



Edited by
Erin Griffey

Sartorial Politics in Early Modern Europe Fashioning Women

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Sartorial Politics in Early Modern Europe

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Dr. Allison Levy, an art historian, has written and/or edited three scholarly books, and she has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Association of University Women, the Getty Research Institute, the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library of Harvard University, the Whiting Foundation and the Bogliasco Foundation, among others. www.allisonlevy.com.

Sartorial Politics in Early Modern Europe

Fashioning Women

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Acknowledgements

The idea for this project started with a dress. In April 2016, it was announced that a group of divers had discovered a shipwreck – apparently from the mid seventeenth century – in the Wadden Sea off the Dutch island of Texel. The divers found a dramatic haul of objects, including an array of silk garments. Amongst these was one that dominated news headlines – a silk dress which was initially connected to one of Henrietta Maria's ladies-in-waiting, who lost her baggage at sea in 1642. Although this identification turned out to be incorrect, it sparked my imagination, since so few original garments survive from this period.

I was lucky enough to see some of these garments and fragments in person, and it reminded me how historians rely heavily on clothing as it is portrayed in portraits and documented in accounts and inventories. But there is still so much more to discover about the relationship between actual garments and those portrayed, described, and listed. Physical garments remind us of the real currency of clothing, as material value, as social status, as national identity, as familial belonging. They were not just worn for practical reasons of warmth and modesty; the fabrics, colours, cut, and decoration were also carefully selected to articulate value and meaning. While scientific analysis continues on the shipwreck and its goods, and dress historians examine the materials, construction, and countries of origin of the clothes, the fact that they were packed in a ship reminds us that garments, like people, were regularly on the move – naturally, in some cases, by ship, whether as raw materials transported, finished garments sent as gifts, shipped for long-term moves (something royal brides knew all too well at this time), or for short-term trips.

Certainly, my ability to travel was instrumental in preparing this volume. For this, I am grateful to the University of Auckland for a generous Faculty of Arts Research Development Grant that enabled me to make a number of trips to the UK and Europe. My fellow contributors are based in a number of places that were very much on the sartorial map in the early modern period, and I am privileged to have been able to work with such a brilliant line-up of historians, art historians, and literary scholars. I am particularly grateful for the new research contributors undertook for their essays here. Three contributions have been translated, from Spanish, French, and German, and it is gratifying to be able to include this material in English.

My students have also played an important role in the development of this collection. Many have worked on aspects of early modern elite women and dress, including Jemma Field, Katy Bond, Natalie Bell, and Mirren Brockies. Jemma worked closely with me in the initial stages of this project and remained a constant presence throughout. I could not have completed this book without the assistance of Susanah Whaley, who was instrumental in proofreading, formatting, as well as making

a number of sharp editorial suggestions with both the essays and, critically, in the introduction.

And, as many readers here will agree, I have been very lucky to have worked with Erika Gaffney at Amsterdam University Press. She has been, as always, encouraging and engaging.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband and daughter for being endlessly supportive despite my long and frequent trips away from home, and to my parents, who I think will fancy this a very appropriate project for a child who was always obsessed with clothes.

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Introduction

Erin Griffey

Fashion as Meaning: ‘the pattern of your imitation’

Writing in 1673, Hannah Woolley’s *The Gentlewoman’s Companion; or, a Guide to the Female Sex* advised women to ‘incline somewhat to the Mode of Court (which is the source and foundation of fashion); but let the example of the most sober, moderate, and modest be the pattern of your imitation’. Female clothing materialised both fashion and virtue, engagement with the court and with traditional female values. Medieval and early modern concepts of ‘costume’ and ‘habit’ embodied outer appearance or clothing as well as manners or moral qualities.¹ As such, clothing was inherently powerful. It worked to link a person to the (fashionable) authority of the court, but it also had the potential (and limitations) of communicating personal morality.

Essentially, clothing embodied identity. As Ulinka Rublack states, clothing was not ‘something external to the body, that could be simply put on and taken off, or that could function as an abstract sign: rather, it was seen to mould a person and materialize identity’.² Likewise, looking specifically to the early modern court, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass trace the term ‘fashion’ to its Latin origin as the verb ‘to make’, or, in its biblical sense, ‘to create’, i.e., creating a self through their appearance.³ The power of clothing in creating an immediately recognisable identity was readily understood by early modern theatre companies who relied on dress to communicate character and social status in a symbiosis of inner and outer appearance. Rank, wealth, magnificence, and personal virtue was embodied in dress, and, as such, dress was inherently political, richly materialising the qualities associated with the wearer, whatever their rank.⁴

1 The relationship between clothing and morality has a long history dating to antiquity. For a brief summary within the context of sixteenth-century costume books, see Ilg, ‘The Cultural Significance’, 45–47. On the double meanings of ‘costume’ and ‘habit’, see 46–47.

2 Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 138.

3 Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 1–2.

4 For the way in which the outer also engendered the inner, see ‘The Greatness in Good Clothes: Fashioning Subjectivity in Mary Wroth’s *Urania* and Margaret Spencer’s Account Book (BL Add. MS 62092)’ in Snook, *Women, Beauty and Power*, 63–85.

Clothing necessitated careful selection across every aspect of the attired body – the choice of garment type, the fabric, the cut, the colour, the texture, and the decoration.⁵ This was based on the inherent dialectic in clothing between the subject and the observer, presentation and perception. At the early modern court, elites were keenly aware that they were always on display, performing and being observed, with Rublack characterising the social group as being ‘supremely dress-literate’.⁶ This was not new to the Renaissance, however, for it was in strong evidence at the medieval court where, as Susan Crane states, the secular elite understood ‘themselves to be constantly on display, subject to the judgment of others, and continually reinvented in performance’.⁷ Turning to Renaissance Florence, Carole Collier Frick similarly highlights the consciousness of clothing choices when she describes the elite citizens ‘wrestl[ing] daily with self-identity, appearance and display’ in a ‘combative arena’ that was explicitly staged for display, recognition, and comprehension.⁸

The same can be said for the early modern courts explored in this volume. Indeed, if the court was a dominating force in fashion, providing a ‘pattern of your imitation’, its display by the power brokers of court dress – above all royalty – was loaded with both political and moral significance.⁹ Sartorial decisions needed to be made carefully, given not just the high visibility of clothing but also the number of people involved, the complexity of the garments, and the expense incurred. Dress in the early modern period was inherently demanding. A single outfit required a whole entourage of suppliers, tradesmen, and specialists, including mercers, tailors, embroiderers, haberdashers, milliners, pin-makers, and farthingale-makers. And it was, on the whole, very expensive, with fine materials – especially silk fabrics, fancy trimmings, and rich embroidery – commanding very high prices, while complicated garments needed elaborate pinning, lacing, and tying, thereby necessitating considerable time to get dressed as well as help from others.¹⁰

Moreover, in terms of sheer expense, clothing and accessories provided a vehicle for communicating the wealth and magnificence of the crown.¹¹ The role of clothing in signalling social status and wealth has been well traversed by sociologists, dress

5 A point also made in Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 65.

6 Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 53.

