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Perspectives and Trends in Textile and Dress in the Early Modern Nordic World

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The editors,
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Fig. 15.5: Classical Danish design, The Chair, designed by Hans Wegener (Designmuseum Danmark; Photo: Pernille Klemp)

Fig. 16.1: Mme St. Romain. Engraved by Martin Rudolf Heland, c. 1800 (Pl. AF 50:75, National Library of Sweden)

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Fig. 16.4: Theodore Lane, Draughts. Pl. 4. A Bad Move. Print published by George Humphrey, 1822. (Pl. AF 50:52, National Library of Sweden)

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Fig. 16.7: Arlaud (attr.), Ab Dieu, le Vent m'emporte, print c. 1790 (Pl. AF 53:40, National Library of Sweden)

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Fig. 16.11: “Redingotte en Bakmann ou à coqueluchon.” French, 1779, Hand-colored engraving on laid paper. Designed by: Pierre-Thomas LeClerc, French, about 1740–after 1799; Engraved by: Nicolas Dupin, French; Publisher: Esnauts et Rapilly, French, 18th century: Gallerie des Modes et Costumes Français. 20e. Cahier des Costumes Français; 14e Suite d’Habillements à la mode en 1779, U.117 The Elizabeth Day McCormick Collection, No. 44.1394 (Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

Fig. 16.12: Title page of Carl Gyllenborg, Swenska sprätthöken, comédie, Stockholm, 1740 (National Library of Sweden)
List of Contributors

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Christina Folke Ax is trained as an ethnologist and received her PhD in 2004 on the theme of Icelandic town and peasant cultures in the 18th and 19th centuries and has published extensively on Norse subjects. From 2004–2006 she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Copenhagen followed in 2008–2010 as an associate at the University of Iceland. She is currently a researcher attached to the National Museum of Denmark’s initiative Northern Worlds, where she explores life and culture on the North Frisian Islands as well as seal and whale hunting in the 17th to the 19th centuries. In the past, she has been a member of the steering committee of the research network Encountering Foreignness at Turku University, Finland and the research network Global Cultural History. Network for the study of colonialism and post-colonialism in Copenhagen.

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Juliane Engelhardt holds a PhD in history and is currently an associate professor at the University of Copenhagen. The subject of her doctoral thesis was the patriotic societies in the Danish conglomerate state in the Age of Enlightenment. Here, she focused on the meaning of patriotism among the rising middle classes. Her thesis has been published as a monograph in Danish, and in various articles in English. The incipient cultural distinctions among the middle classes in Scandinavia, Great Britain and the German Empire are the focus of her present research. This culture was characterized by material asceticism, a strong work ethic, and emphasis on moral reform. She investigates the religious origins of this culture, in particular Puritanism, Methodism, and Pietism.

Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen is a social anthropologist working as a curator at Den Gamle By, The Old Town, National Open Air Museum of Urban History and Culture, in Aarhus, Denmark. She was originally trained as a crafts teacher and since 1995 she has published extensively on subjects related to historical dress and textiles. She has curated several exhibitions of accessories and dress, and also permanent exhibitions of homes from 18th-, 19th- and 20th-century Danish towns. Her special interests at present are 18th- and 19th-century dress and textiles and also 1970s dress and lifestyle as part of a larger project at The Old Town (2007 onwards) where the history of 20th-century Danish towns is in focus.

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Seija Johnson was formerly a handicrafts teacher, and since 2003, has been employed as a curator on research issues at the K. H. Renlund Museum – Provincial Museum of
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Maria Mackinney-Valentin is an associate professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Design School. She earned her PhD in 2010 with the thesis “On the Nature of Trends: A Study of Contemporary Trend Mechanisms in Contemporary Fashion”. Her current research focuses on the construction of social identity in and through fashion with special focus on the themes of age, gender and beauty perception. She also holds an MA in English Literature from the University of Copenhagen. Her work has appeared in publications, such as Design Issues and Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion.

Vibe Maria Martens is a historian, with a background in Danish and British colonial history. She has worked with textile studies at the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research, University of Copenhagen (2010–2012) and attended a variety of conferences and workshops, such as those in conjunction with the EU funded Fashioning the Early Modern research programme. She has commenced PhD research at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy in 2012 with the project “Indian Textiles in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Denmark: Colonialism and the Rise of a Global Consumer Culture”.

Cecilie Støger Nachman graduated as a fashion curator in 2012 from the University of the Arts, London College of Fashion. With a BA in architecture from The Royal Danish Academy and an MA in the field of fashion and museology, her final dissertation investigated the so-called fashion dolls of the 18th-century and in particular the relationship in scale between the dolls and their human spectators in a written dissertation and a full exhibition proposal. Besides her studies, she has assisted on various international fashion exhibitions and interned at the textile and dress collection of the Museum of London. Currently she works with the curation of art and design exhibitions at The Apartment in Copenhagen, an interior design studio and gallery laid out like a private home.

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Patrik Steorn, PhD in Art History, is a researcher and assistant professor at the Centre for Fashion Studies, Stockholm University. Within the project, Fashioning the Early Modern, Creativity and Innovation in Europe 1500–1800, Steorn has specialised in the transnational and transmedial movements of printed fashion imagery, caricatures and fashion plates in 18th-century Sweden. Currently he is working on the project Swedish Fashion in the U.S. in the 1960s. A transnational perspective on domestic fashion, funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. He is also active outside Stockholm University as a curator, writer, and lecturer in art history, visual culture, fashion studies and gender and queer studies. From 2014 Steorn is the Museum Director at Thielska Galleriet, Stockholm.

Peter Andreas Toft, PhD, is currently part of the academic staff at the National Museum of Denmark. He was trained as a prehistoric archaeologist (MA) and later received his PhD in Eskimology and Arctic Studies from the University of Copenhagen. His doctoral thesis from 2011 explored how European commodities changed function and social meaning amongst the Inuit of the Historic Thule Culture in Greenland 1600–1900. His research focuses on colonial and Inuit history, trade and exchange, cultural encounters, historical archaeology, prehistoric art and material culture.

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This prologue is accompanied by a suite of Kashmir shawls, all from the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London; a fact speaking to the growing dominant position of Great Britain in the European-Asian encounters in early modernity. The shawls elegantly represent an item of fashion, which in itself is an embodiment of how qualities and patterns may travel, find new use and form a fashion far from its original shores. The shawls became a vital fashion accessory in Europe from the second half of the 18th century onwards. In the beginning they may have mostly been for outdoor use, later they also demonstrated the economic standing, civilised refinement and cultural knowledge of its wearer when used indoors, not to mention their comforting and warm qualities cherished in the winter-cold Europe.

Hand-woven shawls made of fine wool from mountain goats in Kashmir in Northern India arrived in Europe in the middle of the 18th century. Due to high prices and a keen demand, craftsmen and factories began to make more affordable copies of these shawls, most notably in England and France. Hence, the pattern is also known as Paisley after the Scottish town, which became the most important European production site. Curiously enough, in Danish they were called franske sjaler, i.e. French shawls. In the Indian original, the shawls were made with a plain central piece, narrow side borders and wide edging borders featuring the pinecone or droplet-shaped Botteh pattern. In the European made shawls, these Botteh border-pieces grew larger and more stylized and at some point they widened to cover the entire shawl.
Prologue

Mikkel Venborg Pedersen

At the heart of this anthology lies the world of fashion. It may be in the field of clothes and dress, that of appearances and fashionable manners, in the realm of housing and dwelling or in ideas and attitudes. The volume does so by confining itself within the time frame of early modernity, 1500–1850, and by focusing on the Nordic world, i.e. the Scandinavian countries Denmark, Norway and Sweden as well as Finland, Iceland, the Faroe Isles and Greenland. However, the common thread that runs through the various chapters constituting the anthology is that of the Nordic world encountering impressions from the outside, be it from Europe, the mighty Russian Empire stretching all the way to the fabled plains of Asia, or the colonial possessions connected to Europe by trade routes to Asia, to the Americas and Africa as well as the Arctic. The Nordic countries were, in some respects, at the periphery of general European fashion trends. In other ways, they participated fully in developing them, in using them and thus shaping them, and their inhabitants were stakeholders, as indeed were all Europeans, in living through the process from early modernity to modernity proper, as illustrated throughout the book’s chapters.

A cultural encounter may occur on several levels and ranges from individual meetings over an intertwining of cultural currents to spectacular clashes of cultures. This is also the case for fashionable encounters of trends, styles, looks, vogues and the occasional craze. In the more narrow area of fashionable material culture, an encounter may take place in the design process when diverse traditions and cultures meet. It can find itself entangled in the production, for instance, when a material from one part of the...
world meets a technology from another and new forms or uses appear. An encounter may occur too, when an object is removed from its original environment and repositioned elsewhere in the world, perhaps through imported consumption. In this process, it gains a new significance in the daily lives of people and thereby the object and its uses contribute to the formation of a new fashion or new forms of trade and production, which are seldom quite the same as before. Men and women are not merely receivers; they are also creators of life, history, culture – and fashion. This is the case both where a fashion originates and where it reaches. Thus, in this anthology, the history of fashion does not restrict itself to form and material goods alone. It encompasses social and cultural history, including aspects of human existence such as ecology, economy, social organization, ideology and politics as well as religion, philosophy and general worldviews.

With this broad (cultural) perspective on its subject, the anthology inscribes itself into a general turn in the study of artefacts and man’s relationship with them which has taken place in international scholarship in recent decades. The study of material culture resurfaced in the various academic disciplines of cultural (historical) studies and has found a renewed, close relationship with museums and their collections, where naturally the study had never disappeared; indeed a cooperation that this very anthology exemplifies, drawing its authors and editors from both institutional frameworks mentioned. Traditionally, and in broad terms, the study of material culture was either one of connoisseurship or utilized as a tool to gain an understanding of economic and social history at large. Whereas the first lead of studies at times was accused of holding to conservative norms, the later ones were often inclined to rest on leftist worldviews. However, after several decades of severe criticism of grand theory and Marxism in particular, for cultural analysis today, the crucial questions are not tied so much to production as to consumption, where cultural norms and values most clearly surface. In the final analysis, for cultural research it is the human being itself that is in focus. Artefacts can, as everything else, serve as indicators of man’s culture, as tokens of cultural conceptions, values and choices, customs and traditions as they are created to be used, consumed and desired. In this anthology, while the individual chapters may vary considerably in their immediate focus, the understanding of the artefact itself, its significance both in its functionality and its broader cultural aspects, is addressed by all the authors.

Another major area of ideas stems from the above-mentioned shift in scholarly attention. Thus today, it entails focusing on the implications of meetings, influences and clashes. Circulation and semantic brethren such as flow, exchange and mobility underpin much scholarly work in the humanities and social sciences in our present time, perhaps substituting previous core focus areas such as nationality, ethnicity and identity and eventually taking the various disciplines back to concepts constitutive in their own history, as they were constructed a couple of hundred years ago. Or, does it? Perhaps, it is more important that today we experience what is often perceived as an increasingly smaller world of intertwining trade, communication, networking, technically supported infrastructure and channels of exchange that circulate knowledge, images, impressions and news at a hitherto unseen pace. The chapters of this anthology, dealing with encountering new fashionable trends and forms, things and ideas, thus hold not a little information on how our predecessors experienced and dealt with what today so often is felt as a flood of impressions, as the chapters illustrate a world which, when early modernity came to a close, was turned almost upside down.

**Fashion in Early Modernity**

The period between 1500 and 1850 was one of both thoroughgoing, and occasionally rapid, change in Europe. Fashion during these centuries reflects social and cultural history ranging from life in the Renaissance through the Westphalian Peace ending the Thirty Years War 1618–1648 and the general
Prologue

establishment of Absolutism in most European principalities up to the French Revolution in 1789 and the subsequent wars ending with the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 and the new ordering of Europe in Vienna; the latter, a cautious attempt to combine the old absolutist ideas with the impulses of the French Revolution, such as democratic ideas and civil rights. Moreover, it was a life changed from enfolding itself in a feudal Europe through not only political revolution but also industrialisation, leaving multitudes to grapple with coming to terms with technical innovations and at the same time witnessing a struggle within Christianity itself, paramount in the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, as well as between old religious dogmas and new philosophy and science, for instance the publishing of Isaac Newton (1642–1727)'s *Philosophiae Naturalis Principa Mathematica* in 1687.

In the realm of fashion, the courts of Europe laid the standard; however, during the 17th and especially the 18th century, the burghers of the towns eventually contested this aristocratic and court-based prerogative in taste and fashion. Furthermore, the European expansion into the rest of the world and the consequent trade and cultural meetings both underscored the new role of the bourgeoisie and led to intensified contacts with the civilizations of Asia and the Near East, and later also the Americas. The Industrial Revolution transformed the way things were produced, marketed and acquired and, in the end, the accessibility of fashionable goods also for common people in the rapidly growing European towns and, somewhat later, in the countryside as well. Such historical changes may be observed in even the minutest of fashion details.

After the mid-17th century, the world became a smaller place. In all of Europe, trade and the rapidly developing print technique led to a hitherto unknown form of marketing and disseminating information and fashionable goods from one part of the continent to another, and this, at an astonishing speed considering the contemporary means of transportation. Already in the 17th century’s court culture, one could speak of an all-embracing European fashion. In the towns of the 18th century, this began to be the case as well.

Whereas the Northern Italian city-states in the 16th century still maintained a high status in the fashion vogue of Europe, based not least on their imports from the Ottoman Empire and further afield as well as on the domestic production of brocade, velvet and other costly materials, in the 17th century, France took over the fashion beacon. Only the formal Habsburg courts of Vienna and Madrid stuck to conservative Spanish trends, influencing Lisbon – and hence Brazil – as well, even after the change of royal dynasty in Lisbon from the Habsburgs to the House of Bragança with King John IV (1640–1656). However, even in Madrid and Vienna, France eventually overtook the role of fashion centre, especially after the French Bourbon dynasty’s succession of the Habsburgs on the Spanish throne in 1700 with King Philip V (1683–1746) and the Spanish War of Succession 1701–1714, where Spain lost its remaining significant influence and power in Europe as a whole. The victors of the war were England and France. In the latter, a close intertwining of court fashions at Versailles and the producers of silk fabric in the town of Lyon combined with a very strict nationally structured trade and quality control secured an all Europe embracing diffusion of these fashion trends. All absolutist courts in Europe looked to Versailles and there they beheld silks from Lyon, full-bottomed wigs and the long-reigning King Louis XIV (1638–1715)’s shoes with red high heels. In the latter part of the 18th century, the light and elegant rococo style took over, in dress focusing not so much on structure as on the materials themselves and their configuration. In general, the well-established, and still to us today, well-known schemata of a three-piece overgarment from the beginning of the 18th century remained unchanged for men and women and thus the material and accessories grew in importance, quantity and quality; at times proving even more precious than the actual costume itself. Lace in gold and silver as well as of the finest linen thread was

Left to right:
Fig. 0.4: Begam Samru is pictured wearing a Kashmir shawl and holding a huqqa-snake, with a draped curtain behind her (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Fig. 0.5: Lithograph of ‘The Young Lady’s Toilet’ by W. Tayler (artist) Jules Bouvier (lithographer), 70 St. Martin’s Lane, England (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)
thus used and reused together with elegant buttons, waistcoats, cuffs, loose pockets under the skirts as well as shoes, bows, ribbons, and hooks and eyes of precious metal.

This aspect of use and reuse also reveals that during the entire early modern period, clothes, and indeed fashionable clothes, were a huge investment also for the wealthy and rich. Not only were brocade, silk, velvet, fine linen and eventually cotton in themselves precious materials, they all had to be crafted by hand from the very raw material harvested from the fields of Europe or exotic far-away places over spinning, dyeing and weaving to the actual cutting and sewing of garments. In the 17th century and especially in France, the earliest attempts to fabricate ready-made clothes saw the light of day but for all those of higher standing this was no option, perhaps apart from accessories and underwear imported from India and China. Another possible exemption may be knitwear, yet another those clothes which were handed down from master to servant, from higher servants to lower domestics, from parents to children, from the well-to-do to the poor. Clothes were used and reused, altered to follow fashion trends and body sizes as best as one could. In contrast to the expensive materials, labour was held cheap in early modernity, another reason for the eternal alteration of clothes and accessories. In general, clothes were expensive. Fashion was outrageously so.

From sometime in the 17th century onwards, and coinciding with the new European post-Westphalian state system of 1648, although beginning in Spain and Portugal in the 15th and 16th centuries, Europe witnessed new influences, which France only to a certain degree could absorb and change into a decidedly French fashion. The greatest contender was England and Scotland, since 1707 unified into Great Britain. Here, increasingly a lighter and simpler fashion grew to fit the modernising lifestyle of what became the world’s first industrial state. Where the French codex was one of embellishment and strict forms, of huge skirts and masses of accessories, the English standard during the 18th century increasingly featured smaller skirts surrounding, not changing, the female body, natural hair instead of wigs, and, for the men, tight-fitting, yet more comfortable garments befitting the active life of a country squire or city-gentleman, even the half-boot came into fashion for everyday use among the landed gentry and on the filthy streets of busy London. Other Europeans drew from both traditions, also in Scandinavia.

The European outward expansion led to external influences coming into European fashion and daily life too. China had since antiquity provided silks but now shipload upon shipload of silk arrived in European ports along with tea and porcelain, lacquer-work, architectural traits and interior decorations. This was without much ado mixed with impressions from India and the Near East; there was in Europe a tendency to view it all as ‘exotic’ and/or ‘East Indian’. Besides the cottons and printed calicoes imported primarily by the British and Dutch trading companies as well as their Danish and Swedish counterparts, were Kashmir shawls, which in the late 18th and early 19th centuries gained a novel role in European fashion, warming young ladies only covered with the gossamer thin cotton or silk of the day’s fashionable empire-style dresses. Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt in the 1790s led to an Egyptian craze in Europe of the time in which also the Indian Kashmir shawls were included. Chintz and calicoes dressed ladies and gentlemen, commoners and servants as well as beds and windows, chairs, settees and tables. From the North American colonies came cotton in vast quantities to Great Britain; with the French being provided from their Caribbean colonies; while from their own Caribbean colonies, Denmark–Norway obtained first and foremost sugar, which was reloaded in Copenhagen and the income from the sale was used to a certain degree to pay for the fashionable goods imported to the realm.

Scandinavia in Early Modernity
While in early modernity, the Nordic countries constituted part of Europe and of the European
expansion into the world, yet, they were in a way at the fringe too. Thus, when dealing with issues not situated directly at the absolute heart of Europe, it is always worth discussing where exactly to begin and where to end an otherwise generally accepted scholarly periodization. Early modernity is, as a scholarly term, usually connected to time and it denotes the period after the celebrated Renaissance and before the world truly turned modern, i.e. in general, European history from 1500 to 1800.

It is a puzzling conceptualisation, though. The border towards the earlier period, labelled the Renaissance and still so heavily influenced by the Swiss art historian Jacob Burkhardt, is to a large degree informed by the academic discipline of art history and the development of form and shape of material goods as well as a picture of a world emerging after the Middle Ages. The border towards the subsequent period, for want of better words is usually termed (early) modernity; the notion of early modernity is rather more defined by political, economic and philosophical thought. This thread of thought is coined by the French in their equally internationally used phrase of l’ancien régime, combining in a broader frame influences and long lasting and only slowly changing developments demarcated by the rise of the French central state of the later Valois kings in the 16th century and the French Revolution of 1789, and including a slow pace of change in the economy and the realities of everyday life. The German term of die frühe Neuzeit, just as much utilized as the two earlier mentioned ones, comprises philosophical thought and absolutism as a system within the Holy Empire as well as the daily life of common people back in time; it often appears more informed by detailed cultural history and ethnology than the two others. Die frühe Neuzeit may also be argued not to end with the French Revolution, but rather with the Napoleonic Wars or perhaps even some time into the 1820s or 1830s. Not least due to Denmark–Norway’s and Sweden’s close connections with the German states, both during and after this period, the implications of the term Frühe Neuzeit may serve best while reading this anthology.

It is not the goal of this anthology to settle the issue of periodization; it is simply mentioned as a manner of setting a chronological frame for the chapters in the anthology. This is crucial as, seen from Europe’s core countries, the Nordic developments to some degree were delayed in terms of encountering impressions from abroad. Nordic historical periods are, in this respect, at the outset of early modernity up to one hundred years behind; for example, the Danish Renaissance is generally framed by the years 1536 and 1648, i.e. the Lutheran Reformation and the death of the long reigning monarch Christian IV (1577–1648). Further to the north, the slow adaption of European fashions at large is even more visible, although this time lag narrows down during the Baroque and into the 18th century. When approaching the end of the early modern period, Scandinavia is by far and large on par with the rest of Western Europe, although as in Germany, early modernity withers away, albeit slowly. Thus the chapters of this anthology stretch from somewhere around 1500 until around 1850, the bulk of articles dealing with the 17th and 18th centuries.

Two kingdoms dominated Scandinavia during early modernity, indeed around 1500 the dream of continuing the medieval Nordic Kalmar Union was still alive, in Denmark at least. However, this proved impossible and in the beginning of the 16th century there emerged two realms: Denmark–Norway with the Duchies of Schleswig & Holstein, and Sweden with Finland and the provinces south of the Baltic. Denmark–Norway was governed from Copenhagen by the Danish Oldenburg dynasty; with the escape of the Swedish nobleman Gustav Vasa (1496–1560) from Danish captivity in 1521, Sweden in 1523 once again became independent under his rule. Soon after, in 1534–36, Denmark–Norway witnessed a civil war leading the way to the Lutheran Reformation of 1536; in Sweden the Reformation process began at the same time but lasted throughout the century, interrupted as it was by throne vacancies and periods with Catholic rulers, such as King Sigismund of Poland and Sweden (1566–1632), whose reign soon ended in civil war in 1599 and the succession of

Left to right:
Fig. 0.9: Top left: Fragment of a shawl fabric of tapestry woven woolen twill, Kashmir, 1800–1899; top right: Fragment of a shawl fabric of tapestry woven woolen twill, Kashmir, 1800–1899; bottom: Dress fabric for a shawl of woven wool, possibly made in Iran or Europe, 1830–1899 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)
Fig. 0.10: Sikh Painting; Sikh Sardar, Lahore c. 1835–c. 1845 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)
Fig. 0.11: Silk shawl, possibly made in Spitalfields, London, 1801–1811 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)
his Lutheran uncle and opponent King Charles IX (1550–1611), son of Gustav Vasa. Noteworthy is also the conversion of the last Vasa in the direct line, Queen Christina (1626–1689), who subsequently in 1654 relinquished her crown and lived as a Catholic in Rome.

The two kingdoms, Denmark–Norway with the duchies and the kingdom of Sweden were deadly opponents but also politically constituted two ends of a political equilibrium. The fragile Nordic power balance was a concern for many a European Great-Power politician throughout early modernity. Until sometime around 1630, Denmark–Norway was the protagonist, then Sweden's nearly 100-year rise to European power began, in Swedish termed Stormaktstiden, the Swedish Empire. In 1659, the innumerable wars between the two Nordic realms took a pivotal turn as Denmark–Norway was heavily defeated and had to cede over its Scanian provinces and the most southern and eastern of the Norwegian provinces. The background for this Swedish rise was not least European politics. The Swedish king Gustav II Adolph (1594–1632)'s intervention in the Thirty Years War against the counter reformation of Rome and the Holy Roman Empire was met with considerably more success than the Danish king Christian IV's own attempt. King Christian IV was defeated in 1626 by the Imperial marshal Tilly, whereas King Gustav II Adolph in 1632 overpowered the Imperial general Wallenstein at Lützen near the German town of Leipzig, securing vast stretches of conquered land south of the Baltic in exchange for his own life. The Swedish Empire was a fact but also tied Sweden's focus primarily towards the Baltic area. Quite the opposite occurred in the case of Denmark–Norway which participated in the European colonial trade with some of its inhabitants consequently settling in far corners of the world, a strategy through which the double kingdom overcame the shift in the Nordic power balance – and of high importance for our present theme of fashionable encounters. Copenhagen became a commercial hub for all of Northern Europe.

