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## A Glittering Reputation. Gaultier's retailing Innovations in Seventeenth-Century Paris

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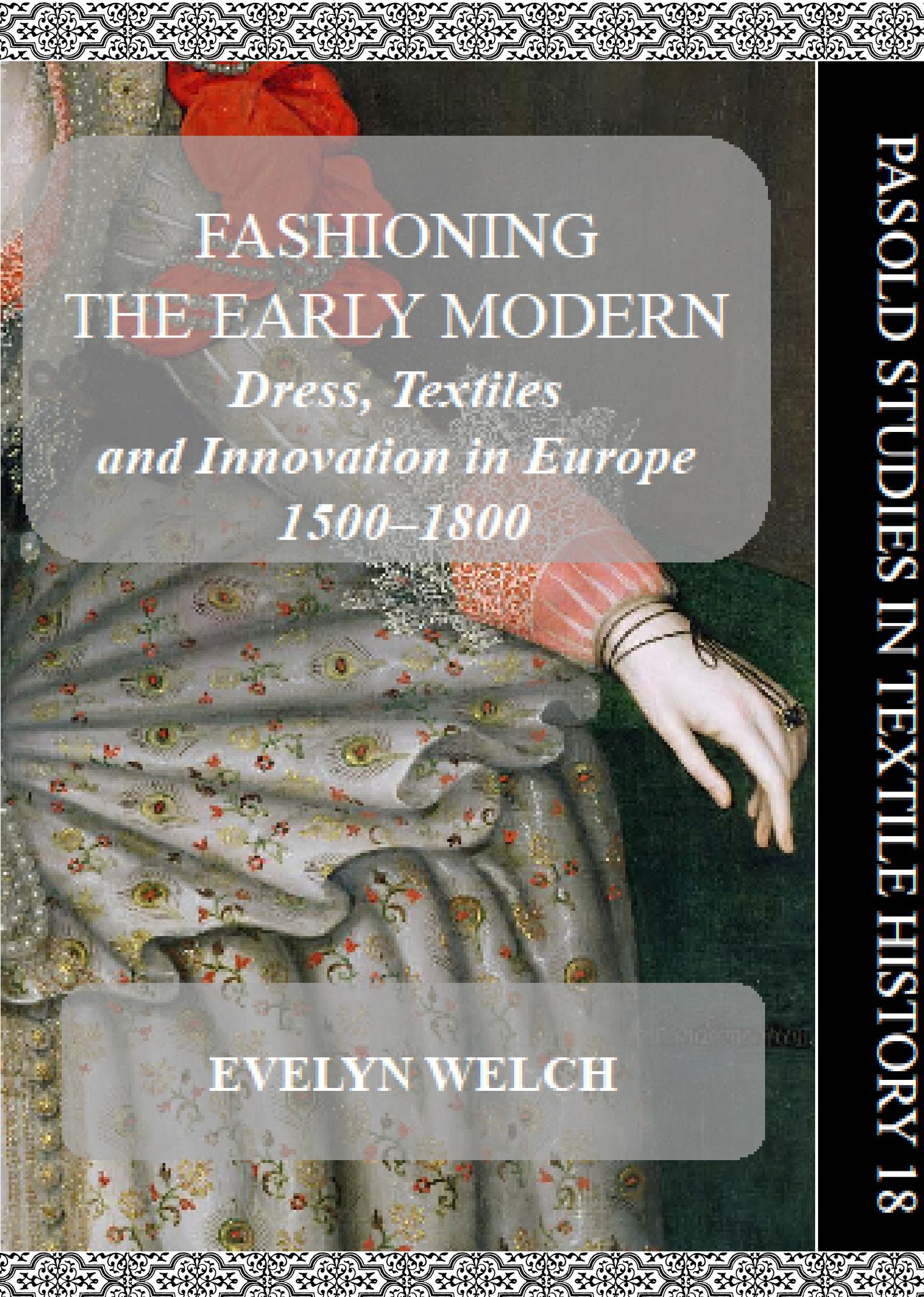
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EVELYN WELCH

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## A GLITTERING REPUTATION

*Gaultier's Retailing Innovations  
in Seventeenth-Century Paris*

CORINNE THÉPAUT-CABASSET

Between 1670 and 1720 Paris was regarded as the place where fashions were made and sold. Louis XIV (1638–1715) and his minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–83) were well aware of the economic importance of fashion and of its role in the game of appearances and power. Accordingly, they encouraged textile production through privileges that supported royal workshops manufacturing silk and woollen fabrics, linen, and lace in France and its territories. Colbert sought to ally aesthetic excellence and technical innovations in manufacturing in order to outdo all foreign competition and to capture domestic, European, and even global markets.<sup>1</sup> The French press, notably Jean Donneau de Visé (1638–1710), editor-in-chief of the monthly publication the *Mercure Galant*, championed the spreading of news to entice consumers into buying these fashionable products.<sup>2</sup> The *Mercure* reported on court life, and between 1672 and 1700 Donneau published articles specifically dedicated to announcing changes in fashion or the introduction of some novelty in the city of Paris or at the palace of Versailles.<sup>3</sup> These articles were couched in the form of letters to female readers. A series of engraved fashion plates was also included, since Donneau hoped, through text and image, to provide information on fashion for tailors and dressmakers in the provinces.<sup>4</sup> Donneau's periodical

<sup>1</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme XV<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1979), i. 365: 'La mode est consciemment utilisée par le monde marchand'; trans. Siân Reynolds as *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century*, 3 vols. (London, 1981–4).