7 Crane, ‘The Performance of Self’, 4–5. For the all-importance of display in an early modern court context, see Griffey, *On Display*, esp. 1–9.

8 Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 1. Sophie Tomlinson highlights the silent yet expressive woman in Stuart court masques in a performance that translates directly to performance through dress: ‘The fact that women in masques were mute meant that the power of their performance lay chiefly in their sumptuous appearance and physical movement’, *Women on Stage*, 21.

9 As Rublack has underscored, courts inspired fashion but also counter-fashions: 10; and courts were not the only influence on clothing.

10 On the rituals and demands of dressing and undressing, see Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 23. See also Marin, *The Portrait of the King*, 27–28, who argues that all of this work reflected the status of the wearer.

11 For clothing as a sign of royal magnificence, see Hayward, ‘Luxury or Magnificence?’.

historians, and fashion theorists.¹² Because a fashion must be first devised and then repeated, Roland Barthes argues that to wear a certain form of dress is to accept and reinforce 'a set of collective representations' about what that dress means and the other conventions that go along with it.¹³ For a dress to be fashion, it is circulated not only as a garment but 'broadly as a *meaning*', and '*acts out meaning*'.¹⁴ Clothes spoke for the wearer the moment they entered the room, and many garments were easily recognisable from a distance executed as they were in bold hues, adorned with rich ornamentation, and often extending to an impressive scale. The importance of clothing equally translated into court portraiture wherein a sitter's facial features were often sketched hastily, but their clothes were laboured over with painstaking detail, for it was the garments that 'materialised their status'.¹⁵ Richard Brilliant asserts that kings and queens effectually possess two bodies, one their own, and the other belonging to their state; and in portraits and prints, they appear 'fully encased in the trappings of royalty because that was the body worthy of portrayal'.¹⁶

The transformative power of clothing is borne out in the popular story told by the clerk in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, where, in a Cinderella-like moment, the peasant Griselda is transmuted into a lady worthy to marry the prince merely through the act of putting on a suite of noble clothes, and in doing so she is known to have become 'another person'.¹⁷ The story also demonstrates how the reverse could occur, as the noblewoman is made into a peasant again when her finery is removed. Similarly, royal jewellery is inevitably laden with symbolic value, and yet these can be broken up, melted down, or pawned. Clothes and jewellery depend on magnificent display on an appropriately worthy body.

Recent scholarship has shown that visual and material display at the early modern court was always invested with political significance. In the most immediate sense, this display communicated the value of magnificence as a material mirror of wealth and political power. The grand palaces built for European monarchs accomplished this, as did art collections and portraits. Bodily display, in the form of dress, was just as important in staging political and moral value at court. One might argue it was even more important since it commanded such vast sums – and regular reinvestment – and it needed to be renewed daily. In a seminal 1996 article, Malcolm Smuts argues for a broader understanding of the aesthetics of court display that encompasses not only the fine arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, but banquets, masques, and clothing.¹⁸ Readily visible – both on the physical person and through

12 Classic studies include Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*; Simmel, 'Fashion'; and Bourdieu, *Distinction*. See also Davis, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*.

13 Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 10.

14 Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 10, 289.

15 Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance clothing*, 12; see also 34.

16 Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 102.

17 Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, 220; the example of Griselda is also cited by Crane, *The Performance of Self*, 34; Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance clothing*, 13, 220.

18 Smuts, 'Art and the material culture', 86.

pictorial commemoration – clothing offered a particularly potent opportunity for royalty, nobility, courtiers, and office holders to stage their political, national identity and dynastic identity.¹⁹ This extended to jewellery, which was an ever-present feature of early modern court attire. Jewels were often incorporated directly into apparel, or were carefully selected to complement and aggrandise an outfit.

Clothing was deployed strategically by kings in court ceremonial and foreign politics, wherein close attention was paid to the quality and quantity of fabric and the richness of ornamentation. Maria Hayward's analysis of Henry VIII's wardrobe, portraits, and diplomatic gifts, for example, demonstrates the central role of clothing in conveying the king's authority and engaging in diplomacy.²⁰ For royal women, bodily display was a powerful means to negotiate and assert marital viability, nationality, confessional identity, conjugal loyalty, dynastic continuity, and factional belonging, which could be communicated in the cut, fabric, style, colour, and trimmings of a garment, a pair of shoes, a piece of figurative or inherited jewellery, or pair of silk stockings. Early studies of female sartorial magnificence looked to the example of Elizabeth I, with foundational publications by Janet Arnold and Roy Strong.²¹ More recently, sustained attention has been given to Eleonora of Toledo's impact on fashion at the Medici court in the work of Roberta Orsi Landini and Bruna Niccoli.²² However, while there are few studies that foreground the political dimensions of early modern queens' sartorial choices, the importance of wearing national styles in claiming political allegiance has been well acknowledged. Janet Cox-Rearick's exploration of the 'power dressing' of the Spanish consorts Eleonora of Toledo at the courts of Cosimo de' Medici and François I shows how their wearing of Spanish dress was central to claiming imperial allegiance.²³ In particular, Spanish dress, with its distinctive high neckline, long sleeves, and conical skirt, was highly influential throughout early modern Europe.²⁴ Necklines, collars, sleeves, and skirt shapes were carefully choreographed for sophisticated audiences that read national identity and political allegiance in them.

