘sweete heart you have often said you would give your sister Drasett twenty pounds and something to her children’.<sup>40</sup>

In *A Sick Man’s Salve*, the neighbours all agree with the sick man that a will is necessary ‘to set an order in such worldly goods as God hath let me [that] after my departure there be no [...] strife for them, among such as I most wish to be linked together with’.<sup>41</sup> Some wills in the sample bear evidence of similar motivations. The musician Ralph Stratchey was so worried that his son and daughter would fight over his belongings, that he asked for his possessions – including his linens, woollens, and wearing apparel – to be ‘inventaried and appraized by two honest men of this city’ so that his children ‘doe not quarrell one with the other about the division’.<sup>42</sup> Even more worryingly, as the gentleman Edward Stripling explained, he needed to make a will ‘for preventing and avoydeing of suites in law and controversies which may ensue after my decease for neglect of not settling of my estate in my life time’.<sup>43</sup>

While testators would have wanted to avoid conflict, the primary purpose of wills for those with close family was to ensure their continued support in financial and material terms. When Richard Hilles prepared his will in late 1587, he made sure his sick son would be taken care of, even ensuring that all apparel and linen ‘presentlye beinge in my litle house withoute Bishoppes Gate where my son Gerson Hilles liethe’ should not be sold until after his son had died. Then, these clothes, along with Gerson’s shirts, were bequeathed to

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<sup>39</sup> Andrew Rudd, 1630, PROB 11/158/297.

<sup>40</sup> Roger Greendon, 1650, PROB 11/214/780.

<sup>41</sup> Becon, *The Sicke Mans Salve*, 117-18.

<sup>42</sup> Ralph Stratchey, 1650, PROB 11/211/751.

<sup>43</sup> Edward Stripling, 1650, PROB 11/211/631.

Anthony, Richard's apprentice.<sup>44</sup> Many other London citizens took care of their apprentices in their wills, often releasing them from a portion of their apprenticeship and gifting them tools, money and clothing. Wills also show that Londoners tried to provide sustaining emotional support to their families, friends and colleagues. The cutler William Hodson asked his two supervisors to aid and assist his wife in executing the will 'and otherwyse as she shall have neede of their good councele and frendshippes'.<sup>45</sup> John Farmerye asked his wife to exercise 'motherlie care' for his children.<sup>46</sup> Susan Dalmare asked her three children to be 'obedient' to their father, 'praying hym to have a fatherlie care over them'.<sup>47</sup>

### **Clothing and emotions**

Following the pleas of *Annales* school historians, scholars in the emerging field of the history of emotions have drawn attention to the ways that emotional expression is shaped by culture through societal expectations, religious teachings, behavioural manuals, familial structures, gender politics, and friendship groups. Emotions have also been seen as a force for historical change, as they can prompt behaviour and shape the way that people communicate with one another.<sup>48</sup> Wills offer evidence of emotions in two ways: in Barbara Rosenwein's terms, they include emotional 'utterances' (using emotional language) and 'gestures' (wills legally require the transfer of money and belongings from one person to another, a transfer often motivated by the emotions of the testator which may also provoke

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<sup>44</sup> Richard Hilles, 1590, PROB 11/75/400.

<sup>45</sup> William Hodson, 1580, PROB 11/62/335.

<sup>46</sup> John Farmerye, 1590, PROB 11/75/228.

<sup>47</sup> Susan Dalmare, 1590, PROB 11/76/27.

<sup>48</sup> For an overview of the field, see William M. Reddy, 'Historical Research on the Self and Emotions', *Emotion Review* 1, 4 (2009): 302-15 and Barbara Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions', *American Historical Review* (June 2002), 821-45. On emotional regimes see William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and on emotional communities see Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

an emotional response by the recipient).<sup>49</sup> In her study of wills made in York between 1400 and 1600, Lisa Liddy suggests that emotions only began to be voiced in wills with the shift to the vernacular in the sixteenth century, as most testators, executors, and witnesses would have been unable to understand the Latin used by scribes until at least the late fifteenth century.<sup>50</sup> However, even in the English wills in her sample, Liddy admits that emotional utterances are ‘rare’.<sup>51</sup> In this sample of London wills, however, all written in English, such language abounds, demonstrating both the emotional acuity of the testator, and his or her sensitivity to the feelings of friends and family, who would feel both emotional and financial turmoil after the death. Testators in this sample clearly saw the medium of the will as an appropriate place to express deep feelings of love and care, as when Elizabeth Billingsly asked to be buried in the church of St Olaves ‘as neere the bodie of my dearly beloved and kinde husbände as possibly can be’.<sup>52</sup> Anger and fear were also voiced, less frequently but with vehemence, as when the sadler Thomas Hollowaye used his will to chastise his sons who had been ‘greedy and covetous’ and had entered into bonds which, he believed, would cause them to lose land and property. Nevertheless, he noted that ‘Elizabeth my wyfe being thaire mother will have a speicall care to do them good yf she finde them willing to endeavor themselves to live orderly’.<sup>53</sup> Many wills show a complex muddle of emotions, mixing feelings of duty, care, and anxiety, as when Edward Bentley worried about the fate of his ‘poore helpless sister Elisabeth’ and bequeathed her his house upon his death in 1660.<sup>54</sup> The scrivener John Atkins lamented that he did not have ‘more to give’ his ‘most lovinge wife Mary Atkyns [...] ffor if I had tenn tymes as much as I have it were nothinge answerable to that which shee hath deserved at my hands for the sweete

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<sup>49</sup> For more on emotional communities see Rosenwein, ‘Worrying about Emotions’; Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* and Barbara Rosenwein, ‘Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions’, *Passions in Context: International Journal for the History and Theory of Emotions* 1, 1 (2010): 1-33.

<sup>50</sup> Lisa Liddy, ‘Affective Bequests: Creating Emotion in York Wills, 1400–1600’, in *Understanding Emotions in Early Europe*, ed. Michael Champion and Andrew Lynch (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2015), 276.

<sup>51</sup> Lisa Liddy, ‘Affective Bequests’, 277.

<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Billingsly, 1640, PROB 11/184/74.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Hollowaye, 1590, PROB 11/76/148.

<sup>54</sup> Edward Bentley, 1660, PROB 11/298/377.

disposition love and affectionate care shee hath shewed to mee and myne'.<sup>55</sup> William Nodes, a butcher, echoed this feeling when he said that the customary two-thirds of his belongings left to his 'loving wife Ellenor' were 'two little for her'.<sup>56</sup>

Clothing became laden with these feelings when bequeathed at a profoundly emotional moment – on the deathbed. Garments and accessories could convey love and were often given out of a sense of duty and to provide physical and emotional comfort. Sometimes emotional utterances and gestures were combined, making explicit the connection between the gifted garment and the underlying feelings that motivated the bequest. When leaving his son Ralphe a gold ring and his third best shirt, Robert Smarte reminded him that this was 'to th intent that he shall consider his duetie' to his mother, brother, and sisters.<sup>57</sup> When leaving a black beaver hat, two pairs of silk stockings (black and tawny), and a black mourning cloak to his brother Roger, William Edwardes mentioned that he offered them with 'brotherlie love'.<sup>58</sup>

Peter Stearns has suggested that rising consumerism in the eighteenth century led to a change in emotional expression, and that bequests of household items in eighteenth-century wills demonstrate a 'vivid connection between objects and emotions' which were a 'a new way to express love'.<sup>59</sup> However, as this chapter suggests, bequests of objects either explicitly or implicitly connected to emotions can be traced at least two centuries earlier.<sup>60</sup> While Liddy did not find as many open expressions of emotion in her sample of wills from 1400 to 1600, she too interprets bequests of household objects and clothing as emotional gestures. Objects, she states, 'were reflective, but also constitutive, of an emotional relationship between the deceased and his chosen recipients'. However, Liddy rejects

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<sup>55</sup> John Atkins, 1640, PROB 11/184/150.

<sup>56</sup> William Nodes, 1660, PROB 11/297/149.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Smarte, 1570, PROB 11/52/533.

<sup>58</sup> William Edwardes, 1610, PROB 11/116/621.

<sup>59</sup> Peter N. Stearns, 'Modern Patterns in Emotions History' in *Doing Emotions History* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 32, 17-40.

<sup>60</sup> Martha Howell also found meaningful bequests of objects in her close reading of one hundred and fifty wills from late medieval Douai. Martha C. Howell, 'Fixing Movables: Gifts by Testament in Late Medieval Douai', *Past & Present* 150 (1996), 3-45.

Rosenwein's suggestion that a 'panoply of sources' should be studied in order to understand an 'emotional community', and restricts her investigation to the linguistic descriptions of objects in her sample of wills.<sup>61</sup> In this way, she follows William Reddy, whose *The Navigation of Feelings* (2001) placed importance on linguistic expressions of emotions, what he termed 'emotives'.<sup>62</sup> Monique Scheer has built on Reddy's work by showing emotions as physical bodily practices.<sup>63</sup> In only focusing on words, Liddy misses the chance to make a close study of the objects bequeathed in wills and how they interacted with the bodies of both testator and recipient. The significance of objects was raised through their materials, visual, and tactile appeal, information about their manufacture, and their cultural meaning. In material terms, different textiles and colours could even evoke different emotional registers, most explicitly through sombre and substantial mourning garments, but also intimate linens worn next to the skin, or in joyful or playful hues and decorations. The sample of wills that form the core evidence for this chapter are studied in combination with visual and material sources to explore what it meant for this 'emotional community' of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Londoners to own, bequeath, inherit, and reuse clothing. Rosenwein has recently called for the 'integration of the history of emotions into "regular" history'.<sup>64</sup> In keeping with her plea, rather than placing emotions at the heart of this investigation, this chapter pays close attention to emotional utterances and gestures, integrating them into this exploration of the importance of clothing in life and at death.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Liddy, 'Affective Bequests', 273, 287.

<sup>62</sup> Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*.

<sup>63</sup> Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory* 51, 2 (2012): 193-220.

<sup>64</sup> Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns', *History and Theory* 49, 2 (2010): 260.

<sup>65</sup> On the importance of incorporating material culture and histories of the body into the history of emotions, see Laura Kounine, 'Emotions, Mind, and Body on Trial: A Cross-Cultural Perspective', *Journal of Social History* 51, 3 (2017): 1-12.

## Clothing bequests

Taking into account bequests of previously-owned garments, new garments, and the provision of mourning apparel, clothing was bequeathed by 53% of London testators in this sample (117 of the 220). Such a rate remained fairly consistent between 1560 and 1660, as Table 4.2 demonstrates. There was a slight decrease in this proportion in the seventeenth century, following a peak in 1600 (when 85% of testators left clothing in their wills), although 50% of testators in the 1650s and 60s left clothing. These results are markedly higher than those found in previous studies of wills from the period. Clothing was given as a bequest in just under a third (30.5%) of the wills examined by Maria Hayward that span the earlier sixteenth century.<sup>66</sup> In their study of wills from Elizabethan Essex, Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm-Davies found that just 20.9% mentioned clothing.<sup>67</sup> Only about 10% of all wills of tradesmen from Newcastle upon Tyne, studied by Gwendolynn Heley, included clothing bequests.<sup>68</sup>

Also setting apart this London sample from previous studies of early modern English wills is the fact that clothing was given by a high proportion of both men and women. 61% of women (28 of 46) and 51% of men (89 of 174) bequeathed their own clothes, new clothing, and funeral garments. Even if we discount those who only left provisions to buy mourning garments or make charitable bequests of clothing for the poor without mentioning their own clothes, the rate of bequests is still high at 34% of men (60 of 174) and 52% of women (24 of 46) (Table 4.2). Such figures contrast strikingly with other studies of early modern wills that have argued that bequeathing clothing was a

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<sup>66</sup> Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 111.

<sup>67</sup> Jane Malcolm-Davies and Ninya Mikhaila, 'What Essex Men Wore: An Investigation into Elizabethan Dress Recorded in Wills 1558 to 1603', in *Textiles and Text: Re-Establishing the Links between Archival and Object-Based Research: Postprints*, ed. Maria Hayward and Elizabeth Kramer (London: Archetype Publications, 2007), 18-22.

<sup>68</sup> Gwendolynn Heley, 'The Material Culture of the Tradesmen of Newcastle upon Tyne 1545 -1642: The Durham Probate Record Evidence' (PhD Thesis, Durham University, 2007), 78, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6116141.pdf>.

Table 4.2	Y=yes N=no	(m) = men (w) = women											
Bequests	1560	1570	1580	1590	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650	1660	Overall	
Clothing of any kind	13 Y 7 N	8 Y 12 N	16 Y 4 N	12 Y 8 N	17 Y 3 N	8 Y 12 N	6 Y 14 N	10 Y 10 N	7 Y 13 N	10 Y 10 N	10 Y 10 N	117 Y 103 N	
Men mention clothing of any kind	10 Y 7 N	7 Y 12 N	12 Y 4 N	11 Y 6 N	15 Y 2 N	6 Y 7 N	6 Y 13 N	6 Y 7 N	4 Y 12 N	6 Y 6 N	6 Y 9 N	89 Y 85 N	
Women mention clothing of any kind	3 Y 0 N	1 Y 0 N	4 Y 0 N	1 Y 2 N	2 Y 1 N	2 Y 5 N	0 Y 1 N	4 Y 3 N	3 Y 1 N	4 Y 4 N	4 Y 1 N	28 Y 18 N	
Men mention own clothing	10 Y 7 N	7 Y 12 N	12 Y 4 N	11 Y 6 N	15 Y 2 N	6 Y 7 N	6 Y 13 N	6 Y 7 N	4 Y 7 N	4 Y 12 N	6 Y 6 N	89 Y 85 N	
Women mention own clothing	2 Y 1 Y	1 Y 0 N	2 Y 2 N	1 Y 2 N	2 Y 1 N	2 Y 5 N	0 Y 1 N	4 Y 3 N	3 Y 1 N	3 Y 5 N	4 Y 1 N	24 Y 22 N	
Clothing given for the poor	1(m)Y 19 N	2 (m) Y 18 N	8 (6m, 2w) Y 12 N	3 (m) Y 17 N	2 (1m, 1w) Y 18 N	0 Y 20 N	0 Y 20 N	1 (m) Y 19 N	1 (m) Y 19 N	0 Y 20 N	0 Y 20 N	18 (15m, 3 w) Y 202 N	
Mourning Garments	10 (8m, 2w) Y 10 N	5 (4m, 1w) Y 15 N	14 (11m, 3w) Y 6 N	10 (m) Y 10 N	7 (5m, 2w) Y 13 N	2 (m) Y 18 N	4 (m) Y 16 N	2 (1m, 1w) Y 18 N	5 (2m, 3w) Y 15 N	5 (3m, 2w) Y 15 N	4 (3m, 1w) Y 16 N	68 (53m, 15w) Y 152 N	

Table 4.2:

Bequests in the London sample

gendered practice. Examining wills from Birmingham and Sheffield, Maxine Berg only found clothing in the bequests of 15.6% of Birmingham men and 7.2% of Sheffield men, compared to 27% of Birmingham women and 25.6% of Sheffield women.<sup>69</sup> While she discovered that women described each item of clothing and left it to friends and family, Berg claimed that ‘though [men] did bequeath their clothes, [they] rarely left any details of them’.<sup>70</sup> This led her to conclude that ‘few men appear to have attached personal identity to their clothing significant enough for them to make individual bequests of items of apparel’.<sup>71</sup> For Berg, wills demonstrated that women ‘to a far higher degree than men noticed their possessions, attached value and emotional significance to these, and integrated them into the web of their familial and community relationships’.<sup>72</sup> Such a claim has been repeated by historians, such as Keith Thomas, who suggested that ‘[p]erhaps domestic chattels were more important to women than to men because that was often all they had to leave’.<sup>73</sup> Despite discovering thick descriptions of clothing bequeathed to friends by Hamon Le Strange (1583-1654), Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths still claimed that ‘we have to agree with Berg’s conclusion’.<sup>74</sup> However, the bequests made by Le Strange (who bought his finest clothing during business trips to London), of such sumptuously described garments as a ‘black figured satin suite’ and a ‘gray cloak lined and open at the arms with flat buttons ash colour and tawny’, were not as unusual in his time, as this study shows, particularly amongst men of his status who were purchasing and wearing fine clothing in the capital. In

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<sup>69</sup> Maxine Berg, ‘Women’s Consumption and the Industrial Classes of Eighteenth-Century England’, *Journal of Social History* 30, 2 (1996): 420.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 421.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 429.