After the Great Nordic War of 1700–1720, the political equilibrium was once again restored, perhaps even with a slight Danish–Norwegian upper hand, which was, not least, due to the world trade and the might of the Royal Danish Navy, to a considerable degree manned by Norwegians. In the Great Nordic War, Russia, Poland and Denmark–Norway as allies defeated Sweden; of note is the famous Battle of Poltava in 1709 leading the way for Russia's rise as a major European power ever since. However, a number of battles took place in the North German provinces of Sweden too (e.g. parts of present-day Poland, the Baltic Countries and Russia around St. Petersburg and the areas around Szczecin (German Stettin) and Stralsund) as well as in the Duchies of Holstein and Schleswig. One consequence was the end of the Swedish Empire as the war meant the loss of most of Sweden's Baltic provinces south of the Baltic Sea and the kingdom was reduced to practically the same borders as Sweden and Finland of today. It did not make things easier in Sweden that the throne changed several times between different dynasties during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Denmark–Norway, on the other hand, gained from the Great Nordic War. One Danish wish may have been the recapturing of those provinces lost in 1659, which was prevented by the European Great Powers eagerly overseeing the Nordic power balance; however, Denmark–Norway inaugurated a new era of peace lasting until 1801 and 1807–14, when Denmark was embroiled directly in the Napoleonic Wars. After the Great Nordic War, slowly, and after the middle of the century remarkably so, Denmark–Norway entered a period of relative prosperity and, hence, consumer demand walked hand-in-hand with the double kingdom's ships sailing the world's seas. Norway was formally governed by a vice-regent out of Oslo, or Christiania as it was known then, but this military and political centre had a twin in the old Hanseatic town of Bergen on the Norwegian West Coast to where many a new influence from abroad reached Norway, including imports of socks, sweaters and stockfish from Iceland and the Faroe Isles as well as oil, baleen and bone from whales hunted in the Arctic waters. In all reality though,
Copenhagen was and remained the metropolis. The city was so large and the state so centralised that Copenhagen overshadowed all the other towns of the realm.

A troublesome terrain as Norway provides for trade and communication, entailed that a great deal of the general Norwegian population lived in a higher degree of isolation than was the case in Denmark with its medieval town system and the double kingdom's great and distant capital of Copenhagen. During the 18th century, an economic system developed within the conglomerate state. In general terms, Norway provided timber, iron ore, tar and fur as well as sailors for the trading ships and the Danish Royal Navy; Denmark offered agricultural products, political and military leadership as well as trade; Schleswig and Holstein stood for trade, early industry and modern agriculture. A part of this system was also the Danish–Norwegian participation in the extra-European expansion, which was much more thorough than the Swedish attempts. The latter part of the century is, in Danish history, often labelled *den florissante periode*, the flourishing or blossoming era of trade, and especially Copenhagen and certain towns in the duchies prospered. Danish tradesmen travelled to London, Amsterdam, Paris and other European metropolises to an almost incomprehensible degree, their ships busily crossed the waters of the Baltic, the North Sea, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Pacific as well as the Arabian, Indian and Chinese Seas.

During the Napoleonic wars, however, Denmark–Norway finally supported the French, whereas Sweden after some ado allied itself with the Habsburg-Prussian-Russian-British Coalition. Already back in 1809, Sweden had had to cede Finland to Russia as part of the wars but the compensation came in 1814 with the new ordering of Europe. Being on the losing side, Denmark was forced to cede Norway to Sweden, albeit as a semi-independent kingdom, thus ending more than 400 years of the Danish–Norwegian double monarchy and reducing Denmark to a small player in European politics, not to mention Norway's plight. The Norse lands of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Isles remained within the Danish realm. In 1807, Denmark–Norway had lost her impressive fleet to the British at the Battle of Copenhagen as well, signifying a deep blow to trade and political power. The Swedish-Norwegian Union lasted until 1905 when Norway left the union and acquired full independence.

An ancient part of the Swedish kingdom was Finland. When Sweden left the Nordic Union in 1521–23, Finland remained connected to her and here too, the Lutheran Reformation was effectuated. In the wars leading to the formation of the Swedish Empire, traditionally the Finns comprised the elite units and took the brunt of conflicts with Russia. In Finnish political history, the Swedish Empire is usually considered a great period, whereas Finland during the Great Nordic War suffered deeply. In 1713, the Russian Tsar Peter the Great (1672–1725) conquered all of Southern Finland and after the war the most south-eastern part around the town of Vyborg was ceded to Russia. Finland was economically devastated. Voices of escaping being the Swedish bulwark against mighty Russia grew increasingly stronger during the 18th century, in Sweden and Finland labelled *Frihetstiden*, the Era of Freedom, which ended with an absolutistic inspired *coup d'état* directed by King Gustav III (1746–1792) in 1772. During the Swedish-Russian War in 1788, Finnish officers conducted separate peace negotiations with Russia. By an irony of fate, in 1809, Sweden was forced to cede Finland to Russia where she gained a semi-independent status as a Grand Duchy directly under the Tsar. With the Russian Revolution in 1917, Finland won its independence.

Swedish Finland was governed out of Åbo, in Finnish Turku, on the south-west coast. While the present-day capital Helsinki, Swedish Helsingfors, may have already existed as a town, it was not until Russia took over that it grew in importance, as it was made the new capital of the Grand Duchy. In early modernity, the important town was Åbo (Turku) along with other towns facing the Bay of Bothnia between Sweden and Finland. Fashion followed
Sweden and the impulses from the Baltic region, as they did in so many other parts of the Swedish kingdom. However, this also entailed contact deep into Central Europe. When their countries were not at war, for elites in both Sweden and Finland, Russian St. Petersburg was not far away either for trade or for cultural exchange. The Finnish nobility, mostly of Swedish origin, often dwelt in Stockholm as well during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Denmark and Norway had been in a political union since the late 14th century and with the Norwegian crown came also the Norse tax lands of Greenland, the Faroe Isles and Iceland, settled mostly from Norway during the Viking Age. They were governed from Copenhagen as bilande, a kind of internal colonies or tax lands, and whereas the two latter kept in contact with Denmark during the entire early modern period, Greenland was re-colonized as late as in 1721 by missionaries and traders after the collapse of the first Norse settlement in Greenland in the early 15th century. All three bilande operated under their respective trade companies, by Royal appointment and, usually, combining state administration with commerce. Iceland withdrew from the Danish realm in 1944 and declared itself independent, whereas Greenland and the Faroe Isles continue as semi-independent entities still today.

To the Danish crown also belonged the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein in the present-day Danish-German borderland. After the Great Nordic War, the Danish fief of Schleswig came under full Royal Danish control in 1721; Holstein continued as a fief of the Holy Roman Empire until its demise in 1806, thereafter Holstein was connected to the various German collaborative bodies but still with the Danish king as its duke. Politically, the two duchies were contested lands, a situation which remained unchanged from 1814 to 1864, when they also included the neighbouring Duchy of Lauenburg accorded as a small compensation to Denmark for the loss of Norway in 1814, a token of the old European political concern of maintaining the Nordic balance of power. Culturally, the duchies formed a prosperous, early developed gateway from Denmark to the rest of Europe. And they were by far the richest provinces of the realm. Through their towns, not least Altona, near the German free town of Hamburg, and merchant houses all over the duchies, cultural novelties, fashions and ideas reached Denmark, especially Copenhagen and the rest of the Nordic countries and provinces, otherwise only finding a way through manor houses, the royal and ducal courts and the households of a few, rich merchants.

In both Nordic realms, colonial trade became part of affairs from the 17th century onwards. Whereas Sweden after a few attempts of full-scale colonialism restricted itself to trading through companies of merchants, mostly based in Gothenburg on the Swedish West coast, in 1620, Denmark–Norway inaugurated its tropical colonial adventure by contracting land in Southern India: the colony of Tranquebar. Trade with China became paramount in the 18th century and a further Indian colony in Bengal was founded in the 1750s. Forts on the Gold Coast of Africa in present-day Ghana were added to the realm in the mid-17th century together with the isles of the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix. The Indian possessions were sold in 1845, the African forts in 1850, but the Danish West Indies were kept in the realm until 1917, when they were sold to the United States of America. These tropical colonies opened up the world to Danish–Norwegian sailors, tradesmen, missionaries, soldiers, aristocrats, politicians and eventually the public at large and created pathways of encounters with cultural currents, fashionable trends and philosophical-political novelties as well as material goods.

As a result of the national catastrophe of 1659, when Denmark and Norway ceded vast areas of territory to Sweden, in 1660/1665 Denmark developed into an absolute monarchy leading a very thorough – and successful – centralist policy, both when it came to military affairs, civilian government, administration and mercantilist inspired trade. International trading companies were founded in the duchies, mostly situated in Flensburg in Schleswig.

Left to right:

Fig. 0.18: Fragment of shawl (dupatta) of woven pashmina wool with gilt, Kashmir, 1675–1725 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Fig. 0.19: Shawl of pashmina wool, Kashmir, c. 1780 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Fig. 0.20: Fragments of shawl, woven pashmina (goat hair), Kashmir, 1675–1725 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Given by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II)
Fashionable Encounters: The anthology

This anthology aims to provide a broad image of the theme of fashion as a concept and as an empirical manifestation in the Nordic countries in early modernity. The chapters range from object-based studies to theory-driven analysis. It covers the entire period and all parts of the Nordic world with a keen eye towards cultural encounters with currents from abroad. Thus, the anthology adheres to the view that fashion is not merely a history of dress and costume, although it is inevitably so, but also a context-based study of a certain phenomenon in history, created by and itself creating culture and history, close to the human being itself, as it is.

This basic view is reflected by the broad background of the authors and editors who are historians, art historians, cultural historians, ethnologists, anthropologists, archaeologists and conservators. Their institutional affiliations cover universities and museums, and they range from professors and lecturers, curators and researchers at museums to postdoctoral fellows and several PhD students. Most were part of a Scandinavian follow group to the European 7th-framework programme and the Humanities in Europe Research Area (HERA) project, Fashioning the Early Modern 1500–1800, running from 2010–2013. The scholarly discussions, the individual research projects and the anthology editors’ realization that the early modern Nordic world was somewhat of a blind spot on the international map of fashion-history studies led to this volume in all its variety and breadth.

It has not been an aim of the editors of this anthology to make all chapters follow a single theoretical or methodological perspective but to make good use of the various views, scholarly traditions and multitude of approaches – present in the anthology – to shape a picture of both fashionable encounters in the Nordic early modern world and an indication of a dynamic field of scholarship currently taking place at museums and universities in the Nordic countries, one centre being the Danish National Research Foundation’s Centre for Textile Research based both at the University of Copenhagen and at the National Museum of Denmark 2005–2016. Thus, each chapter of this volume may be read independently, forming a tale of its own, although, when read in its entirety, they coalesce into a comprehensive story of the Nordic world meeting fashionable goods in early modernity.

This prologue has hopefully provided a framework to make this endeavour a realistic one.

The first three chapters of the anthology take us further back in time to the two rival kingdoms of Denmark–Norway and Sweden with Finland. They all deal with regulations of trade and consumption, so vital to the rank societies of early modernity, and with an interplay between the foreign and domestic. Another shared feature is one of sources, combining portraits, epitaphs and lists of items, mostly deriving from probate inventories. Camilla Louise Dahl and Piia Lempiäinen open this section by shedding light on what consumers in certain Dano–Norwegian towns could actually purchase when shopping in the late 17th century. They identify both a fancy for exotic materials as well as a growing desire for ready-made garments and accessories, linking both Denmark and Norway to a system of internal trade
as well as foreign trade through Copenhagen across the entire realm. As they conclude: “all sorts of goods could be produced by local people and sent elsewhere in the realm, and imported luxuries could travel from the farthest east to the highest north”.

This proposed a possible threat to established society! It is a token of the prevalent political and macroeconomic thinking at the time that rank and consumption were inextricably linked, as is demonstrated by Eva I. Andersson’s chapter on sumptuary laws in Sweden in the 16th and 17th centuries. She examines both the effect of the sumptuary laws on dress and the distribution and circulation of otherwise contraband items found among people’s possessions. An often overlooked twist, which is underscored by Andersson, is that these statutes and laws also coined a certain nationalisation of dress, which perhaps even effectively demonstrated precisely what it meant to be a Swedish subject in this period, at least among the upper classes. This aspect of clothes being of significance to identity formation is dealt with by Seija Johnson, who through studying the possessions of four women in the Finnish town of Kokkola, the Swedish Gamla Karlaby, addresses the particular Finnish position between Sweden and Russia as well as gender and social questions from the perspective of micro-historical methodology. Even among the peasantry, there were indications of fashionable trends; probate inventories reveal that all kinds of novelties found their way to the somewhat faraway placed Kokkola in the 18th century.

The next five chapters of the anthology all take their starting point with the artefacts themselves and lead us into detailed studies of techniques, materials and craftsmanship. Pernilla Rasmussen focuses on cutting and sewing women’s fashion clothes, and she contests the general view that men’s clothes required better tailoring than women’s garments in the period leading to the early development of measurement systems for male attire. Instead, utilizing a great number of examples, Rasmussen suggests that there were different geographical traditions in the tailoring of clothes pertaining to each gender. Sweden – but one may easily extrapolate the conclusion to Denmark–Norway as well – having tailors belonging to the German artisan tradition, demonstrated vigorous development in manufacturing techniques not available to French and/or English seamstresses.

Maj Ringgaard, too, focuses on techniques, although her attention is drawn to knitwear only too often overlooked in fashion studies. Based on the technical analysis of primarily 17th- and 18th-century knitted waistcoats in Copenhagen, Ringgaard demonstrates not only the techniques and their broad use but also the invention of new stitches enabling the forming of heels in stockings as well as new ways of creating patterns using one fine colour only. As it was easy to make, the knitwear was much more in use than often perceived and fine knitted stockings soon proved inevitable in the fashionable person’s wardrobe, whether man or woman. With the knitted waistcoats adorned with silver and gold, the highest levels of elegance could be achieved. Elegance is also a key word in Lena Dahrén’s detailed examination of bobbin lace in Sweden. After the Lutheran Reformation, some liturgical vestments survived in Sweden, others were later donated or bequeathed to churches. The selected artefacts for the study are all ornamented with bobbin made borders of gold and silver, hence indicating donors in the highest strata of society. Not only have the elegant, imported bobbin-lace edges survived, due to their utilization in ecclesiastical functions, they also bear witness to fashion trends of the period otherwise seldom depicted in Scandinavian material other than portraits.

For Dahrén, a source material hitherto only known in an ecclesiastical context sheds new light onto mundane fashion around 1600. The questions of fashion, our sources of understanding it, and what it did to people back then, are the focus of Bjørn Sverre Haugen’s at once personal and theoretical treatise on how to understand dress practice among 18th-century Norwegian peasant women, especially in regard to the peasant version of the corset, the bodice, which in all three Scandinavian languages is termed liv, or life, and which was worn on top of the...
(linen) shift and laced up in the front, supporting the body and bosom, hence also called a stay! In his chapter, Haugen provides us with insight not only into fashions of Norwegian peasant women and thought-provoking ideas of what it may have meant to them, but also into our limited possibilities to know about it.

The final chapter of this section and forming an interlude to the next suite is Cecilie Stöger Nachman's brief chapter on the fashion doll, the Queen of Denmark. Despite its name, the doll resides in the collections of the Museum of London, and Nachman gives an account of both the doll itself, and such fashion dolls' importance in the greater dissemination of fashion throughout Europe. They presented the first attempt to promote fashion as an international product associated with outspoken commercial interests, which were later taken over and communicated by print.

Four chapters constitute the following section of the anthology, opening with Mikkel Venborg Pedersen's study of the impact of colonial goods in a Copenhagen bourgeois' home in the latter part of the 18th century. The chapter is both concerned with methodology and empirical study, leading us through colonial imports, the importance of towns and everyday life, at a particular place, at a certain time. Perhaps what is most striking is that Copenhagen city life, already at this time, was so heavily influenced by colonial imports that the description and analysis of the home and family there cannot be restricted to a few items. Fashion trends, too, must be studied in context, as Venborg Pedersen demonstrates, opening themes of the section devoted to such matters as the importance of towns, trade and luxury, the colonies and the use and reuse of items. Indeed, reuse of a particular kind stands at the core of Vibe Maria Marten's chapter dealing with the circulation of fashionable items through theft on the streets of Copenhagen in the 18th century. Her focus is thus on recirculation and Martens also casts a keen eye on second-hand trade, where the degree and amount of clothes and accessories stolen from people found reused by poor people is striking and not only point to social history as part of fashion studies but also to an otherwise overlooked crucial manner of circulation.

Kirsten Toftegaard's chapter, on the other hand, deals not with stolen attire, but with a garment deemed precious enough to be kept and in the end constitute part of the collections of the Designmuseum Danmark, the wedding dress of Bolette-Marie Lindecrone, née Harboe. It concerns the riddle of the extraction of silk and embroidery found in 18th-century formal European attire, taking the beacon of colonial imports from above and examining influences from China in detail in one dress, revealing a fascinating story of the elite culture of the Copenhagen merchant class. Fine material from a bridal dress could very well end up being reused for another rite-de-passage, namely childbirth, or rather baptism. This theme is addressed by Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen who investigates luxury textiles in Danish christening robes, comprising all sorts of (re-)used luxury textiles, stemming either from the gowns of the christening infant's mother or from older periods. Her chapter covers almost three centuries and demonstrates, among other things, the importance of the contextual analysis of dress and garments. Danish baptismal practices changed a great deal from Catholic times through the Protestant Lutheran Reformation of 1536 to the pietistic inspired ways in the 18th century.

Colonial consumption not only meant Chinese silks, calicoes from India and US cotton. In the Danish–Norwegian realm, another part of the trade system was made up by the North-Atlantic areas. In her micro-historic study of the Frisian island of Rømø in the Wadden Sea, belonging to the Duchy of Schleswig, Christina Ax informs us both of how the men of the island in the 18th century went on long whaling expeditions to the North Atlantic, providing Europe with oil and baleen as well as whalebone, then called "fish-bones" for corsets, and how this made an impact back home on the island as well. Contrasting the fashionable trends of high society European women and the traditional dress of the Rømø peasant women, Ax finds that some inspiration did reach Rømø. Indeed the lives of these women in Rømø were, to some degree,
informed by the demands of European corset and dress fashion.

Far up to the north, Greenland was colonized by Denmark in 1721, and not even the Inuit population was immune to fashionable influences. Due to strictly kept protocols from the Royal Greenlandic Trading Company, in their chapter Peter Andreas Toft and Maria Mackinney-Valentin are able to demonstrate in meticulous detail how the Inuit population around South Disko Bay in the early 19th century bought Faroese sweaters, doll’s cups or porcelain, had European-style pockets sewn into their traditional costumes and began to use buttons, not to mention drinking coffee and smoking tobacco. Moreover, it is also possible to show how these items were distributed among the traditional elite and the new colonial upper classes in the small settlements, thus cautioning us from seeing fashion as something restricted to court, nobility and rich merchants alone. Here, modern trend theory is used as a tool to understand consumption, distribution, and the role of trendsetters. Inhabitants of both Romo and Greenland, as providers of raw material, participated in the European trading system which developed during early modernity, and they themselves were also touched by it as consumers.

This was clear to their contemporaries. The novel fashions and the new goods from east and west, south and north entailed a breakdown of the hitherto so firmly established European-centred system of Christian belief and philosophy. Could it lead people to behave in false ways, undermine society, church and civil order? These were questions becoming ever more important to Europeans of the day, and a debate on luxury arose, often connected to other intellectual movements of the 18th century. However, especially in Protestant countries, it had a forerunner in the late 17th century, which is the focal point of Juliane Engelhardt’s chapter that revisits writings on the tradition and clothing by English puritans, such as Richard Baxter, and German pietistic writers, such as August Hermann Francke. Not least, the latter branch of pious Christianity influenced Denmark, both through the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein and when King Frederik IV (1671–1730) and King Christian VI (1699–1746), if not de jure then de facto made pietism the official version of Danish Protestantism from around 1725 onwards, despite the official orthodoxy of Lutheranism which prevailed once more in the 19th century. Luxurious abundance became a problem as the 18th century came to a close, at least in theory. In reality, restraining oneself from abundance was perhaps yet another way of displaying cultured manners and luxurious fashionable consumption, now following the lead of the British bourgeoisie.

The tone was harsh in the 18th-century discussions on fashion and the public perception of luxury. This rapidly became part of gendered perceptions too, as demonstrated by Patrik Steorn in his chapter on a collection of printed caricatures mostly in Sweden from around 1800. The fop of the rococo was now considered and ridiculed as an unmanly creature with silly follies, too much leisure time and too little brains to fill it. The bourgeois notion of serving and expressing sincerity can be read out of these fascinating caricatures which, as Steorn illustrates, was also a pan-European phenomenon, although a certain national trait may be featured in many of them. Thus, in the print media too, the Nordic countries encountered fashionable goods in early modernity just as it did in dress, manners, interior decoration and moral debate, as the reader will meet in the following pages.

Left to right:

Fig. 0.28: Cream woven shawl, Kashmir, 19th century (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Fig. 0.29: Shawl, cream wool with red, yellow, blue and green floral design, c. 1790 to c. 1810 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)

Fig. 0.30: Cream woven shawl, Kashmir, c. 1820–c. 1840 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)
Early modern Europe saw an increase in imported goods from the New World, Asia and Africa. Delicate china, exotic spices, coffee, tea and new types of fabrics were making their way to a wider group of European consumers. The Scandinavian demand for foreign goods and imported luxuries from Europe and the rest of the world had grown rapidly from the 16th century onwards. Not only did members of the royal household or the court desire to dress luxuriously in foreign fabrics, but the Dano-Norwegian bourgeoisie, who during the 16th and 17th centuries had experienced growing wealth, too were buying, using, reusing and discarding a large number of foreign goods. As suggested, luxury commodities were now circulating throughout society, becoming available to more people and shaping their identity in a new way.¹

A wide collection of probates has survived from early modern Denmark-Norway and among them, a number of inventories of shopkeepers, retailers and merchants. These inventories can shed light on how and what people were shopping in the 17th century Dano-Norwegian kingdom. This chapter investigates selected late 17th-century probates from eight towns: the capital of the realm, Copenhagen, East-Jutlandic Aarhus, Zealandic Vordingborg and Nyborg in Funen, all in Denmark, as well as North-East Norwegian Trondheim and Larvik, Frederikstad and the Norwegian capital Oslo, back then known as Christiania, all situated in Southern Norway.

In the 17th century, towns such as Copenhagen and Trondheim were thriving naval ports in Northern Europe. Copenhagen held the Dano-Norwegian monopoly of trade in the colonies, Greenland and Iceland, and was the political and economic centre of the kingdom, whereas Trondheim together with Bergen was the centre of the so-called Nordlandsandel, the North Norwegian trade route, which meant that most of the goods from up north passed through Trondheim on its way further down to the rest of Norway and Denmark as well as elsewhere in Europe.² Trading companies dealing...
specifically with and having monopolies over Asian, West Indian and North Atlantic goods were established during the 17th century, the earliest, the Danish East India Company (Ostindisk Kompagni) was founded in 1616 in Copenhagen. The other towns selected for this survey were smaller provincial towns of various sizes that engaged in different levels of domestic and foreign trade.

Probate records were made obligatory for everyone in Denmark–Norway in 1683, but in many cases, older record books and documents kept in the town halls were discarded to make room for new ones. This means that probate records from the late 17th century can be scarce or even non-existent in many places. Furthermore, even where probate records are present, shopkeepers’ stock inventories have not always been drawn up or preserved, and hence the preserved probate records do not always give a complete picture of the town’s demography and of the trade practised there. Thus the towns selected for the survey are those where merchant or shop inventories have survived from the 17th century. Although the preserved probates per inhabitant is low in Scandinavia as compared to elsewhere in Europe, in order to form a statistically useful source material, the number of extant probate records is still significant and large enough to be used for the purposes of this chapter. The selection of inventories can offer an interesting glimpse of the shops that operated in the area and the commodities they traded.

The probate records

The probate inventory in Denmark–Norway, as in many other places, was a business document in which economic values were assigned to listed items to facilitate division among heirs and assessment of estate duty. Upon the death of a person, the home would be sealed and everything of value systematically and carefully registered and taxed, and eventually divided among the heirs. The marital status, trade and place of residence of the deceased and, in most cases, additional information on the surviving spouse and children or other heirs were entered in the probate inventory, but its prime purpose was to list and value all moveables and immovables in the home. Even before the probate records were made obligatory for everyone, they were required from townspeople; in 1598 a legislative act demanded that probates had to be drawn up in inheritance settlements whenever there were underage heirs.