19 On clothing and national and regional identity with a focus on early modern Germany, see Rublack, *Dressing Up*, esp. 125–175. For early modern costume books and their demonstration of the close relationship between clothing and nationhood, see Ilg, 'The Cultural Significance'. For a costume book that focusses on female clothing, see Amman's *Gynaeceum siue theatrum* [...].

20 See Hayward, 'Fashion, Finance, Foreign Politics'.

21 Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's wardrobe unlock'd* and Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth* and *Gloriana*. See also Lawson, 'A Rainbow for a Reign', 26–44.

22 For Eleonora of Toledo's sartorial magnificence and influence on the Medici court, see Landini and Niccoli, *Moda a Firenze, 1540–1580: Lo stile di Eleonora di Toledo*. On the potential for clothing to signal status, wealth, and professional position, see Storey, 'Clothing Courtesans', esp. 106–107. For anxieties about foreign cloth and clothing styles in subverting national identity in early modern England, see Hentschell, 'A Question of Nation'.

23 Cox-Rearick, 'Power-Dressing', 39–69.

24 See Butazzi, 'Il modelli spagnolo nella moda europea', 80–94; Colomer and Descalzo, eds., *Vestir a la española en las cortes europeas*, esp. Carmen Bernis and Amalia Descalzo, 'Spanish Female Dress in the Habsburg Period', in volume 1, 39–75, and Almudena Pérez de Tudela, 'Costume at the court of Philip II: Infantas Isabel Clara Eugenia and Catalina Micaela', also in volume 1, 321–362.

Colour also had particular currency. The Catholic Church positioned colour prominently within the context of liturgical vestments and church decoration, with changes in accordance with the liturgical calendar. A courtly garment's colour, too, was imbued with potential meaning, as with black to signify stability and/or mourning, green to connote youth and fertility, and tawny to symbolise love and longing.²⁵ Henrietta Maria, for example, wore green for her entry into London as the bride of Charles I, and she wore it on May Day.²⁶ Colour offered the opportunity to showcase wealth through the choice of expensive dyes such as black and crimson and to demonstrate political and personal alliance in the case of livery colours.²⁷ Black had particularly strong associations with Austro-Hispanic court dress and could be used to signal imperial loyalty.²⁸ As Jane Schneider has argued, the 'black courts' of Burgundy and Spain influenced the currency of black clothing at the Elizabethan court.²⁹ Moreover, the cut and colour of clothing could reflect political and/or familial identity. For elite women whose currency was closely measured in marital alliances (whether speculative or secured), clothing made strong claims about the power and magnificence of their family dynasty as a whole.³⁰ Furthermore, being less vocally active in a public political context, their appearance was one way they could make an impact.

Women and Fashion as Tool

This volume shows women at the most elite levels of society engaging in politics. Coinciding with the revisioning of women's history in the 1980s, Joan W. Scott drew attention to 'a certain functionalist view ultimately rooted in biology' that maintained 'separate spheres' for men and women in the study of history. Historians then considered, and still tend to consider today, women predominantly in relation to

25 Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 67; Griffey, *On Display*, 4; Snook, *Women, Beauty and Power*, 70.

26 Griffey, *On Display*, 4.

27 On the trade, availability, and value of dye stuffs in early modern England and their relationship to the 'political economy', see Schneider, 'Fantastical Colours in Foggy London', 109–127. On black as a colour of mourning, see Griffey, 'Henrietta Maria and the Politics of Widows' Dress' in this volume; on the currency of red at the court of Henry VIII, see Hayward, 'Crimson, Scarlet, Murray and Carnation'. On colour in Queen Elizabeth's wardrobe, see Lawson, 'Rainbow for a Reign'. For blue in late medieval and early modern England, see Hayward, 'Dressed in Blue', 168–185. On colour and meaning at the Elizabethan and Jacobean courts as seen in Wroth's *Urania*, see Lamb, 'Dressing Queens (and Some Others)', 317–321. On the symbolic and social values of colour, see the work of Michel Pastoureau, including his books on the colours blue, black, green, and red, all published with Princeton University Press.

28 On the wearing and significance of black at the Habsburg courts, see Colomer, 'Black and the Royal Image'. See also Cox-Rearick, 'Power-dressing', 40, 52–53, and Quondam, *Tutti i colori di nero*.

29 Schneider, 'Fantastical Colours', 122.

30 Frick discusses this in reference to elite women in Renaissance Florence, whose clothing needed to reflect the collective family honour, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 79.

sex and family, leaving to men 'issues of politics and power'.³¹ The essays in this volume provide a direct revisioning of this issue, closing the distance between the two spheres.³² Women, power, politics, family, and sex are considered concurrently.

Since many royal women crossed cultural boundaries in early modern Europe through their marriage into other courts, their physical appearance was inflected with real purpose and strong visibility for both the natal and marital courts, and it was staged proudly in painted portraits and widely circulated in commemorative prints and medals. Such sartorial politics marked royal women as powerful agents of cultural exchange and diplomacy. This was clearly marked out in the portraits made as part of marriage negotiations as well as the garments and jewels selected for other key moments in the political and religious calendar: marriage, coronation, birth, baptism, and mourning. Contemporary observers recounted these ensembles with relish and often with forensic attention to detail. The gifting of clothing also provided a forum for claiming allegiance, announcing favour, transmitting wealth, and showcasing royal connections.³³ It was common for royal women to gift clothing and to receive garments themselves as gifts. A clear example is seen in the case of Elizabeth I, who repeatedly gave and received sartorial gifts, which became institutionalised in the celebration of New Year's Day.³⁴ Mary, Queen of Scots, while imprisoned by Elizabeth, even tried to soften the English queen by presenting her with a skirt of crimson satin worked through with silver, which she had sewn herself.³⁵ In an essay on the sleeve, Evelyn Welch states that exchanges of cloth were 'signs of friendship' and, even if gifts did not have monetary prestige, they built affective relations.³⁶

Contemporaries were quick to comment on a new queen's style of personal adornment, and queens were typically encouraged to abandon their natal traditions in favour of current fashions at their marital court.³⁷ This highlights clothing as a site for social transformation for women, from unmarried to married, but also as an act of assimilation from a foreign country into their marital court.³⁸ The custom of dismissing a wife's foreign attendants for local ones suggests a similar drive, for both clothes and attendants were visible signifiers of national identity and station. If in her home country the set of clothing and attendants had signified her status, they now marked

31 Scott, 'Gender', 1057.

32 Timothy McCall states that there is a 'diminishing yet still resilient tendency to assume that only women are gendered or sexual, whereas men have standard or essentially human bodies', 'Brilliant Bodies', 449. Accepting that there is gendered male dress, as McCall does, in fact makes distinct the possibilities of female dress.