<sup>73</sup> Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 126. More recently, Miles Lambert has called Berg’s claims ‘exaggerated’, with reference to a sample of 142 published wills from Cheshire towns between 1651 and 1760 which showed 8% of men and 20% of women in Ashton and Sale and 17% of men and 25% women in Bowden bequeathed clothing, in Miles Lambert, ‘Death and Memory: Clothing Bequests in English Wills 1650–1830’, *Costume* 48, 1 (2014): 46.

<sup>74</sup> Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 152.

London, at the very least, investing time and effort in describing clothing bequests was a practice shared by a majority of men and women.

The average number of garments bequeathed by the 38% of London testators who used their wills to give away their own clothing is also higher than in other studies. A total of 234 garments were bequeathed by the twenty-four women who bequeathed their own clothing in their wills, averaging 9.8 garments per bequest. Sixty men bequeathed their own clothing, and gave away 228 garments, averaging 3.8 garments per bequest. Such numbers far exceed those discovered in Kristen Burkholder's study of late medieval wills from the Husting Court and Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Her sample, comprised of a similar mix of urban artisans, merchants, professionals, gentry, and nobles, calculated that women gave an average of 2.8 items of clothing, and men 1.5.<sup>75</sup> Clearly, Londoners from the 1560s to 1660s bequeathed clothing with far greater frequency than those living in the city a century before.

How can these significantly higher findings in the London sample be explained? Perhaps the greater incidence of clothing, both in terms of quantity of garments given, and in the number of testators who mentioned it, simply reflects the greater wealth of the testators compared with their contemporaries in the country and their urban ancestors. Or maybe clothing held a greater importance for people living in an increasingly consumer-driven city. Sixty-five testators belonged to companies directly connected with the clothing industry; clothing might have been acutely important to the men who gained their living from it (see Table 4.3). Nevertheless, these wills demonstrate that London men and women both expressed personal attachments and placed value in clothing with greater frequency and at a higher rate than previous studies have discovered. Clothes mattered to Londoners, even – or perhaps especially – when they were on their deathbeds.

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<sup>75</sup> Kristen Burkholder, 'Threads Bared: Dress and Textiles in Late Medieval English Wills', in *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, ed. Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, vol. 1 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), 136. Staples does not give an overall percentage of how many Londoners bequeathed clothing, but she does show that it was a popular bequest among Londoners in the late Middle Ages; Kate Kelsey Staples, *Daughters of London: Inheriting Opportunity in the Late Middle Ages* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 119-22.

## Bequests of own clothing

In this sample, over a third of all men and half of all London women used their wills to give away their own clothing. The 462 individual garments mentioned (234 female, 228 male) do not, however, represent all the clothes given away, let alone all those owned by testators. Some dying men and women would have already started to disperse their garments before they died, leaving no textual trace. Others mentioned garments in their wills in a way that makes them impossible to count numerically – seven women and eleven men simply bequeathed ‘all their apparell’ in their wills. When, in October 1560, Edmund Browne left ‘to my brother Robert Browne all my apparell’, in the absence of an accompanying probate inventory, we cannot know the quantity or quality of Edmund’s clothing, other than to suppose that as a Merchant Taylor who left two gold rings to his sons, he probably had several good quality outfits.<sup>76</sup> Others mentioned garments without specifying a number, such as the Haberdasher John Merest who left his brother Anthonie ‘all my apparrell lynnenn and wollen herein recyted, that I dalie wore on my bodie and none other’, noting that he meant that his countless coats, doublets, shirts, hose, and shoes would go to his brother.<sup>77</sup> Twelve bequests of a ‘suit of apparel’ also represent a larger number of male garments: a suit meant at least a doublet and hose, but could also include the points which attached the upper and lower garments, and perhaps also matching outer garments. One Essex yeoman generously defined a suit of apparel in his 1601 will as ‘1 cloak, 1 jerkin, 1 doublet, 1 pair of round hose, 1 pair of stockings, 1 pair of garters, 1 pair of shoes and 1 or 2 new shirts’.<sup>78</sup> In the London sample, at least some of the testators had a less expansive definition of the suit; in 1630 Roger Jones of St James Garlickhythe gave his servant an

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<sup>76</sup> Edmund Browne, 1560, PROB 11/157/308.

<sup>77</sup> John Merest, 1570, PROB 11/55/1.

<sup>78</sup> Essex Wills, The Archdeaconry Courts, 1597-1603 (vol. 7) abstracted and edited by F. G. Emmison (Essex Record Office, Chelmsford, 1990), no. 226, 46, as cited in Jane E. Huggett, ‘Rural Costume in Elizabethan Essex: A Study Based on the Evidence from Wills’, *Costume* 33, 1 (1999): 76. This will is not included in the sample.

Table 4.3:  
Professions in the  
London sample

<b>Table 4.3</b>	
<b>Profession / Company as described in the will</b>	Number
Apothecary	1
Armourer	1
Baker	2
Barber Surgeon	1
Brewer	4
<b>Broadweaver</b>	<b>1</b>
Butcher	4
Clerk	1
<b>Clothworker</b>	<b>3</b>
Coachman	1
Cook	2
Cooper	1
Cutler	2
Doctor of Physic	3
<b>Draper</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Dyer</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Embroiderer</b>	<b>1</b>
Fishmonger	4
Founder	2
Gardener	1
<b>Girdler</b>	<b>3</b>
Goldsmith	6
Grocer	12
<b>Haberdasher</b>	<b>14</b>
Innholder	3
Ironmonger	1
<b>Leatherseller</b>	<b>2</b>
Mariner	1
Mercer	7
Merchant	3
<b>Merchant Taylor</b>	<b>21</b>
Musician	1
Notary	1
Plumber	1
Poulterer	1
Saddler	2
Salter	5
Scrivener	3
<b>Shoemaker</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Skinner</b>	<b>5</b>
Stationer	2
Tallow Chandler	2
<b>Taylor</b>	<b>3</b>
Upholsterer	1
Vintner	2
<b>Woolman</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total involved with clothing industry (in bold)</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>

ashcolour suit and a scarlet suit laced with gold lace with ‘the cloake[s] suteable’ to both, suggesting that he regarded his cloak as complementary, rather than integral, to the suit.<sup>79</sup>

Wills, therefore, are not a useful index of the contents of testators’ wardrobes. Rather, they highlight items that were of personal importance to the testator, perhaps particularly fine or striking items. The Merchant Taylor Robert Maisters only mentioned three items in his will: two pairs of shoes and a fashionable watchet blue scarf with silver fringe. The scarf, which he left to his godson Philipp Barnes, sounds like a beautiful accessory, but it surely does not represent the extent of his wardrobe. Wills are also often unclear whether specific items are ‘ordinary’ or exceptional. Elizabeth Brooke’s death ‘on or about’ the 28th February 1629/30 must have been unexpected, as she had to make a nuncupative will. Her wishes for her wardrobe, proved in court on June 25, were conveyed through a female network comprised of her aunt, a ‘Mrs Furnivall’, and her sister, who had been charged ‘to see certaine apparrell to be delivered to some servants that had attended her in her sicknes viz. two petticoates to Anne Washer and one petticoate to Anne at Mrs Freemans’.<sup>80</sup> Petticoats were worn by women across the social spectrum, and as a layer close to the skin, could be regarded as a rather personal item of clothing to give away. But perhaps this was the most appropriate item Elizabeth had to offer to her social inferiors; finer clothing, although not subject to sumptuary legislation in the 1630s, was still regarded as the reserve of the elite. Petticoats, however fine, could be covered up under overskirts and aprons, and would be useful to working women who may not have had the need for sumptuous outer garments. In fact, petticoats were the second most commonly bequeathed item in the sample: twenty-seven were given away (Table 4.4). They also appear to be the garment with which women could express their individual style and taste. Petticoats in this sample were described as being made of a wide range of textiles including shag baize (coarse woollen stuff, with a long nap), damask, turkey and silk mohair (made from Angora goat hair, or an imitation of this made of silk or wool), and peropus (a wool/silk blend).

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<sup>79</sup> Roger Jones, 1630, PROB 11/157/687.

<sup>80</sup> Elizabeth Brooke, 1630, PROB 11/157/734.

Table 4.4:  
Female  
garments  
in the  
London  
sample

Female Garments	Number	Popularity	Textile	Colour	Decoration	Ranking / Type
Gown	39	1	unspecified: 23 cloth: 5 serge: 4 Kentish cloth: 2 stuff: 1 Turkish grosgrain: 1 silk calamanco: 1 grosgrain: 1 worsted: 1	unspecified: 30 black: 8 green: 1	unspecified: 30 garded with velvet: 2 lined with russet: 2 lined with marten: 1 lined with buckram: 1 unlined: 1 laced with velvet and silk fringe: 1 furred with budge: 1	unspecified: 16 best / first: 10 second: 1 third: 2 new: 2 old: 3 fourth: 1 wearing/everyday: 2 French: 1
Cassock	4	16	unspecified: 4	unspecified: 4	unspecified: 2 second: 1 third: 1	unspecified: 4
Cloak	1	=26	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	riding: 1
Coat	2	=22	cloth: 1 silk: 1	unspecified: 1 coloured: 1	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 1 best: 1
Mantle	2	=22	unspecified: 1 broadcloth: 1	stammel: 1 tawny: 1	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2
Waistcoat	7	9	unspecified: 4 serge: 1 stuff: 1 tufted holland: 1	white: 3 coloured: 1 red: 1 purple: 1 scarlet: 1	unspecified: 6 wearing: 1	unspecified: 7
Kirtle	18	5	unspecified: 8 chamlet: 4 cloth: 1 durance: 1 grosgrain: 1 silk calamanco: 1 taffeta: 1 worsted: 1	unspecified: 13 black: 2 tawny: 2 purple: 1	unspecified: 16 furred with Dutch fur: 1 garded with velvet: 1	unspecified: 9 best/first: 4 my wife's: 3 mourning: 1 Sunday: 1
Petticoat	27	2	unspecified: 16 shag bayes: 2 damask: 1 bayes: 1 grosgrain: 1 mohair: 1 peropus: 1 turkey mohair: 1 serge: 1 silk mohair: 1 stuff: 1	unspecified: 14 red: 6 green: 2 black: 1 coloured: 1 orange: 1 scarlet: 1 white: 1	unspecified: 24 laced: 1 with galloon: 1 wrought: 1	unspecified: 19 best: 3 my wife's: 2 new: 1 old: 1 wearing: 1
Underpetticoat	1	=26	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	with a silver binding lace: 1	unspecified: 1
Sleeves	3	=17	holland: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3
Kercher	6	10	unspecified: 6	unspecified: 6	unspecified: 6	unspecified: 6
Neckercher	16	6	unspecified: 12 holland: 4	unspecified: 16	unspecified: 16	unspecified: 16
Handkercher	21	4	unspecified: 20 holland: 1	unspecified: 21	unspecified: 21	unspecified: 16 best / first: 4 fine: 1
Crosscloth	3	=17	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3
Band	5	=11	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 3 made by me: 2
Ruff	1	=26	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	best: 1
Cuffs	8	8	unspecified: 8	unspecified: 8	unspecified: 8	unspecified: 8
Gloves	3	=17	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	best: 1 second: 1 wedding: 1
Muff	1	=26	plush: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1
Coif	5	=11	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5
Gorget	5	=11	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5
Veil	3	=17	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3
Hat	5	=11	unspecified: 4 beaver: 1	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 3 lined with velvet: 2	unspecified: 1 best/first: 3 narrowest: 2
Hatband	3	=17	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 2 with diamonds: 1	unspecified: 2 best/first: 1
Smock	12	7	unspecified: 12	unspecified: 12	unspecified: 12	unspecified: 3 best/first: 2 new: 5 old: 2
Shift	1	=26	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1
Apron	22	3	unspecified: 12 linen: 4 holland: 3 mockado: 1 say: 1 silk grosgrain: 1	unspecified: 13 white: 8 black: 1	unspecified: 20 fringed: 1 laced: 1	unspecified: 20 best: 1 old: 1
Shoes	5	=11	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 5	unspecified: 4 unlined: 1	unspecified: 2 new: 2 old: 1
Stockings	2	=22	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2
Scarf	2	=22	unspecified: 1 sarconet: 1	unspecified: 1 black: 1	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 1 long: 1
Safeguard	1	=26	unspecified:	unspecified:	with broad black lace: 1	unspecified:

They also came in a wide range of hues, from green to black, orange, scarlet, and white. Red was the most popular colour for petticoats, describing six of the twenty-seven petticoats in the sample, perhaps because it was considered to be a healthy colour; Andrew Boorde recommended wearing scarlet petticoats in his *A Dyetary of Helth*.<sup>81</sup>

Textile and colour were used to describe many of the garments given away in wills, but testators often ranked their clothing, using qualitative terms such as best, second best, third, fourth, worst, new, and old. In the absence of these garments, such terms are difficult to assess, but these descriptions clearly held meaning for the testator and his or her family, friends, servants, and appraisers who would have been familiar with the wardrobe of clothes.<sup>82</sup> Of the 234 male garments given away, thirty-three were described as ‘best’, seven were ‘second’, and one ‘third’ best. Four were described as ‘worse’ (Table 4.5). Of the 234 female garments, thirty-one were ‘best’ or ‘first’, three of each ‘second’ and ‘third’, and one ‘fourth’ (Table 4.4). Often, the ‘best’ clothing was given to a close family member, such as when Thomas Awdley left his ‘best black gowne’ with velvet to his brother-in-law in 1600.<sup>83</sup> Both Miles Rodorey, leatherseller, and Robert Tudnam, grocer, left their ‘best’ livery gowns to other freemen in the city; Rodorey to a fellow leatherseller, and Tudnam to a goldsmith who, he said, was ‘welbeloved’ to him.<sup>84</sup>

While Rodorey and Tudnam gave their ‘best’ livery to their peers, ‘second’ or ‘worse’ clothes often went to social inferiors, as in 1599 when Thomas Eaton left his servant his ‘second cloake’, and when Bartholomew Teader left his ‘boy [...] (meaning his apprentice)’, one suit of ‘old cloths’ in 1630.<sup>85</sup> When bequeathed, ranked clothes might demonstrate a preference or favouring of one legatee over another. In 1600 John Allen, a Merchant Taylor, left his ‘best Dublet and my hose to yt and my best hatt’ to his brother

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<sup>81</sup> Susan James also discovered that red was by far the most popular colour of petticoats in her sample of Tudor wills. Andrew Boorde, *A Dyetary of Helth* (1542) as cited in James, *Women’s Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485–1603*, 267.

<sup>82</sup> Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII’s England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 111.

<sup>83</sup> Thomas Awdley, 1600, PROB 11/95/173.

<sup>84</sup> Miles Rodorey PROB 11/62/214 (1580) and Robert Tudnam, PROB 11/96/22 (1600).

<sup>85</sup> Thomas Eaton PROB 11/95/24 (1600) and Bartholomew Teader PROB 11/157/487 (1630).