In those cases where the deceased was a merchant or a tradesman, even the stocks of trade goods were valued and written down. These inventories of goods are, in most cases, attached to a probate record of the deceased. There are, however, examples of shop or stock inventories preserved on their own with no records of the owner as well as of probates of shopkeepers without stock inventory. The existing inventories mention a variety of stocks, such as unopened packs of cloth and commodities on board ships or in warehouses, goods stored in basements, attics and storage rooms as well as stocks in shops and stalls.

Probates from Copenhagen have survived from 1681 onwards. A few of these have earlier starting dates, even as far back as 1677, but they were finished earliest in 1681. From 1683 to 1687, the number of probates is less extensive than the years 1681 and 1688, from which a large amount of probates have survived. Since Copenhagen held the monopoly of trade with the colonies, Iceland, the Faroe Isles and Greenland, this town can present a large number of probate records of those involved in trade with these places.

Vordingborg, Aarhus and Nyborg were smaller towns than Copenhagen and can thus show fewer probates, but even in these towns a number of merchant probates have survived. From Vordingborg and Nyborg, merchant and shopkeeper probates can be found throughout the second half of the 17th century and earlier, while from Aarhus, shop inventories are found from the 1670s onwards.

From Larvik, Frederikstad and Trondheim, probates can be dated back to 1673, 1676 and 1678 respectively, whereas the Oslo probate records only date back to 1692. Of the Norwegian towns, Trondheim can by far present the largest number of inventories of traded goods. This is due to a great number of surviving probate records, collected in probate record books originally kept at the town hall, as well as due to the Nordland trade. A great number of the probates from Trondheim thus record people involved one way or another in trade.

A number of merchants, traders and citizens even left behind painted church memorials,
epitaphs, sporting themselves and their families in all their wealth and status. And although these paintings meant for the church show the family members dressed for church — which by principle should be subdued and modest — fashionable details and foreign finery are often found in the depicted costumes. It is worth noting that these portraits were usually ordered while the family was still alive or at the death of a single family member and that those ordering the portraits must have had a great influence on the depiction of themselves and their clothes.

**Shops, shopkeepers and customers**

The first shopkeepers to sell from permanent structures, thus competing with marketplaces and fairs, were probably artisans. Producers sold their products from the windows of their workshops in the intervals between market and fair days. Some shopkeepers operated from their homes, selling their goods from a stall, a bod, in the house, while others owned stalls in different places in the town, usually at the town square. Such sales are probably as old as artisanal production itself. In the 17th century, a wide range of shops was available to consumers of fashion from artisan stalls to retail shops selling ready-made goods.

The probate inventories rarely mention the physical aspects of the shops, or whether they were situated in the home, or elsewhere. Primarily, probates list entries such as “Kramvarer” (goods), “i kramboden” (in the shop) or “Kramvarer i boden” (goods in the shop) not leaving much room for interpretation. Some merchants, who distributed their goods to other retailers, did not have a shop at all. Their stocks are usually described as “skibslast” (ship stock) or the stocks were kept in a warehouse in the harbour. However, most of the inventories simply list the size of the stock from which the size of the shop may be assumed as well as the quality and value of the goods.

The types of stock, and thus the shops, varied a great deal from small, petty to large ones and from specialised shops to general stores. Textile goods in the shops included fabrics sold by the piece or the ell, ready-made items and various dress accessories and haberdashery as well as other textile-related items such as soap and cloth brushes to clean and maintain textiles, textile-producing tools and sewing tools, starch and dyes. A large portion of the retailers who sold cloth and dress accessories also sold a wide range of other items such as maps, tobacco, knives, nails, cups and plates.

A typical smaller town shop was a general store selling not only a limited amount of drapery goods but also all sorts of small wares (such as pins, soap and spices), ironware (nails, tools, household utensils) and miscellaneous goods from maps to mugs. The specialist shops on the other hand sold only a limited type of goods. For example, a drapery shop sold only textiles while artisan shops, such as the wigmakers, passementerie makers, dressmakers, tailors and slipper makers and the like, sold a narrow range of goods of their own making as well as ready-made items from elsewhere.

The specialist shops were primarily a big town phenomenon, and as an approximation, there were more specialised shops in Copenhagen than in the other towns. However, they can be found already long before the late 17th century. For instance, some specialist shops in Malmö (present-day Sweden) near Copenhagen date to the mid-16th century and at least some of them are even older. Obviously, some specialized artisans can be traced far back in time, such as the weaver, the shoemaker and the like, while others like wigmakers were of a more recent trade, at least in 17th-century Europe.

The so-called galanterie shops were shops specialized in more gallant, i.e. luxury ware,
such as fine fabrics, stockings, fans, muffs, snuff, powder, perfume, and the like. A couple of these can be found in Copenhagen, such as a shop owned by Claus Iversen who died in 1688. This shop included a range of luxury silks as well as ready-made items, such as embroidered knitted waistcoats, silk stockings and snuff. Birgitte Jensdatter, a widow and owner of a well-endowed general shop in Copenhagen that was recorded in 1696–97, too, sold a range of gold and silver embroidered muffs, feather muffs, beaded muffs, Japanese walking sticks, French fans à la mode, perfumed gloves, beads, whalebone as well as toothbrushes, snuff, powder and soap.

At the other end of specialist trade was Bernt Olesen, a small-scale pedlar who died in Copenhagen in 1692. Bernt Olesen, a boatman by profession, did not have a stall of his own but sold directly to other shopkeepers. He traded in Icelandic goods, such as hose, gloves and mittens, knitted waistcoats, home-woven vadmál, sheepskin, wool and swanskin – all of which were produced in Iceland and sold
to customers in Copenhagen. Several such “Iceland traders” are mentioned in the probate records from Copenhagen, some selling Icelandic ware from their own shops, others itinerant traders and pedlars or even boatmen making an extra living by bringing goods from Iceland to Denmark. In Trondheim, the majority of the shops were various general stores, although drapery shops selling highly luxurious goods can be found even there. The shop of Hans Kiemler and his wife Birgitte Hornemand, recorded after the death of Birgitte in 1699, sold silk accessories, passementerie and expensive fabrics and was clearly at the high end. In addition, the drapery shop of Lorens Flensborger and his wife Elsebe, recorded in 1685, specialized in luxury fabrics and haberdashery, such as various silks: satin, caffata, tersenelle, silk ribbons and gold and silver passementerie. Customers of these shops were clearly among the upper classes of the town. A large group of traders in Trondheim were Nordland traders, trading various goods to and from the northern parts of Norway. The traders included pedlars selling various goods to the settlers and communities up north, pedlars who bought skin, feathers and leather goods in Nordland to be traded down south, and those owning shops in Trondheim selling Nordland goods.

A fancy for foreign fabrics
In the 17th century, Dano–Norwegian shops were stocked with fabrics that originated from all over the world. In addition to locally produced qualities, fabrics were imported both from northern and eastern colonies and everything in between. However, by the late 17th century, a large number of textile terms had changed from indicating a specific production place to mean a certain quality of fabric. Thus, in many cases, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether a fabric was really imported or locally produced.

Wool is the most common material in the inventories, and in addition to homemade qualities, it was imported from different parts of Europe. In the medieval period, a broad range of Dutch, Flemish, English, Scottish, and German wool cloth had been very popular and also appear in shop inventories of the 16th century, but in the late 17th century, these fabrics seem to have been almost entirely replaced with English wool cloth. The bulk of the wool cloth mentioned in the late 17th century was, when specified, English. English cloth, a fine broadcloth that was the priciest among the wools, appears in the inventories throughout the century in many colours, and late in the century especially in dark and light browns and greys as well as in black. In many cases, the probates do not list the origin of the wool cloth. For example, a petty shop owner, Lorens Mohr from Copenhagen, had dozens of unspecified cloth in different colours in his shop inventory from 1681–82, as well as Spanish and English cloth, “cloth of Mark” (markeye), Englishaise (baj) as well as linen (lærred), cotton (catun) and some silk. Peder Nielsen Buch, a merchant from Oslo who died in 1693, had unspecified stammel, baise (baj) and cloth (klede) in his inventory. Similarly Rudolf Møller, a wealthy draper of Nyborg, Denmark (inventory from 1678–79) could offer his customers a wide range of wool cloth, such as “klede” (cloth), “sars” (serge) and “bai” (baise) but the inventory offers no references to the production place of these fabrics except for the fabrics defined as “English”. This could mean that, at least in some cases, the term “English” indeed referred to quality rather than origin. Linens on the other hand are often referred to as Holland (Dutch), German and French linen, and in all cases the French and Dutch linens were the most expensive. A number of linens might also have been locally produced, such as the “narrow” linen (smallærred). Along with the popularity of the printed cottons of India, printed linens, probably made to mimic the cottons, were widely common according to the shop inventories, and they also may have been locally made.

Silk fabrics appear in many of the merchant inventories, and they were evidently widely distributed throughout the 17th century, in spite of the attempts to control and prohibit the use of such costly materials. A number of legislative acts against using, buying and selling silks were issued in the 1680s, but the shop inventories mention large quantities of these goods. Inventories include heavy and thin gauze-like silks, structured and patterned silks as well as printed silks with names, such as atlaskes, damask, grosgrain, samite, trip de velours, caffata, satin and cammelotte. Rudolf Møller in Nyborg (1678–79) had caffata,
“padded taffeta” (gewattet taft), possibly a kind of quilting, terselene (tersinel), silk grosgrain (silkegrovgrøn) and tubine (tobin) in his shop. A retailer of Vordingborg (1650s) sold all sorts of silk ribbons, silk buttons and other silk passementerie and Lorens Mohr from Copenhagen (probate from 1681–82) sold bombazine (bommesie) from Haarlem and Bremen. A place of origin is however very rarely mentioned, as the silks are commonly defined by their quality and type.

Although sometimes hard to distinguish, the many different kinds of silks in most cases must have been produced outside Denmark–Norway. King Christian IV (1588–1648) did experiment with local silk production in the so-called Børnehus, a part prison, part orphanage, but the project failed due to the lack of public demand and popularity and the silk production stopped. Inventories of the Børnehus show that the main buyer, if not the only one, was the royal household itself, and none of the inventories from the probates of drapers mention any Børnehus silks, suggesting they may never have been widely distributed.

Cotton is another obviously foreign material that starts to appear in the inventories increasingly in the 17th century. By the end of the century, colonial goods already had a huge market in Denmark–Norway, and there was a popular demand for all qualities of cotton. Most of the cottons, but not all, are called “East Indian” in the inventories, and these included patterned, striped and printed varieties as well as solids. The merchant Evert Peitersen in Aarhus had unspecified cotton (katun) in his inventory in 1676 as well as scarves made of cotton, and Lorens Mohr,
The owner of a petty shop in Copenhagen (1681–82) had relatively cheap unspecified cotton in his shop. Niels Olsen and his wife Anna in Larvik, who seemed to accommodate both the middle-class segment and the lower classes, had small quantities of cheap, printed brown cotton in their shop in 1677. Even Christen Claudi († 1681), whose shop in Copenhagen sold cheaper items for a broader lower income market, had various cotton goods in his inventory. Among these were printed cotton petticoats, black cotton banyans, unspecified cotton jackets, socks and stockings as well as printed cotton fabric sold by the ell. At the higher end, pricier and better quality cotton can be found in Trondheim stores, like Claus Petersen Angel’s shop in 1683, which sold blue, yellow and green as well as red-striped cotton by the ell. Hans Kiemler’s shop (recorded in 1699–1701) held a wide range of high quality cottons: coloured, printed, floral-patterned and solid blues and browns while Lorens Flensborger’s (1685) had red-striped and blue-striped cottons as well as solids in blue and white.

As well as fabrics, shops also provided a wide range of haberdashery for clothing, such as ribbons, laces, passementerie, buttons, hooks and eyes, laces, tassels, feathers and whalebone. These were probably produced both locally and abroad, although certain fine laces and exotic feathers definitely came from abroad. The inventory of Rudolf Møller in Nyborg in 1678–79 lists French passementeri as well as French lace, and Evert Peitersen from Aarhus has red and blue Polish buttons as well as French lace in his inventory in 1676. Indeed, most of the shop owners in this period had various types of lace among their goods suggesting that these items were in high demand.

Other products, for instance various small gold and gilded artefacts, such as buttons, may equally well have been made by skilful local goldsmiths.

Inventories also show that goods were widely exported within the realms of the
A growing desire for the ready-made object

Ready-made goods were available in a wide range from dress accessories such as fans, purses, stockings and gloves to items of dress such as children’s clothes, petticoats, knitted waistcoats (nattrøjer), banyans, jackets and even complete dresses.

Prior to the late 17th century, most of the ready-made items available in the shops were small items, usually various types of dress accessories such as purses, headwear, stockings, garters, gloves, aprons and the like. In the second half of the 17th century, larger dress pieces such as children’s wear, jackets as well as home and nightwear, e.g. dress gowns and knitted waistcoats, had become more common judging from the inventories. Clearly more ready-made items than previously were offered for purchase in the later 17th century.

As with the fabrics, the origin of a ready-made item, in many cases, can be difficult to determine. An item might have been woven or sewn up in a completely different place than where the material was produced. A child’s frock of cotton, for instance, was obviously of imported fabric, but the dress itself could have been locally produced. Christoffer Henriksen from Frederikstad in Norway had cotton gloves in his inventory from 1676, while Birgitte Jensdatter, who owned a galanterie shop in Copenhagen, Denmark in the 1690s sold ready-made dressing gowns of red and white “East Indian” chintz and children’s jackets of cotton.

Retailers also sold knitted waistcoats; Jensdatter herself had waistcoats knitted of cotton both with and without embroidery. In these cases, the raw materials were clearly not produced in Scandinavia, but it is not explicitly noted if these ready-made items were sewn up locally or elsewhere, in the factories of the Danish East-Indian trading company, or made outside of Scandinavia in a place other than the home of the raw material.

In other cases, particularly accessories like stockings, gloves, fans and headwear are often specifically mentioned as being of the imported kind. Stockings for men, women and children are commonly listed in the inventories, and they were made of wool, linen, silk and cotton. Stockings could be knitted or made of fabric, but the inventories do not always specify this. The probate of Claus Iversen in Copenhagen from 1688–90 lists a diverse selection of stockings that varied from quite inexpensive ones made of cloth to luxurious silk and/or knitted stockings in colours, such as black, red, peach, green, orange and pearl, as well as striped. The inventory specifies stockings from England, Hamburg and Lüneburg. It is possible, however, that as with the fabrics, “English stocking” could have meant a stocking made in a certain way and not the country of original production.

Muffs were a fashionable accessory worn by men and women alike, and several muffes made of wool, silk, fur or suede are listed in the shop inventories. Birgitte Jensdatter’s inventory lists feather muffes, embroidered muffes, muffes with gold and silver embroidery, muffes with glass pearls, silk muffes as well as golden muff band.

Although inventories rarely mention the origin of these items, in many cases, the material, at least, is of foreign origin.

Headwear, such as various types of caps or hairbands for women and hats and caps for men appear in the shops throughout the 17th century. Children’s headwear likewise appears throughout the century. The 1696–97 inventory of Birgitte Jensdatter mentions a number of different headwear available to the female customer. These included plain or patterned ruffled caps (kapper) of nettle yarn, cotton and linen; plain fontanges as well as fontanges with lace or ribbons; French fontanges, coloured ones, and fontanges of nettle, cotton, silk and gauze; fontange trimmings (garnetyr) with point de chainette (ponte carenet); and ribbons for ruffle hairbands.
caps; dotted, solid and floral patterned veils (flor); as well as veils of gauze; hoods (kabuds); caps of cloth and silk, caps embroidered with gold or silver; face masks (maske); and night caps (nathue) of silk, taffeta, cotton, linen and wool, all in various qualities and price ranges. She also carried Roman and Venetian gloves, French stockings and gloves, East Indian handkerchiefs and chintz nightgowns, as well as Icelandic wool and whalebone which were probably brought from Greenland.

Footwear also appears among the goods in the merchants’ inventories and it was apparently not sold exclusively by shoemakers. Many shopkeepers and merchants sold children’s shoes, which often, though not exclusively, could be of a simpler kind, while shoes offered for adults were primarily slippers of fine fabric or animal skin. They were a common ready-made item in the shops and could probably be produced anywhere. Probate inventories of common people mention slippers of silk, velvet or fine kid suggesting they were quite widely used. Shoes and boots can also sometimes be found in the inventories, although the latter was usually sold only in the regular shoe shops. The material of the shoes for adults and children alike is rarely mentioned in the inventories, but when mentioned, they were of animal skin, and they could apparently come from all over Europe. Anders Tordsen, a small trader in Larvik in 1675, had shoes from Bergen in his stock, while Søffren Christensen, owner of a drapery shop in the same town had “little English children’s shoes” and cheap “ordinary peasant shoes, large and small” in his stock the same year. It is unclear if these were cheap shoes intended to be sold among the farmers nearby or if they were produced by them. A large portion of the shoes may have originated from Nordland, like those sold as Bergen shoes in Larvik, as Bergen was a centre of Nordland trade. In probate inventories of Nordland traders from Trondheim, the term “finne” shoes and boots appear, leaving it unclear whether it refers to shoes made by locals in Finmarken or by the “fins” (the Sami population) or a specific type of footwear known as finnesko. Clogs were occasionally sold by the petty shopkeepers, who did not otherwise sell shoes. In 1689 Dorthe Ulfsdatter Blom, a widow of a small shop owner Morten Gærchen in Vordingborg, had in her inventory 25 pairs of clogs valued at only 4 skilling a pair.

In addition to fabrics, haberdashery and ready-made items, other objects, such as tools for maintaining or preparing clothes were also
available. This included different colours of starch for the collar ruffs and headpieces, such as fontanges, as well as dyes, smoothing stones, scissors, pins and needles. These were offered by most retailers, and are not usually marked as being of the imported kind. Certain dyes must have been imported, but most tools were probably locally made.

Conclusions: Trading within the kingdom and beyond

A large proportion of the goods available in Dano-Norwegian shops were imported. In spite of attempts to minimize the use of luxurious dress, nothing seems to have really limited the flourishing trade and a huge range of both local and foreign fabrics, dress accessories and haberdashery was available to the 16th- and 17th-century consumer. Goods came from as far away as the colonies in Africa, Americas and Asia as well as from all over Europe, and the clothing of a Dano-Norwegian consumer was more international than ever before. Materials for fashionable wear were imported from all over the world, but in addition to that, different foreign fashions lured the consumers. A vast proportion of shops, even shops in smaller towns, carried some products of foreign origin, either goods made out of foreign materials, goods made outside the realm or goods of foreign fashion. In a failed attempt at national protectionism, the crown strove to favour local production and prohibit certain foreign wares, but the shop inventories clearly show that people wished to clothe themselves in a cosmopolitan manner, building their wardrobes from both local and global elements.

The places where individuals traded varied,
and, in many cases, it seems to be a matter of where the trader had his or her connections. With the exception of the large trading centres, such as the colonies and the northern trade, it seems that personal connections may have dictated whether a tradesman mainly traded with merchants in Germany, Holland or England. The goods available in the shops were rather diverse as well. One shopkeeper would have English shoes for sale, while another would have shoes from Jutland or Bergen and a third would sell locally produced shoes. It seems that personal taste, connections and availability formed the basis of the stock in the shops, but the customer base also affected the stock. General stores that catered for the lower level of the population had more local items in their stores as well as lower quality imported goods, whereas galanterie shops, whose customers were on the wealthier end of the scale, could offer a large range of goods from all over the world: French fans and bonnets, cotton from the East Indies, fine gloves from Rome, English stockings and more. However, it is noteworthy that all levels of society desired to obtain their share of the luxury goods and colonial novelties, and the shops strove to provide each buyer with an alternative in their price range. For example, cotton enjoyed so much popularity that, by the late 17th century, many shops could offer cotton items and fabrics.

Nevertheless, import was not solely a matter of bringing foreign luxuries from far away countries to Danish and Norwegian customers. A wide exchange of goods also took place within the realm. Goods were transported back and forth within the borders: whalebone from Greenland made its way to the main Danish and Norwegian cities, fur and feathers from up north and Iceland as well as the Faroe Isles were sent down to the southern parts of the kingdom, knitted waistcoats, stockings and mittens were produced locally by peasants and sold to townspeople, while others specialized in bringing foreign goods from Europe and Asia to even the remotest parts of the kingdom in exchange. Apparently, all sorts of goods could be produced by local people and sent elsewhere in the realm, and imported luxuries could travel from the farthest east to the highest north.

Trade in 17th-century Denmark–Norway was an intricate system where goods were exchanged from south to north and east to west, both within the Dano–Norwegian Kingdom and the rest of the world. Denmark–Norway was a part of a global trade network, where everyday goods as well as novel luxuries were being distributed to a wider range of consumers than ever before.

**Notes**

5. For instance, a number of Norwegian towns, such as Stavanger on the west coast, have probate records dated to 1680 and onwards, but none of them contain regular shop inventories. The probate of Knud Clausen in 1685 does contain a number of fabrics, but it is unclear if these were part of a shop inventory or merely for the family’s own use. Statsarkivet i Stavanger: Stavanger by: skifteprotokoll BB1: 1680–1686, p. 169r. Similarly, a number of towns can only produce a single or few inventories dating to the 17th century, for instance Skien in Southern Norway (probates from 1666 and onwards) and Næstved on Zealand in Denmark (only a single merchant’s inventory from 1688), therefore these towns have been omitted from this survey. Statsarkivet i Kongsberg: Skien by: skifteprotokoll 1 (Hb 0001): 1666–1686. Landsarkivet i København: Næstved byfoged: skifteprotokol 1687–1698a; Dahl (2009), 21, Dahl (2010), 3–6.
6. In all towns but Copenhagen and Aarhus, all the probates could be examined, whereas the amount of probates surviving from Copenhagen numbered in the many thousands and was therefore too large to examine as a whole. Instead, only samples of the probates were selected. Probates from Aarhus have previously been examined by Erna Lorenzen, and her lists of merchant inventories have been used in this survey. Lorenzen (1975), 9–18.
9. For example, in Vordingborg in Denmark, an inventory of goods from the 1650s exists but the probate with a record of the name of the deceased has not been kept. Vordingborg byfoged: skiftearkiver 1647–1669.
10. Oslo was the largest Norwegian town at the time together with Bergen on the west coast; however, as the probate records do not date far back, the material can only give us a glimpse of shopkeepers in the second half of the 17th century. Bergen, on the other hand, does not have preserved probates before 1734.
16. Christen Madsen in Copenhagen (probate from 1688) was one of these tradesmen, selling Icelandic homespun fabric, *tidsholm*, among other things. Københavns skiftekommision 1681–1776, konceptskifter: 1688 63 – 1691 90, bs. nr. 3. Probate no. 92.
17. Trondheim by, skifteprotokoll 5: 1694–1706, 28r. Birgitte Henriksdatter Hornemand died in Dec. 1699, but her inheritance was not settled until 1701, and the probate was drawn up in April 1701.
18. Trondheim by, skifteprotokoll 1: 1678–1686, 36v.
27. Vordingborg Byfoged, skiftedokumenter 1647–1669, a probate without number and date, c. 1650s.
34. Trondheim by, Skifteprotokoll 1: 1678–1686, 19v ff.
35. Trondheim by, Skifteprotokoll 5: 1694–1706 28r.
36. Trondheim by, Skifteprotokoll 1: 1678–1686, 348c.
38. Although Polish buttons could mean certain type of buttons, i.e. double buttons, see Lorenzen (1975, 15–17.
39. Frederikstad by, Skifteprotokoll 1: 1676–1686, 17r.
43. Oslo skifterett: Skifteprotokoll 1, 1692–1701, 30f.
44. A *nattrøje* was usually a knitted waistcoat, worn under the regular jacket during the day for warmth or as a less formal kind of dress in the home (Ringgaard 2010, 99). Waistcoats made of cloth had been common from the 16th century, but by the mid-17th century, knitted waistcoats had become very popular and were found in both cheap and expensive qualities, the luxury ones with gold, silver and silk embroideries. For more on knitted waistcoats, see Maj Ringgaard in this volume.
45. Compared to shop inventories of the 16th century, the number of ready-made items in the shops had increased and a wider range of ready-made textile goods (such as items of clothing) was available to the consumer, see Dahl (2011), 89–95.
46. Ostfold fylke, Frederikstad by, skifteprotokoll 1: 1676–1686, 22v.
50. According to Pylkänen (1970), 46, “English” stockings were also manufactured in Scandinavia in the 17th century.
52. Ibid.
54. Larvik by, 1: 1673–1690, 24v.
55. Larvik by, 1: 1673–1690, 53v.
57. Vordingborg Byfoged, 1670–1699, probate 15th May 1689.