33 On clothing left in wills, see Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 202–204.

34 Howey, 'Fashioning Monarchy', 142–147.

35 Howey, 'Fashioning Monarchy', 151.

36 Welch, 'New, old and second-hand culture', 110.

37 This is well known in the case of Marie Antoinette. For her 'remise' or handover, she was subjected to the traditional undressing ritual, as discussed by Weber, *Queen of Fashion*, 25–27; one of her ladies-in-waiting explained that this ritual ensured a foreign bride 'would not retain any trace of [her] court [of origin], not even her slip or her stockings', Weber, *Queen of Fashion*, 25.

38 This is seen in Chaucer's Griselda, too, as previously noted.

her as a foreigner, and her position and her entourage necessitated translation into this new context which read and understood her garments differently.³⁹

But clothing was also an opportunity for women to show personal agency, operating as a silent form of speech. Christopher Breward has argued that images of elite women, such as the 'encrusted and embellished' miniatures painted by Isaac Oliver, 'fulfill and suggest the noblewoman's role as a hollow cipher [...] lacking any sense of individuality other than the details of dress'.⁴⁰ However, many elite women did individualise their clothes for personal ends, especially in making dynastic connections and claims of national identity. Evidence that not all early modern women were 'hollow ciphers' has already been found in abundance in Anne J. Cruz and Mihoko Suzuki's edited collection, *The Rule of Women in Early Modern Europe*, which considers power exerted by sovereign women. Looking to Isabel of Castile, for example, Barbara F. Weissburger observes how, during the procession on the morning of her coronation, the queen chose the symbol of a sword over a sceptre to highlight her virility rather than her femininity.⁴¹ Part of this volume's purpose is, however, to illuminate the ways in which the 'emblems' of dress women wore could be manipulated and used to their advantage even in circumstances in which a woman did not directly occupy a position of power. This example of what might be called 'soft power' is analogous to Carole Levin's presentation of Elizabeth I as a strategically loving sister to her younger brother while he was sovereign in order to ensure her own survival.⁴²

'Soft power' is a term which has been widely used in the context of modern and historical diplomacy since the 1990s.⁴³ This volume goes beyond diplomacy to engage with a 'proto-soft power' that is unique to dress.⁴⁴ As has been intimated in my earlier discussion of identity and dress, dress in the early modern court was, in effect, a language with its own rustling, clinking signs – a language consisting of sound, sight, and even scent in the form of pomanders worn on the body and the fragrant herbs that were strewn on the floors at court. This audible language was the prerogative of a certain class: those who could afford the silks and jewels which made such sounds, and which spoke for them as an extension of their own gestures. When this language (which could be used for diplomacy but extended to other diverse ends) appeared on a body of inborn power, including a woman's body, it spoke in specific and powerful

39 See also Snook, *Women, Beauty and Power*, 71–75, for her discussion of how Alanus endeavours to make Nereana love him through changing her clothes, deliberately acculturating her into his environment.

40 Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 72.

41 Weissburger, 'Tanto monta', 50.

42 Levin, 'Elizabeth I as sister', 125.

43 Rivère, *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power*, 4. James Daybell and Svante Norrhem's discussion of female diplomacy also references 'soft power', arguing that female 'influence could be achieved by other (softer but nevertheless intended) means' of achieving influence, 'Rethinking Gender and Political Power', 10; see also 20 for 'soft cultural and economic power'.

44 See Ladan Niayesh's use of the term 'proto-soft power' in her essay 'The Fabric of Silk Power' on the Persian silks worn by diplomatic ambassador Sir Robert Shirley, 205.

ways. Furthermore, this was a language that took into account gender and virtue. Welch points out that sleeves provided a suitable area for 'seemingly asexual' display for women, when there was 'concern that the area around the breast should be treated modestly, and not attract overt attention'.⁴⁵

Early modern royal and noble women appear to have been aware of the response their dress effected. Some of these transnational queens remained loyal to the styles of their homes in their real lives, while appearing in the dress of their marital court in formal opportunities for display such as portraits. Diplomatic audiences with foreign ambassadors offered the opportunity to adapt one's appearance to the ambassador's home country in order to signal political favour or to pointedly signal allegiance to a different court/country. Women could use clothing as a way of directly entering into the politics of the male sphere. For example, at the Field of Cloth of Gold in June 1520, Catherine of Aragon wore a Spanish headdress with her hair down around her shoulders to indicate her reluctance towards an Anglo-French alliance at Spanish expense.⁴⁶ Furthermore, female dress was politicised in offering an arena for women to enact patronage and, as such, to show agency as directors and templates of fashion, and to set ideals of femininity at court.

Redressing Magnificence

This edited volume participates in two timely and vibrant scholarly discussions about the early modern court: firstly, royal women as political and cultural agents and secondly, clothing as a central player in the broader courtly arsenal of magnificent display. Increasingly, scholars are calling for a reconsideration of what constituted 'the political' in early modern Europe, arguing for a move away from traditional definitions that have distinguished between the public and the private, the domestic and the political. In turn, this has seen a growing re-evaluation of the political value of royal and elite women by understanding how they used cultural avenues and social mores to advance their political aims.⁴⁷ There is a growing body of scholarship on early modern queenship, with several important edited collections that examine queenship across a range of court centres.⁴⁸ In addition, the study of a number of significant early modern royal marriages has proven a valuable pathway into understanding the dynastic imperatives that governed royal women and the political and cultural significance of wedding festivities.⁴⁹

45 Welch, 'New, old and second-hand culture', 104–105.

46 Matthews, 'Apparel, Status, Fashion', 150.

47 See, for example, Daybell and Norrhem, *Gender and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1400–1800*.

48 McManus, *Women and Culture*; Orr, *Queenship in Europe 1660–1815*; Gough and Smuts, *Queens and the Transmission of Political Culture*; Cruz and Suzuki *The Rule of Women*; and Woodacre's *Queenship in the Mediterranean*.