Table 4.5  
(continued  
overleaf):  
Male  
garments in  
the London  
sample

Male Garments	Number	Popularity	Textile	Colour	Decoration	Ranking / Type
Suit	12	=6	unspecified: 4 cloth: 7 silk grosgrain: 1	unspecified: 8 ashcolour: 1 black: 1 grey: 1 scarlet: 1	unspecified: 10 with gold buttons: 1 with gold lace: 1	unspecified: 4 best: 2 second: 1 old: 2 wearing: 2 mourning/ funeral: 1
Gown	41	1	unspecified: 31 cloth: 3 stuff: 2 fur: 1 Kentish cloth: 1 London russet: 1 puke: 1 worsted: 1	unspecified: 34 black: 3 liver colour: 1 new colour: 1 sad green: 1 sheep's colour: 1	unspecified: 22 furred with budge: 6 faced with foynes (polecat): 3 faced with black coney: 1 faced with genet: 1 faced with taffeta: 1 faced with otter: 1 faced with satin: 1 faced with satin and welted with velvet: 1 furred: 1 furred and faced with budge and welted with velvet: 1 furred with black lamb and lined with satin and edged with velvet: 1 welted with velvet: 1	unspecified: 15 best: 10 second: 2 livery/citizens: 5 husband's: 3 working day: 2 worse: 1 wearing: 1 new: 1 old: 1
Cloak	31	2	unspecified: 24 cloth: 6 silk stuff: 1	unspecified: 18 black: 5 grey: 2 green: 2 French green: 1 ashcolour: 1 sad: 1 scarlet: 1	unspecified: 25 with gold lace: 1 faced with velvet: 1 lined with black stuff: 1 lined with purple bayes: 1 lined with velvet: 1 with gold and silver buttons: 1	unspecified: 20 best: 4 second: 1 mourning/ funeral: 4 riding: 2
Coat	12	=6	unspecified: 8 cloth: 2 mockado: 1 velvet: 1	unspecified: 7 black: 4 liver colour: 1	unspecified: 8 without sleeves: 1 with sleeves: 1 with sleeves and fringed with black Jane silk: 1 faced with coney: 1	unspecified: 7 new: 2 horseman's: 2 working day: 1
Cassock	5	=11	unspecified: 3 cloth: 1 broadcloth: 1	unspecified: 3 black: 1 rat colour: 1	unspecified: 3 furred: 2	unspecified: 4 ready-made: 1
Doublet	29	3	unspecified: 13 satin: 6 silk grosgrain: 2 canvas: 1 camlet: 1 fustian: 1 grosgrain: 1 mockado: 1 rash: 1 taffeta: 1 worsted: 1	unspecified: 23 black: 4 russet*: 1 tawny: 1  *from context, colour not textile	unspecified: 22 cut: 2 laced: 1 laced with black lace: 1 with mockado: 1 without sleeves: 1 wrought: 1	unspecified: 15 best: 7 second: 1 husband's: 2 on my back: 2 new: 1 old: 1

Table 4.5  
(continued)

Jerkin	5	=11	unspecified: 3 broadcloth: 1 grosgrain: 1	unspecified: 3 black: 1 sad blue: 1	unspecified: 4 welted with velvet: 1	unspecified: 2 best: 2 shipcoller?: 1
Jacket	2	=17	unspecified: 1 damask: 1	unspecified: 1 tawny: 1	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2
Waistcoat	2	=17	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2
Sleeves	1	=22	satin: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1
Breeches	9	10	unspecified: 8 velvet: 1	unspecified: 9	unspecified: 8 covered with kersey: 1	unspecified: 6 best: 2 second: 1
Gaskin	1	=22	cloth: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1
Hose	13	5	unspecified: 7 chambray: 1 cloth: 1 broadcloth: 1 buff: 1 mockado: 1 silk: 1	unspecified: 7 black: 4 buff: 1 sad blue: 1	unspecified: 7 paned: 2 laced with billament lace: 1 paned with tuft taffeta: 1 made wider: 1 wrought: 1	unspecified: 8 best: 3 worse: 1 husband's: 1
Venetians	1	=22	unspecified: 1	green: 1	laced: 1	unspecified: 1
Shirt	14	4	unspecified: 14	unspecified: 14	unspecified: 11 stitched at the neck and wrists with yellow silk: 2	unspecified: 5 best: 1 second: 1 third: 1 husband's: 2 coarse: 2 plain: 1 fair: 1
Petticoat	1	=22	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	on my back: 1
Nightclothes	1	=22	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	new: 1
Stockings	12	=6	unspecified: 5 worsted: 4 silk: 3	unspecified: 4 black: 6 tawny: 2	unspecified: 12	unspecified: 11 fine: 1
Boots	1	=22	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	old: 1
Shoes	3	=15	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 3
Hat	12	=6	unspecified: 8 beaver: 1 felt: 1 taffeta: 1 beaver: 1	unspecified: 11 black: 1	unspecified: 11 wrought: 1	unspecified: 9 best: 2 worse: 1
Hatband	2	=17	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 1 worse: 1
Cap	4	=13	unspecified: 3 stuff: 1	unspecified: 3 black: 1	unspecified: 3 embroidered with green silk: 1	unspecified: 1 flat: 2 husband's: 1
Hood	3	=15	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 2 liver colour: 1	unspecified: 3	unspecified: 1 livery: 2
Scarf	1	=22	satin: 1	watchett: 1	with silver fringe: 1	unspecified: 1
Ruff	2	=17	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2
Cuff	4	=13	unspecified: 4	black: 3 white: 1	unspecified: 4	unspecified: 4
Gloves	1	=22	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1
Mittens	1	=22	unspecified: 1	liver colour: 1	unspecified: 1	unspecified: 1
Handkerchiefs	2	=17	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2	unspecified: 2
Total	226					

William ‘for a Rembrance of his good wil always’. His other brother Richard, who was not praised for ‘good wil’, received the ‘worse paned hose and my worse hat with the band to yt’.<sup>86</sup> Ann Wight gave her best gown and petticoat and best gloves to her daughter Ruth and her second-best gown and petticoat to her daughter Sarah. Wight’s third best gown was given to her granddaughter Ruth and her fourth best gown to her other granddaughter Mary. Perhaps this ranking reflected the ages of the four women; was Ruth the eldest? Ann may have owned more than four gowns when she made her will in September 1650, but it is only the four ‘best’ that she mentions. She clearly owned more than the eleven named items of clothing in her will, as she left ‘all the rest of my wearing apparrell not before bequeathed’ to her two daughters. She expected her daughters and granddaughters to be able to identify her gowns by their ranking, as she gave no further description of them.<sup>87</sup>

Others divided their clothing not by rank but by textile. Elizabeth Moone gave away a few specific items (including her wedding gloves and wedding purse) but bequeathed most of her garments in groups of ‘night linnen and playne neck clothes’ (divided between her cousin and maid), ‘apparrell belonginge to my bodie of woollen kinde’ (to her maid Judith), ‘apparrell beinge of anie kinde of silk’ (sold along with her ‘best linnen’), and ‘smocks and other trifles’ (given at the discretion of Mrs Stevens).<sup>88</sup> Some identified clothing by its purpose or quality. Thomas Ayresley gave the clerk of his parish church ‘my gowne which I weare dailie called my workinge daie gowne’. Ayresley must have wanted to make a good impression during his work as a Merchant Taylor, for he described his working day gown as faced throughout with black coney.<sup>89</sup> Some garments were ‘old’, ‘plain’, or ‘coarse’, while others ‘fine’, ‘fair’, or ‘new’. Occasionally, a garment was linked to a specific activity or event, such as ‘Working Day’ (gown, coat), ‘Sunday’ (kirtle), ‘Riding’ (cloak), ‘horseman’s’ (coat), or ‘Wedding’ (gloves). Garments described as ‘wearing’ (suit,

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<sup>86</sup> John Allen, 1600, PROB 11/95/297.

<sup>87</sup> Ann Wight, 1650, PROB 11/214/93.

<sup>88</sup> Elizabeth Moone, 1640, PROB 11/184/278.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas Ayresley, 1570, PROB 11/52/137.

gown, waistcoat, petticoat) or 'on my back' (doublet, trus, petticoat) were presumably the most closely associated with the testator.

For both men and women, the most commonly bequeathed clothing item was the gown; forty-one male gowns and thirty-nine female gowns were given away in this sample (Tables 4.4 and 4.5). For men, gowns were upper garments worn long and loose, usually with long sleeves. For women, the term denotes something more akin to a dress; some were designed to be worn open in combination with other garments such as a kirtle or petticoat and bodice.<sup>90</sup> As an outer garment usually covering the whole length of the body, gowns would have been one of the most expensive and noticeable items of clothing: a generous and personal bequest. In terms of value, a full-length gown used many yards of textile as well as trimming and lining which represented a large initial outlay. Elizabeth Spencer (d.1613) calculated that she had spent £6 4d. on a new white calico gown in 1610, with £3 12s. of that sum being spent on twelve yards of calico at 6s. per yard, and the remaining costs on sarcenet lining (2s. 6d.), 24 silk buttons (3s. 6d.), galloun lace 'to laxis ye semes of itt' (8s.), stiffenings of whalebone, canvas, and fustian (1s. 1d.), silk sewing thread (2s.), and for cutting and making up the gown (12s.).<sup>91</sup> Spencer also gave 10s. to a Master Dorman who had helped her acquire some of these materials, demonstrating that such clothing items represent not just an investment of money, but also time and access to mercers and craftspeople. Imported from India, calico was a highly fashionable and only newly available textile in the early seventeenth century; as Beverly Lemire has shown, before the East India Company started importing it en masse, it was available to only the well-connected elite and merchant classes.<sup>92</sup> Calico is not represented in the sample of London wills, although female gowns in the London sample are described as being made of cloth, Kentish cloth,

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<sup>90</sup> Cumming, Cunningham, and Cunningham, *The Dictionary of Fashion History*, 95.

<sup>91</sup> Margaret Spencer, 'Account Book' c.1610, fols 7r-8r.

<sup>92</sup> The East India Company began importing calicoes along with indigo silk in the 1620s and '30s, and by the end of the seventeenth century calicoes were enormously popular. Lemire provides evidence, including from wills and probate inventories in Southampton, that well-connected nobles and merchants owned calico furnishings from the 1550s. Beverly Lemire, 'Domesticating the Exotic: Floral Culture and the East India Calico Trade with England, C. 1600–1800', *Textile* 1, 1 (2003): 67-68.

serge, stuff, Turkey grosgrain, grosgrain, silk calamanco, and worsted (see Table 4.4). Although they required a large initial outlay, gowns could be easily and affordably altered into a new style or to fit a new owner. When Spencer had her taffeta gown altered, it cost her 7s. 6d. (which includes the cost for extra silk and thread).<sup>93</sup> If the new owner preferred to release the value of the gown's materials, he or she could have it taken apart so that the textile and trimmings could be reused in new garments or sold. Gowns were a most generous gift.

In the stores of the Victoria and Albert Museum, two sumptuous gowns show evidence of heavy reuse. The first, made of mulberry silk velvet, is now missing much of the back and front left of its fabric, and spangled silver bobbin lace that once trimmed the hem and covered the seams has been removed – its former presence indicated by a few remaining fragments attached with tufts of yellow thread and some fragments trapped in the left shoulder seam which have been recently captured in an x-ray image (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). Made of a very fine cut and uncut velvet of three heights of pile which form a pattern of pomegranates and gillyflowers, almost certainly imported from Italy, this gown would have cost far more than Spencer's calico one, as figured velvet with such lush pile demanded a large quantity of silk thread and advanced technical skills. In the 1612 *Rates of Marchandizes*, which recorded the nominal price (although not the fluctuating market value) of goods, velvet of all colours was priced at 15s. per yard, rising to 25s. per yard for crimson or purple velvets dyed 'in grain' (i.e. with kermes or cochineal).<sup>94</sup> This floor-length, bright mulberry- coloured gown, with its hanging sleeves revealing a bright pink silk taffeta lining pinked with small cuts, would have been a sumptuous and fashionable item for a

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<sup>93</sup> Margaret Spencer, 'Account Book' c.1610, f. 14v.

<sup>94</sup> England and Wales, *The Rates of Marchandizes, as They Are Set Downe in [th]e Booke of Rates, for the Custome and Subsidie of Poundage, and for the Custome and Subsidie of Clothes the Same Being Signed by the Kings Maiestie, and Sealed with the Great Seale of England, and Remaining in His Highnesse Court of Exchequer at Westminster, and by Speciall Commaundement from His Maiestie Published in Print, for the Direction of such as It May Concerne: Together with the Rates of Such Impositions as Are Laide Vpon Any Commodities, Either Brought into the Realme, or Carried out of the Same, according to His Maiesties Letters Patents Thereof Vnder the Great Seale of England* (London: F. Kingston, 1612), L1r. For more about the administration of customs see Thomas Stuart Willan, *A Tudor Book of Rates* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962).

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Figure 4.4: (above)

Gown, 1610-1620, English with Italian velvet, silk velvet, silk, linen, silk thread, linen thread, V&A, 178-1900.

The gown is mounted with a partial reconstruction made of black and red shot silk taffeta.

Figure 4.5: (left)

X-ray of left shoulder of the gown, revealing fragments of silver bobbin lace.

young girl to wear. It provided much material that could be removed and reused. In this case, the silver lace might have been applied to another garment or even melted down and sold. The missing panels of the fine velvet might have been recycled for new garments or home furnishings.<sup>95</sup> Another gown from the V&A, also dating from 1610-1620, bears similar evidence of recycling. A panel of olive-coloured silk plush (long-piled velvet) has been cut away and its silver braid has also been removed (Figure 4.6). The V&A speculates that this gown, like the mulberry version, also had hanging sleeves, but that these too have been removed.<sup>96</sup>

Both gowns were purchased in 1899 from the Isham family collection, and might have been worn or altered by Sir John Isham's (1582-1651) daughters Elizabeth (1608-1654) and Judith (1610-1636) or his wife Judith (née Lewen, 1590-1625). Judith's father William Lewen was a Judge of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, so he was in the business of dealing with wills. His own will is twelve pages long, far longer than any will in this sample (which range between a third of a page and five pages in length, the majority being one page long), and includes bequests of a large number of mourning gowns.<sup>97</sup> The Isham family wealth came from John Isham's grandfather and namesake, a mercer who made his fortunes as a woollens merchant. Judith died before her husband and so was unlikely to have written a will; there is no record of a will of hers being proved at the Canterbury court. Elizabeth's diary, however, reveals that she was given some of her mother's clothing in the years after her death. In 1636, over a decade after Judith had died, Elizabeth wrote 'my father gave me my mothers mitens'<sup>98</sup> and in 1641 Elizabeth noted 'my father gave me my mother[s] black velvet gowne'.<sup>99</sup> Such events were notable enough to be written into

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<sup>95</sup> For a detailed pattern of the gown see Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion*, 122-23; Jenny Tiramani and Susan North, eds, *Seventeenth-Century Women's Dress Patterns*, 2 (London: V&A Pub., 2012), 18-33.

<sup>96</sup> <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O361549/gown-unknown/>.

<sup>97</sup> Doctor William Lewin, 1598, PROB 11/91/472. This will is not included in the London sample.

<sup>98</sup> Northampton Record Office MS, IL 3365, [http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/plc\\_Y1636.htm](http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/plc_Y1636.htm).

<sup>99</sup> Northampton Record Office MS, IL 3365, [http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/prs\\_Y1641.htm](http://web.warwick.ac.uk/english/perdita/Isham/prs_Y1641.htm).

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Figure 4.6:  
Gown, 1610-1620, English, silk, wool,  
linen, linen thread,  
V&A, 174-1900.

Elizabeth's diary, although she did not record whether she wore or altered them, or her feelings about this gift.

When John Isham died in 1651, he left the remainder of his goods and estate to his son Justinian, and did not mention any clothing.<sup>100</sup> Elizabeth Isham did not have time to write a will before her death three years later; a nuncupative will was made during the 'sicknes whereof shee dyed' and she, too, did not bequeath clothes.<sup>101</sup>

Whoever was the recipient of the mulberry and olive velvet Isham gowns, which remained in the family until their move into the V&A collection, seems to have appreciated their rich materials and deep colours and saw fit to cut off panels of velvet and sections of lace trim for reuse. Of the eighty male and female gowns in the London sample, many are described as being highly decorated – faced and lined with furs, satins, taffetas, and velvets; some of these gowns probably suffered the same fate, being taken apart or altered for reuse (Tables 4.4 and 4.5). Elizabeth Spencer probably did not leave a will when she died aged about twenty-four.<sup>102</sup> Whoever inherited her calico gown might have been impressed to receive an exotic and delicate new material, only available to the well-connected, valuing it less for its economic value and more for the access it implied; this might have also been the case with the recipients of those gowns lined with imported furs like genet.

Cloaks were the second most commonly bequeathed male garment, with thirty-one being bequeathed in this sample (only one female cloak was given, described by testator Henry Feilde as a 'a ridinge cloake for a woman', which he gave to his friend's wife).<sup>103</sup> Even more than gowns, cloaks display a diverse range of colours: black (5), grey (2), green (2), 'french green' (1), ashcolour (1), scarlet (1), and 'sad' (1). Some are also described as highly

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<sup>100</sup> Sir John Isham, 1651, PROB 11/217/737. This will is not included in the London sample.

<sup>101</sup> Elizabeth Isham, 1654, PROB 11/237/87. This will is not included in the London sample.

<sup>102</sup> Based on biographical information of the Spencer family, Snook calculates that Elizabeth was no older than 24, and perhaps much younger when she died. I have not found her will in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury records at the National Archives, although she might have proved her will elsewhere; Edith Snook, 'The Greatness in Good Clothes: Fashioning Subjectivity in Mary Wroth's *Urania* and Margaret Spencer's Account Book (BL Add. MS 62092)', *The Seventeenth Century* 22, 2 (2007): 226.