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Foreign Seductions: Sumptuary laws, consumption and national identity in early modern Sweden

Eva I. Andersson

This chapter deals with the consumption of imported textiles, clothing and the concept of the foreign in Swedish sumptuary laws from the 16th and 17th centuries. Textiles have been imported to the territory of Sweden, since before there even was a country named Sweden, as the finds of silk from the Viking town of Birka outside Stockholm illustrate, but the early modern period saw an increase and diversification in the import of textiles. This worried the authorities who were afraid that through the consumption of foreign luxuries, the Swedes would lose their national as well as personal wealth, but also what they referred to as their old and honourable simplicity. Sumptuary laws, a special kind of legislation intended to regulate consumption, often, but not always, according to estate or class, were one way that this anxiety was addressed. The idea of the foreign was always present in Swedish sumptuary laws and in the debates around them in the 16th and 17th centuries and it was considered both seductive and frightening.

In the early modern period, there was perceived to be a close connection between clothing and the person wearing it. The post-modern manner of playing with individual identities with the help of clothing was unthinkable for early modern men and women who saw the outer as a reflection of the inner person. With this in mind, the purpose of dress regulations can be understood by the dual meaning of the word recognition: a person's status was supposed to be easily recognizable, but fine dress was also recognition of a person's worth.

The possibility, and even ambition, of the authorities to ensure that the laws were followed and to prosecute offenders varied over time and place. Offences against dress regulations rarely appear in legal records in Europe, either because the laws were not enforced or because fines were issued and paid without the matter reaching the courts. Thus, it is difficult to determine how the legislation affected manners of dress. It is plausible that the efficiency varied depending on what was forbidden: A study of preserved, late 18th-century garments in Sweden, for example, shows that the ban on dresses in other colours than black, white and grey in the sumptuary law of 1794 was indeed adhered to; leaving many dresses in these colours in museum collections. This illustrates how the decrees had a greater chance of having any impact on the way people dressed if they were in
Swedish sumptuary laws in the 16th and 17th centuries

Swedish sumptuary legislation can be found from 1345 to 1820, but it is not until 1436 that we encounter regulations on dress, in a document directed to the burghers of Stockholm. This is the case also with the following six dress regulations, which are all from the 16th century. Most of these are not what we generally think of as sumptuary laws – specific laws issued to curb consumption – but parts of protocols or regulations covering a variety of topics concerning the governance of the town of Stockholm. That dress regulations from this time only concern Stockholm is not a coincidence – the population of Sweden in the 16th century was small, the grade of urbanization low and Stockholm was probably the only town where problems of distinguishing between people and classes through dress could arise. In the 17th century proper, sumptuary laws were issued, addressing the whole of Sweden, although not always all parts of society. Thus, one of the sumptuary laws from 1664 came in three different versions, one for each of the three higher estates in Sweden: the nobility, the clergy and the burghers. Class distinction was not the sole motivation behind sumptuary laws on dress. Of the dress regulations from the late 16th and 17th century, most had as their main purpose to enforce differences in dress according to estate, but economy, both on a personal and a national level was also an important motive, as well as women’s sexual morals. Women’s rights to consumption were generally decided by their fathers’ and husbands’ professions or birth, not their own, since they could not be clergymen and rarely were burghers in their own right, but regulations of dress according to sexual morals proved an important exception; throughout the roughly three and a half centuries that Sweden had dress regulations, a woman’s sexual morals and the issue of how to distinguish the pure from the impure in a sexual sense were always present. This is especially true for the 16th-century dress regulations, where the first four only make rules for what so-called loose women were not permitted to wear. Although not explicitly stated, the issue of national identity was also present in most of the legislation and the debate around it.

The medieval and early 16th-century sumptuary laws only regulated dress for women according to morals; the first regulation which aims to make a distinction according to estate is from 1583. Here, and also in the two following regulations, from 1585 and 1589, both forbidden and permitted materials, as well as certain items of clothing are listed. The problem of dressing above one’s station appears to be only a women’s problem, since the regulations only address women’s consumption of clothing. The regulation of 1644, the first in the 17th century, is the first Swedish sumptuary law that addresses all of Sweden and it is also the first one which is aimed at both men’s and women’s consumption of clothing. It is, however, only directed at the nobility and the object of the regulation was to curb excessive spending in connection with weddings, which means that most consumption of clothing is left without.

Most of the regulations of clothing in the 1664 law are, likewise, found in sections dealing with weddings, but there is also one law, directed only at the nobility, which deals with clothing in more general terms. In 1668, two sumptuary laws regulating dress, both directed at the nobility, were issued and in 1669 one, which targeted excessive consumption among the clergy. In two of these, clothing is one of
many items in attempts to regulate spending at weddings, funerals, christening parties and other festivities, while the third one specifically targets disorder in dress, by which is meant: too luxurious clothing in general or cases where the boundaries between the estates are blurred. The last two sumptuary laws of the 17th century are from 1688 and 1699 and of a new type; one that would become more common in the 18th century, where forbidden materials, primarily patterned silks, are listed, but dress is not discussed.10

Foreign goods in sumptuary laws 1529–1699
Imported goods are found in the sumptuary regulations both as forbidden materials and objects and as that which is permitted. A large part of the textiles consumed in Sweden in the early modern period was imported; not only luxury materials such as silk, but also broadcloth, cheaper wool fabrics of either mixed wool and worsted yarn or worsteds, linen/wool mixes and linen. The first regulation of the 16th century, from 1529, shows continuity with medieval fashion ideals in its forbidden dress materials: scarlet (scharlakan), unspecified silk, vair (gräskinn), and what is merely termed other expensive furs. The 1563 regulation only lists types of clothing; that from 1570 mentions silk; while the regulations from 1575 again focus on types of clothing. In 1583 and 1585, some silk fabrics, such as damask and satin (atlas), are permitted in garments worn above the belt, while gowns of damask and all velvet garments are forbidden for the burghers’ wives and daughters.

The regulation of 1589 is by far the richest of the 16th-century dress regulations, due to its listing of both the forbidden and the permitted. Here, we find both wool fabrics such as scarlet, broadcloth, says (sajen), mackejer, which was a coarser wool fabric; Turkish mackejer, wool camlet (ullen kamlott) and wool grosgrain (ullen grofgrön), which were permitted for the wives and daughters of Stockholm’s burghers and silk satin, damask and velvet, which were only permitted for the highest level of burghers or wholly forbidden for anyone outside the nobility. All these were imported fabrics: broadcloths, worsteds and mixed fabric primarily from England and the Low Countries and silks mainly from Italy in the 16th century, and from France in the 17th.13 The word Turkish in Turkish mackejer does not necessarily mean that it was imported from the Ottoman Empire, but the fabric may either originally have been made there or was generally perceived as being Turkish in some way or another. The word mackejer is of Dutch origin which may point to the Netherlands as the site of production.14 Interestingly, Turkish mackejer is only found once and ordinary mackejer not at all, in probate inventories from the period.

There is a clear difference between the 16th- and 17th-century regulations, with many more types of foreign luxuries listed in the latter. This is partly due to changes in fashion, which introduced new materials and accessories, but some of the difference can also be attributed to the 17th-century legislation being aimed also at the nobility, unlike the earlier regulations which were solely directed at the burghers of Stockholm. The regulation from 1644 lists only the forbidden materials, all of which are of the luxurious foreign type: cloth of gold and silver, silk damask, satin and tobîn (a ribbed or moiré silk or half silk), lace and cords from silk with or without gold or silver, lace (presumably) from linen and silver or gold buttons. The same materials are found in the laws from 1664, 1668, 1669, and 1688, but there are also new imported materials and fashion items, such as many more types of patterned silk (the terms generally used are façonerad or blommerad but we also find striped silk), plush (plysch), lace made from wool or hair, patterned silk ribbons, ribbons of gold or silver, fringes, feathers and jewellery and buttons made from glass. The regulation of 1699 adds silk brocade, bordalotter, at this time a silk or half silk with a small woven pattern, striped silk, silk taffeta (sidentaft), silk serge (sidensari) (both previously probably hidden under the general category of silk fabric), and half silk. The suit shown in figure 2.1 is a good example both of that which would have been permitted to the lower estates and that which was prohibited. The suit, which is dated to 1647 and which belonged to the Swedish king, Karl X Gustav (1622–1660) is made from wool camlet, a material which was permitted, while the lace on the suit was either totally forbidden or heavily restricted, even for the nobility.

We will now enquire into whether any or all of these were to be found among the citizens
Fig. 2.1: Wool camlet suit belonging to King Karl X Gustav (1622–1660) (Livrustkammaren; Photo: Göran Schmidt).
of Stockholm in the late 16th and mid-17th century, by examining probate records.

**Foreign materials in probate inventories 1589–1649**

This part of the chapter focuses on the consumption of clothing among ordinary people in a previously unexamined period: the late 16th and the first half of the 17th century. To what extent did foreign goods reach the Swedish consumers? Were the burghers and other inhabitants of 16th- and 17th-century Stockholm seduced by foreign luxuries or was the anxiety of the authorities unfounded?

A survey of the materials in clothes listed in probate inventories from late 16th- and early 17th-century Stockholm is one way of studying the actual consumption of clothing – as opposed to the normative sumptuary laws.

A probate is a list of belongings and debts generally drawn up when a person dies, although a few inventories from bankruptcies in the collections of probates are also used in this study. In this period, making a probate after a person died was not required by Swedish law; such a law only came to effect in 1734. Thus, probate inventories prior to the 18th century are unusual, especially outside the nobility, which is one reason why the consumption of clothing in the 16th and 17th centuries is much less studied than later periods, such as the 18th and 19th centuries. Especially in towns, however, probates were sometimes also drawn up for persons from the lower estates before the 18th century. The majority, if not all, of those preserved from the 16th and 17th centuries are from Stockholm, archived by the Collegium of Justice. For three reasons, Stockholm is therefore the obvious choice for a study of the consumption of foreign materials in clothing among the people: the availability of source material, the fact that the 16th-century dress regulations were all directed at people living in Stockholm, and that it was, by far, the largest town in Sweden in the period.

The period discussed here starts in 1598 with the first probate that contains references to clothing and ends in 1649 with the final year in the first volume of probates from the Collegium of Justice. Ideally, a study of probates from the decade following the sumptuary laws of 1664, to see how, or if, they affected the consumption of clothing should also have been made, but due to time constraints only the first half of the 17th century was included.

In this chapter, sixty probates have been studied. The people found in them are the burghers and workers of the town, with a few exceptions in the form of clergy and naval men. On the social scale, they range from day-labourers to mayors, with the majority being artisans or shopkeepers. Unfortunately, the professions of the persons are not always given. The probates of the nobility were, however, registered elsewhere and it is unlikely that a member of the clergy would not have his profession mentioned. It is therefore probable that the unidentified persons belonged to the same class as those where the occupation is noted. From the contents of their probates, we can, with some certainty, also place most of those without a given profession among the petty bourgeoisie and workers. Women are generally identified through their husband’s name and profession.

Eliminated from the study are probates where no clothing is listed, where the materials for items of clothing are not given, and the very few cases where the clothes mentioned were made only from domestic materials. The terminology of the textiles found in the probates is occasionally problematic, since not all terms are identified and others encompass a variety of textiles. The translation from Swedish to English further complicates this since it is possible that early modern Swedish did not draw the lines of distinction between fabrics in the same way as modern English, or indeed modern Swedish, does. The most important example is the word *kläde* which today is used for fulled and shorn woollens, but which was less clearly defined in this period. In the Middle Ages, what made a wool fabric a *kläde* was not its composition of wool, as opposed to worsted, yarn and the fulling and shearing, but the fact that it was imported and this may also be the case in parts of the early modern period. In the late 17th century, the making of *kläde* was regulated in Sweden and from this time we know that the term was used for a fulled and shorn broadcloth. *Kläde* has, despite this ambiguity, been defined as broadcloth in the text.

What is clearly evident from the probates is that most of the clothing materials were imported; not only the luxury fabrics, but also the more ordinary materials. There are a few
examples of vadmal, which was a (usually) domestic coarser wool fabric in the probate inventories of the poorer people, but even here we more often find imported wool fabrics. Compared to Swedish sources from the Middle Ages, there is a great variety of materials to be found in the probates, both from wool, silk, linen and mixed fabrics. Kläde, usually of English origin is the most common throughout the period under study. Other common fabrics made from wool are says, wool camlet and what was termed Turkish grosgrain. The materials mackejer and Turkish mackejer mentioned in the dress regulation from 1589 are, however, nowhere to be found. Could it be that, at this time at least, mackejer was a type of grosgrain and that the king’s administration and the city’s scribes simply used different words for the same fabric? As noted above, the main source of foreign wool fabric appears to have been England, in the form of broadcloth, kersey and says but one also finds hundskott, wool fabric from Hoondschote in Flanders, Görlitz, from Görlitz in Germany and Scotland as places of origin. Lybisk, i.e. from Lübeck in Germany also occur as a name for fabric, but considering the role of Lübeck as one of the main transit ports in Northern Europe, it is impossible to say whether it was manufactured there or merely associated with the town. As table 2.1 indicates, the origin of most of the wool fabric found in the probates is, however, unknown.

In the tables, the examined period is divided into three shorter periods: 1589–1610, 1611–1629 and 1630–1649. The materials are listed with both the name found in the documents (with normalized spelling) and either an English translation, or when no such could be found, a description of the fabric in question, as far as this can be ascertained. The tables also show in the bottom row the total amount of foreign materials in each period, and, in the column to the right, the total amount of each type of material for the entire period from 1589–1649.

As may be seen, the total amount of garments in foreign materials differs in the three periods,
which naturally limits the conclusion that can be drawn regarding changes over time. Due to the poor legibility of some of the probates, in some instances, it has not been possible to make out the material, and probably some garments have also been missed. This should not affect the overall result, but the absolute figures for each material should not be seen as definitive. The dominance of *kläde* is so evident in all periods that we can be certain that this was the most common material in clothing in the first half of the 17th century. It was followed in popularity by says, Turkish grosgrain, wool grosgrain and wool camlet. To the two latter should probably be added some of those 67 garments where the material is only given as camlet or grosgrain, without defining the material, which has been left out of this table due to the uncertainty of the material. There were silk camlets and silk grosgrains too, and we encounter them in the probates as well, but given the social status of the people whose clothing is studied and the other materials in the probates, wool is a more likely material in most cases; or half wool/half silk fabrics and other blends. Examples of such mixed fabrics found in the probates are *tripp*, *schagg*, *kaffa* and *turkaff* which were fabrics with a pile, sometimes cut in patterns. These could be made from wool or from silk and a ground weave of wool, hemp, cotton or linen. There are also half silks, such as *bomaj*, and linen-wool mixes, such as *fyrra*, which appears to have been a fulled fabric with a linen warp and wool weft, in the probates.

While *kläde* remains consistently popular, there are changes over time when we consider other wool or wool mix fabrics. Wool camlet and says are among those with a sharp decrease in occurrence in the probates, and fabrics described by the name of its origin also become less common. Among the new fabrics are *rask*, a glazed wool twill, and *perpetuan*, also a wool twill, and like *rask* used for aprons.

The silk fabrics which constitute most of the forbidden materials in the sumptuary laws of the 17th century are less common than wool in the probates. The most common types are atlas, damask and velvet, but unspecified silk fabric, silk camlet and silk grosgrain are also relatively common. As with the wool camlets and wool grosgrain, it is possible that some of the unspecified camlets and grosgrains were made from silk. It is, however, less likely that the prefix silk was left out, since the silk version was more luxurious and expensive. Some fabrics with uncertain fibre content, such as *kaffa* and *dirdomdej* have been included among the silk fabrics in the table. *Dirdomdej* is derived from the French *tiretaine*, which usually was a fabric made of a blend of wool and linen, but could also, at least in the Swedish context, have been made from silk.

Table 2.2 shows silk garments found in the probates, and is structured the same way.
as table 2.1, so that it shows both the total amounts of silk garments in the three shorter periods and the total of each material for the entire period from 1589–1649. Looking at the first period, we note that the most commonly used silk fabrics were those that actually were allowed for at least some of the burghers of Stockholm, although only in smaller garments, but also that velvet was worn despite the regulations forbidding its use for commoners. Just as with the wool fabrics, new types appear or become popular in the final period, such as kaffja and tursnell, silk from Tours, attesting changing fashions and the increased diversification in the production of both wool and silk textiles.

Both wool and silk garments came in a variety of colours: black, brown, purple and red being the most popular in the probates. Figure 2.2 shows a detail from the mid-17th-century epitaph of Laurentius Paulinus Gothus (1565–1646), a professor of Uppsala University and bishop of Strängnäs, buried in Strängnäs Cathedral in Sweden. His father was a goldsmith, magistrate and mayor in the town of Söderköping, and Laurentius Paulinus Gothus thus belonged to the highest strata of society outside the nobility, both by birth and by profession. The painting depicts the family in mourning, and on this detail, we see his wife Brita Eriksdotter, who was the daughter of a vicar, and their three daughters. While this painting depicts a bishop’s family, the manners of dress among the higher ranks of clergy and the most prosperous among Stockholm’s burghers were similar enough that it can serve as an illustration of how a wealthy citizen of Stockholm and his family would have been dressed. This is evidently a higher stratum of society than most of the examined probates, which originate from groups in society where no portraits have been painted or preserved. The three daughters and their mother are all dressed in black doublets, either of damask or of patterned velvet. They have white (linen) aprons, white collars, black cloaks, a gold chain around their necks and gold rings on their fingers. The mother also has a gold bracelet and the girls have necklaces made of three strands of pearls caught together by a gold ornament at intervals. The mother wears several layers of linen caps, where the uppermost of this is a starched widow’s veil. Beneath it, she wears what appears to be a forehead cloth under a linen coif, either starched or wired to give a rounded shape at the temples, and on top of that an orange, or gold coloured, smaller cap. This splash of colour in the otherwise black and white palette of mourning is found also in other paintings of the period. The daughters wear decorated headbands, possibly made of lace and embellished with pearls and beads. The use of patterned silks and jewellery show the wish to be fashionable and stylish also under these sad circumstances.

Linen clothes, seen in the form of collars, smocks, caps and aprons in figure 2.2, are less common in the probates than wool and silk. The Swedish word läft, which is used in the sources, could mean both linen and cotton, but this early it is almost certainly linen; yet when they do, it is precisely in these types of garments: shirts, smocks, ruffs, caps, aprons and occasionally socks.

For läft, the origin is seldom given, but these cases show the province of Hälsingland in the north of Sweden, known for its linen production, and Finland and Russia to be places which contributed to the linen available in the Swedish capital. Since Finland was a part of Sweden, only the Russian linen found in the probates was imported. The economic historian Lili-Anné Aldman’s study of textiles in the custom rolls of Stockholm in the early 18th century, however, alludes to many types of imported linen, and it is likely that many of these were also available in the 17th century.

Cotton in garments is only mentioned twice in the probates, once as stuffing in an item of clothing and once as fabric called cattun. Cattun, which is the Swedish name for calico, is found in the probate of Hans Jönsson, a sub-lieutenant who died in 1644. This fabric was certainly imported, probably from England. Calico was, at this time, not necessarily printed, but could also be plain coloured or undyed cotton. In the 18th century, it was frequently imported undyed and then printed in Sweden, since customs duty on unfinished calicoes were only an eighth of what was charged for printed calicos. It is, however, certain that in 1644 any printing would have been done outside of Sweden.

Of the furs utilized for lining clothes, many could be obtained within the Swedish realm: fox, marten and, certainly, sheepskin, which all occur frequently in the probates. Vair, that is the winter fur from the grey squirrel, could also be acquired in Sweden, but the finest were
imported from Russia. In this period, vair was not at the height of fashion, as it had been in the Middle Ages, but had become more of a middle-class fur – it is therefore not surprising that it is found quite often in the probates through the entire first half of the 17th century; albeit more commonly in the first decade of the century. As noted above, it was still popular enough among the Stockholm burghers in the 16th century to be on the list of things forbidden to women of ill repute.

The question asked in the beginning of this section, if the burghers of Stockholm followed the dress regulations set by the king, could not be answered fully. The period of the survey, 1589–1649, is not optimal, since the dress regulation from 1644 is directed at a group (the nobility) that is not represented in the probates from Stockholm, however, one can assume that the materials which were forbidden to the nobility were also forbidden to the three other (lower) estates. The image given by the probates is complex; most of the materials found in the probates were those that were allowed for the burghers, but we cannot, of course, know if that was due to adherence to the dress regulations or due to economic factors, although a strong argument could be made for the latter: all textiles were expensive due to the labour needed to produce them and, for example entire gowns of silk were probably completely out of the reach of most...
of the population. And there is also proof that people did not always comply with the dress regulations. In the probates we do find velvet caps and jackets, jackets and cassocks of silk grosgrain in the beginning of the 17th century as well as lace after 1644; all clear violations of the respective sumptuary laws. This indicates that respect for the regulations may not have been an important factor behind the dominance of permitted fabrics in the probates. What the probates do reveal is that, for whatever reason, most of the clothing listed on the probates were made from fabric permitted to the lower estates and thus that the disorder of dress described by the authorities, where commoners supposedly dressed like the nobility, was primarily rhetoric; a repetition of a common European topos in the debate about, and regulation of, fashionable dress.

Another aspect that this survey has shed light on is the large amount of imported materials found in the wardrobes of ordinary people living in Stockholm in the first half of the 17th century. While most of these were the more commonplace wool fabrics, the damasks, satins, taffetas, velvets, grosgrains, and other silk fabrics found in the probates certainly belonged to those foreign luxuries condemned by the authorities.

**The locality of dress**

The construction of a national identity was an important issue in many parts of Western Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries; philosophical, political and religious treaties as well as various types of fiction dealt with the problem of what it meant to be Italian, German, French or English – and of course: Swedish. Intertwined with ideas about nationality was the question of what it meant to be a Protestant or Catholic.

Clothing was an important way that national and religious identity was constructed. In Sweden, the main influences came from Germany, a geographical area whose struggle with national identity was especially complicated because of it not being a separate nation, but a part of the political construction known as the Holy Roman Empire, which included many languages, cultures and different interpretations of Christianity. In the process of creating a specific German way of dressing, what was perceived as traditional German cultural traits in manners of dress were held up as a positive example and warnings were issued against influences from Italy, and France. What should be seen as typically German in dress was, however, not clear: in Italy, Germans were often seen as essentially barbarians, civilized only by the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and Italian culture. Thus the construction of a German culture of dress was under pressure from two sides: on the one hand it had to be a contrast to what in Germany was seen as the affected luxury of the French and Italians, on the other, it had to distance itself from all accusations of barbarism. Among other things, this meant that certain historical German fashions had to be discarded, both in practice and in the history of fashion. From the middle of the century, the typical slash-and-puff fashions of the early 16th century, with their stripes and many colours, were no longer acceptable and a German Protestant dress code was carefully negotiated between the two extremes of barbaric slovenliness and effeminate luxury. Since Sweden was culturally and sartorially close to Germany, this process also affected Swedish relations to dress.