49 Smart and Wade, eds., *The Palatine Wedding of 1613*; McGowan, ed., *Dynastic Marriages 1612/1615*; and the forthcoming Brepols volume, Canova-Green and Wolfson, *The Wedding Journey of Charles I and Henrietta Maria*.

More commonly, though, elite women have been studied in isolation. Studies on individual queens and queens consort have reshaped our understanding of female royal patronage and cultural agency, and have brought new figures to our attention beyond the more familiar subjects of Elizabeth I, Isabella d'Este and Marie de' Medici. Pioneering studies of these women have been instrumental in shaping approaches to elite women and the political implications of their visual persona and cultural patronage. Other prominent court women who have been the subject of recent scholarly attention along these lines include the Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia, Elizabeth of Bohemia, and Hedwig Eleonora.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, there is still scope for the examination of other queens and noblewomen, as Jemma Field's recent work on Anna of Denmark has demonstrated.⁵¹ Similarly, the power dynamics between women at court merits further attention, building on the volume edited by Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben.⁵²

While these studies have enhanced our understanding of the diverse ways in which royal women could politicise the sociocultural avenues available to them – for example, court spaces, theatrical patronage, household positions, and gift-giving – the analysis of how garments and accessories were marshalled for political and personal reasons has been comparatively less explored. When clothing has been discussed in relation to national identity, this has focussed on national styles of dress.⁵³ Certainly clothing at the early modern court has been the subject of renewed interest by historians in particular, who have moved from earlier studies which charted history through the styles of garments worn in portraits to new considerations of the role of dress in the broader theatre of early modern magnificence, the adoption of different types of clothing for different rituals, and the political value of dress.⁵⁴ The politicised nature of clothing at the courts of Louis XIV and XV has been the subject of several notable studies, including those by Peter Burke, Philip Mansel, and Daniel Roche.⁵⁵ Marie Antoinette's sartorial choices have been analysed by Caroline Weber,

50 For Isabella Clara Eugenia, see Wyhe, ed., *Isabella Clara Eugenia*. On Elizabeth of Bohemia, see Smart and Wade, eds., *The Palatine Wedding of 1613*. See also Kleinman, *Anne of Austria: Queen of France* and McGowan, *Dynastic Marriages 1612/1615*.

51 See Field, 'Anna of Denmark and the Arts', 'The Wardrobe Goods of Anna of Denmark', and 'Anna of Denmark: A Late Portrait'.

52 Akkerman and Houben, *The Politics of Female Households*.

53 See, for example, the three essays constituting Section One, 'Fabrics of Nation', by Ulrijke Ilg, Roze Hentschell, and Elizabeth Wincott Hockett, in Richardson, ed., *Clothing Culture*, 29–91. See also Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth*. Spanish dress has been the subject of a notable recent essay collection, Colomer and Descalzo, eds., *Vestir a la española en las cortes europeas*. On clothing and national identity, see in particular Rublack, *Dressing Up*.

54 For a recent assessment of the significance of this field of study and key works, see McCall, 'Materials for Renaissance Fashion', 1449–1464. See also Paresys and Coquery, eds., *Apparence(s)*; ; Flicker and Seidl, eds., *Fashionable Queens*; Santaliestra, 'Isabel of Bourbon's Sartorial Politics'; van Wyhe, 'The Making and Meaning of the Monastic Habit'.

55 See Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XI*; Mansel, *Dressed to Rule*; and Roche, 'The Culture of Clothing'.

who has discussed the cultural and political impact of these 'fashion statements'.⁵⁶ As Weber vividly demonstrates, Marie Antoinette was a fashion innovator who championed 'unorthodox styles [...] [in] defiance of time-honoured royal customs'. In turn, her critics 'resented her because they retained an expectation that the royal consort should respect the established limits of her position, should retain the air of docile conformity and anodyne polish that previous consorts had reassuringly conveyed'.⁵⁷ Certainly this argument warrants comparison with the earlier queens, queens consort, and aristocratic women discussed in this volume.

Furthermore, studies of specific royal wardrobes and the dress of specific courts have also advanced our knowledge of early modern dress at court, with recent studies by Jemma Field of Anna of Denmark's wardrobe and Orsi Landini on that of Cosimo de' Medici's.⁵⁸ Scholars including Janet Arnold, Valerie Cumming, Elizabeth Currie, Maria Hayward, Lisa Monnas, Anna Reynolds, Aileen Ribeiro, Ulinka Rublack, Jenny Tiramani, Susan Vincent, and Evelyn Welch have done much to illuminate the materials, terminology, construction, economic value, and patterns of social circulation of apparel in the early modern period.⁵⁹ Notable too is their use of historical, literary, and visual analyses to address the symbolic meanings attached to items of male and female dress, and to highlight the common disconnect between physical items of dress and visual self-representation.

While dress is now often analysed within a broader sociopolitical context and notions of self-fashioning, it is notable that jewellery has not drawn the same level of current scholarly attention. An important exception is Marcia Pointon's *Brilliant Effects*, which offers fascinating insight into the politics of jewellery. While its analysis of early modern court portraits is limited, Pointon's book provides a richly interdisciplinary approach to the study of early modern jewellery.⁶⁰ Other studies have foregrounded the role of jewellery within the context of marriage and associated issues of gender, property, and affective relationships.⁶¹ However,

56 Weber, *Queen of Fashion*. See also Thomas, *The Wicked Queen*, esp. 81–104. See also Goodman, ed., *Marie Antoinette* for the 'crucial political and cultural contests that were enacted on the very body of the Queen' (1), especially the chapter by Mary D. Sheriff, 'The Portrait of the Queen', 45–71.

57 Weber, *Queen of Fashion*, 6.

58 Field, 'The Wardrobe Goods of Queen Anna of Denmark', 3–27; Landini, *Moda a Firenze 1540–1580: Cosimo de' Medici's Style*.

59 For a historiography of early modern dress, see Vincent, 'From the Cradle to the Grave', 163–178. For key texts by these scholars, see Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion*; Cumming, *Royal Dress*; North and Tiramani, eds., *Seventeenth-century Women's Dress Patterns: Book One and Book Two*; Tiramani, ed., *17th-Century Men's Dress Patterns*; Rublack, Hayward, and Tiramani, eds., *The First Book of Fashion*; Monnas, *Renaissance Velvets: Merchants, Princes and Painters*; Currie, ed., *A Cultural History of Dress; Fashion and Masculinity*; Welch, 'Art on the Edge', 241–268; and Welch, ed., *Fashioning the Early Modern*.