<sup>103</sup> Henry Feilde, 1600, PROB 11/96/341.

decorated: covered with gold and silver buttons, lined with purple baize, or covered in gold lace (Table 4.5). These descriptions adhere to Phillip Stubbes' description of cloaks in 'dverse and sundry colors, white, red, tawnie, black, greene, yellowe, russet, purple, violet, and infynite other colors: some of cloth, silk, velvet, taffatie, and such like'. Stubbes also describes the variety of cloak decoration and shapes: 'garded, laced, & thorowly faced: and somtimes so lyned, as the inner side standeth almost in as much as the outside: some have sleeves [...] some have hoodes [...] some are hanged with points & tassels of gold, silver, or silk'.<sup>104</sup> While Stubbes was dismissive of these elaborate styles, the wills demonstrate clearly that London men sought to express their taste and fashionability by wearing a diverse range of cloak styles while walking in the street, riding, attending a funeral, or in mourning.

Twenty-two aprons were given in this sample of wills, making the apron the third most commonly bequeathed female garment. Eight of these were described as being white, but this does not mean that they were all simple working garments: only one was declared 'old' in the will (Table 4.4). The aprons made of linen or say from this sample could have been practical working garments such as those seen on the 'countrywoman' depicted alongside the London women in Lucas de Heere's sketch (Figure 2.6). Others, like those made of fine holland, mockado, and silk grosgrain, and those described as 'laced' and 'fringed', might have been worn as decorative rather than practical garments. Even simple white aprons were in vogue in the 1620s, and in June 1622 Sir Thomas Knyvett wrote to his wife Katherine to let her know of that all the 'great ladies' in London were wearing plain white aprons.<sup>105</sup> Two dummy boards, novelty trompe l'oeil house decorations placed in fireplaces or corners to surprise and delight visitors, show how white aprons might be worn

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<sup>104</sup> Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses Contayning A Discoverie, or Briefe Summarie of Such Notable Vices and Imperfections, as Now Raigne in Many Christian Countreyes of the Worlde: But (especiallie) in a Verie famous Ilande Called Ailgna: Together, with Most Fearefull Examples of Gods Iudgements, Executed Vpon the Wicked for the Same, Aswell in Ailgna of Late, as in Other Places, Elsewhere. Verie Godly, to Be Read of All True Christians, Euerie Where: But Most Needefull, to Be Regarded in Englande* (London: John Kingston for Richard Jones, 1583), Cvir.

<sup>105</sup> As cited in Paul S. Seaver, 'Middleton's London', in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 72.

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Figure 4.7 (left):

Woman with mirror dummy board, English, *c.*1630-1650, oil on wood, 154.9 cm x 81.3 cm, V&A, W.89-1921.

Figure 4.8 (right):

Woman with broom dummy board, English, *c.*1630-1650, oil on wood, 156 cm x 91 cm, V&A, W.90-1921.

Table 4.6	*only the primary garment colour, not the colour of linings or decorations are included here		
Colour*	Number of men's garments	Number of women's garments	Total
Black	33	13	46
White	1	14	15
Red	0	7	7
Tawny	4	3	7
Green	3	3	6
Liver colour	4	0	4
Scarlet	2	2	4
Coloured	0	3	3
Grey	3	0	3
Ashcolour	2	0	2
Purple	0	2	2
Sad blue	2	0	2
Buff	1	0	1
French green	1	0	1
New	1	0	1
Orange	0	1	1
Rat colour	1	0	1
Russet (from context, colour not textile)	1	0	1
Sad	1	0	1
Sad green	1	0	1
Sheep's colour	1	0	1
Stammel	0	1	1
Watchett	1	0	1

Table 4.6:  
Colours of clothing in the London sample

by both servants and fashionable women, their vast expanse of fine linen and delicate lace edging protecting and enhancing the olive green sheen of their fine velvet gowns (Figure 4.7 and 4.8).

Wills do not, however, always capture the full range of styles worn by Londoners from 1560 to 1660. As tables 4.4 and 4.5 show, the majority of clothing bequests did not specify the textile, colour, or decoration of clothing. Only 112 garments (just under a quarter) were described by colour, although we can still get a sense of the broad colour palette worn by Londoners (Table 4.6). Black was by far the most popular hue for male garments, and white was the most popular colour for women (only mentioned in reference to one male garment). Red or pink tones, described variously as red, scarlet, liver, and stammel, were also popular for men and women. From ashcolour to watchett, many testators describe colours in nuanced terms; William Edwardes gave a gown of a ‘sad green color’ to his nephew John, and to his brother a pair of silk stockings ‘enclyninge to a Tawney colour’.<sup>106</sup> Encompassing range of textiles – from fine Holland linen to new peropus – these wills evoke the diversity of fabrics available to Londoners at the time (Table 4.7).<sup>107</sup> Descriptions of linings and trimmings also show that for those able to afford them, decorative flourishes were appreciated.

The range and variety of garments in this small sample of wills attests to the myriad textiles, dyestuffs, trimmings, and inspirations available to Londoners. In her study of wills from Elizabethan Essex, Jane Huggett concluded that ‘[n]ovelty clearly was not valued even by those who could afford it’, finding that even those who bequeathed a large number of clothes had them made of the same fabrics and colours.<sup>108</sup> Not so for these Londoners. The Merchant Taylor Roger Beeston, for example, owned a colourful and diverse range of garments and styles, hinted at by his bequests of three cloaks (one lined with purple baize, the other in French green, and the third of black cloth), four doublets

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<sup>106</sup> William Edwardes, 1610, PROB 11/116/621.

<sup>107</sup> Kerridge states that Peropus was first heard of in Norwich in 1613; Eric Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 45.

<sup>108</sup> Huggett, ‘Rural Costume in Elizabethan Essex’, 81.

(one of cut fustian, one of a silk grosgrain, one of satin, and the fourth of black mockado), three pairs of hose (one pair laced with billament lace, one made of chambray, and the third of black cloth), two jerkins (one ‘shipcoller’ (sheep’s colour?) and the other black), and a hat.<sup>109</sup>

While accessories like a muff, a safeguard, scarves, and petticoats hint at the wide variety of garments and dress accessories that were widely available in London, noticeable gaps stand out. No masks or vizards were mentioned in these wills, and just two beaver hats (one male, one female) and only three ruffs (two male, one female) were bequeathed. When Huggett found only two mentions of ruffs in her sample of Essex wills – one from a man living in a town, and the other a wealthy Colchester woman – she concluded that the ruff was ‘little seen in the sixteenth-century countryside’.<sup>110</sup> However, from portraits and written descriptions, it is clear that ruffs were a highly popular accessory for London men and women, particularly around the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>111</sup> The three ruffs directly mentioned in this sample surely do not represent the number that would have been owned by the 220 testators. Sara Allanson’s instruction to her executor to give her kinswoman Sara Allen her ‘wearinge linnen, onlie to be excepted my best ruffe which I give to Mrs Lorke’ shows that many more ruffs were probably given by testators in this sample, although they were probably grouped along with the rest of the linens.<sup>112</sup>

## Linens

Although only four individually named garments in the sample (all aprons) were described as being made of linen and twelve of fine ‘holland’, linens were among the most common clothing and textile bequests. The term could refer to both linens for the household

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<sup>109</sup> Sometimes called cambric or chambray, a lightweight linen originally made in Cambray, Flanders; ‘cambric, n.’. *OED Online*. December 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/26658> (accessed January 12, 2017). Roger Beeston, 1600, PROB 11/95/177.

<sup>110</sup> Huggett, ‘Rural Costume in Elizabethan Essex’, 78, 80.

<sup>111</sup> See earlier chapters on ‘Redressing London’ and ‘The London Look’, for example.

<sup>112</sup> Sara Allanson, 1630, PROB 11/157/675.

Table 4.7:  
Textiles in  
the London  
sample

Table 4.7 *only the primary textile used in a garment is counted here, not including mentions of linings or decorations			
Textile*	Number of men's garments	Number of women's garments	Total
Cloth	21	7	28
Holland	0	11	11
Worsted	6	2	8
Satin	7	0	7
Serge	0	6	6
Stuff	3	3	6
Camlet	1	4	5
Grosgrain	2	3	5
Silk	4	1	5
Broadcloth	3	1	4
Linen	0	4	4
Mockado	3	1	4
Kentish cloth	1	2	3
Taffeta	2	1	3
Velvet	3	0	3
Beaver	1	1	2
Damask	1	1	2
Shag Baize	0	2	2
Silk calamanco	0	2	2
Baize	0	1	1
Buff (from context, textile rather than colour)	1	0	1
Canvas	1	0	1
Chambray	1	0	1
Durance	0	1	1
Felt	1	0	1
Fur	1	0	1
Fustian	1	0	1
London russet	1	0	1
Mohair	0	1	1
Peropus	0	1	1
Plush	0	1	1
Puke (from context, textile rather than colour)	1	0	1
Rash	1	0	1
Sarcenet	0	1	1
Say	0	1	1
Silk grosgrain	3	1	4
Silk mohair	0	1	1
Silk stuff	1	0	1
Tufted Holland	0	1	1
Turkish grosgrain	0	1	1
Turkey mockado	0	1	1

(napkins, sheets, tablecloths, and so on) or for the body (such as shirts, smocks, ruffs, bands, nightcaps, collars, and cuffs) and so when testators like the widow Margaret Bright bequeathed ‘all my linen’, it is unclear whether she meant household or wearing linens, and how many items she was giving away.<sup>113</sup> There may even been a conceptual slippage between wearing and household linens. As Sara Read has suggested, once napkins, cloths, shirts, or sheets had been worn down, they were repurposed as rags which could be used for cleaning or as menstrual cloths for women.<sup>114</sup> Lady Anne Clifford even recorded this transformation in her diary, noting on 13 December 1619: ‘My Lord gave me three shirts to make Clouts of’.<sup>115</sup>

Even though most testators did not write about the kinds of linens they gave away, these were meaningful gifts. Easy to clean, breathable, and light, linens were worn next to the skin of all members of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English society, protecting the body from sickness and the outer garments from sweat and oils. At the neck and wrists, linen ruffs, bands, neckerchiefs, and cuffs highlighted the whiteness of the face and hands. Undershirts and smocks covered the whole body, protecting it from stiffened bodices, doublets, and itchy woollens. Given their proximity to the body, wearing linens were perhaps the most personal items of clothing. Shirts and smocks, worn as underwear, were so intimate that, as Anne Hollander has noted, a woman could be described as being ‘naked in her smock’.<sup>116</sup> It is therefore unsurprising that few depictions of men and women wearing just their shirts exists, as usually these items were only visible at the wrist and neck, or when worn in bed; such paintings tend to depict men or women nearing death, such as the image of John Eliot before his execution, or of Braithwaite making his will (Figures 4.9 and 4.1). A 1635 painting of *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of his Wife* is a good example;

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<sup>113</sup> Margaret Bright, 1600, PROB 11/95/154.

<sup>114</sup> Sara L. Read, ‘Thy Righteousness Is but a Menstrual Clout: Sanitary Practices and Prejudice in Early Modern England’, *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 3 (2008): 5-6.

<sup>115</sup> *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, ed. D. J. H. Clifford (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992), 81 as cited in *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>116</sup> Gowing, *Common Bodies*, 34.

**Image has been removed for copyright reasons**

Figure 4.9 (above):

English School, *Sir John Eliot (1590-1632)*, 1632, oil on panel,  
90 x 69cm, Plymouth City Council Museum and Art Gallery.

The inscription reads

'Sir John Eliot painted a few days before his death in the Tower AD 1632'

Figure 4.10 (below):

John Souch (c.1593-1645),

*Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of His Wife*, 1635,

oil on canvas, 203.2 x 215.1cm,

Manchester Art Gallery 1927.150.

the deceased wife is wrapped in a linen smock, her head covered by a linen cap with a border of fine lace which exacerbates her pallor (Figure 4.10).

The other figures, Sir Thomas, a child, and a woman, are all dressed in fashionably styled black mourning garments and bright white linen cuffs and collars. Thomas's shirt is artfully arranged to swell out between a long slash in his over-sleeves, the vividness of his body contrasting with his wife's delicate reclining body, nestled amid linen shirt, cap, and bedsheets. Such images are also conjured up in wills, as when Patricke Meake gave away his doublet and hose of white fustian and his petticoat, 'all this being upon my back in my sickness time'. He gave these clothes, so closely associated with his illness, to his brother 'for his great paines he hath taken with me in my sickness'.<sup>117</sup> Such clothes would, then, be intimately associated with Patricke, his failing health, and his brother's care.

Women of all social classes tended to the linens of their household, often making, repairing, decorating and washing them. Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife* (1615) declared that the godly and patriotic wife was responsible for clothing her family 'outwardly and inwardly', to protect them from the cold, care for their skin, and keep away vermin.<sup>118</sup> Wills confirm that caring for linens was regarded as a female responsibility, as bequeathing all linens to the nearest female family member was a common practice. Margaret Bright divided hers between her four daughters.<sup>119</sup> Elizabeth Billingsly took such care over her bequests of linen to her daughters that before she died she parcelled them into bundles with labels 'written upon directed by there severall names'.<sup>120</sup> Both household and bodily linens were fundamental items to the maintenance of home and the body, and so Billingsly's precise division of her linens between her daughters was a final act of motherly care for the households and health of her children.<sup>121</sup> When Patricke Meake bequeathed

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<sup>117</sup> Patrick Meake, 1560, PROB 11/43/620.

<sup>118</sup> Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife*, ed. Michael R. Best (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 146-65.

<sup>119</sup> Margaret Bright, 1600, PROB 11/95/154.

<sup>120</sup> Elizabeth Billingsly, 1640, PROB 11/184/74.

<sup>121</sup> For more on the role of linens in theories of health in the Renaissance, Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey, *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For examples of types of linens

two shirts to his brother-in-law, he did so acknowledging that it was his sister who had the knowledge and responsibility for these linens: 'to her husband [...] two of my shirts which I have appointed for him which my sister do know.'<sup>122</sup> Although they were worn as underwear, shirts could be exceptionally fine, and extant examples show how they were sometimes decorated with embroidery in areas where they might be visible such as the neck, cuffs, or through slashed sleeves (Figure 4.11a&b). Charles Tyrrell, a gentleman, had a range of shirts; to his servant he gave his two 'coarse shirts', to his brother-in-law a 'plain shirt stitched about the neck and the wristbands with yellow silk', and to his brother Sir Edward Tyrrell 'a fair shirt laced all over'.<sup>123</sup>

Linen garments spanned the lifecycle. Babies were swaddled in long linen cloths, a linen shirt was often the final article of clothing worn by a dying man or woman, and a linen cloth was usually the shroud that wrapped their dead body. After all, at death, other clothing was no longer needed. English men and women were usually buried in a linen shroud or sheet, and although this is rarely mentioned in wills, in 1630 Afra Fitzgerald offered her sister fine holland sheets and all of her wearing clothes: 'she willed her to keepe them, and to give her a sheete to bury her in'.<sup>124</sup>

Many men and women, especially those living in an urban area like London with limited access to water and drying space, sent their linens to professional laundresses to be washed, bleached, and starched.<sup>125</sup> The merchant Peter De Prill even remembered his

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see Janet Arnold, Jenny Tiramani, and Santana Levey, *Patterns of Fashion 4: The Cut and Construction of Linen Shirts, Smocks, Neckwear, Headwear and Accessories for Men and Women C. 1540 - 1660* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2008).

<sup>122</sup> Patrick Meake, 1560, PROB 11/43/620.

<sup>123</sup> Charles Tyrrell, 1620, PROB 11/135/343.

<sup>124</sup> Afra Fitzgerald, 1630, PROB 11/157/308. In 1666, the 'Burial in Woollens' act was passed, which required all men and women to be buried in wool. Until then (and sometimes after, in defiance of the law), men and women were usually buried in their linens and wrapped in a bed sheet as a winding sheet. Susan North, *Dress and Hygiene in Early Modern England: a study of advice and practice*, (PhD Thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2012), 63-64.

<sup>125</sup> Natasha Korda, Sex, Starch-Houses and Poking-Sticks: Alien Women's Work and the Technologies of Material Culture', *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 5, Special Forum on Sex and the Early Modern Woman: Representation, Practice, and Culture (2010): 201-8; Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 127-33.

laundress in his will, leaving ‘ould Mary our wassher’ 40s., showing how these professionals could be close associates of the family.<sup>126</sup> To prevent these clothes from being lost or returned to the wrong owner, linens were marked with the initials of the owner. Bequests of linen garments embroidered with the initials of their owner would have been a deeply personal gift, symbolically and explicitly linking the item to the bodies and identities of both the former and new owners.