<sup>2</sup> The *Mercure Galant* continued to be published for four years after Donneau's death. See John Styles in this volume on the impact of the press.

<sup>3</sup> Corinne Thépaut-Cabasset (ed.), *L'Esprit des modes au Grand Siècle* (Paris, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Jennifer Jones, *Sexing La Mode: Gender, Fashion and Commercial Culture in Old Regime France* (Oxford, 2004), 15–41.

reached markets in the French provinces and many European courts, thus disseminating French fashion at home and abroad during and beyond the reign of Louis XIV.<sup>5</sup>

The *Mercure Galant* is perhaps the best known and most used source for historians studying French fashion of the late seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> The paucity of research on fashion for that period may reflect the lack of surviving material evidence, and also the way in which different disciplines have foregrounded different research questions. The few published biographies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Parisian merchants seem to focus on art or furniture dealers, or fashion merchants, rather than textile merchants.<sup>7</sup> This essay addresses the lacuna for the late seventeenth century, delving into the selling of textiles in Paris. More particularly, it focuses on one individual retailer (François I. Gaultier), whose name appears frequently in the pages of the *Mercure Galant*, revealing his reputation not only in France but also further afield. The inventory of his merchandise of 4 March 1684 is preserved in the Archives nationales in Paris, and provides details of his business at the time.<sup>8</sup>

This study contributes to the pioneering work of several historians of early modern French retailing. Carolyn Sargentson published the first book on eighteenth-century luxury retailers (*marchands merciers*) active in Paris, presenting their interventions in importing, adapting, designing, and marketing objects as diverse as silks, furniture, and ceramics, while Natacha Coquery's recent study of shops in Paris con-

<sup>5</sup> Donna J. Bohanan, *Fashion beyond Versailles: Consumption and Design in Seventeenth-Century France* (Baton Rouge, La., 2012); Corinne Thépaut-Cabasset, 'Garde-robe de souverain et réseau international: l'exemple de la Bavière dans les années 1680', in Isabelle Paresys and Natacha Coquery (eds.), *Se vêtir à la cour en Europe 1400–1815* (Lille, 2011), 177–93.

<sup>6</sup> John L. Nevinson, 'The "Mercury gallant" or European Fashions in the 1670s', *Connoisseur*, 136/548 (1955), 87–91; Jones, *Sexing La Mode*, especially pt. 1; Joan De-Jean, *The Essence of Style: How the French Invented High Fashion, Fine Food, Chic Cafés, Style, Sophistication, and Glamour* (New York, 2005), esp. 61–82.

<sup>7</sup> Guillaume Glorieux, *A l'enseigne de Gersaint: Edme-François Gersaint, marchand d'art sur le pont Notre-Dame (1694–1750)* (Seyssel, 2002); Lazare Duvaux, *Livre-journal de Lazare Duvaux marchand bijoutier ordinaire du roy, 1748–1758*, ed. Louis Courajod, 2 vols. (Paris, 1965); Fiona Ffoulkes, "'Quality always distinguishes itself": Louis Hippolyte LeRoy and the Luxury Clothing Industry in Early Nineteenth-Century Paris', in Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford (eds.), *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650–1850* (Manchester, 1999), 183–205; Michelle Saporì, *Rose Bertin, ministre des modes de Marie-Antoinette* (Paris, 2004); Clare Haru Crowston, *Credit, Fashion, Sex: Economies of Regard in Old Régime France* (Durham, NC, and London, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Archives nationales de France, Minutier central (hereafter AN MC), Étude XLI/294.

siders a broader spectrum of retail establishments and their impact on the French economy. For the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Stéphane Castelluccio has revealed the production and consumption of luxury goods in Paris, and their dissemination to various clients outside France, from Sweden to Lisbon, Bavaria to Saxony. In the meantime, Joan DeJean has written extensively not only on the rise of France as the leader of fashion, on the development of the urban fabric of the city of Paris and its representation in print, and also, most recently, on the innovative luxury shopping environment of late seventeenth-century Paris.<sup>9</sup> Guillaume Glorieux's thorough and impressive study of the print-seller and mercer Edme-François Gersaint has been particularly inspiring, as he worked on an individual retailer, managing to tease out his subject's environment and networks from a variety of notarial records.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Annick Pardailhé-Galabrun's study of the people of Paris and the 'birth of intimacy' illustrates how extensive and rich these archival resources are. My sources and methodology are similar, in that I foreground the use of notarial records from the Parisian Minutier central, an invaluable source for all historical disciplines.<sup>11</sup> The Minutier contains the papers of 122 notaries' studies or offices—in total about 20 million documents.<sup>12</sup> In the seventeenth century there were 113 such offices in the capital, drawing up contracts that are useful for examining all aspects of everyday life. These legal papers include inventories, marriage contracts, apprenticeship contracts, business partnerships, property transactions, rent contracts, etc. Recourse to a notary was not obligatory, but it did ensure juridical security for clients. Usually clients patronized the notary who lived closest to their place of residence, while different trade bodies patronized their own preferred notary.