60 Pointon, *Brilliant Effects*.

61 See Randolph, 'Performing the Body in Fifteenth-Century Florence', 182–200. The two essays on jewellery in Mirabella, ed., *Ornamentation* are by literary scholars: Karen Raber, 'Chains of Pearls: Gender, Identity and Property', 159–181, and Catherine Richardson, '"As my whole trust is in him" Jewellery and the Quality of Early Modern Relationships', 182–201.

studies of jewellery have traditionally been – and largely still are – the domain of curators. Several studies of medieval and early modern jewellery, including works by Joan Evans, Hazel Forsyth, Yvonne Hackenbroch, Diana Scarisbrick, and Anna Somers Cocks, discuss the art of the goldsmith, the different gemstones and cutting techniques, and the changing fashion in types of jewels.⁶² While jewellery specialists, including Evans, highlight the importance of jewels in relation to dress, jewellery remains relatively unexplored as a central component of bodily display at court.⁶³ While the materials and specialists involved in creating clothing and jewellery were different, the styling of the two together involved some coordination by the wearer, possibly in conjunction with wardrobe staff and/or dressers. Pendants, hat jewels, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and belts needed a clothed body for display, and jewels could be reworked and repositioned, not to mention gifted or pawned.⁶⁴ Relevant to the women's jewellery discussed in this volume, Natasha Awais-Dean's recent study of the ownership and meaning of male jewellery in Tudor and Jacobean England lifts jewellery out of its effeminate associations with frivolity and empty fashion. 'For to be bejewelled', Awais-Dean states, 'signalled more than mere ornament; it reflected what it meant to be a man.' As early modern jewellery could convey identity, remembrance, and even power, ornamentation required conscious deliberation.⁶⁵

This volume looks to a variety of courts and royal women to consider how female political power is enacted specifically through sartorial display. There is no other volume with this focus on material display, while at the same time juxtaposing queens regnant and consort, as well as aristocratic women within the court more broadly. This approach nuances our understanding of the political and personal significance of bodily display to women as they negotiated the geographic, confessional, and religious divides of early modern Europe. Because of the many women considered, the collection offers the opportunity for national divides, or convergences in such display to be considered by the reader across chapters. Magnificence, in this context, is redressed not only as a powerful political statement for women with limited power in decisions both in their own lives and at court, still while confirming notions of femininity, but as a complex, targeted, tailored language of dress in which literacy was essential. This language was dynamic – responding to changing political agendas. The volume further extends into consideration of how the personal (the individual's own body and its adornment, literally the clothes on its back) and the political (the

62 Evans, *A History of Jewellery 1100–1870*; Forsyth, *London's Lost Jewels*; Hackenbroch, *Renaissance Jewellery and Enseignes*; Scarisbrick, *Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery*; Cocks, *An Introduction to Courtly Jewellery* and ed., *Princely Magnificence*.

63 Evans, *A History of Jewellery*, 12.

64 On the value of specific jewels, see Strong, 'Three Royal Jewels', 350–353; for pawning, see Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 26–32; Collins, *Jewels and Plate of Queen Elizabeth I*, esp. 136–141, 167.

65 Awais-Dean, *Bejewelled*, 121.

machinations of power and diplomacy between persons, court, and countries) were intricately linked in the lived experience of the early modern court.

Sartorial Politics: Fashioning Women

On entering a room, and in the voluminous gowns and sparkling jewels that eclipsed a woman's body in portraits, sartorial display spoke first and lasted longest. This volume demonstrates that women at early modern courts participated in sartorial politics in three principal ways: to showcase and advance claims to dynasty, both to their natal and marital court; to engage in diplomacy; and to embody appropriate royal magnificence in court ceremonial. The essays cover a broad expanse of early modern Europe, including Sweden, England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, providing a strong cross-cultural perspective of early modern Europe. This approach is essential to the study of early modern royal women, who often married into courts far from their natal home but maintained close ties with their home country. This breadth of focus also facilitates comparison of court culture, fashions, and the role of dress in staging political power in early modern Europe. The elite subjects examined in the volume cover women of the highest royal ranks at the most powerful courts to second tier noble women at princely courts; what unites them all is an understanding that the sartorial was deeply political. The authors here draw on the full panoply of visual and published sources and several have conducted fresh archival work for their essays, drawing on chronicles, letters, ambassadorial accounts, and inventories.

Most essays focus on a particular woman or group of women from a single court, with several examining the cultural transfer and associated sartorial displays that occurred with a royal marriage into a foreign court. As we shall see, the tensions and anxieties around foreign fashions at their new marital courts needed to be carefully negotiated alongside the expression of their family heritages, as interpretations of court clothing were themselves politicised. Clothing also provided an opportunity for elite women to present themselves as arbiters of taste, fashion templates to serve as models for other courtly women as well as other aspiring elites. Other essays provide a wide-ranging study of a single court or style of dress, and three further essays examine the central role of jewellery in the arsenal of sartorial politics. Another essay analyses the theatrical costumes worn by royal women in Shakespeare's tragedies. As a whole, this range of essays enables readers to see how dress, both ceremonial and performed, in portraits and onstage, communicated social status and magnificence, made claims to political power and international connections, and shaped public opinion. Although many notable courts are not addressed here, the hope is that this collection demonstrates that this is a rich subject that warrants further studies by historians and art historians, both of individual courts and cross-culturally, as well as literary scholars in considering sartorial themes in drama and literature.

The essays are organised roughly chronologically, beginning with the late fifteenth century and ending in the late seventeenth century. Sarah Cockram's study of one of the most celebrated Renaissance fashion icons, Isabella d'Este, sets the scene to demonstrate the central role of clothing and jewellery in the marchesa's statesmanship, patronage, and family life. Cockram shows how Isabella's 'cultural and sartorial cachet were bargaining chips for a vulnerable state such as Mantua in the face of peninsular conflict and Valois/Habsburg power play', detailing how she used the style of her clothing, personal *impreses*, and other symbolic imagery to assert political allegiance, wealth, nobility, and refinement. Once dubbed 'Machiavelli in skirts', such was her sartorial power as a trendsetter that dolls wearing Isabellian styles were in demand at foreign courts. Isabella's sartorial choices displayed her own lineage alongside her promotion of her husband's Gonzaga dynasty. She achieved this particularly through the wearing of devices, recognisable symbols which were consequently taken up and strengthened in use by her children.