Handkerchiefs, such as the V&A example dated c.1600 and embroidered with a border of flowers stitched in red silk, were popular gifts during courtship (Figure 4.12).<sup>127</sup> Often embroidered and decorated with fine lace by their female giver, handkerchiefs were symbolic of femininity and, as ‘paraphernalia’, were one of the few belongings that a woman knew would be hers upon the death of her husband.<sup>128</sup> The twenty-one handkerchiefs given by women and two by men in the London wills might have carried these former associations, and, like the V&A example, may even have been embroidered with the small initials of their previous owner. Bequests like that of the maiden Elizabeth Brooke, who asked her aunt, her sister, and a Mrs Furnivall to ‘see certaine handkercheifs desposed of to some of her freindes’, must be understood as operating within this symbolic register. As she made her will aloud to those around her deathbed, Brooke asked for her handkerchiefs to be divided between her sister, her two brothers, her cousins, and some male friends. Brooke was unmarried and, as she made her nuncupative will, had to relinquish any hopes for a courtship. Her handkerchiefs, however, would have been recognised as deeply personal gifts, with their suggestion of close bodily interaction, femininity, and perhaps unrequited love.

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<sup>126</sup> Peter De Prill, 1610, PROB 11/115/94.

<sup>127</sup> Diana O’Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester University Press, 2002), 63, 73-74.

<sup>128</sup> Natasha Korda, ‘The Tragedy of the Handkerchief: Female Paraphernalia and the Properties of Jealousy in Othello’, in *Shakespeare’s Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 111-58; Will Fisher, ‘That Shakespearean Rag: Handkerchiefs and Femininity’, in *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 36-58.

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Figure 4.11a and b (detail) (above):  
Shirt, *c.*1580-1600, linen embroidered in red silk,  
green silk, and silver-gilt thread, collar is edged  
with needlelace, 134 x 92 cm (body).  
Museum of London 28.84.

Figure 4.12 (below):  
Handkerchief, *c.*1600, English, linen embroidered  
with silk and trimmed with metal thread bobbin  
lace, 37 x 37cm,  
V&A T. 133 – 1956.

Note the embroidered initials 'em' on the lower  
left side.

## Handmade clothing

When a testator mentioned in the will that he or she had made one of the items being bequeathed, they reminded the recipient of the time and care that had been personally invested in the garment. Elizabeth Pounte made one of her handmade bequests clear: to ‘sister Proby’ she gave ‘the gorget and the bande I made last’.<sup>129</sup> Her other bequests such as handkerchiefs, aprons, holland sleeves, and cuffs might well also have been homemade. Pounte also gave away her sewing equipment, leaving ‘pynpillows’ for her sisters Haslewood and Proby.<sup>130</sup> Skilled needlework wrought by women was highly esteemed in early modern England, imbuing such gifts with a particular importance.<sup>131</sup> When Ester Buckingham, a widow from Cripplegate, gave her sampler to Mrs Cole’s younger daughter, perhaps it was an unfinished piece of needlework that could be completed by the younger woman.<sup>132</sup> Although he did not sew it himself, Richard Hilles was proud enough to mention that the needlework carpet that he bequeathed to his son Daniel ‘was wroughte in my house’.<sup>133</sup>

Given how many Londoners were employed in the clothing and textile trades, it is likely that many more bequests were made by testators. Broadweaver Henry Boulte left his father John ‘eight yards of my best blacke worsted’ which he said was ‘[t]o make him a coate’.<sup>134</sup> When Anne Browne, the widow of a linen weaver, left a shirt and loom to Nicholas Bullefant she may have been giving him an item of clothing made entirely by her

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<sup>129</sup> A gorget was a kind of neck covering; either a small ruffle on a smock, or a deep falling collar: ‘gorget, n.1’. *OED Online*. December 2016. Oxford University Press; see also Cumming, Cunnington, and Cunnington, *The Dictionary of Fashion History*, 94-95.

<sup>130</sup> Elizabeth Pounte, 1590, PROB 11/75/420.

<sup>131</sup> Andrew Morrall, Melinda Watt, and Cristina Balloffet Carr, eds, *English Embroidery from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1580-1700: Twixt Art and Nature* (New York: Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture, 2008); Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women’s Textualities in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

<sup>132</sup> Ester Buckingham, 1660, PROB 11/300/131.

<sup>133</sup> Richard Hilles, 1590, PROB 11/75/400.

<sup>134</sup> Henry Boulte, 1660, PROB 11/297/205.

own hands and the equipment she used to make it; Browne could have spun the linen threads, warped the loom, woven the cloth, and stitched the shirt.<sup>135</sup>

Wills, then, also give us insight into the trade and manufacture of clothing. In 1600, Merchant Taylor Henry Marten used his will to forgive John Nicholls of many debts, but mentioned that he still expected to be paid £3 10s. ‘that he oweth me for a cloke I sold him’.<sup>136</sup> Some testators left merchandise and tools to others in their trade, as when Merchant Taylor James Peirson left half of all of his possessions, including ‘merchandizes [...] lynnyn woollen’ to his ‘lovinge friend’ Thomas Bellasses, also a Merchant Taylor.<sup>137</sup> The tailor Robert Maisters left a pressing iron, an important tool used by tailors to press down seams, smooth fabrics, and shape garments, to William Tillson.<sup>138</sup> Other wills show how Londoners often bought yards of fabric and stored it at home before having it made up into garments, or sent out garments for alterations or mending. The cook Warrant Foden of Allhallows Staining left Thomas Hampton ‘one peece of satten nowe in my howse to make him a suite of apparrell’.<sup>139</sup> Mawde James bequeathed an unlined black gown to Alice Cole, noting that it is ‘now at the skynners’, presumably being repaired there.<sup>140</sup> The founder George Stephenson even gave his sister ‘a stamell mantell of broad cloath which weare pawned by my mother in lawe unto me’, suggesting that family members provided informal credit arrangements to one another and used clothing as a guarantee.<sup>141</sup> Robert Carterwell, a spur-maker, never made good on his loan, but Ellen Bennett used her will to return ‘a certaine gowne which he did heretofore pawne unto my late husband’.<sup>142</sup>

Wills also provide much information about how clothing was kept and stored. Henry Feilde left Marrye Morris a safeguard decorated with broad black lace, mentioning

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<sup>135</sup> Anne Browne, 1650, PROB 11/211/866.

<sup>136</sup> Henry Marten, 1600, PROB 11/95/43.

<sup>137</sup> James Peirson, 1650, PROB 11/212/299.

<sup>138</sup> Robert Maisters, 1600, PROB 11/95/168.

<sup>139</sup> Warrant Foden, 1610, PROB 11/116/341.

<sup>140</sup> Mawde James, 1570, PROB 11/52/193.

<sup>141</sup> George Stephenson, 1630, PROB 11/158/605.

<sup>142</sup> Ellen Bennett, 1630, PROB 11/157/379.

that it was kept 'in my great Chest in the keepinge of one Clement Bucke'.<sup>143</sup> Margaret Walker, who lived at the sign of the White Lion in St Brides, mentioned that her best linens were kept in a chest by her bedside.<sup>144</sup> Richard Hilles gave his long cyprus chest to his 'good freinde' Robert Hampton, mentioning that he 'did sometymes use to laye some of my owne and my wyves apparrell' in it.<sup>145</sup>

### **London connections**

Failure to leave clear instructions for the dispersal of clothing could cause problems for those left behind. Elizabeth Moore, for example, hired a room in her house in Thames Street to a woman whose husband was travelling overseas. The woman died after a few weeks, leaving behind a box full of linens. When the husband returned to London, he demanded the goods from Moore, who had already given the linens to the deceased woman's sister. In lieu of the linens, Moore allowed Walton to lodge with her without charge – which raised the suspicion of the authorities, getting Moore into further trouble.<sup>146</sup> Other problems could arise if an intended recipient died before the testator, especially during plague seasons. Some wills acknowledged the precariousness of life, as when Elizabeth Higen left Rose Tindall two kerchers, neckerchers, smocks, a gold ring, and a black gown lined with russet 'yf she do survive me'.<sup>147</sup>

Nevertheless, some testators placed their trust in their executors, friends, or family to decide what to do with their apparel. Mary Vaghan left all of her clothes to her three daughters, stating that they should divide them equally and 'bestow what they shall thinke fitt to my neece Mary Davies'.<sup>148</sup> Elizabeth Moone asked a Mrs Stevens to divide her night

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<sup>143</sup> Henry Feilde, 1600, PROB 11/96/341.

<sup>144</sup> Margaret Walker, 1610, PROB 11/116/20.

<sup>145</sup> Richard Hilles, 1590, PROB 11/75/400.

<sup>146</sup> Hatfield Papers, 5, 341-44. As cited in Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71, 1 (2008): 234.

<sup>147</sup> Elizabeth Higen, 1560, PROB 11/43/498.

<sup>148</sup> Mary Vaghan, 1660, PROB 11/297/33.

linens and plain neckcloths between her cousin Margaret and her maid Judith.<sup>149</sup> Alice Smythe asked her executors to give a gown to her old servant Ales Bettes ‘suche a one as myne executors shall thinke mete and conveniente for her estate’.<sup>150</sup> Merchant Taylor Christopher Perte asked his ‘welbeloved wife’ to use her discretion when choosing which of his wearing gowns, coats, doublets, hose, and caps to give his clothworker Thomas Hawkins in 1590.<sup>151</sup>

Most testators, however, made assertive statements about what should be done with their clothing, and gave their items to a wide range of family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours. The Draper Thomas Eaton left belongings and money to friends and acquaintances, including to his master’s children and servants, and £40 to his ‘companion in laboures’ Martin Hamond. Elizabeth Moone left money to two cousins, although they cannot have been close friends as she noted that they were both ‘married to husbands whose names I knowe not’.<sup>152</sup> Bridgett Osborne, however, noted that the money she left for her ‘loving’ cousin Daniell was due to their close relationship: ‘I am much beholding and engaged for his love care and kindness to mee as well formerly as now’.<sup>153</sup> Clothing was sometimes designed as a reward for help given to the testator during their sickness, or to those who would administer the will. Robert Smarte named his son-in-law George as the overseer of his will, and ‘for his paynes in that behalfe by him to be taken my gowne of London russet’.<sup>154</sup>

Bequests were the product of friendships and social connections formed in the streets, parish churches, market squares, and shops of London. Wills reveal the social networks of Londoners who wished to remember neighbours, tradespeople, and the local poor, in addition to their family and friends. John Collyns noted that his two overseers also lived in his parish of St Giles-without-Cripplegate, and many wills were witnessed by

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<sup>149</sup> Elizabeth Moone, 1640, PROB 11/184/278.

<sup>150</sup> Alice Smythe, 1580, PROB 11/62/136.

<sup>151</sup> Christopher Perte, 1590, PROB 11/76/372.

<sup>152</sup> Elizabeth Moone, 1640, PROB 11/184/278.

<sup>153</sup> Bridgett Osborne, 1650, PROB 11/21/621.

<sup>154</sup> Robert Smarte, 1570, PROB 11/52/533.

neighbours.<sup>155</sup> Londoners frequently remembered their neighbours in their wills. Fishmonger Henry Gardyner left 13s. 4d. for ‘a recreacion’ for his neighbours on the day of his burial in 1580.<sup>156</sup> Mawde James and Margaret Harlakenden, both widows, left money for spiced bread to be given to their ‘good neighbours and frends’ at their burials.<sup>157</sup> Elizabeth Haslewood left her ‘mingled coloured stuffe petticoate’, a waistcoat, a white holland apron, and some wearing linens to her landlady.<sup>158</sup> Wills also show close connections to individuals in the wider community. William Silliarde left 40s. to the poor of St Benet Finke and 20s. ‘unto the goodman Foster’, a poor haberdasher ‘dwelling upon London bridge’.<sup>159</sup> Richard Perry, a Grocer, gave 20s. to the poor of St Christophers ‘neere the Exchange’ where he was to be buried, and left another 10s. specifically for ‘our poore milkwomen’.<sup>160</sup> Richard Reymond left his ‘stuffe I weare every day’ in addition to a pair of stockings and a pair of old boots to ‘Thompson the milkwoman’s husband’.<sup>161</sup> Richard Hilles left funeral gowns of ‘good strong kentish cloth’ to the waterman, the sexton of his parish, and to John Dymmocke ‘a lame carremman of Sainte James parish at Garlicke Hyde’. He also left his ‘newe velvet coate without slevs which as yet I did weare but seldome’ to William Fleetwood ‘the recorder of the saied Cittie of London whome I did allwayes finde to be my speciall good freind and I never deserved parte of his good will towardes me’.<sup>162</sup>

As Keith Wrightson has shown in the wills written by scrivener Ralph Tailor in Newcastle, the ‘language of place’ represents a form of strong emotional attachment, showing how early modern men and women conceived of and identified with their streets,

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<sup>155</sup> John Collyns, 1570, PROB 11/52/51.

<sup>156</sup> Henry Gardyner, 1580, PROB 11/62/128.

<sup>157</sup> Mawde James, 1570, PROB 11/52/193 and Margaret Harlakenden, 1580, PROB 11/62/544.

<sup>158</sup> Elizabeth Haslewood, 1650, PROB 11/213/407. Mingled meant woven in mixed colours, although Haslewood did not specify which colours in this case. ‘mingled, adj.’. *OED Online*. March 2017. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/118809?redirectedFrom=mingled> (accessed May 04, 2017).

<sup>159</sup> William Silliarde, 1570, PROB 11/52/25.

<sup>160</sup> Richard Perry, 1650, PROB 11/214/409.

<sup>161</sup> Richard Reymond, 1660, PROB 11/299/29.

<sup>162</sup> Richard Hilles, 1590, PROB 11/75/400.

parish, ward, and city.<sup>163</sup> For some testators, city connections extended beyond their parish, ward, or network of streets. Citizens of the London companies used their wills to ensure a continued connection to their guilds after death. Robert Hullson left his gowns furred with budge to the clerk and beadle of the company of Merchant Taylors.<sup>164</sup> Thirty-eight in this sample gave money for their company to have dinner or drinks on the day of burial, decorations for the livery hall, or charitable support for poor company members.

### **Clothing the poor**

Feelings of community and charity compelled nearly 20% of testators in the sample to leave money to London's hospitals and prisons; over 40% left money to the poor. Just under 10% of Londoners left money to provide clothing for the poor, so clothing alms account for a minority of charitable provisions.<sup>165</sup> These bequests were not consistent over the sample period; rather they were concentrated between the 1570s and 1600s, dwindling in the seventeenth century (Table 4.2). Between 1610 and 1660, only two testators in the sample left money to provide clothing for the poor, contrasting to eight in 1580 alone. This correlates with Ian Archer's suggestion that charitable giving in London increased during the Reformation period, peaking in the 1570s when over 70% of wealthy Londoners left money for the poor and public institutions like hospitals and prisons, and then gradually declining over the seventeenth century.<sup>166</sup> In contrast, Peter Earle's sample of 181 middling Londoners from 1665 to 1720 records only 30% making charitable bequests.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Keith Wrightson, *Ralph Taylor's Summer: A Scrivener, His City and the Plague* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 94-95.

<sup>164</sup> Robert Hullson, 1580, PROB 11/62/324.

<sup>165</sup> Sweetinburgh found that 6% of male and 9% of female testators left clothing alms in her sample of East Kent wills from 1400-1540; Sheila Sweetinburgh, 'Clothing the Naked in Late Medieval East Kent', in C. Richardson, ed., *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 109-22.

<sup>166</sup> Ian W. Archer, 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), 230-32.

<sup>167</sup> Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society, and Family Life in London, 1660 - 1730* (1989), 316-19 as cited in *ibid.*, 231.