<sup>9</sup> Carolyn Sargentson, *Merchants and Luxury Markets: The marchands merciers of Eighteenth-Century Paris* (London, 1996); Natacha Coquery, *Tenir boutique à Paris au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: luxe et demi-luxe* (Paris, 2011); Stéphane Castelluccio (ed.), *Le Commerce du luxe à Paris aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Bern, 2009); DeJean, *The Essence of Style*, especially chs. 1–4; ead., *How Paris Became Paris: The Invention of the Modern City* (New York, 2014); ead., 'Shops of Gold: Advertising Luxury in Seventeenth-Century Paris', *Luxury*, 1 (2014), 23–46.

<sup>10</sup> Glorieux, *A l'enseigne de Gersaint*.

<sup>11</sup> Key works using inventories from the Minutier central to analyse the nature of interiors and the ownership of a range of goods are Annick Pardailhé-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy: Privacy and Domestic Life in Early Modern Paris*, trans. Jocelyn Phelps (Cambridge, 1991); Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris: An Essay in Popular Culture in the 18th Century*, trans. Marie Evans in association with Gwynne Lewis (Leamington Spa, 1987); id., *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the 'Ancien Régime'*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Marie-Françoise Limon-Bonnet, *Des minutes qui font l'histoire: cinq siècles d'archives notariales à Paris* (Paris, 2012).

The emphasis in this chapter is different from previous work, as my research focuses on the activities of woollen and silk merchants at the end of the seventeenth century in an attempt to understand their role in creating and selling innovative fashions. It has been possible to locate textile and retailing activity geographically within Paris, and then to determine the address and status of Gaultier's clients. Although many maps of Paris were published from the sixteenth century onwards, the first mapping of houses in the city dates to 1686 and reveals the houses street by street, parish by parish, as well as indicating the names of those in charge of the district and identifying the occupants of each house. During the *ancien régime* the textile and clothing trades—merchants, artisans, and retailers—were concentrated in the heart of Paris on the right bank of the Seine near the Cloth Hall (Halle aux Draps et Toiles) in the parish of Saint-Eustache. The merchant drapers (*marchands drapiers*) had their guild office close to the rue des Bourdonnais in the parish of Saint-Germain-L'Auxerrois (Illustration 6.1).<sup>13</sup> The textile retailers and second-hand dealers were located in the parishes of Saint-Germain-L'Auxerrois and Saint-Eustache, the rue Saint-Denis, the rue Saint-Honoré, and adjacent streets—in other words, in the district of the Louvre and the Palais-Royal.<sup>14</sup> Even today, the district around Saint-Honoré, les Halles, and the rue Saint-Denis is home to lively retail centres for clothing and other fashionable luxuries.

In order to differentiate the mass of local shopkeepers from those with a reputation beyond their district, two main sources were used: the *Mercure Galant* and the royal accounts. The names given by the *Mercure* constituted my first list of addresses for textile merchants, retailers, and artisans. Twenty-one names in total made up the world of trade and commerce comprising artisans and merchants who made fashion: cloth merchants, tailors and seamstresses, silk retailers, hat-makers, lace and ribbon retailers, etc.<sup>15</sup> This list was supplemented with the names that appear in the royal accounts for the period from the 1670s to 1686.<sup>16</sup> The name of Gaultier emerged as one of the two most important merchants of that period—one who had a reputation in print, and who also supplied the royal wardrobe (Garde-Robe) and the

<sup>13</sup> Available online at (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53010953b>), where the map can be viewed in close detail.

<sup>14</sup> See also the study of a sample of the Parisian population in Pardailhé-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy*, 26–30.

<sup>15</sup> Thépaut-Cabasset, *L'Esprit des modes au Grand Siècle*.

<sup>16</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereafter BnF), Paris, Mél. Colbert. Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Gall. 188.



Illustration 6.1. Map of the city of Paris, by Pierre Bullet (c.1639–1716), 1676. Photograph © Bibliothèque Nationale de France

royal household (Garde-Meuble Royal de la Couronne).<sup>17</sup> He supplied the Garde-Meuble with ‘crimson red damask brocaded with gold’ for the Trianon in 1688.<sup>18</sup> His activity was characterized by its longevity and scale, as well as its reputation in the public domain. Not surprisingly, his name has already entered the secondary literature on fashion

<sup>17</sup> Marcelin Charlier was the other major name. He was a silk merchant and draper at the shop sign ‘Au cerceau d’or’, rue de la Coutellerie à Paris. His silk manufactory was established in 1677 by royal privilege in Saint-Maur, near Paris. See Chantal Gastinel-Coural, ‘La fabrique lyonnaise au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: la commande royale de 1730’, *Revue de l’Art*, 62 (1983), 49–64.