Unlike Germany, Sweden in the 16th century was linguistically, culturally and religiously largely homogenous. This would change in the 17th century when Sweden through war incorporated parts of Denmark/Norway, northern Germany and the Baltic states in its realm. Protestantism remained a defining component in the realm, even more so since the 17th century saw the rise of what has been dubbed the Protestant orthodoxy, but the realm was now multilingual and did not share a common history. Even in the 16th century, the stability of Sweden as a political entity was not taken for granted, since Sweden in the later Middle Ages had been in union with Denmark and Norway, a union that was increasingly viewed as a Danish occupation of Swedish territory. Swedish cultural identity was thus, similar to Germany, something that needed to be discussed and defined. History played a crucial role in the construction of a Swedish national identity. In the 16th century, Johannes Magnus argued forcefully for Sweden as the original homeland of the Goths, showing them to be noble and as the preservers of culture, rather than the destroyers of the Roman Empire as they were usually depicted. He also spent a great deal of time and effort
Refuting Danish claims to be the most prominent and ancient of Nordic countries. In his brother, Olaus Magnus’ *History of the Nordic peoples* from 1555, the heroic past of the Swedes is told together with what we today would call an ethnographic description of the customs of the peoples living in Sweden in his day. Further glorifying Swedish history, in the 17th century the prominent Uppsala professor Olaus Rudbeck the Elder launched the idea that Sweden was the cradle of all civilization and also the mythical Atlantis. Eccentric as this seems today, the idea was actually well received at the time, also outside of Sweden. The 16th and 17th centuries were a period of increased interest in national history in all the Nordic countries, a part of what has been dubbed the Nordic Renaissance, thus the Swedes were not alone among the Nordic countries in exalting their national past, although not many reached the grandiose scale of Rudbeck’s ideas. Dress, weapons, houses, laws and other customs were, according to Rudbeck, among the things that divided one people from another. The preoccupation with the foreign in Swedish sumptuary laws in the 16th and 17th centuries also shows that clothing and manners of dress were seen as important components of a national identity.

The early modern period was especially suited for fashion to take on this role. Unlike most of the Middle Ages when styles of dress were similar over most of Europe, with details and accessories contributing the regional flavour, the second half of the 15th century saw a new development in western European dress, with regional fashions becoming increasingly diverse toward the end of the Middle Ages due to a general rise in income and material standards in western Europe as a whole. On this map of geographically diverse fashions, Sweden belonged to the German cultural sphere and Swedish fashions of the 16th century largely conform to German ways of dressing. In the 17th century, France assumed its place as the leader of fashion, a place it would keep for 300 years, and this inevitably affected fashion in Sweden as well as in the rest of Europe. Regional variations still remained, although from our vantage point centuries later, it may be hard to notice the regional differences and easier to see the broad similarities in dress within larger areas.

For 16th- and 17th-century Swedes, there were, however, many regional differences in dress. Not only between German and French fashion, differences which can be seen even at the distance of a few hundred years, but also between Swedish and German fashion, which were much more alike, and also between manners of dress in different parts of Sweden. Stockholm, the capital, probably showed the greatest variety, due to the amount of foreigners, mainly Germans, permanently settled in the town; foreigners who claimed their right to be dressed in the manner of their homelands. The latter was one of many ways that fashion influences reached Sweden; influences that caused some anxiety in the minds of the crown and other authorities.

The thought that foreign fashion influences could be damaging to a people is very old indeed, ever since antiquity both luxury and barbarism – the two extremes in the spectrum of the clothing debate – have been explained by and connected to foreign influences. Predictably, we also encounter this opinion in the Swedish sumptuary laws. The blame is sometimes placed on foreign citizens living in Sweden, who invent or import new styles, sometimes on foreign merchants who aim to seduce the pure and simple Swedes with their foreign luxuries or new ways of dressing.

The simplicity of the Swedes, perceived generally as a positive trait, is a recurring theme. The 1589 regulation mentions that the inhabitants of Stockholm often are tricked into believing Bohemian crystal and even glass to be real diamonds or other precious stones. While this to our eyes may not show the Swedes in a very positive light, it is not necessarily negative either, since it was a consequence of the aforementioned, positive, simplicity. The problem, according to the king, was that the lower estates and foreigners both dressed above their status and that a spiral of ever increasing consumption was created. This was not in conflict with the honourable simplicity which was a national trait attributed to the Swedes, but a disturbance caused by specific circumstances; if these were to disappear, the Swedes would go back to their old way of dressing. When looking at the sumptuary laws, it appears that luxury in itself was seen as something foreign to the Swedes and that it was introduced by foreigners, either because of their own wish to dress luxuriously, a fairly innocent motive, or...
for the more wicked reason to trick the Swedes to exchange the riches of their homeland for useless trinkets and thus enrich themselves. In the days of mercantilism, any import was viewed with suspicion and imports of fashionable fabrics and items were doubly so, due to the generally low opinion of fashions in dress. The regulations endeavoured in vain to stop fashion changes by describing which garments were permitted and how they should look, and forbidding any new inventions in regard to dress. The term, new and foreign patterns (the author’s own emphasis) was used, suggesting that, at least, part of the blame for the changing fashion could be laid at the door of the foreigners. The Swedes themselves were not without blame; at least not the burghers’ wives and daughters who dressed above their estate or the persons of the nobility afflicted by curiosity, a trait seen as negative, but the temptation very often came in the shape of the foreign.

One specific way that foreigners could influence Swedes to adopt unseemly clothing was through the exceptions made for foreign citizens resident in Sweden in the sumptuary laws. These are found in the regulations from 1583, 1589, 1589, 1664 and 1669 and thus for a period of almost 90 years foreign citizens were exempted from the sumptuary laws. They were, however, not allowed to dress in any way that they pleased, but were expected to dress in the way people of their estate did in their home countries; the social distinction had to be upheld also among those not of Swedish origin. According to the sumptuary laws, this was frequently abused, both by foreign citizens who dressed above their station, claiming that the garments and materials in question were according to the custom in their home countries, and by Swedish citizens who adopted foreign styles or materials otherwise not permitted. In this context, foreign manners of dress were neither positive nor negative; it all depended on who it was that wore the clothes. If they, however, spread outside the limited group of foreigners they became a problem, not only because of the reasons given above, but because it would break the fundamental connection between dress and person, the function of clothing that made it possible to recognize a person’s estate or origin from the outside, but which also was a recognition of those qualities.

The exemption given to foreign citizens shows the important role of place in perceptions of dress and fashion in the early modern period. Another way this was expressed was in the new genre of printed books showing manners of dress in diverse parts of Europe and the world. The Royal Library in Stockholm now holds two of these in its collection: François Deserz’s Omnium Pere Gentium, nostre acetatis Nationum, Habitus & Effigies printed between 1562 and 1572 and Abraham de Bruyn’s Omnium pene Europae, Asiae, Apribae etque Americae gentium habitus from 1581. Both are first listed among the books belonging to Nicodemus Tessin the Younger’s library in the early 18th century and nothing is known of their earlier provenance, but it is possible that they were in Sweden already by the 17th century, and that there may also have been others, now lost. These costume books have long been seen primarily as an expression of an early ethnographic interest and of a cosmopolitan outlook, prompted by the new geographical discoveries of the early modern period. Recently it has, however, been suggested that one of the purposes of both the German and Italian costume books was also to enable the reader to identify with the dress, values and ideals of the region in which they were made, and also with those of the upper or bourgeois class. The costume books were, according to this view, a kind of moral map of Europe (and to some extent the rest of the world) and regional manners of dress thus also held a deeper significance. Following this thought, the Swedish sumptuary laws can be viewed not merely as an acceptance of difference in dress according to origin, but also as a way of creating and protecting Swedishness.

Foreign fashions were not always something bad; they could be accepted and introduced into Swedish dress, as long as they did not threaten the political and moral order – either by upsetting the distinctions according to estate or by leading the Swedes into effeminate and immoral luxury. We find, for example descriptions of women’s gowns as Polish in a 16th-century royal inventory; a designation that may refer to loose gowns trimmed with horizontal bands of frogging, a style that was associated with Poland in the Scandinavian countries. In the probates, we also encounter
designations such as *engelsk kappa* and *tysk kappa*, meaning English and German cloak or coat and *engelsk träja*, i.e. English jacket or doublet. The most likely meaning of the words English and German in this context is that the garments in question were made from English or German wool fabrics, but it is also possible that it was certain types of coats and jackets, which were perceived as being of English or German origin. The garments themselves could certainly also have been imported and have earned the designation that way, although it is likely that most tailored garments were made for the owner, not imported as ready-made garments. Smaller garments, such as the Scottish stockings, mittens and gloves found in the probates were imported and are another example of how geographic origin was used in connection with clothing in the 16th and 17th centuries. Similar examples of geographical names for items of dress, showing appreciation and awareness of regional difference in dress, are found in other European countries; such as French and Flanders gowns in England. The most well known example of this appreciation is probably Elizabeth I of England, who asked the Scottish ambassador if he preferred her in the English, French or Italian style. 

Locality continued to play an important role in perceptions of dress in later periods, even when the involvement of the state in the form of legislation ceased. In the 18th century, the debate on luxury came to include more strata of society and we find parish meeting protocols where the affluent farmers promise to abstain from foreign luxuries, to keep their local, traditional dress and to do what they can to stop servants and agricultural workers from adopting foreign manners of dress. Local dress also became an important factor in the ideological formation of the Swedish peasant class in the 19th century. Later in the 19th century, the so-called national dress became a part of the new nation states’ construction of a national heritage. These costumes were based on regionally specific peasant costumes from the 18th and 19th centuries, again tying perceptions of nationhood to manners of dress. There was, however, an important difference between these and the patriotic ideas on dress found in Swedish sumptuary regulations in the early modern period. In the case of the 18th- and 19th-century peasant costumes, newcomers were expected to change their dress according to local custom, while in the sumptuary laws of the previous centuries, it was taken for granted that foreigners resident in Sweden would keep their national manner of dress. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the locality that mattered was thus not where you lived, but your origin. This is in line with the interest in origin which pervaded the discussion on history in the early modern period, not least in Sweden, where the claim to a glorious past was an important part in the construction first of the modern Swedish state under the Vasa dynasty and later, in the 17th century, as a new regional great power.

Despite the difference between a later emphasis on local homogeneity in dress and a previous wish to display one’s origin through dress, there were also similarities in that class was an important factor also when locality of dress was discussed. It was only in the romantic notions of the late 19th-century national dress enthusiasts that there was a time when everybody in a specific region dressed the same, regardless of class. Indeed, as we have seen, the main problem with foreigners dressing in a different way than Swedes in the 16th and 17th centuries was that this could be used to blur the distinctions between the estates, and in the 18th- and 19th-century parish records we see how the well-to-do farmers mainly opposed new manners of dress when they were brought in by servants and did their best to keep servant girls from using foreign goods such as silk scarves.

**Conclusion**

Swedish sumptuary regulations from the 16th and early 17th centuries are full of concern about dangerous foreign influences. Foreign merchants are accused of introducing new fashions to the detriment of the old, honourable ways of dressing, and, by their very existence in the Swedish capital of Stockholm, the foreigners showed enticing new ways of dressing, something that, according to the sumptuary laws, women were especially susceptible to. The sumptuary laws describe a state of disorder in dress where nobles and burghers alike were ruined by competing in the consumption of luxurious clothing and where it was impossible to distinguish between the nobility and the commoners.

When studying probates of the citizens
of Stockholm, it becomes evident that this image painted by the authorities was mainly rhetoric. The complaint that the people did not adhere to previous sumptuary laws did, however, have some basis, as seen from the clothes owned by the mostly middle and lower class citizens represented in the probates. Most of the materials used were those that were permitted for their class, but we also find clearly forbidden items, such as caps and jackets made of velvet. The silk fabrics which were allowed, such as satin and damask were more common than the forbidden ones and the majority of the clothes in the probates were, as expected, made from various types of wool fabric. Unsurprisingly, the sumptuary laws thus show an incomplete and biased image of clothing consumption and manners of dress in early modern Sweden.

While their usefulness as sources to what people actually wore can be questioned, sumptuary law can reveal much about the discourses of the time. The sumptuary laws of the 16th and 17th centuries show us how clothing was part of the creation of a national identity. In them, a Swedish national character is outlined: the Swedes are simple, even naïve at times, and if they were not seduced by foreign influences, they would dress in a way that was simple, modest, fitting for their estate and economically responsible. The sumptuary laws stressed the importance of geographical origin in connection with dress; exceptions were made for foreign citizens resident in Sweden, who wished to continue to dress in their native ways; showing that manners of dress were seen as a part of nationality. The Swedish preoccupation with nationality was, in turn, a part of a larger European phenomenon; the similarity with the German discussion on both clothing and national character is obvious, although unlike in the Holy Roman Empire, where the blame was placed on Italians and the French, the source of the dangerous foreign influences is not given. A hope often expressed in the sumptuary laws is that the Swedes should return to their old, simple ways and thus, by being true Swedes again, save the country from whatever ills that were plaguing it at the time. The sumptuary laws should therefore also be understood as a part of the larger discourse on what it meant to be Swedish, on Sweden's history and its future destiny.

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**Notes**

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14. Ordbok över svenska språket, utgiven av Svenska Akademien (1983–).
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Ordbok över svenska språket, utgiven av Svenska Akademien (1983–). Land.
Fashion from the Ship: Life, fashion and fashion dissemination in and around Kokkola, Finland in the 18th century

Seija Johnson

This chapter deals with novelties and fashionable dresses in the second half of the 18th century in Kokkola (Gamlakarleby), a small but important port town located in Ostrobothnia, Finland, which belonged to Sweden until 1809. The history of Kokkola is a history of rich tradesmen, famous shipbuilders and sailing: it is about the export of tar, pitch and planks; the import of salt; and the introduction of novelties from all over the world. To research the men’s history of Kokkola has been quite popular through the years, while women’s history remains in many ways an untold story. Fashion is not only the privilege of the wealthy, and here I research women’s history in general, sketching a history from below, through fashion and clothing. The subject of my study is everyday life. The central person in this enquiry is Brita Ahla, mentioned in three documents. The first and second ones are to be found in the inventories after the deaths of her two husbands and the third one in the inventory after her own death. Another important figure is Marja Laiberg mentioned in a single document, thus leaving many, as yet, unanswered questions. I have studied these documents from a micro-historical perspective. As defined by Giovanni Levi (2001), microhistory as a practice is based on the reduction of the scale of observation and on a microscopic analysis. It is also based on an intensive study of the documentary material. The researcher also needs to be open to and be more aware of significant details and to be able to explain them. As the documents in microhistory often relate to common people, the documents do not always directly report the facts of the phenomena and the researcher has to gather the facts together indirectly from other documents referring to other phenomena. In the cases discussed here, there are many significant details, with the information originating from probate records in Kokkola parish; Kokkola church records; customs lists from Öresund, Stockholm and Kokkola; the history of Sweden, Finland and Ostrobothnia; and the research reports of reliable dress researchers in Finland and abroad. It is my hypothesis that the availability of novelties and the rapid change of fashion in the 18th century had a major impact on women’s dress also in the centuries that followed, and even up to our own time. It can be seen, for example in the new women’s national costume of Kokkola parish reconstructed in 2000.
Sailing and fashion

Kokkola has been named “the town of a thousand sailing ships” and it may be said that most novelties came to Kokkola in the 18th century in the cargo of sailing ships. Thus, even fashion sailed to Kokkola. But what fashion? According to the historian Giorgio Riello, “The world of fashion until the age of industrialisation and commercial capitalism (that occurred in the nineteenth century) was dominated instead by textiles”. Textiles provided a springboard for dress fashion, but information on, at least, French fashions was accessible even to those who had difficulties to travel, in the shape of fashion dolls, dressed and sent out at regular intervals from Parisian modists to fashionable dressmakers and tailors all over Europe (see Cecilie Nachman in this volume). The consumer saw the design as a pattern on a fabric. Design was the outcome of collaboration among designers, manufacturers and consumers. The network of fashionable dressmakers in Sweden was very well informed by dolls and foreign fashion magazines, and the knowledge of fashion also reached the eastern part of Sweden. Thus the import of textiles was a specific phenomenon in Kokkola. The direct import of merchandise and fashion was a means by which also common people were indirectly introduced to fashion by a fairly small group of families with economic or other foreign contacts.

Kokkola was founded in 1620 by Gustav II Adolf, king of Sweden (1611–1632). At the time, the town had a population of less than 1,000 people and even in 1749, it had only 914 inhabitants. When Kokkola became a staple town in 1765, its inhabitants increased by 200 inhabitants and at the end of the 18th century Kokkola had over 1,600 inhabitants. In the 18th century when the society of the country was divided into four classes – the nobility, the clergy, the burghers and the peasantry – Kokkola had no nobility but the group of burghers consisted of merchants, civil servants, notable artisans and seamen. In spite of its small size, Kokkola was among the leading seafaring towns in Finland in the 18th and 19th centuries. All ships had to sail via Stockholm, but after 1765 when sailing directly all over the world was more commonplace, the ship owners and merchants in Kokkola could actively trade overseas. Through the customs accounts of Öresund in Denmark, it is possible to follow what goods ship owners imported from outside the Baltic Sea. With its own maritime transport, Kokkola held a special position in the export and import of goods. The most important harbours for Kokkola’s maritime transport were Amsterdam, Danzig, Köningsberg, Cagliari (Sardinia), Copenhagen, Lübeck and Marseille.

As fashion was dominated by textiles, the new materials had to find their way up north. These new materials were brought by ship to Kokkola first via the two Finnish harbour towns of Hamina (Fredrikshamn) and Lovissa (Lovisa), but mostly via Stockholm. The customs accounts in 1768–1772 indicate that fine materials like bordalou, or single and double camlet (kanla) had been imported to Stockholm from England and fine damask (damast) from France, Pomerania, Denmark and East India. The protocol of the Stockholm Collegium contains lists which mention Stockholm, Abo (Turku), Lovisa (Lovisa) and Gamla karleby (Kokkola) are named, but the customs lists in Kokkola do not contain any imported textiles. The explanation could be that when the cargo came via Stockholm, it was not considered as imports but domestic trade. However, the list for the year 1774 shows that 45 pounds of white cotton yarn (bomullsgarn) and 317 pounds of red Turkish cotton yarn (turkiskt bomullsgarn) were imported from France. In the same year, linen (lin), tow (blär) and raw hemp (hampa) were imported from St. Petersburg, Russia. Cotton (bomull) was imported from Amsterdam in 1775 and 1776. Examining the customs catalogues, it may be seen that all kinds of silk textiles and ribbons were imported to Stockholm and there was also a large number of other sorts of textiles, such as fine thin linen (linne), fine calico (kaliska), uncoloured calico, Dutch linen (holländskt linnen), Warendorf linen and nankeen (nankin). New fashions and new fabrics were not the only novelties that reached Kokkola. The merchants who kept abreast of the times traded in not only the most important imported product, salt, but also, for example lemons, French wines, Dutch tobacco, oil, tamarind, coffee beans, rice, liquorice and all kinds of spices and dyestuffs.

Kokkola is still a place with good commercial relations to other countries. In the 18th century, information on the latest novelties and fashions reached Kokkola quickly, but
after her death in 1790, aged 73. Gustav III's coup d'état when he wrested power from the Swedish government in 1772 and the Russo-Swedish War 1788–1790, which also concerned the eastern part of Sweden. Not only Russian soldiers, but also infectious diseases visited Kokkola from time to time. Researching fashion, clothing and textiles in Kokkola parish is as problematic as there is no concrete extant clothing from the 18th century. The clothes were worn out as the textiles were used, reused and altered. The clothes were inherited by the family, but it was also common to burn clothes when trying to kill infectious bacteria. Moving away and taking all your belongings with you was also a reason why no clothes remain from the time. Thus, what sources remain to base one's research on? There are probate records dating back to 1697 in Kokkola and 1723 in the neighbouring countryside in the Provincial Archives of Vaasa. What is left of the clothing are the names and amounts of different items of clothing, their colours and some comments on their age, but through intensive study of the documentary material, the researcher can find a way to the contents of the wardrobes of 18th-century women, both rich and poor. As the historian Daniel Roche declares, “The inventory after death… provides a tool of debatable but, when all is said and done, reasonably high value.”

Novelties and fashionable dresses

In this chapter we will follow the clothing of four different women, through the inventory of their wardrobes. My fashionable lady with her clothing of the rococo and Gustavian neoclassical style periods is represented by Brita Ahla. She was a part of the bourgeoisie and was twice widowed, thus living most of her life as a single parent. Her first marriage was to a merchant, and her second to a lawyer. We will meet her three times: first in 1751 when she was in her late thirties and a merchant’s widow, next in her mid-forties in 1762, and finally posthumously in April 1791, a few months after her death in 1790, aged 73. Two others are Maria Andersdotter Domar (†1775) and Maria Elisabeth Larsdotte Wäster, née Frijs (†1785). They were both peasant women who lived in the neighbouring countryside but in near contact with Kokkola town. The fourth is Marja Laiberg (†1767), a woman whom I have named “the lady in between”, as she was neither a part of the bourgeoisie, even though her husband was a well-known artisan nor an ordinary peasant woman, even if she lived the major part of her life in the countryside. Novelties and fashion held a great significance in these women’s lives, even if they manifested it in different ways.

The manner of dressing in the 18th century was directed by the courts in Europe and regulated by Swedish sumptuary laws. According to textile scholar Riitta Pylkkänen (1982), the style periods in Finland of the 18th century can be divided into the late Baroque 1720–1745, rococo 1740–1780, the Gustavian late rococo 1770–1785 and the Gustavian neoclassical 1780–1820. Researching fashion and different style periods through inventories of the deceased not only involves attitudes towards fashion, the context, too, has to be considered. The generation the person in question represented is of crucial consequence, being both a social issue as well as an economic one.

The style periods in this study, covering the rococo to the Gustavian neoclassical, are periods of favourable economic conditions, when fine new materials made in the textile mills of Europe and the world over were imported to the eastern part of Sweden. It was a time of remarkable change, but it is between the social layers of the class society that differences are evident, not in the various regions or parishes in the case of Ostrobothnia on the Gulf of Bothnia. The clothing of the peasantry was of one kind and the gentry had yet another dress code. To compare these two groups and their clothing is highly useful. Clothing was a part of one’s property, and the nobility had more possibilities to vary their clothing, but this did not deter the peasants who found other ways to compensate as will be demonstrated below.

We meet Brita Ahla for the very first time in a situation that would be devastating for her and her children. Her husband Johan Brunlöf and three of his friends had drowned in a sailing accident outside Kokkola in September 1750. The inventory after Johan Brunlöf’s death took place in January 1751 and the document consisted of lists and the value of the deceased's
goods and chattels. The inventory provides data of family relations, the inheritors, names of those who attended the meeting, the date of death, and even the cause of death. Inventories in Kokkola have been preserved from 1697 onwards, which is much earlier than ordained by the Swedish law of 1734. As in any other inventory, Johan Brunlöf’s inventory consisted of various categories of things, such as gold, silver, cash, clothes, linen, tin, copper, kitchenware, books and documents concerning debts. The law decreed that ⅛ of one per cent of the undistributed estate’s property had to go towards poor relief, and the list also included the tax for the stamped paper (charta sigillata) as well as the fee to the magistrate for his services.³⁹

Brita Ahla was born in Stockholm in 1717 where her family had escaped Russian soldiers stationed in Kokkola during the period of the Great Hate (1713–1721). Brita Ahla’s family returned to Kokkola, and her father Daniel Ahla continued his career in 1722 as a councilman, being one of the richest and most authoritative merchants in Kokkola.³⁰ The inventory made after the death of Brita Ahla’s first husband is noteworthy for its lack of immovable property. Johan Brunlöf did not own a house. This was because the family lived with Brita Ahla’s parents. After Daniel Ahla’s death in 1733, Brita Ahla’s mother had remodeled the house, and thus the house was owned by her stepfather, Martin Polviander.³¹ All property had been thoroughly listed, even the widow’s clothing. Her most valuable fashionable dress was a worn black damask robe, which she had received as a gift from her parents. It had been her wedding gown. The second-most valuable fashionable dress was a new red robe and she also had a red- and white-striped short damask jacket and a red silk serge jacket.³²

Riita Pylkkänen has shown in her research that, in the rococo period in Finland from 1740–1780, the most important clothing novelty was the robe à la française, which consisted of trompeuse,³³ engageantes,³⁴ consideration,³⁵ stomacher worn over the chest and stomach, poêches which had a one-piece covering and a bodice and a trail. In the back, it had double box Watteau pleats and a stiff under-petticoat, criarde with hip pads and bustles.³⁶ According to Riitta Pylkkänen, one of the reasons why the robe reached Finland and Ostrobothnia so quickly may have been that, during the Lesser

Hate (1721–43) the gentlewomen who had escaped to Stockholm came in contact with the latest fashion and spread it to Finland when they returned home. This is one explanation, but my alternative suggestion is that fashion also once again came to Kokkola via the cargo of sailing ships bringing new textile materials and fabrics, and these new materials and fabrics reached the Kokkola tailors and from them the women in the town. As the fashion arrived in the form of textiles, one can find, for example in Lorenss Steen’s inventory from 1748, that in his shop, he had sold all kinds of materials that were meant for fashionable dresses.³⁷

Brita Ahla’s clothing can be described as those of a respected merchant wife’s fashionable clothing. She had acquired her husband’s position in society through her marriage according to the 1734 law. Her favourite colours were red, yellow and violet, thus the general look does not reveal that it was the clothing of a widow in mourning. She might not have been expected to lose her husband so suddenly, although it seems that death had been present in the family on many occasions. She had given birth to eight children and lost five of them; she even lost her youngest daughter in March 1751. Johan Brunlöf’s inventory reveals that Brita Ahla was left in a very difficult situation at her husband’s sudden death. As a married woman, she had fewer opportunities to act in society; yet, as a widow, her position was different. She was not under guardianship any more, but she had to take over the responsibilities of the debts and loans and even endeavour to obtain compensation for her husband’s death at sea and his lost cargo.³⁸ In spite of much help from relatives, her best course of survival was to re-marry. In the same homestead lived a bachelor, a lawyer named Samuel Möller. Brita Ahla married him in 1753 and gave birth to a son the following year.³⁹

The next time we meet Brita Ahla is in 1762. She was then 45, her second husband had died and it was the time to make an inventory of Samuel Möller’s property. Much had changed: the family lived in their own house, and Brita Ahla’s two daughters had married rich merchants, but her son, Samuel Fredric, was only 8 years old. Brita Ahla’s situation had improved, since as a widow for the second time she was not under guardianship in society, but there were still some unpaid liabilities to take care of. Samuel Möller’s inventory consisted of
lists of different commodity groups, such as gold and silver, tin, copper, brass, tableware, books, linen, clothes, porcelain, receivables and liabilities. Yet, in the eyes of the researcher, something is missing. There is no list of Samuel Möller’s clothes. This is not unusual. Some of the widow’s clothes are listed, but the end of the list contains a note to the effect that the widow had kept the rest of her everyday and best clothes as her right to matrimonial property and they were left unlisted.