Gifts of clothing for the poor often came with specific instructions or obligations. In 1580, cooper Edmund Birde decided to give gowns to those living at his company's almshouse and specified 'aswell men as women'.<sup>168</sup> In the same year, widow Dorothy Tatton left money for gowns for forty men and forty women, and also provided 12d. for each to have dinner.<sup>169</sup> The majority of testators who gave clothing explicitly obliged those who received alms to attend their funeral in mourning attire. Some of those who gave garments made of high quality fabric intended their generous gesture to be recognised. John Howland asked that twelve poor men carry his body to the burial wearing gowns of broad cloth or a 'good mantell freese' up to the value of 13s. 4d. per gown,<sup>170</sup>

### **Mourning clothes**

As Keith Thomas has argued, following and adapting Jacob Burckhardt's characterisation of the Renaissance period, the sixteenth-century English upper classes were deeply concerned with posthumous reputation.<sup>171</sup> In post-Reformation England, while it was no longer appropriate to endow monasteries and other institutions to pray for intercession, Protestants developed new ways to ensure that they were remembered in death.<sup>172</sup> Advice manual *The Sicke Man's Salve* stages this shift, as the neighbours debate the need for mourning gowns, some arguing that the dead should not be mourned as they have gone to heaven. Epaphroditus (the sick man) eventually decides that he will leave gowns for thirty poor men who will accompany him to the burial, explaining that 'when a man of honest

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<sup>168</sup> Edmund Birde, 1580, PROB 11/62/123.

<sup>169</sup> Dorothy Tatton, 1590, PROB 11/62/127.

<sup>170</sup> John Howland, 1570, PROB 11/52/310.

<sup>171</sup> Thomas, *The Ends of Life*, 226-67; Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (Penguin, 1990).

<sup>172</sup> J. F. R. Day, 'Death Be Very Proud: Sidney, Subversion, and Elizabethan Heraldic Funerals', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. Dale Hoak (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 179-203.

reputation departeth, & is brought to be buried, there should followe him certain in fine black gownes and certaine poor me[n] and wome[n] in courser cloth'.<sup>173</sup>

Many of those making a will, from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries, were keen that their funeral be a grand affair and provided mourning 'blacks' for their friends, family and servants' first act of remembrance; of this sample, fifty-three men and fifteen women (31%) left money for this purpose. It was entirely at the discretion of the individual to decide to whom mourning clothes should be given, at what cost, and of what material, although broadly speaking it was expected that those high up the social spectrum should have a higher number of men and women in black than those lower down (Figure 4.13).

Often personal decisions about the provision of mourning garments are hard to decode from a will. Take, for example, William Bodnam, a grocer, who left black mourning gowns to his cousin, his two overseers and their wives, and to a friend, but decided that his coffin bearers, those who 'carie me to Church', should do so 'in their owne gownes'.<sup>174</sup> Robert Tudnam, also a member of the Grocers' Company, gave long and complicated instructions for mourning attire. Like Bodnam, his four pall-bearers – selected from the Company – would be paid in money rather than gowns 'upon condition that they carry my body to the church decently in their blacke gownes'. Tudnam gave money to provide mourning of various qualities: for Agnes Smoth, a gown of 13s. 4d. per yard, while his 'man' Asby could spend only 10s. per yard for a mourning cloak. Tudnam specified that Richard Trott would receive three and a quarter yards of black broad cloth of 25s. per yard for a cloak, while George Hyer and William Trindell would receive only three yards of the same cloth. Such decisions were carefully made, taking into account the social connections between giver and receiver, the hierarchy of status, age and gender and, of course, personal attachment. Tudnam's funeral must have been a sea of black; in addition to the ten named recipients of mourning cloth and the four pall-bearers who would supply their own blacks,

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<sup>173</sup> Becon, *The Sicke Man's Salve*, 137, 154.

<sup>174</sup> William Bodnam, 1580, PROB 11/62/550.

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Figure 4.13:  
Thomas Lant, *The Funeral Procession of Sir Philip Sidney (Lant's Roll)*, plate 16, British Library.  
This plate depicts the velvet-covered coffin carried by 14 yeomen and 4 gentlemen described as 'deer lovinge frends'. Various types of mourning apparel – from cloaks and hoods to gloves and suits – are on display in this depiction.

Tudnam asked his executor to spend £40 to buy black cloth gowns, coats, or cloaks for ‘three score poore men’.<sup>175</sup> The speedy provision of so many funeral garments could put significant pressure on London’s tailors, as is revealed by their demands for a more flexible workforce in petitions in which they explained ‘trade consists principally in the Spring and the Foure termes in the yeare funeralls & some weddings which comonly require a quick despatch’.<sup>176</sup> John Greenhough, a woolman who lived in the parish of St Olave Hart Street, left £20 to ‘find’ gowns for forty poor men to wear at his funeral, perhaps suggesting that the gowns might be bought ready-made, second hand, or even leased in some way. Greenhough’s connections to other parishes are revealed by his choice of mourners: of these forty poor men, he asked for fifteen from St Olaves, and twenty-five from Allhallows Barking, Allhallows Staining, and St Dunstan-in-the-East.<sup>177</sup> The Haberdasher Daniell Watts also provided for a lavish funeral, paying 10s. to sixty-four ‘poor aged men’ to wear black gowns to his burial. He left £5 to the two men whom he declared guardians of his daughter to buy mourning garments, and £3 to each of his servants for mourning. To ensure such expense would be witnessed by his neighbours, he demanded that his body ‘be carried out of my owne howse to Church and from now other place. And alsoe that my said bodie be buryed in the daie time and not in the night.’<sup>178</sup> Others prided themselves on frugality. The widow Elizabeth Aty asked for her burial to be performed ‘with as little expense as may be’.<sup>179</sup>

Even those who were not provided with mourning apparel were expected to turn out to the burial in appropriate dress. Mourning dress for both men and women was usually

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<sup>175</sup> Robert Tudnam, 1600, PROB 11/96/22.

<sup>176</sup> Uncatalogued petitions from c.1671 or 5 and 1681, as quoted in N. V. Sleight-Johnson, ‘The Merchant Taylors Company of London, 1580-1645, with Special Reference to Government and Politics’ (PhD Thesis, University of London, 1989), 362.

<sup>177</sup> John Greenhough, 1630, PROB 11/157/187.

<sup>178</sup> Daniell Watts, 1640, PROB 11/184/244. For more on the fashion of night burials, see Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1984), 188-215. Perhaps Watts was reluctant to be buried at night due to the association with plague burials; Vanessa Harding, ‘Burial of the Plague Dead in Early Modern London’ in *Epidemic Disease in London*, ed. J.A.I. Champion (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 1993), 53-64.

<sup>179</sup> Elizabeth Aty, 1660, PROB 11/302/469.

made of heavy broadcloths or other woollen fabrics in dull colours with unreflective surfaces.<sup>180</sup> When Samuel Pepys's Aunt Fenner died in August 1661, Pepys's father was unable to provide mourning for all of his family, so they were expected to supply their own. Pepys was clearly relieved when he described how his family were able to turn out in appropriate mourning attire, 'all in mourning, doing him [his father] the greatest honour, the world believing that he did give us it'.<sup>181</sup> Six items from the sample – one kirtle, one suit, and four cloaks – were described as being for 'mourning', suggesting that at least a few testators kept garments in their wardrobes that they reserved for mourning, perhaps that they had once been given through the will of another deceased friend or family member. For the poor who received mourning garments through bequests, however, coats, gowns, or cloaks were important outer garments in which the dispossessed might shelter from the cold long after the deceased was put in the earth, and so their status as 'mourning' wear was probably only a temporary one.

Historians have suggested that gloves were often bequeathed en masse to be worn at the funeral, but this sample only contains four bequests of gloves as individual items passed down, and three bequests of money for gloves to be purchased for remembrance.<sup>182</sup> These three bequests of gloves as tokens are also rather small: William Skipwith, a clothworker who died in 1640, left five shillings for each of his overseers to buy gloves, dyer John Harroway gave gloves to his 'fellowe servants', and grocer William Webb left money to provide twelve bachelors with white gloves to wear at his funeral.<sup>183</sup> Maria Hayward cites a 1592 will from a London-based Merchant Taylor who left 100 pairs of gloves to the householders of St Dunstan's parish.<sup>184</sup> These surely would have kept Henry

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<sup>180</sup> Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History* (London: Routledge, 2009), 73.

<sup>181</sup> Ernest Rhys (ed.), *Diary of Samuel Pepys* (Dent, 1942), vol. I, 186, 203, 441, as cited in Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 74.

<sup>182</sup> Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 274-76; Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, 67.

<sup>183</sup> William Skipwith, 1640, PROB 11/183/740, John Harroway, 1630, PROB 11/212/92, William Webb, 1620, PROB 11/136/322.

<sup>184</sup> This example, and the assertion that testators 'regularly left bequests of rings and gloves', PROB 11/80, is in Hayward, *Rich Apparel*, 13.

Payne in the minds (and on the hands) of those living in his local parish at least as long as the leather gloves survived, but his magnanimous gesture was unusual in its scale.

Mourning clothes were a public statement of emotional distress, and were meant to be recognised. When Sir Kenelm Digby went into mourning for his late wife in 1633, John Aubrey described how he ‘retired into Gresham College, London, where he diverted himselfe with his Chymistry [...] He wore a long mourning cloake, a high crowned hatt, his head unshorne, Look’t like a Hermite, as signes of sorrowe for his beloved wife.’<sup>185</sup> Protestant reformers debated how long mourning garments should be worn after the death of a loved one, with moderates suggesting that mourning blacks be worn for a short period (probably between two days and a week) and others suggesting up to a year.<sup>186</sup> Not only was a long period of mourning an expensive undertaking, requiring an extensive wardrobe of blacks, it could be regarded as insincere. As Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift summarised the Puritan position, mourning dress did not emerge ‘from any sadness of mind [...] there being under a mourning gown oftentimes a merry heart’.<sup>187</sup> But even if only worn for a short time after the funeral, mourning attire would have been a familiar sight on London streets.

### Accessories

Testators who wished to give their friends, family, and neighbours more enduring signs of remembrance could leave money for the explicit purpose of purchasing items of jewellery (often rings). Of this paper’s sample of London wills, just over half (113 wills; 86 men and 27 women) contained bequests of rings already in the possession of the testator, or of

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<sup>185</sup> Oliver Dick, *Aubrey’s Brief Lives* (Penguin: London, 1962), 188 as cited in Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 72.

<sup>186</sup> David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 438; Katharine Goodland, *Female Mourning in Medieval and Renaissance English Drama: From the Raising of Lazarus to King Lear* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 109.

<sup>187</sup> John Whitgift, *The Works of John Whitgift: The Third Portion, Containing the Defense of the Answer to the Admonition, Against the Reply of Thomas Cartwright: Tractates XI-XXIII. Sermons, Selected Letters, &c.*, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853), 369.

money for rings to be purchased. These high proportions go some way to explaining the large numbers of mourning rings in the collections of the British Museum, the V&A, the Museum of London, and even smaller collections like the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.<sup>188</sup>

Some rings had an explicitly personal connection to the testator. One skinner, Thomas Rawlin, left his son ‘my seale ring having two letters in it for my name’. Rawlin’s son was also named Thomas and so this ring would have been an appropriate heirloom, containing the initials of both father and son in one.<sup>189</sup> Twenty years later, the dyer Thomas Billinge only mentioned one object in his will – his ‘seal ringe of gould’ – which he gave to his son Joseph.<sup>190</sup> The seal, usually containing a monogram or emblem of the wearer or his family, was used to prove important documents, and therefore was not only object associated with identity, it was the physical stamp of authority (Figure 4.14).

Sometimes rings already carried associations with another person, and so as they were passed down through generations of family and friends took on multiple identities. Margery Ripley left a gold ring to her daughter Alice ‘which was her fathers with A W graven in hit’.<sup>191</sup> When John Pickeringe gave a gold ring with a death’s head (a skull) ‘which I usuallye weare’ to his brother, it was probably a *memento mori* given to him by a dead friend or relative (Figure 4.15).<sup>192</sup>

Dr Edward Lister, the famous physician, was more explicit about the associations held in a ring he was passing on when he gave Mr Hartland and his wife a gold ring with a death’s head ‘and the letters R.D. for Robert Darby deceased’. Having passed on this ring

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<sup>188</sup> For mourning jewellery, see Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 224-47. For rings in the Fitzwilliam collection, see Katherine Tycz, ‘Mourning Rings’, in *Treasured Possessions: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Victoria Avery, Melissa Calaresu, and Mary Laven (Philip Wilson Publishers, 2015), 235-37.

<sup>189</sup> Thomas Rawlin, 1600, PROB 11/96/136.

<sup>190</sup> Thomas Billinge, 1620, PROB 11/135/280.

<sup>191</sup> Margery Ripley, 1560, PROB 11/43/500.

<sup>192</sup> John Pickeringe, 1580, PROB 11/62/341.

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Figure 4.14 (above):

Gold ring with revolving circular bezel enamelled with a white skull and on the reverse a merchant's mark, probably used as a seal. The edge is inscribed with 'NOSSE TE IPSUM' (know yourself), *c.*1600, England, V&A (M.18-1929).

Figure 4.15 (below):

Gold ring with a white enamelled skull above the initials CR in black enamel, *c.*1649-1674, England, V&A (M.22-1929)

laden with associations with a former owner, Lister gave money to commission a very specific set of rings for his stepdaughters, siblings, brothers- and sisters-in-law, friends, his uncle, cousins, his nephew, and to all of their husbands and wives (the sum total is ambiguous but it amounts to eighteen rings at the very least). This ring was to be ‘on the inside ingraven “Coelum patria Christus via” with two letters for my name and an enameled deaths head betwixt the two’.<sup>193</sup>

While rings which had been owned by the testator carried memories with them, new commissions also carried emotional resonance. In April 1609, Hellen Ball of St Brides in Fleet Street left money for three new rings for her former servants, and three for her ‘loving’ friends, ‘in token of my love towards them’.<sup>194</sup> When Robert Conway left money for ‘all my brothers and sisters’, his ‘loving uncle’ and aunt, three sons-in-law and two overseers to buy rings, his bequest was not just meant to ensure positive remembrances amongst his family. At the end of his will, he wrote ‘And my will and order is that notwithstanding my said bequest my brother John Clifford shall have noe Ring’.<sup>195</sup> Conway’s explicit exclusion of his brother is a reminder that the act of bequeathing items of clothing to only some family members could also function as a slight to others who were left out of the will.

While Lister’s death’s head and initialled rings were intended to make the recipient think both of him and of their own mortality, other rings carried further responsibilities. Some were explicitly named ‘remembrances’ in the will, and carried an obligation with them. As anthropologists and historians, most notably Mauss, have shown, gift-giving practices usually require a reciprocal act.<sup>196</sup> Objects given by the testator were often

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<sup>193</sup> This translates as ‘Heaven the country, Christ the way’; PROB 11/135/365.

<sup>194</sup> Hellen Ball, 1610, PROB 11/115/376.

<sup>195</sup> Robert Conway, 1660, PROB 11/300/55.

<sup>196</sup> Historians of gift giving are still heavily influenced by Mauss’s groundbreaking study, first published as ‘Essai sur le don’ (1923-24), English edition first published 1954, Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, trans. W. D. Halls, (Oxford: Routledge, 2002). For early modern gift giving, see Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford University Press, 2000); Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts: Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

accompanied by the request to ‘remember’ the deceased, and wearable items – rings and clothing – were considered among the most powerful items given as ‘remembrances’. Barber surgeon William Hudson wanted his good friend and neighbour David to spend the 20s. he left to him ‘to buy him a ringe or some other thinge to weare or keepe for my sake and in remembrance’.<sup>197</sup> When William Greenewell left Anthony Havelland, ‘sometimes my servant’ the large sum of three pounds, he stated that it was both ‘to wear for my sake’ and also ‘pray him to do his best endeavour to remember such old debts as are due to my account under his charge’.<sup>198</sup> The widow Elizabeth Canne left various sums of money to provide her friends and neighbours with rings as ‘a gentle remembrance’. But for two young women, the 40 shilling gold rings were to be ‘kept by them for their weddinge ringes’.<sup>199</sup> Whether this demand was well received, or whether Joan and Margaret would have preferred to receive different wedding rings, cannot be known. Robert Smarte gave his son Ralphe a gold ring and the third best shirt ‘to th intent that he shall consider his duetie as well to his mother as to the rest of his brethren and sisters’.<sup>200</sup>

Such descriptions, along with extant rings, show how the material form of rings was designed to provoke an emotional response. Precious stones such as diamonds or rubies, and shining white enamelled skulls, sparkled to emphasise the implicit or explicit instructions to remember death and the deceased. One gold signet ring now in the V&A pushed its memorial function further: behind the bezel, which is engraved with a skull and crossbones encircled by the name ‘Edward Cope’, is a small compartment which contains a portion of bone (Figure 4.16 a&b). In her examination of hair jewellery, Marcia Pointon has noticed how in Protestant cultures, ‘the secular reliquary functioned in devotional ways that are self-consciously analogous to religious reliquaries’.<sup>201</sup> Cope’s ring is an even more

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<sup>197</sup> William Hudson, 1660, PROB 11/300/374.