<sup>18</sup> *Inventaire général du mobilier de la couronne sous Louis XIV (1663–1715)*, ed. Jules Guiffrey, 2 vols. (Paris, 1885–6), quoted in H. Belevitch-Stankevitch, *Le Goût chinois en France au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1910), 112–13 n. 1. See Gastinel-Coural, ‘La fabrique lyonnaise au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle’.

because of his appearance in the *Mercure*, in which he was credited with innovations in fashion, from the launch of new colours to the retailing of imported gowns of the finest quality.<sup>19</sup> This essay investigates further, revealing more about the social circles that he served, before identifying precisely who he was, the range of merchandise that he stocked, where and how he worked, and therefore how he was likely to have achieved his reputation.

#### GAULTIER'S REPUTATION AND CAREER IN FRANCE

The Service de la Garde-Robe was created by Louis XIV in 1669,<sup>20</sup> and Barthélémy Gaultier seems to have been well integrated into the new office from the beginning. Indeed, in that very year a document, dated 4 February 1669, specified that Gaultier was a 'merchant supplying the king's wardrobe'.<sup>21</sup> He was the first of three generations of the Gaultier family to serve in this way, his son François I<sup>er</sup> and grandson François II following in his footsteps. Gaultier father and son supplied the king's and queen's wardrobes, and later provided the trousseaus for the marriages of the French princesses in 1679 and 1680. Gaultier's name also appears several times in the correspondence of that inveterate aristocratic letter-writer Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, marquise de Sévigné (1626–96). In 1672 her daughter, Madame de Grignan, was in debt to Gaultier.<sup>22</sup> In 1679, on the marriage of Mademoiselle de Blois, the marquise commented on the purchases made at Gaultier's by the king for the marriage of his daughters, writing that Gaultier could not complain about 'having earned a million in a year'.<sup>23</sup> Gaultier's reputation extended from the court to the city, where he was immortalized in the literary writings of that astute commentator on Parisian contemporary life Jean de La Bruyère (1645–96), who wrote of the 'useful and praiseworthy practice of losing one third of the dowry brought by the wife in wedding expenses! of beginning to get poor by amassing super-

<sup>19</sup> *Mercure* (1673), quoted in Belevitch-Stankevitch, *Le Goût chinois en France au temps de Louis XIV*, 195. See DeJean, *The Essence of Style*, 54–5.

<sup>20</sup> Corinne Thépaut-Cabasset, 'Le service de la garde-robe: une création de Louis XIV', in Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel and Pascale Gorguet-Ballesteros (eds.), *Fastes de cour et cérémonies royales: le costume de cour en Europe 1650–1800* (Paris, 2009), 28–33.

<sup>21</sup> AN MC Étude LXXXVI/457–462/4 Feb 1669.

<sup>22</sup> Madame de Sévigné, letter to Madame de Grignan, Paris, 16 May 1672, in Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, marquise de Sévigné, *Correspondance*, ed. Roger Duchêne, 3 vols. (Paris, 1972–8), i. 513.

<sup>23</sup> Madame de Sévigné, letter to Madame de Grignan, Paris, 29 Dec. 1679, in *Correspondance*, ed. Duchêne, ii. 779.

fluous things, and of taking from one's funds enough to pay Gaultier for furniture and toilette!'.<sup>24</sup>

An important boost to Gaultier's reputation must have been his inclusion in the first book of useful addresses in Paris compiled by Nicolas de Blégnny in 1691 and 1692,<sup>25</sup> but the best publicity was bestowed on him by Donneau de Visé in the *Mercurie Galant*, in which he appeared among the names of the best-known merchants, tailors, dressmakers, and hairdressers in Paris. Indeed, throughout the existence of the *Mercurie*, from 1672 to 1700, the name of Gaultier kept appearing in different articles describing the new, the most fashionable, the most beautiful or the most successful fabrics, those that were used for the king's suits or for the queen's gowns. In the 1670s it was Gaultier, according to the *Mercurie*, who invented new colours, such as 'straw' or 'prince', and who promised a third new colour whose name he would not divulge.<sup>26</sup> In 1673 the *Mercurie* described women wearing beautiful painted gowns (*manteaux*), covered in flowers and figures, in which Gaultier made great trade.<sup>27</sup> Gaultier awaited the delivery of rich fabrics from the cargoes of the French East India Company (established in 1664), in which he was a shareholder.<sup>28</sup> These references suggest that Gaultier was actively bringing in 'novelties' just ten to twenty years after the company was formed and a year before the French banned the use of printed and painted Asian textiles in order to protect native industries. He may not have intervened in the design of the textiles but he certainly had an eye for what would attract a market interested in novelty imports. These imports also contributed to innovation in the production of luxury textiles in France, by providing Chinese designs and motifs that were often incorporated into local products.<sup>29</sup> Apart from these lightweight exotic fabrics, in 1678 the *Mercurie* reported on fabrics for men's dress, of which there were two types available from Gaultier's—a thick grey cloth 'as well worked as beaver' (i.e. felted) and a brocaded silk with

<sup>24</sup> Jean de La Bruyère, 'De la ville, 18 (IV)', in *Les Caractères, ou Mœurs de ce siècle* (1688), ed. Antoine Adam (Paris, 2005): 'L'utile et la louable pratique, de perdre en frais de noces le tiers de la dot qu'une femme apporte! De commencer par s'appauvrir de concert par l'amas de choses superflues, et de prendre déjà sur son fonds de quoi payer Gaultier, les meubles et la toilette!'