Isabelle Paresys then presents an overview of the sartorial politics that operated for queens at the Valois and Bourbon courts, whose clothing materialised royal dignity, dynastic prestige, and the power of the French monarchy and kingdom of France as a whole. This sartorial magnificence, which involved queens' lavish expenditure on clothing and their subsequent portrayal in suitably rich clothing in their portraits, was accompanied by great largesse to cement allegiances amongst household staff and courtiers. As Paresys explains, the role of dress in claims to power was particularly acute for regents, for whom renouncing queenly magnificence in favour of mourning justified their otherwise unconventional rule.

The essay that follows by Kirsten Frieling examines princely weddings as 'the key interface for exchanging fashions because of the many ways they promoted contact between courts within dress styles'. It was here, at dynastic weddings, that different dress styles were encountered, providing a 'fashion forum', and women were central to this process of cultural exchange. Focussing on noblewomen who married into German princely courts around 1500, Frieling discusses how dress practices were communicated, in particular the reception of foreign styles – whether regional or national – and the relationship with identity politics at a time of significant change in a woman's life. Adopting her new court's dress became a way for the bride to integrate socially and culturally. Although Frieling points to evidence that male rulers exploited the politics of clothing to promote their political rank, she has found no evidence that German elite women's dress was interpreted in explicitly political terms. This may be attributed to their lower rank or lesser power than their royal female contemporaries. Nonetheless, Frieling's essay points to sartorial strategies embedded within political structures. The importance of conformity of dress – within regions, nations, and courts – meant that a new bride's clothing was examined as a sign of her loyalty and integration in her marriage, which, beyond being a simple cultural exchange, was inherently political.

The next set of three essays, by Lisa Mansfield, Susan Vincent, and Jemma Field examine jewellery as an artful and strategically deployed element of dress in both court ceremonial and in portraits. These essays indicate that, while today we associate jewellery almost exclusively with femininity and a desire to look good, elite women in early modern courts wore jewellery for all the 'manifold and multi-layered' reasons that the men of Awaits-Dean's studies do.

Mansfield's essay on Eleanor of Austria provides a revealing case study of how jewellery was used to promote the splendour and status of a bride's natal dynasty. Mansfield pieces together the documentation of Eleanor's jewels in inventories and portraits, demonstrating how these were worn strategically to promote her illustrious lineage and affective ties. As a Habsburg princess with ties to several prestigious courts, Eleanor was valuable as a dynastic bride and married into the Portuguese (Manuel I) and French (François I) courts. The dual role of jewellery as dynastic imperative and affective link is evidenced by her gift to her only daughter of her jewellery. Mansfield's essay highlights Eleanor's large collection of jewels as motivated by her desire to provide a maternal legacy for her daughter Maria, whom she was forced to leave behind in Portugal for more than 30 years when she remarried. Moreover, Eleanor embraced jewellery at a time when new sources of gemstones were opening up, in the New World and in India. In this sense, too, the wearing of jewellery showcased political and cultural capital.

Susan Vincent's essay on Queen Elizabeth I highlights the treacherous terrain trodden by those who sought appropriate representative jewelled gifts to give a sovereign who placed great importance on personal thought. Gifts embodied loyalty, and gifted jewels needed apt grandeur. Vincent's essay explicates that the queen's jewels, received, re-gifted, or worn, contributed to and symbolised the eternal and lamented memory of a golden age. Such a legacy is worthy of a queen whom Vincent claims 'was the most bejewelled person in the history of England'.

Jemma Field's essay considers jewellery as a readily identifiable marker which transcends the personal to convey political significance. Field's essay particularly focusses on the cipher lettering incorporated into a woman's costume which spoke silently yet unmistakably of her faith, her ancestral connections, her loyalties, or to whom she owed favour. Wearing jewellery containing the first letter of a powerful family member's name could serve to remind contemporaries of a favourable connection. This is reminiscent of the heraldic coats of arms worn by medieval knights, which, as Crane discusses, 'could talk'.⁶⁶ Such symbols were used to further political ends when strategically given as gifts.

Robert Lublin's essay considers the role of costume in characterising royal women in Shakespeare's tragedies. While the context Lublin considers is theatre and his material is based in literary text, he highlights the performative element of dress,

66 Crane, *The Performance of Self*, 11.

especially as it was used in the royal court. His extension of the study of the history of dress to its representation in literature, specifically in plays, is comparable to studies of early modern masquing undertaken by scholars such as Barbara Ravelhofer and Sophie Tomlinson.⁶⁷ Ravelhofer describes the costumes worn in masques by the nobility themselves as ‘visual political currency, often with substantial material value’. The masques show nobles taking advantage of the magnificence of costumed display in an obviously performed context, which signifies their awareness of the impressions created by the costumes they wore.⁶⁸ In dressing themselves as queens, duchesses, and nobles, the players of theatrical troupes paralleled the real nobility in their daily performances – as they dress to occupy a role, and to represent their social and political status. Jones and Stallybrass have discussed the boy actor’s body as permeable, ‘open to transformation by the materials it assumes’, as it undergoes ritualised changes of embodiment that is akin to the donning of a monarch’s robes.⁶⁹ Lublin highlights dressing to attain (or enact) royal status especially in the appearance (or lack thereof) of crowns in Shakespeare’s plays. While the players on the Elizabethan stage might be only ‘playing’ at kings and queens, the importance of Lublin’s analysis hinges on the recognition and response to elite dress by the public at large, noble and common alike, and he highlights costume’s central role in assisting a believable performance. This much has been suggested by Breward, who states that the formation of the self through the display of fashion was ‘controlled in a manner that is highly suggestive of the theatrical’.⁷⁰

With this in mind, Julia Holm’s essay contemplates gender play on a different stage – that of the court of Christina of Sweden, who used fashionable dress to demonstrate her position as a strong and modern monarch, despite being a woman. Christina’s assertion of her right to rule, and her representation of her power as monarch, was articulated through dress in a much more strident manner than would have been required had she been a man. This went some way to enabling Christina to live up to her father’s warrior legacy and to compensate for her perceived feminine fragility. Her coronation robes deliberately continued and expanded on the rhetoric of power invested in the monarch. While Christina looked to France as a locus of sartorial advancement and therefore cultural power, she was notable in using French fashion to advance, rather than replace, Swedish sartorial display.