<sup>198</sup> William Greenewell, 1620, PROB 11/136/221.

<sup>199</sup> Elizabeth Canne, 1600, PROB 11/95/18.

<sup>200</sup> Robert Smarte, 1570, PROB 11/52/533.

<sup>201</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Brilliant Effects: A Cultural History of Gem Stones and Jewellery* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 296.

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Figure 4.16a and b:  
Signet Ring, c.1600-1650, England,  
engraved gold set with bone, V&A  
M.273-1962.

evocative example than the hair locks and jewels in Pointon's study as this bone was not encased behind glass. When the ring was worn, the bone would have made direct contact with its wearer's finger, constantly evoking memories of the departed Cope. With such a tangible connection to the deceased, it would have been difficult for the wearer to forget his friend's death or his own future death. If bequests represent the desire of a testator to live on in the minds of his or her friends, and through associations in material goods, Cope's ring is the strongest expression of such endurance; as Sir Thomas Browne wrote in 1658, 'Teeth, bones, and hair, give the most lasting defiance to corruption'.<sup>202</sup>

While mourning rings now held in museum collections are easily identified by their enamelled or engraved skulls, initials, and posies, other bequests which might have been worn as tokens of remembrance are less evident. Two knitted woollen caps in the Museum of London were found with coins concealed within the brim, one of which was a gold angel of Richard III.<sup>203</sup> In 1560 George Fissher left his mother-in-law 'an olde angell' and in 1590 Guye Bower gave eleven of his friends 'an Angell a peece for a token of my good will'.<sup>204</sup> Perhaps the coins tucked into these hats were tokens, worn in memory of a lost friend.

### **Inherited clothing**

How did legatees use and think about inherited clothing? Commentators offer conflicting views. One preacher remarked: 'When thy father is dead, his garment or his ring is dear to thee; this thou carry upon thy finger and wouldst not lose it for anything.'<sup>205</sup> But the Tudor

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<sup>202</sup> Sir Thomas Browne, *Urne Buriall* (1658), ed. J. Carter, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 33 as cited in *ibid.*, 293.

<sup>203</sup> A cap found in Finsbury in the early 20th century, Museum of London ID number 5000, was found with a gold quarter noble of Edward III concealed in the rim. Another knitted cap also found in Finsbury, ID 5003, was found with a gold angel in the rim. Information from the Museum of London internal database, kindly provided by curator of fashion and decorative arts Timothy Long.

<sup>204</sup> George Fissher, 1560, PROB 11/43/504 and Guye Bower, 1590, PROB 11/76/167.

<sup>205</sup> Richard Stock, *A Learned and Very Usefull Commentary upon the Whole Prophetie of Malachy*, ed. Samuel Torshell (1641), i. 73 as cited in Thomas, *The Ends of Life*, 127.

*Book of Homilies* claimed ‘we are loath to wear such as our fathers hath left us; we think that not sufficient or good enough for us’.<sup>206</sup> Few wills offer clues as to the emotional impact that inherited clothing would have on the recipient, and it is likely that while some new owners would mourn and remember by tracing the bodily imprints and marks of use and smelling scents left behind in the garments, others would be less sentimental.

The main economic value in clothing was in the material – cloth, thread, metal decorations – and so much inherited clothing could be resold to release its value, or taken apart and remade into more fashionable styles to fit the new owner. When Richard Perry prepared his will in 1650, he asked for his executor to personally and expediently deliver all of his wearing apparel to his brother Eames ‘for his use’, evidently expecting that Eames would be able to wear or alter these garments quickly.<sup>207</sup> Thomas Fugale suggested the mutability of textiles for use in garments for men and women when he gave to Margaret Dobbes ‘a pece appointed for upperstockes [...] and other clothe appointed for a dublette’.<sup>208</sup> Occasionally the deceased offered instructions for its reuse, as when Alice Dorney left her brother ‘my best gowne of flower’d velvet for him to make a cloak and sleeves’.<sup>209</sup>

Wills, in combination with material and textual evidence, suggest that early modern men and women could invest their clothing with emotions and meaning. Garments could be worth more than their economic value; a coarse red baize petticoat may not have had much value on the second-hand market, but the association of the colour red with health and wellbeing meant that when Elizabeth Haslewood bequeathed one to her maidservant, she passed on protection and care in material form.<sup>210</sup> Some clothes had already been given

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<sup>206</sup> *The Two Books of Homilies appointed to be read in Churches*, ed. John Griffiths (Oxford, 1859), 311 as cited in *ibid.*, 138.

<sup>207</sup> Richard Perry, 1650, PROB 11/214/409.

<sup>208</sup> Thomas Fugale, 1580, PROB 11/62/538.

<sup>209</sup> WI 45.243 (1609) Suffolk Record Office, transcribed in Melissa Hamnett, ‘Fashioning a Self: Issues of Identity Surrounding Women’s Dress in England 1590-1640’, as cited in Jenny Tiramani and Susan North, eds, *Seventeenth-Century Women’s Dress Patterns*, 2 (V&A Pub., 2012), 18. This will is not included in the London sample.

<sup>210</sup> Elizabeth Haslewood, 1650, PROB 11/213/407.

as bequests, and so carried associations with multiple former owners. In 1630, scrivener John Ellett left John Cleaver ‘the stuffe cappe ymbroydered with greene silke which was my fathers’.<sup>211</sup> In 1591 a Lincolnshire man left ‘unto Oswald Brownrige my coat that was Mr Welbies’.<sup>212</sup> Sara Allanson of the parish of St John the Baptist left to her kinswoman Sara ‘all her mothers apparel and linen and wollen whatsoever that I have’.<sup>213</sup> William Frankish had apparently inherited his mother’s black serge gown and kept it during his lifetime, leaving it in his own will to his sister Alice.<sup>214</sup> Other bequests were expected to last more than another lifetime. In 1550 a Nottinghamshire yeoman left his brother ‘my best doublet sleeved with velvet for [the] term of his life; and after his decease to remain to John Fulwood, his son’.<sup>215</sup> The founder George Stephenson left his father a liver colour gown and horseman’s coat, mittens, a cloth hood, and all his red caps and white linens for ‘so longe as he lives and after his death to my brother’.<sup>216</sup>

Laura Gowing has shown how Londoners might incorporate items of clothing and rings, given from a deceased wife or husband, into a new courtship or marriage.<sup>217</sup> Given the swift marriage turn-over in the city – more than half of all marriages lasted less than ten years – such a practice must have been a powerful way both to incorporate a new partner into the family while also retaining a link to a former union.<sup>218</sup> What would the new spouse have felt receiving her husband’s ‘first wifes wedding apparell’ and would she have

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<sup>211</sup> John Ellett, 1630, PROB 11/158/584.

<sup>212</sup> Lady Elizabeth Cust, *The Records of the Cust Family* (1898), 301, as cited in Thomas, *The Ends of Life*, 127.

<sup>213</sup> Sara Allanson, 1630, PROB 11/157/675.

<sup>214</sup> William Frankish, 1660, PROB 11/300/265.

<sup>215</sup> *Testamenta Eboracensia*, vi, ed. J. W. Clay (Surtees Soc., 1902), 294-95 as cited in Thomas, *The Ends of Life*, 127.

<sup>216</sup> George Stephenson, 1630, PROB 11/158/605.

<sup>217</sup> Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 159-64.

<sup>218</sup> Vivien Brodsky, ‘Widows in Late Elizabethan London: Remarriage, Economic Opportunity, and Family Orientations’, in Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M. Smith, and Keith Wrightson, eds, *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 135-36 as cited in Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 163-64.

worn ‘a velvett capp which was [...] her former husbands’?<sup>219</sup> Such objects, so deeply associated with a former union, must have stirred complex emotions.

Being attentive to the emotional power of clothing when reading early modern wills raises a number of powerful, if speculative, questions. In 1508, chandler and barber John Chesman left ‘a gown cloth that should have been my wedding gown’ to a woman named Agnes who he described as ‘my wife should have been’; would Agnes have been able to cut up and reuse this textile, or would she have just wanted to sell it?<sup>220</sup> How did Henry Boulte’s father feel, wearing a coat made from the fine black worsted woven and left to him by his deceased broadweaver son? What was it like to be one of the twenty-six poor women living in the parish of St Andrews Undershafte who attended the funeral of Margaret Harlakenden wearing a newly made black broadcloth gown and for how long did the gown remind them of the generous testator? What did Edward Cope’s friends and family make of wearing a ring containing his bone tight against their flesh?

### **Conclusion: The afterlife of clothes**

Much of what has been assumed about wills and ownership generally, and of clothing bequests specifically, is based on scholarship about the eighteenth century. While it may be true that increasing consumer aspirations and available commodities enabled objects to connect to emotions in novel ways, as Peter Stearns has suggested, this study demonstrates that this was not a ‘new’ phenomenon in the eighteenth century, and instead can be traced in the wills of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Londoners. While Maxine Berg’s sample revealed that the women of eighteenth-century Birmingham and Sheffield described clothing and household goods in greater depth than their male counterparts, her conclusions should not be transplanted into the earlier period. As this sample demonstrates,

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<sup>219</sup> Henry Procter c. Alice Deacon (1590), DL/C 213, p. 764; Jane Grigge c. Robert Eastfield (1578), DL/C 629, f. 53 as cited in Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 163-64.

<sup>220</sup> As cited in Thomas, *The Ends of Life*, 251. This will is not included in the London sample.

London men from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries used their wills to bequeath clothing, which they often described in as vivid detail as women of the time. The language of wills, read alongside material and visual sources, reminds us that extant items of clothing may have carried and prompted a complex range of emotions that were at once deeply personal but also widely acknowledged across the social spectrum, between genders and down the generations. For this London community of clothworkers, tailors, seamstresses, and fashionable consumers, clothing was a thread that could connect the dying to the living, last for generations, and provide economic, material, and symbolic protection to family, friends, colleagues, and neighbours. Clothing helped Londoners navigate their city, and in their passage from life to death.

When we encounter wills in the archives, we are confronted with evidence that shows that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century men and women appreciated their clothing, thought deeply about it, and cared enough to spend time ensuring that it was passed on to be appreciated and used by their successors. Most early modern clothing was worn to tatters or has decomposed. Rare fragments, such as the Museum of London's collection of sleeves, codpieces, shoes, and garment trimmings, are excavated by builders or wash up in the Thames. But almost all early modern clothes that survive, both in private and museum collections, have been passed down through generations of a family before being sold or donated. Surviving clothing and rings are a testament to the respect and care with which recipients took over their inheritance. Those rare objects that survive – such as Isham's mulberry and olive gowns – are the material witnesses which demonstrate both the reuse and preservation of inherited clothing. In the nineteenth century, great-grandchildren of these London testators might have cut up the clothing of their forefathers and -mothers to wear at fashionable historically themed fancy-dress balls.<sup>221</sup> Much of what remains is thanks

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<sup>221</sup> See, for example, Santina M. Levey, 'The Story of a Shirt: A Cautionary Tale with an Unexpected Ending', *Costume* 44, 1 (2010): 28-36; Madeleine Ginsburg, Avril Hart, and Valerie Mendes, *Four Hundred Years of Fashion*, ed. Natalie Rothstein (London: V&A Publications, 1992), 53.

to the care of those who inherited it; we have them to thank for preserving garments that are now in museums. From them, we are now the inheritors of these generous bequests.

### Conclusion: London as a centre of fashion

In her poem ‘The Manner of Her Will, and What She Left to London and to All Those in It, at Her Departing’, Isabella Whitney described how she had nothing to bequeath her fellow city dwellers; instead she left them the qualities she associated with each street.<sup>1</sup> On her poetic perambulation, Whitney revealed the many clothing spaces of the city, demonstrating how Londoners navigated the streets by identifying places of garment manufacture and vending:

Watling Street and Canwick Street  
I full of woollen leave,  
And linen store in Friday Street,  
If they me not deceive.  
And those which are of calling such  
That costlier they require,  
I mercers leave, with silk so rich  
As any would desire.  
In Cheap of them they store shall find,  
And likewise in that street,  
I goldsmiths leave with jewels such  
As are for ladies meet;  
[...]  
With hoods, bongraces, hats or caps  
Such store are in that street  
As, if on t’one side you should miss,  
The t’other serves you feat.  
For nets of every kind of sort  
I leave within the Pawn,<sup>2</sup>  
French ruffs, high purls, gorgets and sleeves  
Of any kind of lawn  
[...]  
I hose do leave in Birchin Lane  
Of any kind of size,  
For women stitched,  
for men both trunks  
And those of Gascoyne guise.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on Whitney, see Wendy Wall, ‘Isabella Whitney and the Female Legacy’, *ELH* 58, 1 (1991): 35–62.

<sup>2</sup> The Pawn was the name for the upper level of the Royal Exchange; Donatella Calabi and Derek Keene, ‘Exchanges and Cultural Transfer in European Cities, c.1500-1700’, in *Cities and Cultural Exchange in Europe, 1400-1700*, ed. Donatella Calabi and Stephen Turk Christensen, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 307.

Boots, shoes, or pantables good store  
St. Martin's hath for you;  
In Cornhill there I leave you beds  
And all that longs thereto.  
For women shall you tailors have,  
By Bow the chiefest dwell;  
In every lane you some shall find  
Can do indifferent well.  
And for the men few streets or lanes  
But body-makers be,  
And such as make the sweeping cloaks  
With guards beneath the knee.<sup>3</sup>

Even less wealthy Londoners like Whitney could conceive of the most densely occupied city spaces, and jump from east to west, parish to parish, by mapping the city through fashionable attire (Figure 5.1). This thesis has mapped the development of London in the century between 1560 and 1660 through the making, wearing, controlling, and bequeathal of clothes. Placing objects at the fore, and drawing on a wide range of archival, literary, and visual sources, it has revealed the material literacy developed by London's makers and required of consumers who collaborated with craftsmen to use fabrics economically and creatively. This material literacy meant that Londoners looked at one another on the streets with expert eyes, visually assessing the economic, social, and cultural worth of the garments worn by passers-by.

Clothing enriched London's economy and impressed many visitors to the city, but it also caused problems for individuals, companies, Parliament, the monarchy, and the Church alike. By looking closely at objects and focusing on London's Mayoral Courts, this thesis has offered a new interpretation of English sumptuary law, showing that it was enforced in the city, that its implementation and economic impact was discussed by Londoners in letters and diaries, and that it prompted clever innovations by craftspeople. Finally, integrating approaches from the history of emotions and objects into the quantitative and qualitative study of a sample of London wills shows

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<sup>3</sup> Isabella Whitney, 'The Manner of Her Will, and What She Left to London and to All Those in It, at Her Departing', in *London: A History in Verse*, ed. Mark Ford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 66-75.

Figure 5.1 (above, close up; below, zoomed out):

Sites mentioned by Whitney.

*Civitas Londinvm* (1562?) 'The Agas Map'. *The Map of Early Modern London*, ed.

Janelle Jenstad, (*MoEML*, 2012): <https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/agas.htm>.

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that both men and women thought carefully about their clothing, its reuse and emotional resonance.

London was exceptional in size, population, diversity, trade, and in its concentration of royal, legal, and parliamentary power. In charting an urban culture of clothing distinct to the city, this thesis has nuanced work on England more generally. But London was the capital of the nation and its successes were lauded as the epitome of English and later British nationhood. News of the London look reached the rest of the country in letters, in trimmings and fabrics carried in peddlers' packs, and on the bodies of young maids and apprentices, as well as the gentry who travelled to and from their residences in towns and villages.

### **London's emergence as a fashion city**

Taken together, this thesis argues that changes in the city enabled London's transformation into a global centre of fashion. As Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have pointed out, the very word 'fashion' transformed in this era. Since the thirteenth century, 'fashion' had meant to create or make, and only became associated with changing styles and innovation in the late 1560s.<sup>4</sup> Jones and Stallybrass are among many scholars who have traced how clothing 'fashioned' identity, in the older sense of the word. But John Styles has pointed out that relatively little work has explored novelty and innovation.<sup>5</sup> In this thesis I argue that it was no coincidence that the two concepts of identity and change were combined in London at precisely the time the word fashion was taking on multiple meanings. Urban identity became associated with novelty and diversity of shapes, colours, and materials, while fashion was presented both as a threat

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<sup>4</sup> 'fashion, n.'. *OED Online*. June 2017. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/68389?rskey=SKDYu2&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed June 23, 2017); Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Greenblatt has been highly influential in the interest in identity and self-fashioning; Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); John Styles, 'Product Innovation in Early Modern London', *Past & Present* 168, 1 (2000): 124-69; this new volume shows how scholars are turning to novelty and innovation, with impressive results, Evelyn Welch, ed., *Fashioning the Early Modern: Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

to stability and celebrated for fuelling the economy, providing visual and material interest, and proving the skills of makers and consumers alike.