<sup>25</sup> Nicolas de Blégnny, *Le Livre commode des adresses de Paris pour 1692 par Abraham Du Pradel (Nicolas de Blégnny)*, ed. Édouard Fournier, 2 vols. (Paris, 1878), ii. 13–14.

<sup>26</sup> Thépaut-Cabasset, *L'Esprit des modes au Grand Siècle*, 106–7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 59.

<sup>28</sup> AN MC Étude/LXXXVI/462. The inventory taken after Gaultier's death in 1688 reveals that he was a shareholder in 1685. The company had been created by Jean-Baptiste Colbert in 1664. See also Belevitch-Stankevitch, *Le Goût chinois en France au temps de Louis XIV*, 195.

<sup>29</sup> See Giorgio Riello in Chapter 2.



Illustration 6.2. *Habit d'Hyver*, published in the *Mercure Galant*, Paris, January 1678. Engraving by Jean Lepautre (1618–82) after Jean Bérain (1640–1711). VAM E. 267-2014. Given by Anthony Griffiths and Judy Rudoe. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

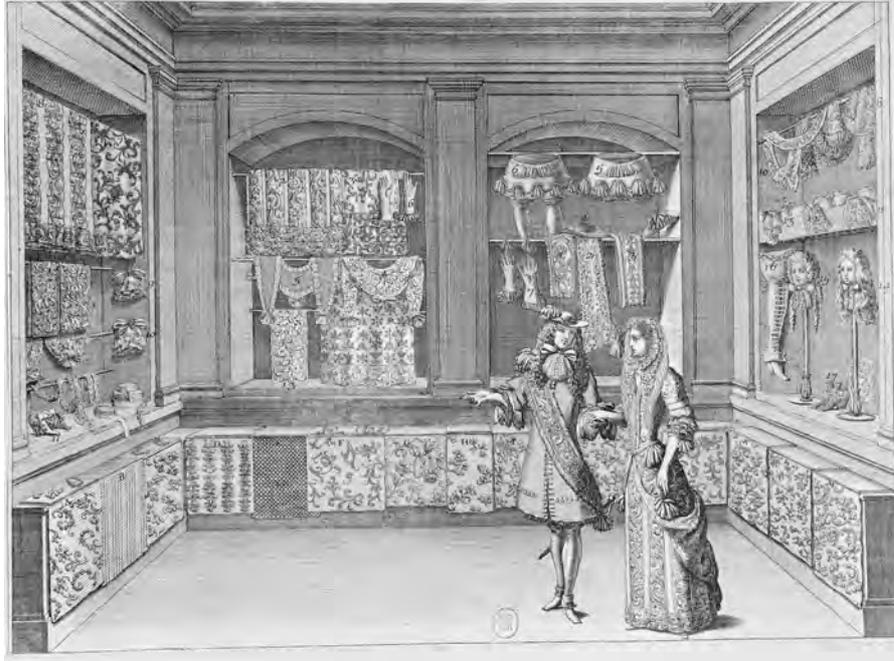


Illustration 6.3. *A Fashionable Couple Visiting a Shop*, published in the *Mercure Galant*, Paris, January 1678. Engraving by Jean Lepautre (1618–82) after Jean Bérain (1640–1711). In the form of a shop or wardrobe interior, the print represents the male and female wardrobes for the spring season in 1678. Every item of clothing and fashionable accessory is marked by a number or letter, keyed to commentary in the text describing the male and female attire. The new textiles available for consumers that hang in front of the counter are similarly marked with letters from A to M. BnF, ED 65b FOL. Photograph © Bibliothèque Nationale de France

*cordonnnet* (Illustration 6.2, showing a winter suit in grey cloth and brocaded silk).<sup>30</sup> In 1678 Lepautre's engraving of a fashionable couple in a shop shows textiles similar to those listed in the inventory of Gaultier's merchandise (Illustration 6.3).<sup>31</sup> In the engraving, the letter F stood for a silk supplied to the queen's wardrobe for petticoats made of thick blue taffeta, with a scattering of small deep-pink brocaded flowers, and a black border. It was at his shop that fabrics to make new outfits for Queen Marie-Thérèse were bought in 1679 (Illustration 6.4).<sup>32</sup>

In the years 1672, 1674, 1679, 1681, and 1685 the name of Gaultier

<sup>30</sup> See Thépaut-Cabasset, *L'Esprit des modes au Grand Siècle*, 106–7. *Cordonnet* is a tightly twisted yarn that adds texture to the surface of a textile, whether it is woven or embroidered into it.

<sup>31</sup> See Thépaut-Cabasset, *L'Esprit des modes au Grand Siècle*, 84–95.

<sup>32</sup> Marie-Thérèse (1638–83), *infanta* of Spain, had married Louis XIV in 1660. See Thépaut-Cabasset, *L'Esprit des modes au Grand Siècle*, 117.