Two seventeenth-century queens who married into foreign courts and experienced a hostile response to their native fashions, Mariana of Austria and Catherine of Braganza, are the subjects of essays by Laura Oliván Santaliestra and Maria

67 Early modern royalty and nobility were commonly entertained by masques and some even participated, wearing lavish attire and with rich staging. See Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama*, 24, 54, 57; Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque*, 1–2.

68 Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque*, 125.

69 Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 5, 13.

70 Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 70.

Hayward, who demonstrate how these queens negotiated their sartorial and related political identity at their marital court. Santaliestra follows the progression of Mariana's dress in portraits from her infancy to her motherhood, and the dramatic change dress embodied in the transferral from Austrian archduchess to Spanish queen. At the same time, this future was made manifest in pictorial representations of the princess from the time that she was about three years old. Santaliestra focusses particularly on the use of a popular and yet cumbersome piece of clothing, the farthingale, as part of Mariana's initiation into a different court structure and her place within it. The farthingale further encompasses the role destined for Mariana as Spanish queen, acting to a royal woman's advantage in protecting her from the close scrutiny that accompanied the inevitable pressure to bear a child and heir.

Catherine of Braganza faced the same scrutiny, which Hayward notes was heightened by the need to compete with her husband Charles II's various fertile mistresses. Catherine's sartorial strategies were thus needed to differentiate her superior role as queen. Part of this included adopting English dress and taking full advantage of the sartorial privileges allowed to her, yet it also meant demonstrating her piety and modesty in contradiction to these would-be usurpers. At her birthday celebration in 1666, for example, Hayward states that Catherine's lack of jewels and plainness upstaged Charles's mistresses, who turned out in full finery. In this, the Stuart consort shows herself balancing Woolley's advice on court style and personal morality with aplomb, taking the 'self-promotion' of the mistresses to a higher, while subtler level. In the process, she justified her legitimate position as wife and queen, in spite of her foreignness and Catholicism.

The essay by Juliet Claxton and Evelyn Welch is unique in shifting its focus beyond how sartorial politics were played out within the court of Charles II, as discussed in the previous essay, to consider the origins of the garments themselves. The essay examines fashion imported from the East and highlights the inherent politics of clothing before many garments were even sewn. The wearing and propagating of fashion items, such as Indian chintz, amongst the elite ladies of the court relied on colonial structures of exchange and the increasingly predominant role of the woman merchant. Claxton and Welch explore the wares of one such unnamed 'china-woman' through the inventory of her goods compiled on her death. The structures of exchange colluded to by these female merchants provided a space in which female seller and buyer came together to shape fashions, which is of particular significance as Claxton and Welch point out that women's clothing was often purchased for them by men. What is more, the writers argue that the fashions embodied in garments worn by Charles II's court were dependent on a complex chain of merchants, maritime networks, and retailers, which renders their significance more than a simple matter of elite taste. The inclusion of this essay, along with that of Lublin, attempts to situate

elite dress at court as part of its wider cultural and interdisciplinary context, as Lou Taylor encouraged in her conclusion to *The Study of Dress History*.⁷¹

The final essay, by Erin Griffey, examines one of the most pervasive sartorial symbols at the early modern court, mourning dress, with its distinctive black garments and veil. If weddings were typically the most visible and highly choreographed occasion for female sartorial politics, the deaths of their husbands offered a suitable opportunity to publicly deploy dress for strategic purposes. A number of royal widows adopted mourning dress as a long-term sartorial strategy that materialised the traditional widows' virtues of chastity, humility and piety, and devotion to their husband's memory. This dress took on particular political currency for royal widows as mothers and regents of royal heirs. Griffey analyses Henrietta Maria's adoption of mourning dress after the execution of Charles I and the political agendas that informed it. She also examines the broader visual iconography of the royal widow and contemporary queens who would have been models for Henrietta Maria. The royal widow provides a fitting conclusion to this volume, highlighting the affective purpose of clothing and jewellery and providing a balance between the meanings dress required as part of early modern social conventions, and the way in which individuals could shape their sartorial choices for deliberate effect using the materials (quite literally) available to them.

As the examples of early modern queens and noblewomen show us, a woman did not just reflect her clothes, as the aforementioned 'hollow cipher' comment seems to suggest, but was able to use her clothes to effect (or protect) her identity and own wants and needs. Her clothes were vestments of agency which could speak variously for herself, and for the interests of others. Clothes simultaneously reinforce a social perception *and* allow the wearer to manipulate it to their advantage. Clothes do allow for masking, and while presenting a seamless identity for performance in line with conventional fashions, deliberate sartorial choices testify to a secret self underneath which may or may not reflect the display enacted on its surface. Female identity – moral, social, cultural, political – was inextricably bound up in the dressing of the body. This volume is subtitled 'Fashioning Women' and yet its implicit title is 'Women Fashion(ing) Themselves'. Fashion set rules, and sartorial politics explores the extent to which women – either themselves or their families – exploited these rules, asserting political value through their clothing and jewellery to create or to fashion an effective material image. Fashion, in the sense of dress norms, could be emphasised and manipulated in line with the wearer's purpose, and it is the balance between inner identity and perceived identity that sartorial politics is navigated. The essays in this volume reflect this occurrence at all levels of court, exploring and expanding on the variances with which women fashioned themselves according to rank and agenda.

71 Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, 272.

Woolley's *Gentlewoman's Companion* highlights the composite political and moral dimensions of fashion, making apparent the contradictory demands that women faced. A woman could dress to look good, and yet moral regulation was needed because the outer presentation expressed what was within. In overtly Christian courts, the latter could scarce be forgotten, even for a queen. Moreover, godliness was a justifying quality of political power. The conflation of this outer self with the inner, being taken at face (dress) value, highlights sartorial choice as not only connected to, but an integral part of, the behaviour with which noble and royal ladies conducted themselves on the stage that was the court, and before the observers, that were their noble peers.