Styles charted the emergence of the annual fashion cycle in the late seventeenth century, connected to ‘mercantilist’ and ‘political’ aims.<sup>6</sup> But while the formal annualisation of fashions emerged later, I argue that in the period between 1560 and 1660, London emerged as a centre of fashion, in which it became expected that clothing should change through innovations. Educated consumers, skilled makers, immigrants, and experimenters all contributed to these new modes of making, dressing, and looking in the city. The ‘London season’ was established, giving a rhythm to visits by the gentry, who needed to travel to the city, even James I recognised, because ‘the new fashion is to be had nowhere but in London’.<sup>7</sup>

Still, fashionable clothing changed at an uneven and unpredictable pace. We have already seen how Lady Randolph worried that the ‘newest fashion’ of satin embroidered with alcomedes was ‘not like to hold past summer’ in 1632.<sup>8</sup> Her uncertainty was shared half a century earlier by Philip Gawdy, who wrote in 1589 to his sister to tell her that in the city: ‘Some weare sattin of all collors with their upper border and some weare none. Some one of them weares this daye with all these fashions, and the nexte daye without. So that I fynd nothingmore certayne then their vncertaynty’.<sup>9</sup>

Fashion was not just restricted to the elites; Londoners like Whitney could buy cheaper clothing second hand, wear imitation beaver hats, and have their clothes tailored into a new shape. Whitney might not have been able to leave clothing in a will, but she was one of thousands of Londoners who identified the city with clothing; her legacy is seen in London’s twenty-first century reputation as a fashion city.

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<sup>6</sup> Styles, ‘Product Innovation in Early Modern London’; John Styles, ‘Fashion and Innovation in Early Modern Europe’, in *Fashioning the Early Modern*, ed. Welch, 46-47.

<sup>7</sup> James I, *The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 343.

<sup>8</sup> Joanna Moody, *The Private Correspondence of Jane Lady Cornwallis Bacon, 1613-1644* (London, 2003), 215, as cited in Styles, ‘Product Innovation in Early Modern London’; Styles, ‘Fashion and Innovation in Early Modern Europe’.

<sup>9</sup> Philip Gawdy to his sister, 11 April 1589, Philip Gawdy et al., *Letters of Philip Gawdy of West Harling, Norfolk, and of London to Various Members of His Family, 1579-1616* (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1906), 49.

## What's left?

One cold winter day in the sixteenth century, a young child playing in a Finsbury field dropped his mitten.<sup>10</sup> A simple woollen garment, it was hand-knitted, and plain but for a small decorative band with chevrons around the wrist (Figure 5.2). At just thirteen centimetres long, the mitten would only have been suitable for a baby or toddler. It remained in the Finsbury field long after the child had returned home to warm his bare hands over the fire. Whether this glove-less child survived long enough to have his own children is doubtful: less than half of London-born children survived until marriageable age due to disease, poverty, and plague.<sup>11</sup> But the mitten's survival was even less probable. As Glenn Adamson has explained, '[o]ne of the key problems in the study of material culture is the phenomenon of loss. Indeed, when it comes to the material past, disappearance is the norm, and preservation is the exception'.<sup>12</sup>

While surviving clothing in museum collections tends to represent the fine fashions worn by the gentry, I have argued here that elite garments can also be read as evidence for the innovative skills of clothing makers – from tailors to buttonmakers – who contributed to London's development into a centre of manufacture and trade that could compete with Paris and Antwerp by the mid-seventeenth century. Simple and humble clothes that have been excavated, often dull from years underground or ripped and torn, are hard to reconcile with fine silk-lined doublets and velvet gowns. But material culture scholars remind us not to forget 'small things'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Unknown, *Mitten*, wool, sixteenth Century, A1989, Museum of London, <http://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/Online/object.aspx?objectID=object-90608>.

<sup>11</sup> Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer, 'Population Growth and Suburban Expansion', in *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*, ed. A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay (London and New York: Longman, 1986), 50.

<sup>12</sup> Glenn Adamson, 'The Case of the Missing Footstool: Reading the Absent Object', in *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 192.

<sup>13</sup> James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977); Sara Pennell, 'Mundane Materiality, or Should Small Things Still Be Forgotten? Material Culture, Micro-Histories, and the Problem of Scale', in *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 173-91.

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Figure 5.2 (above):

Unknown maker, mitten, sixteenth Century, 13 cm x 7 cm, wool, Museum of London A 1989.

Figure 5.3 (below):

Pins on the Thames foreshore, image taken in 2016 by 'The London Mudlark'.

Garments like this mitten testify to the interest in clothing that poorer Londoners shared with their richer neighbours. The tiny chevron band around the mitten's wrist illustrates a taste for decoration. Even though the mittens would not last their growing wearer long, they were intended as more than simple functional items to keep the hands warm.

While Adamson is right to mention loss, the future for studies of early modern clothing promises new discoveries. Every day, thousands of handmade pins wash up on the shores of the Thames, testifying to the flexibility of early modern dress (Figure 5.3).<sup>14</sup> Men and women held their outfits together with pins and laces, so they remind us of the diverse patterns and folds made in ruffs, and the new pair of sleeves or embroidered stomacher that could be attached onto an old bodice. Excavations for London's Crossrail train link have revealed leather shoes and scraps of woven silk.<sup>15</sup> These things, and objects already in museum collections, will be re-animated by scientific examinations, as DNA analysis, dye testing, microscope images, and x-ray scanning become cheaper. A new generation of scholars, collaborating with curators and makers, will contextualise evidence that objects reveal about making, wearing, and storage of clothing.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps these kinds of investigations will one day reveal the original colour of the mittens, telling us more about their makers and owners and further revealing the sensuous clothing culture of early modern London.

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<sup>14</sup> Ivor Noel Hume, *Treasure In The Thames* (London: Frederick Muller, 1956), 193-97.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Sam Pfizenmaier, *Charterhouse Square: Black Death Cemetery and Carthusian Monastery, Meat Market and Suburb* (London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Dinah Eastop and Ross McEwing, 'Informing Textile and Wildlife Conservation: DNA Analysis of Baleen from an 18th-Century Garment Found Deliberately Concealed in a Building', in *Scientific Analysis of Ancient and Historic Textiles*, ed. R. Janaway and P. Wyeth (London: Archetype, 2004), 161-67; Judith H. Hofenk de Graaff, W. G. Th Roelofs, and Maarten R. van Bommel, *The Colourful Past: Origins, Chemistry and Identification of Natural Dyestuffs* (London: Archetype, 2004); Sonia O'Connor and Mary Brooks, *X-Radiography of Textiles, Dress and Related Objects* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2007); Maria Hayward, 'A Shadow of a Former Self: Analysis of an Early Seventeenth-Century Boy's Doublet from Abingdon', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and Its Meanings*, ed. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 107-18.

## Glossary<sup>1</sup>

Alb	White full-length vestment worn by the clergy
Band, falling band, standing band	Linen or lace collar worn at the neck. Falling bands were turned down, and standing bands were starched and worn with a support so that they could stand upright
Bays/baize	Napped woollen cloth
Belly piece	Stiffenings inside the doublet, often made of card, reeds, or whalebone, to give shape to the waist
Blackwork	Embroidery done using black thread on white cloth, very popular in the Elizabethan period
Bodice, pair of bodies	Female upper garment, usually made in two sections and joined at the sides and stiffened with whalebone or other materials
Bombast	Padding or stuffing, used in trunk hose and doublets. Also meant inflated turgid language
Bombazine	Fabric introduced by Flemish weavers, of a silk warp and worsted weft. Often used for mourning
Boothose	Overstockings worn with boots, often decorative
Botcher	Someone who repairs clothing
Broadcloth	Fine plain weave woollen cloth, two yards wide, one of England's prime exports
Buff	Thick leather, used in military clothing. Dull, creamy-yellow colour
Bum roll	Padded roll worn around the waist to create shape
Busk	Wooden or bone support, inserted into the bodice for shape or structure. Sometimes given during courtship, could be decorated
Calamanco	A glossy woollen cloth, sometimes striped and checked
Calico	Fabric made of cotton, or linen and cotton mix
Cambric	Fine linen fabric
Camlet, chamlet	A light warp-faced plain weave fabric with a pronounced weft rib. Made of silk, wool, mohair, camel hair, or a combination of these
Canions	Extensions to the hose, usually worn on the upper thigh

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<sup>1</sup>This glossary has been made using the Oxford English Dictionary Online and Susan Vincent, "When I Am in Good Habitt": Clothes in English Culture c.1550- c.1670' (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2002); Valerie Cumming, C. W. Cunnington, and P. E. Cunnington, *The Dictionary of Fashion History* (Oxford: Berg, 2010); Ulinka Rublack and Maria Hayward, eds., *The First Book of Fashion: The Book of Clothes of Matthaeus and Veit Konrad Schwarz of Augsburg* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

Canvas	A strong linen cloth
Caparison	Trappings for a horse, sometimes a cloth spread over the saddle or harness, sometimes armour
Cassock	A short loose coat, that widens at the hem
Chambray	Plain weave fabric, sometimes woven with a white weft and coloured warp
Chin cloth	Cloth, usually of linen, worn across the face and neck, for part concealment and protection from weather
Cloak	Loose garment worn as outerwear. Varied in length (some fell to the hip, others down to the ankle), made with or without a collar and sleeves
Cloth	Fabric made of woven wool
Coat, riding coat	Coat for riding that often had fitted sleeves and a skirt, sometimes split at the back for flexibility
Coif	A close-fitted cap, usually made of linen, sometimes decorated with embroidery
Crimson	A red colour achieved by dyeing with kermes or cochineal
Crosscloth	Forehead cloth, made of linen
Damask	A figured textile with a reversible pattern, made by using contrasting faces of the weave (usually a satin), could be made from silk, linen, or wool
Doublet	Upper body wear for men and boys, named for its double layers, usually made with sleeves, and attached to the hose with laced points, or hooks and eyes
Durance	A worsted, named for its durability
Ell	Unit of measurement for a cloth, although precise measurements varied across Europe. The English ell was 45 inches
Farthingale, Spanish farthingale, French or Wheel farthingale	A frame worn under a skirt in order to create sculptural shape. The Spanish farthingale was conical in shape, whereas the French or Wheel farthingale was a wide circle
Felt	Cloth made of the matted fibres of wool or fur or a hat made of felt
Frieze	Coarse woollen fabric
Fustian	Plain weave cloth of mixed linen and cotton, A 'new drapery'. Also meant inflated turgid language
Garters	Ribbons that held up stockings or were worn for decorative purposes
Gaskin	Wide loose breeches

Genet	Spotted fur of the catlike mammal the genet, found in Africa, Southwest Europe and the Middle East
Gorget	Either a neck covering, a small ruffle on a smock, or a deep falling collar
Gown	For men, a long loose outer garment, often with sleeves; for women, the main body garment for a woman, worn open or closed
Grosgrain	Cloth with a taffeta weave making thick cords (gros grains) in the fabric
Guards	Decorative band or border along seams
Hatband	A decorative band around the crown of the hat
Holland	A fine linen
Hose	Lower body garment worn by men. When used in reference to women, a stocking
Jerkin	Short upper garment for men, usually sleeveless and worn over the doublet
Kentish cloth	Cloth woven in Kent, sometimes 'motley' (woven in two or more colours)
Kersey	Lightweight woollen fabric
Laps	Skirts on a doublet, so called because they overlap one another
Lawn	Fine linen
Linen	Fabric made from hemp or flax, naturally grey/green, often bleached white
Lockram	A linen
Mantle	An outer garment
Marten	Brown thick silky fur of the marten
Mingled	Woven in mixed colours
Mockado, Tufted Mockado	Cloth made of linen, jersey or silk, resembling velvet. Tufted mockado was voided to form a pile with tufts
Mohair	Fabric made of the hair of the Angora goat, sometimes mixed with wool, or an imitation made with silk and wool
Mourning	Dark clothes worn to mark the death of a friend, family member, or superior. Mourning cloaks were usually full length with a hood to cover the face
Muff	Cylindrical covering for the hands, worn for warmth
Nap	Surface layer or pile given to cloth by cutting and smoothing raised fibres
Nightgown	A loose gown worn informally indoors
Oes	Small metal rings used as decoration
Passementerie	Ornamental braids or trimmings
Peascod	A padded belly, named after the shape of a peapod

Peropus	Fabric made of wool and silk, often watered
Petticoat	For women, a skirt or underskirt, for men, a short coat or waistcoat
Pinked, pinking	Decorative cuts made in a fabric
Pleats	Folds made in fabric, sometimes stitched in place
Plush	Silk with a long and soft pile
Points	Ties made of silk cord or leather with aglets at the end, used to join the doublet and hose, and sometimes used for decoration
Puke	A high quality woollen cloth, or the typical colour of this cloth (deep blue or dark brown)
Quilting	Padding between two layers, often with feathers, wool, cotton or silk waste and secured with stitches
Rash	Smooth fabric of silk or worsted
Rebato	A wired collar to support a ruff or band
Ruff	A neck garment of starched linen or lace
Russet	Coarse woollen cloth, or a ruddy colour
Sad	A dull dark colour
Safeguard	A protective overskirt, or a ribbon or binding around the base of a gown or skirt
Sarcenet, sarsenet	Fine, soft thin silk fabric
Satin	Shiny fabric where the warp threads float over four or seven wefts
Say	Cloth made of a mix of wool and cloth, or a light twilled woollen fabric
Scalloped	An edge cut into segments of circles, resembling a scallop-shell
Serge	A woollen fabric
Shag	Thick-piled woollen fabric
Shirt	Undergarment worn next to the skin, usually made from linen, with long sleeves
Shot or changeable	A fabric with a warp and weft of different colours, creating a changeable or iridescent effect
Signet ring	A ring with initials, a monogram, or coat of arms on the bezel
Silk	Textile made from the fibres of the silkworm, highly prized for lustre, softness, and ability to take dye
Slashed, slashing	A series of cuts made vertically, horizontally, or diagonally on a garment, for decoration and sometimes to add flexibility
Sleeves	Arm coverings, which could be separate and attached to another garment with pins or ties, or integral to a garment
Slops	Wide breeches
Smock	Undergarment of linen, also called a shift

Spangles	Sequins
Squirrel	Fur of European squirrel could be red or grey
Stomacher	Stiffened triangle-shaped piece to cover the gap at the front of a woman's bodice
Stuff	Woven material, often used to describe 'new draperies', a mix of long staple worsted warp and a short staple woollen weft
Suit	Typical male dress, consisting of (at least) a doublet and hose. Could also refer to the coat or cloak worn with the doublet and hose
Supportasse/Supporter	A frame to hold up a ruff or collar
Taffeta	A lightweight tabby weave silk, often used as lining. Tuft-taffeta had sections of a raised pile, often in a different colour
Tawny	Yellowish brown, or woollen cloth
Tire	A covering or ornament for a woman's head
Trunk hose, breeches	A type of hose, often made of panes, which swelled out from the waist
Trus	A close-fitting jacket, or in the plural 'trusses' tight short breeches which held up stockings
Twill	A woven fabric with diagonal ridges, produced by causing the weft threads to pass over one and under two or more threads of warp
Velvet	A fabric with a short pile, formed by placing a supplementary warp over rods in the weaving process, which could be cut in one height, different heights, left uncut, or a combination. Could incorporate metal thread
Venetians	Full breeches, tight at the knee
Verdingale	See 'farthingale'
Vizard	A face mask, held onto the head by a ribbon or a bead held between the teeth
Waistcoat	An informal jacket
Warp	Threads extended lengthwise in the loom, usually stronger than the weft
Watchet	A light blue, perhaps named after the cloth-producing town of Watchet in Somerset
Weft	Threads that cross at right angles to the warp
Wool	Cloth made from fibres usually from a sheep, but also from goats or camels
Worsted	Used to describe both a long-staple woollen yarn combed to align the fibres, and the lightweight smooth cloth made from it

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