Illustration 6.4. *Deshabillé d'Hyver*, published in the *Mercure Galant*, Paris, January 1678. Engraving by Jean Lepautre (1618–82) after Jean Bérain (1640–1711). Private collection. Photograph © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

regularly appeared against considerable sums of money in treasury and royal account books. He supplied fabrics for the service of the Wardrobe and Household, for the Revels (Menus-Plaisirs) and the King's Bedchamber, and also, in 1686, for the king to present as gifts to the Siamese ambassadors. These were silks suitable for making caps (*bonnets*), gowns (*manteaux*), and coats (*habits*).<sup>33</sup>

The hierarchy of merchants and retailers in Paris was quite sophisticated,<sup>34</sup> and Gaultier belonged to the most prestigious of the Parisian companies, the guild of merchants dealing in fabrics made of gold, silver, and silk (*marchands de draps et étoffes d'or, d'argent et de soie*). This company was a subsection of the mercers (*marchands merciers*), whose statutes were established in 1688. It occupied the third rank in a hierarchy of merchant companies (*corps*), and was considered the most important because its business and capital were so extensive. The members of this trade did not manufacture goods themselves, but bought them in to sell on, often adapting them to suit their clients' taste. As they did not make goods, their social status was higher than that of artisans, and they were entitled to call themselves *marchands bourgeois* or nobles.<sup>35</sup> Gaultier, a dealer in silks containing gold and silver, worked in a business partnership that went by the title of Gaultier. Different members of the family worked together as partners in 1656, and in 1669 their premises were in rue aux Fèvres, in the parish of Saint-Eustache. Barthélémy Gaultier was a *marchand bourgeois de Paris* supplying the royal wardrobe in 1669. Then, in 1678, François Gaultier established himself and his family at no. 31 rue des Bourdonnais, in a house 'At the [sign of the] Crown' or the 'Golden Crown' ('A la Couronne' or 'A la Couronne d'or'). The family remained there till the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1684 François Gaultier father and son were in partnership with Louis Gellain, and in 1688 Louis Langlois, son of a Parisian merchant draper (*marchand drapier*), joined the partnership. Both Gellain and Langlois had married into the Gaultier family, thus

<sup>33</sup> Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Gall. 188.

<sup>34</sup> Pardailhé-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy*, 28 ff.; Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley, 1996), 98–109. The fashion merchant (*marchand de modes*) did not exist at this period, and the guild did not develop until the early eighteenth century. See also Crowston, *Credit, Fashion, Sex*.

<sup>35</sup> For statutes and status see *Almanach des corps des marchands et des communautés des arts et métiers de la ville et faubourgs de Paris: l'origine historique de chaque corps; un abrégé de leurs statuts, la manière dont ils se gouvernent; le nombre de leurs gardes, adjoints ou jurés; augmentés des règlements pour l'administration des deniers communs des communautés, et la reddition des comptes* (Paris, 1758), s.v. 'Merciers'; Jacques Savary des Bruslons, *Dictionnaire universel du commerce*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1723–30), s.vv. 'Marchand', 'Mercerie', iii. 275–80, 353–9.

diversifying the products in which the family dealt and contributing to its prosperity. François II Gaultier was a mercer and a wholesale jeweller in 1699, then a merchant in silks in 1709.<sup>36</sup>

The location, size, and layout of the house in rue des Bourdonnais reveal much about Gaultier's status. In choosing to live in this street, he was conforming to the preferred pattern of residence of most merchants who traded in luxury goods and textiles. In 1714 the street had twenty-six houses and seven street lights—the latter a sure sign of its modernity and status.<sup>37</sup> Several of these houses were private town houses of the aristocracy, Gaultier's most likely customers.<sup>38</sup> Gaultier's own house was large, comprising several sections, each of which was rented by a branch of the family involved in the business. Some annexes were let out to tenants. Gaultier and his wife occupied a quarter of the house, which had three storeys, a courtyard, and a garden, the façade being on rue des Bourdonnais.<sup>39</sup> It functioned as both private apartments and commercial premises. On the ground floor there were shops on each side of the main front door (*porte cochère*), equipped with cupboards, shelves, and counters on which to display merchandise.<sup>40</sup> The inventory of François Gaultier, made after his death in 1688, reveals that he had kept a room for himself on the first floor off the main courtyard, and a small closet (*cabinet*) alongside.<sup>41</sup> The rest of the house was probably occupied by other members of his family and by his partners' families. An earlier rental agreement, made in 1679, indicates that he had chosen the rear first-floor apartment to create a storage space (*magasin*), possibly the four rooms where the merchandise was stocked and inventoried in 1684. There were seven rooms on the third floor, probably occupied by apprentices and servants.<sup>42</sup> Gaultier also rented from his neighbour a shop (*boutique*) or store with a little closet adjoining his own house, the two floors being one above the other. The other shop and apartment adjacent to the carriage entrance belonged to the house (and was rented out by Gaultier). A shop was the place in which merchants displayed their wares for sale. Its ground floor opened onto the

<sup>36</sup> AN MC Étude LXXXVI/461. The wedding contract of Gaultier's father and mother (François Gaultier and Madeleine Pocquelin) indicates a rent for a quarter of the town house.

<sup>37</sup> See DeJean, *How Paris Became Paris*.

<sup>38</sup> See Pardailhé-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy*. See also Natacha Coquery, *L'Hôtel aristocratique: le marché de luxe à Paris au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1998).

<sup>39</sup> AN MC Étude LXXXVI/461/29 Feb. 1684.

<sup>40</sup> AN MC Étude LXXXVI/426/17 Mar. 1679.