Looking at Brita Ahla’s clothes, it can be seen that her best clothes are certainly not on the list. Her clothing seems very modest when compared to her position in society. The most valuable clothes in the inventory are her three gowns: a grey, a black and a blue, and a red satin jacket with 24 small silver buttons. Her three gowns were made of wool, and as they were listed as gowns (klädning), they were made for mourning because her list contains examples of the clothes that were meant for mourning in Finland. In Brita Ahla’s position, she had to be ready to wear a mourning outfit on days of national mourning and on other occasions even if the deceased was not a close relative. The clothes listed in her husband’s inventory probably comprised one third or one fourth of all the clothes she owned. One can only guess at the kind of robes she had and what the entire contents of the wardrobe looked like.

Brita Ahla never married again and she died in 1790. Studying the list of her clothes in her inventory, it can be readily noticed that she had accepted a widow’s role and owned and wore the clothes of a widow. Brita Ahla
lived her last ten years in a fashion period which (in Finland) is called the Gustavian Neoclassical style 1780–1820\textsuperscript{43} and had its own fashion style. Brita Ahla had lived with her daughters and her son, Samuel Fredric Möller and had maids and hired men to help in everyday life. Later she lived with her son’s family and sometimes also with the family of her younger daughter Brita Maria Brunlöf and her husband, the customs inspector and councilman Henric Passanen. Her elder daughter, Maria Elisabeth Rahm (née Brunlöf) had died in 1781.\textsuperscript{44}

As clothing in general, the clothing of a widow was strictly regulated in society. Some of the elements of a mourning suit in the 1780s constituted of black or white robes, a black skirt and a black jacket, a white gauze (flor) collar, white cuffs and white aprons with a long hem, as well as a ribbon, called a pleureuse made of batiste hanging down from the shoulder. Brita Ahla had all these and also black silk stockings as well as black shoes made of cloth. Her most valuable fashionable dress was a black ras de sicile robe with a trompeuse, made of one or two-coloured figured silk: beneath the skirt
was a loose front. The robe was probably not so new, but Brita Ahla had accessories of various kinds that made it fashionable. She had a white airy cambric (kammarduks) headdress, a white silk collar, many ribbons and even a collar of swansdown. She also had a red satin bodice with 9 silver buttons. As shown in the previous inventory in 1762, she had a red satin jacket with 24 small silver buttons. Perhaps the jacket, when it turned unfashionable, was modified into a bodice so it became more fashionable. Brita Ahla was a respectable widow with fine clothes, even when she was old. She was 73 years old when she died, but she was still fashion-conscious and she liked to buy novelties and kept up with the latest news in fashion.45

Fashion and dress in the countryside

How did the women dress in the countryside around Kokkola? To answer this question, we may examine the case of Maria Andersdotter Domar who died in 1775. She was 35 and in her second marriage when she died. She had been
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married for over ten years to Matts Johansson Koustar, but when he died in 1772, she was left alone with three children. Maria Domar was a single parent, who lived in a farmhouse which she had bought together with her husband in 1767. The farm needed a master, and two years later, Maria Domar married Carl Matsson Fordell, who took as his surname the name of the farm, Domar. In 1775, Maria Domar gave birth to twin sons, but died soon after, and her sons died later the same year.  

Maria’s inventory reveals that she owned the estate and the list of her clothes was quite long. Her best skirt was a black satin worsted skirt worth 48 copper thalers, more than the price of a cow, which was worth 36 copper thalers. Maria had altogether nine skirts and seven jackets. The second-best jacket was a black satin jacket, but the most valuable jacket was a red jacket made of worsted (regarn). One of her jackets was knitted, and she had five scarves and six aprons, two of them made of cotton, and she had a black pinner with ribbons. She also had a pair of lambskin gloves (klippingsbandskar), made in Malmö in southern Sweden and imported to Finland. Maria’s clothes date back to the style period of 1740–1780, i.e. the Gustavian late rococo style, but as a peasant woman, her clothing and the materials of her clothes were restricted by sumptuary laws. Maria was not poor. Her inventory includes a knitted jacket, a short fur coat covered with blue camlet and a black silk scarf and a pair of gloves. Many of her clothes were made of imported textiles, such as fashionable calamanco, satin and camlet.

Another inventory which I utilized as research material for this chapter is that of Maria Elisabeth Larsdotter Frijs, dated 2nd March 1785. Her father, Lars Frijs, was the richest and most influential peasant in Karlela (Karleby) and in Korplax village, one of the 13 villages around Kokkola. Lars Frijs married twice and had altogether 21 children, with Maria Elisabeth being his 15th child. She was 26 when she married Johan Andersson Herronen and moved to Kälviä, about 20 km north-east of Kokkola. Her husband died in 1772 and when Maria Frijs married Jacob Mattsson Wäster in 1778 she moved to the village of Rödsö with her only surviving child, Brita Maria, who was 14 years old. In the seven years that Maria, now Wäster, was married to Jacob Wäster, she gave birth to a son and three daughters.  

Maria Wäster’s list of clothes appears quite similar to Maria Domar’s, although there are ten years between these two inventories. Maria Wäster had a black satin skirt and seven other skirts. She also possessed four jackets, the most valuable being made of black satin. Maria had seven aprons and five scarves. She also owned a fur coat covered with blue camlet and gloves imported from Sweden or Germany.

When these two women’s clothes are compared, no major differences may be observed. They were both in their forties when they died. Both had been married twice and they had small children from both marriages. These two women lived at the same time as Brita Ahla. They were born in 1740 and 1746 in the rococo period (1740–1780) and died in the Gustavian late rococo (1770–1785) period. The fashionable dresses were restricted to a small group. Studying the inventories from the second half of the 18th century reveals that the most valuable of the peasant dresses were...
Fig. 3.5 (above): A pinner from the end of the 18th century (K. H. Renlund Museum – Central Ostrobothnian Provincial Museum, Kokkola; Photo: Monica Witting-Kangasniemi).

Fig. 3.6 (left): A detail of the pinner’s lining made of printed cotton or linen (K. H. Renlund Museum – Central Ostrobothnian Provincial Museum, Kokkola; Photo: Monica Witting-Kangasniemi).
made for various celebrations in a person’s life and they were made of monochromatic materials, for the most, of broadcloth (kläde) of various colours.

Maria Domar and Maria Wäster wore skirts, bodices, jackets, scarves and pinners or headdresses made of linen. This clothing ensemble constituted what may be termed common folk dress. Brita Ahla had fashionable dresses, but she also had skirts and jackets that resembled those worn by the peasants. In my current research I found out that fashionable dresses were made of factory-woven and tailor-made garments and the common dresses were made of homespun and home sewn garments is feasible, but not in the case of Kokkola parish. Whenever the peasants near Kokkola had a possibility to purchase imported textiles, they seized this opportunity to do so.

From producers to consumers

Clothing is one of the most visible forms of consumption, but not the only one. When speaking of consumption in the 18th century, the consumer revolution that took place in Europe during 1750–1900 has to be taken into account. Moreover, the inhabitants of the countryside became consumers instead, which also changed their attitude towards clothing and fashion. In the eastern part of Sweden (i.e. present-day Finland), the identical development may be observed. People could afford the novelties and the markets expanded through social emulation and social mobility between the social classes. Furthermore, the working classes in cities and in the countryside participated in this consumer revolution as they had higher incomes and aspired to rise in social status. A crucial element for the expansion of the market was the change in the social structure of the society. In the mid-18th century, 80% of the households were peasant households in rural Sweden. The population increased until the mid-19th century, but the share of peasant households increased only 10% and was 51% of the total population, whereas the share of the landless population increased to 49% of the population.

In Finland or the eastern part of Sweden, the population almost doubled in 1751–1805 from 429912 to 898364 inhabitants. The farmers constituted the majority of the population in 1754 amounting to 77%. In the following half a century, it increased and was 58% in 1805, tenant farmers 24% and landless 18%. Peasants, tenant farmers, and the landless in the countryside in Ostrobothnia constituted 20.4% of the population in 1754 and 19.1% in 1769; farmers’ children and domestic servants 63.6% in 1754, and 66.3% in 1769 respectively. Although it was the nobility who led consumption in the 17th century, the peasants took over the lead in the following century. Consumption in the 18th century had a more powerful impact on the market as the spending groups were larger.

The consumer revolution brought many novelties to Sweden. Porcelain, coffee and tea were the commonest articles, while salt constituted the most crucial of the imported goods. However, those inhabitants of Kokkola – at least the wealthiest who could afford them – were able to enjoy the taste of many exotic fruits and good wines. As a staple town after 1765, Kokkola had its own customs authority. Thus, among the imported goods that were listed by the authorities in 1774, one can, for example find 24 pounds of anchovies, 1530 pounds of coffee beans, 1000 fresh lemons, three canfuls of olives, 380 pounds of rice, 400 pounds of raisins, 12 barrels 24 canfuls French white wine and 31 barrels 29 canfuls cicardon (Chardonnay) wine imported from Marseille. As evidenced by the customs lists in 1781, one barrel eight canfuls red French wine and four barrels three canfuls Malaga wine, 2957 lb (pounds) raisins and seven lb capers were imported from Danzig.

The import of luxury goods was financed by export. In 1777, the export of tar was 1577 barrels to Amsterdam, 1 124 barrels to Hull, 600 barrels to Marseille, 1 103 barrels to Mediterranean countries, including 967 barrels to Ibiza, altogether 5371 barrels. Along with tar, Finland (including Kokkola) primarily exported pitch, planks and nails.

Evidence for the consumption of the new stimulants was not hard to find in the inventories of Brita Ahla, Maria Domar and Maria Wäster. In the inventory after the death of Johan Brunöf, Maria Ahla’s first husband (1751) a new teapot made of copper is mentioned. In the inventory of Brita Ahla’s second husband, Samuel Möller (1762) both a teapot made of copper (which is not new anymore) and a smaller teapot made of copper too can be seen.
Samuel Möller also possessed a teapot made of tin and an old teapot in Kalajoki where he had a cottage where he stayed on market days. This inventory contains a new group of kitchenware: six pairs of teacups, a bowl with a lid, one and a half dozen porcelain plates and a salt caster.  

One of the most influential merchants in Kokkola, Mathias Lithén, died in 1781. He had owned 75% of the commodities of his shop. The inventory reveals not only a common shop but almost a department store full of various selling lines. His shop had all kinds of porcelain kitchenware including teacups, plates and soup bowls in various sizes for sale. It seems that he had had access to imported kitchenware.
At the end of the 18th century, Brita Ahla had owned an old porcelain teapot without a handle, as well as an old teapot made of tin. She spent her last years of life with her daughter's family and brought a major part of her belongings with her. In her inventory, one can find three pairs of teacups with handles, three plates and a teapot of porcelain. There is no mention of coffee consumption, for instance, no recording of coffee beans or coffee cups. Brita Ahla certainly was fond of tea and was used to it. However, when I examined the inventories of Maria Domar and Maria Wäster, there were no tea or coffee pots, no teacups or plates made of porcelain. These stimulants had not yet reached these farmhouses in the villages of Kaustar and Rödsö.

Once again, taking a look at Brita Ahla’s inventory or at all three inventories in order to gain an overall view of her clothing, it is evident that she possessed a large number of stockings. In 1751, she had three pairs of stockings, a pair of them being plain red stockings made of silk. In 1762, Brita Ahla probably had many other stockings, but the inventory again lists three pairs of stockings, of which a pair was made of black silk. According to the third inventory written in 1791, Brita Ahla altogether owned 20 pairs of stockings. She had stockings made of wool, cotton and silk. She had a pair of woollen stockings with red clocks, but the absolute novelties were stockings made of cotton, and Brita Ahla had nine pairs of these. Stockings were seldom listed in the countryside. Maria Domar had a pair of woollen stockings but in the inventories after Maria Wäster none could be found, yet we know that they could not manage without stockings in a climate with cold winters. Stockings are an example of things that could be purchased, and as such, constitutes an example of the consumer revolution.

Gloves are often encountered in the lists of clothes in the inventories of Kokkola and its environs. They were imported from Sweden via Stockholm. A type of gloves, klippingshandskar, was made of sheep leather produced in Skåne (southern Sweden) or in Germany. Another type of gloves was klaffhandskar, yellow or white French gloves. According to the inventory after Brita Ahla’s first husband in 1751, Brita Ahla had no gloves in her possession: at least they were not listed.

In the inventory after Brita Ahla’s second husband (1762), there was a pair of wolf-skin mittens, a pair of chamois leather gloves and a pair of gray gloves with lining, but in the final inventory in 1791, we find a pair of old white silk gloves, eight pairs of old silk mittens and a pair of half-gloves. The inventory of Mathias Lithén’s shop contained a separate heading for gloves which covered ordinary gloves but also gloves with embroidery, a dozen chamois leather gloves and nine dozen kid gloves from Skåne. In the list of silk materials, six pairs of silk gloves and two pairs of silk mittens, a mitten from Skåne and gloves made of wool were to be found.

Only one of my examples from the countryside, Maria Wäster, had a pair of gloves (klippingshandskar) in her inventory, but this did not imply that the other women left their hands uncovered. The fact that gloves are found in the inventories and the possibility to buy them in Kokkola had existed, attests that if one could afford a pair of fine gloves, one could also acquire them.

If the definition of fashion was dominated by textiles in the 18th century, the merchants in Kokkola certainly proved it. In 1746, Christopher Carlbom traded half-silk ribbons, satin and cloth along with tobacco, pots and hats in his shop. Lorens Steen had a representative supply of different coloured broadcloth in 1748, and Johan Rahm sold damask, satin, calamanco, cloth, dimity (parkum), printed cotton and linen in his shop in 1754. His son took over the shop after his father, and, in the inventory of the textiles in his shop in 1768, all kinds of textiles were to be found. Mathias Lithén held a variety of woollen textiles in stock in 1782, and those who wished to buy silk could choose between rus de sicile, damask, bordalou, silk sarge (sari), taffeta (taff) and three-coloured silk (triumphant). The list of ribbons comprised of various materials, such as silk, velvet, wool, and linen, both broad and narrow.

**Whose privilege?**

Porcelain, coffee and tea were the most common novelties, but another big group of novelties was clothing introduced to the market and then followed by sumptuary laws. The first sumptuary law in Sweden was enacted in 1436 and the final in 1794 before Finland became a part of Russia in 1809. The intention of these
laws, also known in many other countries throughout the world, was to regulate the consumption of luxury clothes, drinks and other luxury products for economic, moral, religious reasons or for reasons of maintaining social differences. Moreover, the groups that these laws were directed to were different in various periods: first being related to sex,
then to the body, and finally to citizenship. The sumptuary laws that were enforced during the second half of the 18th century in Sweden were also applicable in Finland. The ethnologist Bo Lönnqvist has studied fashion styles in Helsinki in the 1740s through written protocols of local inventories of clothes. To inspect their availability, all clothes that were made of imported material had to be shown at the town halls all over the country, then be labelled, and finally be entered in protocols, and the owners had to sign these inventories. Labels were also made and sent all over the country to be even applied on servants’ hats.

How did the sumptuary laws apply to people who lived up north in Ostrobothnia and Kokkola? It is likely that they concerned them in exactly the same way as the inhabitants of Helsinki and other towns in Finland. The laws were enforced in the province of Ostrobothnia, but regrettably there are no protocols left to indicate if the same kind of events had occurred in Kokkola as in Helsinki, but genteel dressing can be examined in the inventories of the deceased.

Considering the sumptuary laws from the gentlewomen’s point of view, I shall take as an example Brita Ahla. She was born in 1717 as a merchant’s daughter, thus the sumptuary law of 1731 applied to her. According to the law, dresses had to be sewn exactly as specified, without any changes. Only monochromatic silk was permitted and unauthorised decoration was prohibited. If one wished to have a pannier, which Brita Ahla had in 1751, a tax had to be paid for it. From the outset, these under-petticoats had been intended only for gentlewomen of high rank, but the wording of the law had been too diffuse, so the problem was solved with a special tax. The sumptuary law from 1734 prohibited the import of silk ribbons, and in 1735, the import of used dresses from abroad. In 1739, all foreign materials had to be marked and one had to be aware of and follow the instructions and know one’s position in society, wearing the right clothes for the right fashion period. These were not the only sumptuary laws that Brita Ahla had to deal with, but there is no evidence whatsoever of any problems with the laws in her case.

If one considers the sumptuary laws from the point of view of a peasant woman, there were strict norms as to the materials and shapes permitted. It was certainly necessary to know one’s station in life but for a married peasant woman, her clothes constituted her most important property. The laws also applied to Maria Domar and Maria Wäster. For example, the law from 1766 permitted them to use only domestic silk and half-silk textiles and these only for pinners and scarves, aprons had to be made from domestic printed cambric (kammarduk).

Marja Laiberg, the lady “in between”

There have been many discussions on how the peasantry dressed in the 18th century. Bourgeois and peasant clothing have, at least in Sweden and Finland, been considered as opposing pairs of each other. Thus the dominating conception of clothing in society seems to have been based on formism with its dualistic categories. However, as Bo Lönnqvist wrote in 1976, “The point at where fashion ends and folk costume begins is a question which requires careful weighing up and one which has not yet been defined with regard to present day usage.” He also points out that fashion phenomena have not been beyond the reach of the peasantry. Coastal regions such as Ostrobothnia were influenced by urban culture. It has been seen both visually and in concrete form in Kokkola and the neighbouring countryside. Now, more than 30 years later, the question of the boundary is still in the air. That is why I wished to take a closer look at Marja Laiberg and her life.

Her husband Johan Nilsson Bastubacka was born in 1709 in the village of Alaveteli (Nedervetil), about 15 km north-east of Kokkola. He changed his surname to Backman when he studied in Wästerås, Sweden to become a church painter. He returned to Kokkola and obtained his privilege for a wallpaper factory in 1741. He was an artisan and an active church painter who decorated most of the churches in Ostrobothnia. Even the medieval Kaarlela Church, which later in the 18th century was rebuilt as a cruciform church, still has a decoration around its altarpiece made by Backman.

Johan Backman married Marja Laiberg, the daughter of a parish clerk, Thomas Laiberg. Marja Laiberg’s father had died when she was three years old and she had lived most of her
life alone with her mother, Brita Scherping, on a farmhouse in the village of Kaustar near Kokkola. The artist Backman bought two houses in Kokkola and Marja Laiberg’s mother, Brita Scherping lived with the young couple until she died in 1750. Marja Laiberg gave birth to eight children, but only two daughters survived. The two youngest siblings were born in Alaveteli where the family moved after Brita Scherping’s death. Johan Backman died in 1765 and Marja Laiberg in 1767. The Backman family had lived for about 15 years in the countryside. This kind of life was not unfamiliar to Marja Laiberg who had lived in a farmhouse most of her life. However, she was neither a peasant’s daughter nor a peasant’s wife as her father had been a parish clerk and her husband travelled around Ostrobothnia working as an artist and a carpenter.79

In Johan Backman and Marja Laiberg’s inventory, one encounters several surprises. If you look for teapots or cups, you cannot find anything, but an old tea table gossips that tea was not unknown in the family. The clerk had probably not been so precise when he had written down the list of furniture and kitchenware, but in the list can be found two mirrors, half a dozen porcelain soup plates and five plain plates, which by this time were unique.80

Marja Laiberg’s jackets were made of three different silks: taffeta, Russian damask and bordalou; she also possessed a red and yellow vertical striped skirt and one made of black satin. Marja Laiberg’s clothing did not include any fashionable dresses, but she was conscious of the latest fashion in her own time. When I researched the life of Marja Laiberg through the joint inventory of her husband and herself, the Kokkola and Alaveteli (Nedervetil) Church

Fig. 3.10: A silk scarf from the 18th century (Private collection; Photo: Helena Jern).
records and Johan Backman’s paintings, I was struck by Bo Lönnqvist’s statement of the peasants in Ostrobothnia. When clothing was a part of one’s property and it was not possible to achieve more variety or increase the value of this property, this did not prove an impediment to the peasants, as they had their own ways of dealing with the situation. 

I find Marja Laiberg one of the 18th-century women who could be herself in many ways, even if her position in society now appears quite blurred as the lady “in between” until more research is undertaken in order to know her better.

**Conclusion**

This chapter, as shown above, dealt with novelties and fashionable dresses in Kokkola parish in Ostrobothnia in the second half of the 18th century. The subject has not been discussed earlier from this point of view and this chapter is a beginning of a deeper microhistorical research of peasant women, their property, clothing and attitude to fashion. It seems that fashion from this perspective has been discussed by ethnologists in a formalised and categorical way. Yet, it appears that these interpretations are on the retreat and the time is ripe to study more precisely the kind of fashion that seemed to dominate in the parish of Kokkola.

There was an economic upturn in the second half of the 18th century when ship-owning flourished and the first textile manufactory were founded in the coastal towns. The bourgeoisie and the peasants living in the surrounding countryside were often related to each other, and, at least around Kokkola, they had many businesses together because of the production and export of tar. The differences between the social classes were reduced, which could later be seen in the clothing.

I have compared the clothing of Brita Ahla, Maria Domar and Maria Wäster, knowing that Brita Ahla belonged to the bourgeoisie and the other two to the peasantry. Brita Ahla’s inventory reveals that, even if she had fashionable dresses, she did, as it was common, wear out her clothes and as an old woman did not purchase new clothes. Her clothes might seem to be a little old-fashioned, but we have also to consider that she was 73 years old when she died.

Which social group did Marja Laiberg belong to? As a clerk’s daughter living in the countryside, she did not belong to the peasantry, as an artisan’s wife living in Kokkola she belonged to the bourgeoisie, although sometimes the artisans in towns too were considered commoners. Marja Laiberg lived in the countryside as one of the daughters-in-law of the Bastubacka estate. Johan Backman had three brothers and five sisters and their father had been married three times. In order to compare Marja Laiberg’s clothing with the other women of the Bastubacka family, I examined six other inventories. In these documents, one encounters both spinning wheels and looms but also all the fine skirts, bodices, jackets and aprons made of domestic or imported materials that were permitted wear for a peasant woman. Marja Laiberg and her husband Johan Backman lived in a modest house when Johan’s two brothers Lars and Matts Bastubacka shared the Bastubacka estate. In spite of her modest lifestyle, Marja Laiberg maintained her way of dressing, and in my view, she was a kind of a role model for her sisters-in-law. Fashion diffusion enabled by the possibilities to purchase imported textiles is evident in the inventories of the deceased. Brita Ahla possessed fashionable dresses, Maria Domar and Maria Wäster had common folk dresses but Marja Laiberg’s clothing was something “in between” these two possibilities, more likely fashionable commoner dresses.