<sup>41</sup> AN MC Étude LXXXVI/462/23 Jan. 1688.

<sup>42</sup> This disposition of space in other Parisian buildings is described and analysed by Pardailhé-Galabrun, *The Birth of Intimacy*, 40 ff. and 112–14.

street. The luxury shopkeepers of Paris were permitted by the police to open only one shop at a time. In the back shop there was storage for the merchandise. The store was reserved for selling wholesale or for keeping merchandise until it was taken to the shop by the shopkeeper. According to the merchant and writer Savary des Bruslons, shopkeepers kept their best merchandise in the back shop or in a room upstairs.<sup>43</sup>

The inventory made after the death in 1684 of Gaultier's wife Madeleine Pocquelin reveals that the merchandise was stocked in four store-rooms, but does not reveal whether Gaultier was actively trading in a shop on the street. Several rental agreements cross-referenced with post-mortem inventories offer rich documentation, and reveal more about the business spaces and display. The large courtyard of the house seems to have contained the commercial spaces, where customers probably came to shop. A much later description of the houses and residences in the street reveals that in the nineteenth century the house at the shop sign of the Golden Crown was a commercial temple with multiple shop counters in the courtyard.<sup>44</sup> This might suggest that the public and commercial space for trade at an earlier date was in the courtyard. The 'ringing clock' in the courtyard inventoried after Gaultier's father's death in 1688 was probably in the workspace.

The tools of Gaultier's trade give another insight into the spaces dedicated to his professional activities. In 1688, following the description made after the death of François Gaultier, Barthélémy had grates and shovels for two fireplaces in the stores, two big bureaux serving as tables for displaying merchandise with drawers that could lock, seven big cupboards in which to keep merchandise, and two dozen stools covered in different colours. This conforms to the image of a shop display in Jean Lepautre's engraving for the *Mercure Galant* in 1678 (Illustration 6.3). Additional items included an oak desk (*bureau*), two safes, eight wooden seats covered in green serge, and some wall hangings, as well as two wooden desks, a little white wooden cupboard containing some bales of wall hangings, an oak counter, and two pairs of scales in the adjacent closet. Besides tools of the trade, there were many management and

<sup>43</sup> Savary des Bruslons, *Dictionnaire universel du commerce*, s.v. 'Boutique', i. 1089–90; s.v. 'Magasin', iii. 221–2; Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel, contenant généralement tous les mots françois, tant vieux que modernes, & les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts*, 3 vols. (The Hague, 1690), s.v. 'Boutique', vol. i [no pagination].

<sup>44</sup> Charles Lefeuvre, *Histoire de Paris rue par rue, maison par maison* (Paris, 1875), ii. 92. See also Jacques Hillairet, *Connaissance du vieux Paris* (Paris, 1993), 109: 'N° 31. Emplacement de l'hôtel de la Trémoille démolie en 1841. C'est là qu'était à l'enseigne de la Couronne d'or, ce marchand d'étoffes de soie et d'argent, achetées par la Cour et Mme de Sévigné.'

accounting papers, proof that Gaultier was observing the royal edict of 1673, which regulated commercial accountancy practices. Businessmen, merchants, and bankers were obliged to keep a day book, which contained all of their business dealings, their letters of exchange, their active and passive debts, and even the petty cash used on household expenditure. They were also obliged to keep supplementary books, more or less numerous according to the nature and extent of their business.<sup>45</sup>

According to the same inventory, the store in Paris was decorated with ‘a large painting on canvas representing the king on horseback and a figure of Reputation striking down the League of the Holy Roman Emperor, Spain, and Holland’.<sup>46</sup> No doubt this painting had pride of place because Gaultier supplied the king’s household. It is intriguing to ponder whether the king himself had presented Gaultier with this portrait as a gift, and whether it impressed his clientele.<sup>47</sup>

#### FASHIONABLE STOCKS AND NETWORKS

The premises, the tools, and the monumental portrait seem to bear out Gaultier’s reputation as both major shopkeeper and supplier to the king. The contents of the stores give an insight into the quantity and quality of merchandise that passed through his hands—and allow speculation about how he ‘made’ fashion. In 1684 the contents were listed by two commissioned experts who were also merchants.<sup>48</sup> Their document is a 92-page book, bound and covered in white parchment, in which they described and valued stock of all sorts of textiles by quality and quantity—from the most expensive to the cheapest. The list began with fabrics made of metal threads (*dorures*), of which there were no fewer than 476 pieces in a range of types (*à fonds d’or et d’argent, à fond lamé, gros de Naples, de Tours, taffetas*), designs made in different techniques or materials (*damassé, broché, glacé, rayé, liseré, à dessins, figurés, à chenille, à bouquets*) and colours, plain or polychrome (*nué*). It moved on to silks ‘from Venice’, scarlet and then multicoloured. Then came fabrics made in Lyon, many of which were apparently striped; then mixed druggets (*droguets mélangés*) with metal threads and watered silks (*mohères*) of gold and silver.<sup>49</sup> There were

<sup>45</sup> Savary des Bruslons, *Dictionnaire universel du commerce*, iii. 221–2 and 275–80.

<sup>46</sup> AN MC Étude LXXXVI/462/23 Jan. 1688.

<sup>47</sup> See Gastinel-Coural, ‘La fabrique lyonnaise au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle’. Charlier, mentioned above, also had a portrait of the king in his shop.

<sup>48</sup> AN MC Étude XLI/294/4 Mar. 1684.

<sup>49</sup> Or moiré (*moëre* in French). This translation is based on the definition in Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel* (Paris, 1690).

coloured gauzes with gold, white and gold damask, gold- and silver-coloured petticoats (*jupes*), some with gowns (*manteaux*), then velvets from Genoa, Venice, Flanders, and Lyon, damasks from Genoa, Turin, and Lucca, fabrics made with *cordonnet* and chenille threads, coloured satins from Florence and Lyon, *gros de Naples*, etc., and finally fine woollen cloths in different colours from Brussels and Holland (*draps, ratines, camelots*).<sup>50</sup> In total, there were 2,419 items or pieces of fabric, covering 62 pages of the book. But that was only what was in the store-rooms in Paris. Pages 63 and 64 reveal that there was also merchandise in England and en route across the Channel. Gaultier's commercial registers show that this merchandise was worth over 395,437 *livres*—a sum equivalent to about a thousand times the annual rent for his part of the house in rue des Bourdonnais.

Most of the textiles in the inventory were apparently highly fashionable, as they appear in the fashion pages of the *Mercurie Galant*. Indeed, the *Mercurie's* comments underline just how innovative and fashionable the different textiles traded by Gaultier were at the time. They also confirm that Gaultier's reputation lay in retailing silk, and that silk was more important than tailoring or dressmaking in conveying what was *à la mode* at any one time. The fashion plates by Lepautre printed for and published by the *Mercurie* present pictorially the variety of textiles (including some patterns) and their use in garments, albeit through black and white plates (Illustrations 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4).

Apart from information about the ranges of textiles sold by Gaultier, the inventory also gives an insight into his network of clients and suppliers. Pages 69–74 and 75–87 list Gaultier's business debtors and creditors. The debts owed to him amounted to more than 466,198 *livres*, while the debts he owed came to more than 625,539 *livres*. These last pages, comprising the last third of the book, provide the names of Gaultier's customers and indicate their status and profession. They also give some indications about Gaultier's partnership and the professional network he had with the textile manufacturers and merchants in Antwerp, Brussels, Florence, Leiden, Lyon, and Tours. Gaultier was retailing the most extensive range of silks and woollens produced and traded in

<sup>50</sup> These fabrics were probably imported from Flanders and the Dutch Republic, and so traded there. In other words, some may have been made there and others merely imported via these countries. The names of particular fabrics often reveal the original place of production, rather than the place in which they were currently made. For more details about costume textiles and fabrics see Lesley Ellis Miller, 'Les matériaux du costume de cour', in Pierre Arizzoli-Clémentel and Pascale Gorguet-Ballesteros (eds.), *Fastes de cour et cérémonies royales: le costume de cour en Europe 1650–1800* (Paris, 2009), 78–89.

Europe, making his own reputation as a first-class dealer able to supply any textiles available in the world. The client list suggests that his shop was the place to find the most up-to-date fashions and tasteful goods. Among his clients were foreign ministers and European ambassadors, who were likely to spread word across Europe, especially in princely and court circles—which were important since, according to the *Mercur*, fashion spread out from the French court to the city, and thence to the provinces and on to foreign countries. Gaultier's clientele, in terms of geography and demographic, was surely a reflection of his reputation inside and outside the court of Versailles and the inner city of Paris, his innovations extending over territorial and social boundaries.

#### CONCLUSION

This research has established beyond doubt that Gaultier was a merchant and retailer with a solid and respected reputation, and an impressive bank balance to match. It has shown that a merchant of this type worked both with those in his immediate environment in Paris and also with a network of contacts established elsewhere, dealing in the best and most fashionable goods and services. 'Luxury has almost always created fashions', wrote the author of the *Mercur* in 1689.<sup>51</sup>

Patronized by the court and publicized by the *Mercur*, Gaultier and his peers were deemed to be the source of creativity and innovation by the end of the seventeenth century. Letter-writers such as Madame de Sévigné and well-travelled ambassadors had always communicated fashions to their correspondents. The periodical press, however, reached wider audiences, and the publication of fashion intelligence in the new *Mercur Galant* no doubt spread fashion and the reputations of its makers more widely than before, both demographically and geographically.

Gaultier's inventory of merchandise opens up possibilities for the future study of the goods and clients detailed in the document, especially the supply to the king's wardrobe, for which no inventories survive. The breadth and variety of the network of clients may be studied through analysis of the state of active and passive debts contained in the inventory made in 1684. This list of names, which are sometimes accompanied by an indication of status or trade, reveals only the amount that Gaultier's customers spent and/or what they owed him. It should nonetheless be possible in due course to discover more

<sup>51</sup> See Thépaut-Cabasset, *L'Esprit des modes au Grand Siècle*, 165–6.

about the social status of Gaultier's clients, the contacts he had abroad, and the salesmen charged with commercial networking; and also, of course, the relationship he had with the other trades and artisans in the textile and clothing business—tailors, seamstresses, upholsterers—and the reputation of these individuals.