The inventories reveal that all kinds of novelties from Europe and all over the world reached Kokkola and the neighbouring countryside in the second half of the 18th century rather rapidly. Even if the sumptuary laws applied to the inhabitants of Ostrobothnia too, ships brought new materials for weavers, dyers, tailors and dressmakers to make clothes in the latest fashions. To study fashion and clothing of the 18th century in Kokkola parish is challenging but fascinating. The women in Kokkola parish took an interest in fashion, and it appears that they found ways to satisfy their interest.

**Notes**

1. The present state of Finland was a part of Sweden from about 1100 to 1809.
2. See, for example Ojala (1996).
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3 Fashion from the Ship: Life, fashion and fashion dissemination in and around Kokkola

Ribeiro (2010), 218.
Miller (2010), 214.
One of the first Swedish fashion magazines, Konst och Nyhets Magasin för medborgare i alla klasser, was published in 1818–1823.
Lönqvist (1976), 128–129.

A staple town is a town with staple rights, i.e. the right to conduct foreign trade freely.
Jugner (1990), 16–17.

A period of The Great Northern War 1700–1721 with Sweden on the one side, and Denmark, Saxe-Poland, the Tsardom of Russia and from 1715 also Prussia and Hanover, on the other side, that had harsh consequences for Finland.

Another period in the same war with Russia attacking Finland. This time not so heavily and for a shorter time.

The war between King Gustav III and Catherine II of Russia.
Roche (1996), 17.
The Provincial Archives of Vaasa = PAV.
Kokkola Church archives 1723–1800 = PAV.
Gustav III, king of Sweden 1771–1792.

A pinner is a lady's hard hat with a piece of cloth or lace in the front. See Fig. 3.5.

Bibliography

Sources

Abbreviations:
KCA = Kokkola church archives 1723–1800
ACA = Alaveteli church archives 1755–1800
PAV = The Provincial Archives of Vaasa/Vasa landsarkiv

Annual reports. Foreign trade, series 1.
The Provincial Archives of Vaasa:
Christopher Carlholm’s inventory 20.2.1746
Lorenz Sting’s inventory 29.2.1748
Johan Brunlöf’s inventory 25.1.1751
Johan Rahm’s inventory 24.9.1754; Christina Lithén (Johan Rahm jr.’s wife)’s inventory 28.11.1768. PAV.
Mathias Lithén’s inventory 11.1.1782. PAV.

Literature

Andersson, Eva (2011) Kön, kläder och konsumtion i svenska överflödsförordningar under (nästan) 400 år. Abstract, Sessionen En tråd genom historien. Textil, mode


Creating Fashion: Tailors’ and seamstresses’ work with cutting and construction techniques in women’s dress, c. 1750–1830

Pernilla Rasmussen

This chapter sheds new light on methods for the cutting and construction of women’s fashionable dress during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Earlier research on older tailoring theory has chiefly concentrated on men’s clothes, claiming that systems for cutting men’s clothing developed in the early 19th century, while systems especially for women were created as late as in the second half of the century. These circumstances can be related to the organization of the tailoring craft in Britain, where it was only exceptionally that women’s dress was considered a part of the tailors’ work. My argument is that it is possible to discern two different traditions for the organization of the tailoring craft corresponding to two different traditions for the manufacture of fashionable female clothes in Europe during the period. I suggest that these differing conditions were of great significance for manufacturing techniques and the possibilities for technical development. This had particular consequences for the field of female fashion. The manufacturing techniques of French and English seamstresses involved simpler methods of both cutting and sewing, whereas the tailors in Scandinavia, belonging by tradition to the German artisan sphere showed vigorous development in both processes in the 18th century. The different working methods left traces in the costumes to be studied. This chapter provides examples of how tailors and seamstresses interpreted ruling fashion in the light of the different competences of their trades, and highlights the mutual influence among manufacturing techniques, the organization within the fashionable trade and changes in fashion.

The organization of tailors and seamstresses

From the Middle Ages onwards, tailoring in most parts of Europe was regarded a male craft, often organized in guilds. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the manufacturing of fashionable clothes for both sexes was equally considered part of the tailors’ craft. However, from the late 17th century, this was about to change. In 1675, tailors in French cities like Paris and Rouen, partly lost their exclusive right to garments in the female wardrobe to a newly established guild for seamstresses, Maîtresses Couturières (see Fig. 4.1). This profound change with a new division of labour in the craft has
been interpreted in terms of feminization – a negotiation between men’s and women’s interests – and is often accorded a technical explanation. At this time, a new principle for women’s fashionable dress emerged. The stiff bodice and skirt were replaced by the mantua, originally a kind of nightgown used as informal dress at home. The simple construction based on draping did not require a specialist’s skill in cutting or sewing and was therefore understood as work for seamstresses. The remains of the tailor’s craft is often said to have gradually gained a higher professionalism. The new fashion led to a diversification of garments and separate stays were worn as an undergarment. The corset shaped the body and functioned as a firm foundation on which the straight widths of the mantua could be folded and pinned. Whalebone, essential for stay-making, became the centre of the conflict between seamstresses and tailors. According to their privileges, seamstresses were not permitted to use whalebone and hence were shut out from the most prestigious and profitable orders. Stay-making was established as a separate, highly qualified specialty of tailoring, an exclusively male profession. The seamstresses, on the other hand, strongly argued the natural connection between sewing and femininity. Britain experienced a similar development where a dressmaker was even called a mantua-maker.

In countries with a guild system organized after German standards, like Sweden, the traditional organization of the craft survived and the making of clothes for both men and women remained a male craft during the 18th century. In Sweden, the fashion trade and crafts...
were regulated in detail. Outer clothes of high quality, including fashion garments, were always commissioned as unique, made-to-measure objects. Sumptuary laws dictated fabrics, models and decorations. It was forbidden to manufacture new, ready-made clothes for an anonymous market and the import of ready-made foreign clothes was banned. Used clothes were sold in a flourishing second-hand market; by auctions, by advertising or in special shops in town. Tailoring was a craft with a low status. The expensive fabrics belonged to the customer. The tailor himself merely owned his simple tools and was poorly paid for the making of a new garment. Stiff competition for clients, difficulties in establishing larger workshops, seasonal unemployment and legal restrictions made the craft one of the least profitable, and the tailors, the poorest group among craftsmen.⁵

Women were strictly excluded from the professional craft in the towns. There were powerful legal and cultural obstacles. Training and a career in the craft were restricted to men. To pursue business, one had to be a burgher, a freeman of a town. For craftsmen, this required becoming a master and being admitted to a guild. It was inconceivable that a woman could enjoy the economic and political rights and obligations that accompanied this.⁶ The privileges of the guilds included training, manufacturing and control over the number of workshops. Precisely the sole right to a certain area was an important element which drew attention to the boundaries drawn between different crafts and tradesmen, legal craftsmen and interlopers.⁷

Seamstresses gradually replace tailors

Beyond the regulated craft and trade, only a few occupations were open to female practitioners. Upperclass women had even fewer opportunities, but several of these were connected to domestic textiles and needlework.⁸ A wardrobe was

Fig. 4.2: Carl Johan Ljunggren, Scene from an auction-room, 1805 (Uppsala universitetsbibliotek).
considered clearly divided into outer clothes and undergarments of linen. Correspondingly, there were two manufacturing traditions, with tailoring being culturally understood as male-coded by tradition and linen work, female. The practical needlework that girls were taught at an early age was related to the linen work, including underwear and many dress accessories. It was based on simple cutting, although the sewing could be done with great care. Linen work was primarily done at home but it was also in this unregulated area that women often found an income through needlework. Tailoring required cutting, knowledge of special sewing techniques and materials and therefore required trained, specialized labour. It was unusual for women to have a complete mastery of how to make fashion garments. Home dress-making developed on a larger scale during the 19th century but became really important first in the 20th century.

The changes in the division of labour in the manufacturing of women's wear in France and Britain in the late 17th century were delayed by more than hundred years in Sweden. Up to the middle of the 18th century, the same masters made clothes for both men and women. Later, specialization became more common. Female tailors, i.e. men who worked with women's dress, however, were a small group within the profession. Whereas the male tailors seem to have concentrated their manufacture on men's clothes, it was more common for female tailors to make clothes for both sexes. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that their position in the craft was weaker and their work less valued. In the 1780s, tailors still made fashion clothes for women, but thirty years later, seamstresses could perfectly well do the same work, at least in Stockholm. These changes were possible, although, until 1846, tailoring belonged to the ordinary trade whose privileges were regulated by the guild legislation from 1720.

The process whereby the gender division of labour changed can be interpreted in terms of both emasculation and feminization. The turn of the 19th century was a time of political, social and cultural upheaval which had a powerful effect on tailors and their professional practice. The age experienced a growing surplus of unmarried women without a living, a problem particularly noticeable in the upper classes. Following French models, it was argued that tailoring should be reserved for women. At the same time, male labour had to be made available for more appropriate needs in society. By linking tailoring to needlework instead of cutting, scope was created in the public debate for questioning the masculinity of tailoring and hence also the legitimacy of the profession. The gender division of labour in the field of clothing was condemned as being economically indefensible. The guilds generally became questioned and the attitude of the authorities to female work became more encouraging, not least, in a field like needlework and fashion which was increasingly being perceived as something inherently female. When the professional character of the occupation weakened, opportunities were opened for women, creating space for feminization. Female fashions ceased to be a part of a tailor's work without much ado. Women themselves do not appear to have struggled actively to enter the guild-regulated craft. A precondition, however, was the loss of control over training by the tailor's guilds. From around 1800, it was possible to obtain apprenticeships in dressmaking through female channels: boarding schools, tuition in the home, or as an apprentice with a seamstress.

For tailors, the first half of the 19th century was a time of reorientation. The manufacture of clothes for women, a small occupation with little esteem, became politically and culturally untenable. By voluntarily giving up this part of their profession, tailors gained a respite for the part that remained, and thus (without disturbing the guild system) discarded what had become a burden. This led to a renewal of the profession, and through the development of cutting, tailoring acquired a more scientific character which reinforced the male connotations of the profession and distanced it from the female sphere of competence that was needlework. At the same time, attempts were made to enter new professional spheres. Ultimately, this process resulted in a higher degree of professionalism in the areas that remained within the tailor's domain. The manufacturing of women's clothes, on the other hand, underwent a gradual loss of professionalism through the dressmakers and was regarded as equivalent to other unqualified occupations available to women outside the guilds.

The transformation of the craft of tailoring and dressmaking in Sweden should not be
regarded as sudden. To begin with, it was an urban phenomenon, as in England and France, and chiefly concentrated in the capital, linked solely to fashion garments.\textsuperscript{17} The change in the craft of clothes-making was a part of a general cultural turn, whereby a more polarized view of the sexes was particularly prominent, and where it became increasingly important to distinguish male from female.\textsuperscript{19} It can also be seen in the light of a slow transformation of the economic system. For the customer, the tailor was a part of the old patriarchal outlook according to which the relationship affected the lives of the parties far beyond a purely commercial arrangement. The seamstress, on the other hand, was more a part of the modern cash economy.\textsuperscript{19}

The differences in the organization of the craft between various parts of Europe are well known, but in studies of fashionable dress, the awareness and consequences of these circumstances have been limited. In fact, the conditions for the craft were of great significance for the actual work of tailors and seamstresses – for manufacturing techniques and the possibilities for technical development. This had particular consequences in the field of female fashion. The differences in the organization resulted in corresponding differences in craft techniques. I suggest that two separate traditions for the manufacture of female fashion clothes in Europe in the 18th and early 19th centuries can be identified. The French and English seamstresses’ technique involved simpler methods of both cutting and sewing, whereas the tailors in the German sphere showed vigorous development in both processes in the 18th century.

A technical turning point in tailoring

For the manufacturing of fashion garments, knowledge of different materials and fabrics, cutting and sewing was required; the two latter constituting the main technical areas of tailoring. Cutting was regarded a fundament for both tailoring and fashionable dress. Although tailoring was one of the most common crafts, not much has hitherto been known about this activity, or, of the manufacturing techniques used for female fashions.

Tailoring handbooks and written descriptions of the manufacturing of clothes from the 17th and 18th centuries are rare.\textsuperscript{20} François-Alexandre de Garsault’s \textit{Art du Tailleur} (1769) written for the \textit{Description des Arts et Métiers} seems to be the only one which described in detail the cutting and sewing of fashionable female garments in the 18th century. This is a well-known and often used source, but it has its limitations, as the author himself was not a trained tailor and his description was not intended as instruction for other tailors.\textsuperscript{21} The increased number of publications on tailoring dating from the last decades of the 18th century onwards coincided with a general growth of printed books, but has been interpreted foremost as a sign of technical development within tailoring theory. Unlike earlier descriptions, these books were written by tailors for tailors. Still the information is limited, and new sources in the field can rapidly transform our knowledge of the subject. The first systematic drafting systems are said to have been developed and published during the first decades of the 19th century, although some assume that the systems were used and orally transmitted already in the 18th century.\textsuperscript{22} The drafting systems offered systematic and repeatable methods to construct a well-fitted pattern from scratch with the help of the client’s body measurements and mathematical calculations with a minimum of fittings.\textsuperscript{23}

The explanation for the technical renaissance has been sought in the changes of male fashions during this period. As the focus moved from elegant fabrics to a perfect cut and fit, the male shape increasingly became a product of the tailor’s skill. According to changes in society, the demand for well-fitted, fashionable clothes grew correspondingly. Systematic drafting methods facilitated the most demanding part of the manufacturing and made a workshop more competitive on the already existing market. English tailors are assumed to have led fashion as well as technical progress.\textsuperscript{24}

The influence from contemporary ideas and art was important. This was a time with an optimistic belief in the individual human ability to observe and solve problems that can be studied, not merely within tailoring, but in the growing textile industry in its entirety. Tailors were occupied with the study of the human body, its measurements and proportions. Inspiration came from the fine arts and the neoclassical wave in the second half of the 18th century. Studies of antique Greek and Roman sculpture stimulated the interest to analyse
the idealized beauty of the human body. But
art from other periods, like the Renaissance,
proved inspirational as well.²⁵

I suggest that the considerable increase of
published tailoring books should be viewed to
a higher degree as a codification of existing
practice rather than a sole result of a new
technical development within the profession.
Well-established methods were sorted through
and formulated, and set down on paper for the
first time, but the authors would also modify
the processes and add new findings. This
codification occurred in both documentation
and reform. This approach clearly reveals the
continuity of the craft. The value of the books
as a source is thus not primarily related to the
size of the issues or their circulation, but can
be seen as a summary of the knowledge in the
craft at a certain time.

By abandoning the oral tradition, tailors
emphasized tailoring as both an art and a
science.²⁶ The process can be interpreted as a
way to enhance the status of the craft and to
meet the new demands of bourgeois culture
for training and professionalism.²⁷ It became
popular to appear as a teacher in cutting, to
develop and publish new drafting systems and
argue one’s own system’s advantages over one’s
rivals.²⁸ This manifests a new tendency where
the collectivism of earlier was transformed
into a focus on the individual as a specialist.

Stationary technique in cutting
methods for women’s fashionable
dress

English and French tailoring books from
this period give the impression of a craft
dominated by male tailors manufacturing for
male clients with the addition of some female
garments that the tailors had reserved as their
domain. The making of women’s clothing was
regarded a foreign branch: “as different as that
of a cabinet maker and a carpenter”.²⁹ Some
tailors argued that their systems for men could
be adjusted to suit women, but, in general,
fashionable dress for women was marginalized
in the profession.³⁰ This corresponds to the
development of the craft’s organization in
France and Britain where women’s dress
gradually left the tailors’ domain and primarily
became the occupation of seamstresses.

These seamstresses in France and Britain
were excluded from both enhanced status
and progress in cutting techniques well into
the 19th century. Earlier research agrees that
the development of drafting methods for men
was in an intense phase while the technical
renewal of women’s clothing was almost non-
existent.³¹ As fashionable dress is regarded as
an internationally widespread phenomenon and
similar in character, its technical homogeneity
has seldom been questioned. The social
historian and curator Claudia Kidwell assumes
that the oldest drafting systems for womenswear
were developed during the 1820s and 1830s,
but in lack of written sources, she stresses the
American, Aron A. Tentler’s A new system for
measuring and cutting ladies’ dresses […] with an
Arithmetical Table… (1842) as the first system
devised for women. It is described as a divisional
system based on the proportion of the bust
measurement and provided a punched device
through which points in the construction were
marked.³² Kidwell argues that cutting methods
for women, unlike systems for male clothing,
depended on this kind of specialized tool,
because of the different levels of education
and skill among tailors and dressmakers.³³ This
illustrates how differently men’s and women’s
work and their relation to new technology
can be interpreted. While measuring tools
for tailors developed in the 19th century are
generally taken as a sign of high competence
and a scientific turn in the craft, the same tools
used by women have instead been regarded as
a necessary aid to women with limited ability
to learn something as new and complicated as
pattern drafting.

The stationary technique is confirmed by
the new books for women on needlework,
published from the late 18th century onwards,
e.g. Instructions for Cutting out Apparel for the
poor… (1789), The Lady’s Economical Assistant…
(1808), The Alphabetical Receipt Book, and Domestic
Advisor (1826), Workwoman’s Guide… (1838).³⁴
In the 1840s, books with simple methods for
dressmaking were published in England, e.g.
The Ladies’ Handbook of Millinery, Dressmaking
and Tatting (1843), M. J. Howell, The Handbook
of dressmaking (1845) and Eliza M. Cory, The
Art of Dressmaking (1849), but it was not until
the 1870s that women in the English-speaking
world on a larger scale were offered more
advanced cutting methods, then published in
practical journals.³⁵ The two types of written
sources to the manufacturing of fashionable
dress – books on tailoring and those on
needlework— are strongly gendered. The first focused on cutting and viewed the profession as a craft based on science— uniting theory and practice. The second emphasized the sewing, where the work involved was not called a craft, but merely needlework.
The development of cutting techniques for women in Germany

However, previously overlooked German sources paint another picture. Handbooks from the beginning of the 19th century on tailoring for both sexes, aimed at male professionals, are probably unique for the German area. Johann Samuel Bernhardt’s book, *Anleitung, den menschlichen Körper, besonders aber den weiblichen […] zu kleiden und zu verschönern…* first published 1811, and in a second unchanged edition 1820, seems to be one of the oldest preserved German-language publications on tailoring (Fig. 4.3). After Garsault (1769), Bernhardt is probably the earliest, most detailed source to the making of women’s clothing. Another tailor who dared take the step and become a writer was F. Heyder with *Das Ganze der Kleidermacherkunst…* (1824). The works of Bernhardt and Heyder contain detailed descriptions of manufacturing both men’s and women’s dress, and thus show a different attitude to what the craft should include. There is a great deal to suggest that they compiled older, well-established methods in use in the late 18th century.

The German books show a change over time that indicates a negotiation of the craft’s organization during the first part of the 19th century. Unlike their predecessors, Auguste Heindorf’s *Praktischer Unterricht…* (1832) and in Swedish translation Fredrika Euler’s *Ny praktisk anvisning…* (1842), both address a female reader. Heindorf concentrates on what can be defined as a female field of knowledge, cut and construction of clothing, for although both men and women are included, his main interest lies in the female wardrobe. Euler only deals with the latter. The drafting system for women, developed by Heinrich Klemm, points in the same direction. This system was published from 1844 in the journal *Bekleidungskunst für Damen – Allgemeine Muster-Zeitung* together with fashion reports, short stories and descriptions of needlework, all with a female target group in mind. The methods described in both these types of handbooks should nevertheless be regarded as cutting systems, attesting that these were available in ladies’ tailoring much earlier than has previously been thought. The systems of Bernhardt, Heyder, Heindorf, Euler and Klemm contain equally advanced cutting methods as their contemporary male counterparts and cannot be compared to methods published in English sources mentioned earlier. Consequently, they illustrate that the technical development in ladies’ tailoring took place in parallel to the identical process for men’s clothes. Moreover, it was done on its own terms and not as a part of, or an exception to, the principles established for men’s clothing.

During the second half of the 19th century, books with advanced cutting technique for women’s clothing continued to be published in German. Similarly to Heindorf and Euler, Philipp Kurz addresses the female reader in *Vollständiges Lehrbuch der praktischen Damenbekleidung* (1857). Although dressmakers in most cases had now taken over the craft, it was chiefly German tailors who developed cutting methods for women’s clothes; the target group, however, was broader and many of the systems and methods that were published in the decades around the middle of the century did not have the unambiguous professional features. With the help of these books, home-dressmakers could produce better and more well-fitted garments for themselves and their families; women with limited previous knowledge could easily learn to sew for clients, while experienced and professional dressmakers could improve and make their working methods more effective.

The female body in the eyes of the tailor

The French and English tailors’ attitude towards the technical possibilities of the fashionable female dress affected their interest and had consequences for the development of knowledge in the field. As manufacturing of women’s clothes was neither associated with professional status nor with technical possibilities, the incitement for renewal was small. It is possible that English tailors were not taught the rudimentary techniques of dealing with the female anatomy and therefore did not master the construction of female garments to such an extent that they had the capacity to develop new methods. However, the physical part of the tailors’ work did not discourage the German tailors. Bernhardt declares the necessity for tailors to be well acquainted with anatomy since this was a condition for creating beautiful, well-fitted and healthy clothes. The
male and female body are described in equal detail but the author states that the curvaceous female body was especially demanding to dress.\textsuperscript{38}

Like the French and English tailors of their time, researchers of today have often regarded female garments less technically demanding than their male counterparts, not least, after the changes in female fashions around 1800, which is said to have required knowledge in draping rather than cutting.\textsuperscript{39} That dressmakers continued to use their traditional working methods is thereby explained as natural. Earlier research also suggests that the dresses fashionable in the period were so simple that they encouraged the development of home dressmaking.\textsuperscript{40} By their appearance in the art of the period, the dresses can indeed be easily interpreted as uncomplicated in their construction. However, there is no empirical support for this in German and Swedish sources, on the contrary, the customers grew even more dependent on professional competence when the principles for fashionable dress changed fundamentally.\textsuperscript{41} The German tailors argued that the fashion changes in fact created the need for handbooks like their own and they emphasized the challenge of the high-waisted bodices and the new ideal with a prominent, rounded bust.\textsuperscript{42} The achievement of the three-dimensional form over the bust remained the most demanding aspect of constructing women’s clothes during the century.\textsuperscript{43} The differences in the judgment of the required competence can be explained by the assumption of many dress historians that, what looks simple, is also simple to manufacture.

**Five cutting methods for women’s dress**

With handbooks and other instructions on tailoring published in Britain, France, Germany and Sweden as a source, it is possible to identify five different cutting methods available during the period. According to Aldrich, the earlier *indirect methods* were profoundly different from the later *direct methods*. The indirect methods reproduced pattern shapes based on measurements from existing garments with the help of simple geometry. The direct methods, on the other hand, were based on the human anatomy and the pattern was constructed with the help of a drafting system based on mathematics with more advanced geometry and anthropometry.\textsuperscript{44}

The five cutting methods can be related to the differing conditions for the craft’s organization in Europe. The first method of copying by drawing a pattern from an old garment or unpicking a garment and utilizing the parts as a pattern\textsuperscript{45} and the second method, to drape, pin and cut the shape of the garment pieces directly on the customer’s body, the so-called “pin-to-the-form”\textsuperscript{46} are chiefly associated with seamstresses as a professional group, who prevailed in the cutting of fashion garments for women in England and France. Method 1 was suitable for the simplest garments used in order create “a facsimile” garment, while method 2 was used for complicated parts of fashionable garments in the most expensive fabrics.\textsuperscript{47} This later method made it possible to shape more complex structures despite limited skills in cutting. No evidence has been found of this practice in the German sphere of influence.

In Sweden, the tailors formed and drew the parts of the garment on the cloth in the way that was described in the earliest printed Spanish tailoring books dating from the late 16th century and in handwritten master books from Austria.\textsuperscript{48} Through years of experience, the master tailor knew his constructions by heart and could draw them directly on the fabric. This can be considered a third method. According to the fourth method, the tailors could proceed from a pattern that they adjusted to the customer’s measurements. Tailors with limited cutting skills could use method 1 when making simple garments.\textsuperscript{49} Even as early as the 18th century, tailors worked according to a fifth method – proportional scale graduations for different sizes, and, some years into the 19th century, also drafting systems especially devised for women’s clothes. Swedish tailors used the same methods for cutting garments for both sexes, and the level of construction technique here was generally higher than in countries where seamstresses dominated the manufacture. In the second half of the 19th century, the main tailoring methods survived, even after seamstresses increasingly undertook the task of making female fashion clothes.

A closer analysis of the texts containing instructions for cutting methods and systems for female fashionable dress reveals that these methods developed in tandem and
independently of methods for male dress, as they were based on older tailoring theory using other methods and techniques.

Tailoring theory – systems for drafting and grading

With the drafting systems, a new principle for pattern construction was established. The new direct methods reveal a desire to leave the old, indirect methods based on experience, since they were viewed as imprecise and capricious. It is easy to receive the impression that, before the systems, tailors only randomly obtained an acceptable fit. However, the drafting systems should not be overestimated. Even if the drafting systems were soon available in a number of variations, they did not fully replace the older methods – the craft offered more than one way to obtain a certain result. Cutting remained part of a craft that required many years of experience and a trained eye, personal talent and intuition. However, cutting was an art with limitations. During the 18th and 19th centuries, it was characterized by a high degree of standardization where the tailor’s skills involved a personal touch to the finishing of the garment, adjusting to the client’s moving body, economizing on the fabric and fulfilling the requirements within the given frame.

Early drafting systems

The early theoretical drafting systems can be divided into three groups: divisional systems based on proportions, direct measurement based only on specific body measurements and combination systems which used a mixture of divisional and direct measurements. The Old Thirds System (the ⅓-calulation) was a simple divisional system based on the discovery of proportion between the bust measurements and the other body measurements required for a pattern construction; the back length was half of the bust and the measurement, further divided in three parts, gave the half back, the armscye (armhole) and the front etc. Calculations based on the bust measurement were characteristic for many divisional systems which predominated in the first half of the 19th century, despite the fact that they actually were based on false premises. The proportions could be settled mathematically, but few male customers had the ideal body. Used for women’s wear, the bust made the division in thirds inadequate. The development of combination systems was a way to solve these problems using proportional measurements as well as direct body measurements. Systems based on direct measurement worked solely with body measurements. During the 19th century, all three types of drafting systems had their representatives and many were long lived.

The significance of the tape measure for the development of drafting systems

Cutting and pattern drafting is based on measuring. Earlier researchers consider the tape measure and the use of stable units in inches and centimetres, presented as a novelty in tailoring books from the early 19th century, as an important factor for the development of drafting systems. Yet, at the same time, they ask why the use of the new technologies spread so slowly among tailors. This can be explained, if we consider the advantages of the older measuring methods using a notched paper strip or a string with knots. Measuring in this way did not require pen and paper and made it possible for an illiterate person, ignorant of arithmetic, to learn pattern construction. Despite the seeming advantages of the new method, knowing the exact amount of inches or centimetres a certain measure represented was of little practical use.

I suggest that the early development of drafting systems was independent of the tape measure, and that the old measuring method, on the contrary, stimulated this development. Unlike the tape measure, the notched paper strip was not only a device for taking measurements, but an important tool used in pattern construction and cutting. The possibility of easily folding or doubling the paper strip was a quick way to divide individual measurements in units used in the drafting. Tailors familiar with spatial rather than mathematical thinking noted how the notches on the strip often related to each other in the same way. Early drafting systems were built on such simple observations. Among the earliest published drafting methods, systems based on both measuring methods are represented. For instance, Hawlitseck’s system, one of the first methods for the construction of
menswear published in Swedish 1842, was based only on the notched strip. The smallest unit of measurement obtained when the strip was folded according to the instructions was not a stable but proportional unit. For cutting menswear, systems like this were published by Heindorf (1832) and Euler (1842). Until the middle of the 1870s, drafting methods developed solely for women were consistently based on the notched measure strip. The smallest unit of measurement obtained when the strip was folded according to the instructions was a proportional unit. The use of the tape measure seems thereby to be related chiefly to systems for male clothing.

Tailoring theory before drafting systems

By studying methods for grading – adjusting a pattern in different sizes by an established scale or a system – instead of pattern drafting, it is possible to find older theories for the work of tailors. Long before the grading systems of today, crucial to the ready-made clothing industry, tailors needed methods for adapting a pattern to a bigger or smaller person without the loss of proportions. This simpler form of grading has been traced by Aldrich to the first decades of the 19th century, published together with drafting methods, for instance by the French tailors F. A. Bardé (1822) and Guillaume Compaing (1828). Grading was especially useful to the military tailors, but grading methods specially developed for female dress were probably developed from this.

As the concepts concerning the cutting systems are a product of later circumstances, it is possible that they are not wholly suited to the purpose. While systems for cutting and grading later evolved along separate lines, with the second depending on the first, they were closely related from the outset. This could be a result of codification – authors have described the same thing but in different words. This is particularly important for the understanding of cutting methods for womenswear, since many of these methods can be found in this borderland between drafting and grading systems.

Grading based on proportion was used in the 18th century. One of the points using patterns as a cutting method was the easy access to different sizes. According to Garsault, stay-makers in Paris had patterns in different sizes to guide them in their work. When the Swedish national costume was presented in 1778 by King Gustavus III (1746–1792), the model was provided by the tailors’ guild in Stockholm in three fixed sizes, just like the military uniforms. The authors of The Taylor's Complete Guide (1796) complain about their contemporaries: “Slop-makers” have patterns “from the smallest size up to the largest Figure, upon proportional scales”. This working method, mentioned only incidentally, was well known to British tailors by the end of the 18th century and was a method used by the early ready-to-wear industry. A system with fixed sizes is also likely to have played a significant role in the extensive production of embroidered and woven dress lengths intended for clothing for both sexes.

Scale methods for grading

Two scale methods described by F. A. Bardé in 1822 can illustrate how grading was performed. According to the first method, the pattern is drawn into a checked chart, with squares calculated on the bust measurements (see Fig. 4.3). Based on this measurement, the pattern can be adjusted to a larger or smaller size. The method, sometimes called the square method, can be traced to the middle of the 18th century. The pattern chart belonging to the pamphlet Anmärkningar vid det sätt att tilskära kläder som nu är bruklig (1754) by the tailors’ guild in Stockholm shows a pattern for a male three-piece suit. The squares could be used to copy the pattern as well as to adjust the size.

For the second method, the pattern’s size is changed by means of different tapes of smaller or larger divisions. This was not unique for tailors, but also used by artists when reducing or enlarging pictures, architecture and sculpture. The method was independent of the tape measure which, on the contrary, could be impractical and required more complicated calculations, while the measuring strip was easily folded into the correct parts. To facilitate the work, charts with grading tapes were sold. This means that when reading older tailoring books,
one must take into account that “inches” or “centimetres” can refer to a stable unit as well as an individual, proportional measure. Nor was this method a new invention in the 1820s, but is described in Underrättelser hörande till […] Mans-klädedräkten (1778) published as instructions for the male Swedish national costume together with a similar pamphlet for the female dress by the tailors’ guild in Stockholm (see also Fig. 4.5). Here, the importance of keeping the proportions in the design when the garments are adjusted to individual clients is stated. If the tailor merely has one individual measurement to guide him, for instance the length of the breeches, the pattern can be drawn in the desired size with the help of a “specifikt alnmått”, a proportional measure. This explanation is not repeated in the instructions for the female dress, but it is likely that the method could be used here too. As the Underrättelser… spread information about the new model to the Swedish and Finnish tailors, it may be presumed that scale methods were already widespread, and that it was an older, already established method, although we cannot be certain of the extent to which it was actually used. According to Kiellberg’s (1754) description of the tailors’ craft, theory based on geometry and proportion was known in the middle of the 18th century.
Creating Fashion: Tailors’ and seamstresses’ work with cutting and construction techniques in women’s dress

Fig. 4.5: Swedish National Costume for women, Allmänna dräkten, without the typical sleeves of the court dress. Worn by Sofia Lovisa Brück at her wedding 1 January 1780, NM 192.119 (Nordiska museet; Photo: Mats Landin).
The importance of scale methods for the cutting of women’s fashionable dress

Swedish and German sources show that cutting theory based on geometry, proportions and scale calculations had been known since the mid-18th century (see Fig. 4.3). Scale methods were used for men’s as well as women’s clothes. They were the oldest theory on which tailors based their work. The methods were independent of stable units of measurements and calculations but were based on the traditional measuring strip with notches. The earliest divisional systems developed from the scale methods for sizing. From the proportions required for scale methods, it was a short step to a proportional system. In retrospect, it can even be difficult to perceive the differences. The fact that the German tailor, Bernhardt published a well-developed system for women based on a scale method in 1811 illustrates the great differences that existed in the manufacture of fashion garments for women in different parts of Europe.

Fashionable encounters – tailors and seamstresses interpreting fashion

I have suggested earlier that two different traditions can be discerned for the organization of the tailoring trade corresponding with two different traditions for the manufacture of female fashion clothes in Europe during the period. Yet how were new fashionable ideals and new models transmitted over these linguistic, cultural but also technical borders, and how did the craftsmen and -women handle this encounter? The different working methods left traces in the costumes to be studied. My research is based on a study of over 100 dresses dated 1750–1830 in Swedish collections of the Nordic Museum in Stockholm, Kulturen in Lund and the Textile Museum in Borås. The comparative material comes from published documentation. The following gives examples of how tailors and seamstresses interpreted ruling fashion in the light of their different competences. Sometimes, the differences are more a question of diverse ways of reaching a similar result, but it is possible to argue that the cutting and construction methods available also had an influence on changes in fashion, as these had an impact on the aesthetic expression in dress.

The mantua, part of formal fashion from the late decades of the 17th century, had a profound impact on fashionable dress during most of the 18th century. In its earliest form, the mantua was a simple garment constructed of straight pieces of fabric in a T-shape. To create shape in fitted dresses by folding instead of cutting became a major feature in the construction of female garments during the 18th century, especially in England.

The successor to the mantua, the robe à la française, found its shape in France in the 1730s and 1740s and became characteristic for formal fashion of the rococo period throughout Europe (see Fig. 4.6). The two-piece dress, containing a petticoat and a robe in the same fabric with its typical box-pleated back, gives the external impression of a construction where straight lengths of fabric were folded to fit the body. When preserved garments of Swedish, British or American origin are studied and compared, it is obvious that this is an example of different working methods achieving a similar result.

Robes à la française, polonaise and robes à l’anglaise preserved in British and American collections bear witness to a draped construction rather than one taken from a pattern (Fig 4.7). First, the bodice lining (the rest of the gown is normally left unlined) was tried out and sewn together and secondly, the lengths of the fashion fabric was shaped, folded and pinned from the outside to the lining (method 2). This process was undertaken directly on the body. As a consequence, much of the sewing was done from the outside of the garment. When we, in a modern context, assume the cutting to come first and the sewing in the next step, we have to imagine that these techniques were dependent on each other and performed in parallel.

Earlier studies of robes à la française of British and American provenance suggest that, these garments did not require the skills and techniques of a tailor, and, show that the gowns generally have a bodice lining of a simple construction, raw, unfinished sewing, and normally without supportive whalebone. The use of whalebone seems to increase during the 1770s and 1780s, but is still not as frequent as in dresses in Swedish collections.

From the perspective of a Swedish tailor, the
Creating Fashion: Tailors' and seamstresses' work with cutting and construction techniques in women's dress
construction of a robe à la française was different (see Fig. 4.8). Objects in the collections of the Nordic Museum and Kulturen indicate that, parts of fashion fabric could be measured with the paper measure, and, if needed, drawn directly on the fabric (method 3). The garment had a well-shaped, internal bodice lining with whalebone. With its distinct form, the lining gives the impression of a more advanced cutting method and a higher degree of standardization, which leads our thoughts to the use of patterns (method 4). The sewing is of a higher quality, more elegantly performed with all raw edges finished and protected between the fabric layers, and, most importantly, the sewing illustrates a higher technical variation. The use of whalebone in the construction of the lining is also a prominent feature. In the Swedish examples, the construction and sewing of lining and fabric are more integrated. Shaping by folds sewn from the outside can be found here too, but the seams of the lining and fabric are usually sewn together at the same time, with some of the time-saving sewing techniques available during the period. This means that the cutting and sewing seems more separate; after cutting out all the required pieces, the lining and fabric were sewn together in parallel. This is probably typical for the tailors’ working methods, and, in this respect, the techniques found in Swedish objects resemble those documented in other areas connected to the German craft. The method is prevalent in gowns with bodice lining during the second half of the 18th century, independent of the model. The example illustrates how differently British and American seamstresses and Swedish tailors interpreted the construction of the
fashionable garments with the help of the working methods available to them.

The final decades of the 18th century saw more rapid changes in fashion. The antique period was inspirational but past styles, in general, was an important source. France experienced a craze for everything English. The informal country style with tailored, well-fitting, woollen outer garments provided impulses to women’s fashions which adopted masculine and sometimes military styles in cut and decoration. The cut and construction of garments for both sexes became increasingly complicated and varied. During the 1770s, the bodice of the gown was more often cut separately in robe à la française as well as in robe à l’anglaise styles, recently adopted by French fashion. This gave new possibilities with more shaped parts. It seems that changes in

the construction techniques in the leading countries of fashion evolved among tailors, who were still responsible for women’s riding habits and the new types of outerwear. The result was a higher demand for cutting in women’s fashionable dress as well – a new challenge for the seamstresses.

Seamstresses were put to a severe test when the new fashionable styles inspired by masculine lines and construction developed by tailors had to be translated into their traditional working methods, grounded in the legacy of the mantua. One answer was the “all-over pleated bodice”, a construction technique for a dress with a short, fitted bodice shaped by a large amount of vertical folds released into a wide skirt (Fig. 4.9). The model was especially popular in England and America for a brief period in 1795–1800. The “all-over pleated bodice” is,
in every respect, a product of a cutting method whose construction was created directly on the body (method 2). Draping and sewing all the pleats from the outside, enabled seamstresses to imitate more complicated constructions with many parts with only a minimum of cutting – saving on valuable labour costs.

Despite the strong influence of English fashions during the final decades of the 18th century, no dress of this type has hitherto been found in Swedish collections. In the 1790s, Swedish tailors constructed dresses with a separate bodice and skirt. The bodice was made up of many shaped parts, sometimes combined with gathered parts formed by drawstrings, often still with a lining of linen with whalebone separately closed by lacing.\textsuperscript{81} The collection of the Nordic Museum contains three unusual examples of women’s jackets, caraccos, dated 1780s–1790s, where the bodice was shaped mainly by pleats.\textsuperscript{82} The fabrics are, in all three cases, embroidered and woven dress lengths. The tailor was obviously restricted by the pattern of the fabric, following the edges of the garment that had been thought-out in advance. The lengths of fabric were imported and probably intended for another cutting method (method 2) than the Swedish tailors were used to. The result was a compromise where the tailor had to adjust his working method to a different practice and use, cutting and folding in the same garment. This exemplifies how the different methods had external aesthetic consequences and, in a way, contributed to national differences in fashion.

In garments dating from the first decades of the 19th century, it is still possible to see a connection between the cutting methods available for the different craftspeople and possible paths for fashion. Preserved garments
in Swedish collections show that the principles developed during the transition period in the 1790s were long lived. The constructions for the bodice were simplified; linings with whalebone became rarer; the opening moved to the back and the gathered front was often replaced by darts. Nevertheless, the constructions still bear evidence of a cutting method from
patterns (method 4). In a British context, the constructions of dresses during the period 1800–1830 were the result of yet another technique. If the dresses were lined, the linings seem to be cut without regard to the bust. The lining kept the bust in firm shape and the fit was regulated by a flexible closing. The front of the fashion fabric was often bias-cut and shaped with folds, draping or gathering which gave the dress a decorative design but did not require cutting skills. The so-called high stomacher front, with a front like the bib of an apron, as well as draping and wrap-over effects was a way to avoid the difficulties of cutting (see Fig. 4.10). These constructions are a typical result of shaping directly on the body. It is obvious that this method continued to have a strong impact on women’s fashions during the first half of the 19th century. However, the differences between Britain and Sweden seem to have gradually decreased. Dresses in Swedish collections dating from the middle of the 1810s sometimes show constructions similar to those which can be found in Britain, inspired by solutions typical for seamstresses. When the waist returned to its normal position, bodices with pleated or gathered front dominated fashion. Draped wrap-over effects were usual in the 1830s and fan-shaped bodices, à la vierge, became characteristic in 1840s’ and 1850s’ fashion. This fashion spread to Sweden as well and can be considered as a result of changes in the division of labour, where seamstresses, instead of tailors, more often made fashionable garments for women.

These examples of cutting and construction techniques in women’s fashionable dress dating to 1750–1830 highlight how manufacturing techniques, the organization within the fashionable trade and changes in fashion mutually influenced one another. Examples of fashionable dress preserved in European and American collections provide material evidence of what can also be studied in written sources, such as tailors’ manuals and books, from the period. In this chapter, I question the picture of women’s fashionable dress as internationally similar in character and technically homogenous. Instead, I suggest that two different traditions for the manufacturing of female fashionable clothes closely related to two different traditions for the organization of the clothing-craft existed, depending on if the manufacture of female fashions was regarded a female occupation for seamstresses, as in Britain and France, or as a male craft performed by tailors, as in Scandinavia which belonged to the German artisanal sphere. It seems reasonable to conclude that, the craft organized in the guild system appears to have been the better soil for technical development. Tailors belonging to the German craft tradition compiled, developed and published analogous, likewise advanced, cutting methods for male and female fashionable wear, building on older tailoring theory which can be traced back to, at least, the mid-18th century, while the British and French seamstresses continued with simpler manufacturing techniques.

Notes
1 This chapter further develops ideas from the chapter “Tillskärning i teori och praktik” in my PhD thesis, Skräddaren, sömmerskan och modet. Arbetsmetoder och arbetsetdelning i tidernas märän innan dräkter 1770–1830: The Tailor, the Seamstress and Fashion: Working Methods and Division of Labour in the Manufacture of Female Dress, 1770–1830, Textile Studies, Uppsala University, Sweden.
5 Rasmussen (2010), 41f, 50, 63, 85; Bergman (1938), 68f; Söderlund (1943), 229f; Ribeiro (2002), 80.
6 Lindberg (2001), 35, 40; Qvist (1960), 14, 45; Ulvros (1996), 36, 211.
7 Söderlund (1943), 30f, 71, 94f, 186; Lindberg (2001), 38, 116; Wörtle (1999).
9 Garsault (1771), 1; Handbook för unga fruntimmer… 1833, 50; Rasmussen (2010), 70–75; Nylen (1968), 206, 226–228; Arnold (2008).
10 Kiellberg (1754); Garsault (1769), 7; Heyder (1824), 2f; Svensson (1935), 286f; Gadd (1991), 181.
11 Buck (1979), 183; Waugh (1968), 101; Pylkkänen (1982), 79–82; Coffin (1996), 22; Arnold (1972), 3; Arnold (1999a), 223.
12 Pylkkänen (1982), 510; Svensson (1935), 268f.
13 Rasmussen (2010), 91, 118.
14 Söderlund (1943), 30f, 71, 94f, 186; Lindberg (2001), 38, 116.
15 Rasmussen (2010), 96–100, 125–128.
16 Rasmussen (2010), 129.
17 Coffin (1996), 22; Musgrave (1997); Waugh (1968), 101f.
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Literature
Creating Fashion: Tailors' and Seamstresses' Work with Cutting and Construction Techniques in Women's Dress

Silk Knitted Waistcoats: A 17th-century fashion item

Maj Ringgaard

From the early modern period, a number of knitted silk jerseys or waistcoats are known. Some are monochromatic with patterns in purl and adorned with embroidery in silver and gold along the front, neckline and wrists, others have rich, brocade-knitted patterns in gold or silver all over. Through technical object analysis combined with the analysis of sources, such as written probate inventories and contemporary depictions, this chapter examines the use, dissemination and production of this type of garment, the knitted waistcoat, called nattrøje in Danish. The use and spread of this knitted garment in the early modern Dano–Norwegian kingdom, and the question of whether some of these garments were produced in Denmark, or could have been produced elsewhere primarily for the Dano–Norwegian market, is addressed.

In this chapter, I compare waistcoats from museum collections and archaeological excavations with written records and images. There are two types of waistcoats in the early modern: woven and knitted. I focus on the knitted waistcoats where a significant difference is apparent between brocade-knitted and damask-knitted waistcoats. I will demonstrate that the knitted waistcoats are a key to the understanding of early modern knitting technology and the spread of fashions.

In terms of sources, the first part of this chapter is solely based on visual analysis of the knitted waistcoats, whereas in the second part of the chapter, I also incorporate archaeological finds and written records.

Early modern knitwear

Few 16th–17th century garments have survived to the present day. In Scandinavia, preserved garments are primarily found in royal collections, with a few also in museum collections. When it comes to knitted garments, the number present in collections is very limited.

In the second half of the 16th century, knitted garments became fashionable. The technique of knitting (primarily knitting in the round, i.e. circular, as no early flat knitting has securely been identified thus far), had until then been primarily used for smaller garments, in particular caps or hats knitted in wool. The caps were fulled, shaped, the nap raised, sheared and finished. Small knitted silk garments, such as multi-coloured purses and ecclesiastical gloves had been in use since medieval times. These items were presumably produced in southern Europe (Spain or Italy).

During the 16th century, men’s fashion
changed from the long, sewn hose to breeches and stockings. This fashion change led to the production of fashionable knitted stockings. Over time, the knitted stocking overtook the production of sewn stockings. Along with this fashion, the knitting craft spread throughout Europe, leading to a considerable production of knitted garments in many countries. Knitted silk stockings were first produced in Italy or Spain as luxury goods, costing nearly an annual salary for an artisan by the end of 16th century. These fine stockings can be seen depicted in many
5 Silk Knitted Waistcoats: A 17th-century fashion item

portrait paintings. Another group of luxury items, rarely known from depictions, are knitted silk jerseys and jackets (or waistcoats as they were termed at the time) brightly coloured and beautifully decorated in silver and gold. Around the world, approx. 40–50 of these knitted silk waistcoats are preserved in collections, most of them in European museums. Some of them have floral patterns knitted in with silver or gold metal thread; some are monochromatic, with or without silver and golden metal thread embroidery. Many are collector’s items without any provenance. They are dated to the period ca. 1590–1650 predominantly based on known fashion style and patterns.¹

Most well known are the bi- or multi-coloured knitted waistcoats. They are knitted in stocking stitch with large floral patterns in gold or silver thread. The technique used is termed “brocade-knitting” (see Fig. 5.3). Here, when knitting the different colours, the yarn not being worked was carried over at the back, thus the yarn floats on the reverse from the one motif to the next, as in woven brocades, creating a blurred negative image of the pattern. Brocade-knitted waistcoats are found in costume collections in England and in southern and central Europe, as well as in collections in North America and Japan. They are often referred to as Florentine or Italian jackets.²

Another type of silk knitted waistcoat is monochromatic with a purl pattern on a stocking stitch background: a technique called damask-knitting, because the pattern is visible due to the light being reflected differently by the two directions in the stitch used, just as the effect in woven damask. This type is found in northern Europe, one each in England and in Scotland,³ and the rest in collections in Scandinavia.

Both brocade- and damask-knitted waistcoats are similarly comfortable garments made from a flexible knitted material, simple in shape but of exclusive materials. Considering the relatively large number preserved, they must have been quite popular; yet, until now, they have remained unrecognised in contemporary depictions.

The monochromatic damask-knitted silk waistcoats greatly resemble a knitted wool garment used until the late 19th century primarily in rural areas of Denmark – a garment called a nattrøje (nattrøjer -pl). These were woollen vests for daily wear knitted with a similar star pattern and the same type of (basket weave) borders at the hem. Similar knitted vests were used in parts of Norway and in southern Sweden. The garment is often mentioned in 16th and 17th-century records, e.g. in probates, merchant inventories or customs registers. It was used by adults and children of both sexes. Mostly when the material of a nattrøje is mentioned, they are woollen garments, but occasionally it is of silk – thus we presume that nattrøje was the name of these preserved silk knitted garments back then in the historic Danish realm.

Brocade-knitted waistcoats

At least 35 of the brocade-knitted waistcoats, as well as some parts and fragments that probably originate from waistcoats, are preserved in collections worldwide. To my knowledge, there are no archaeological finds of this type, except two coffin finds from Roskilde, Denmark. Here, brocade-knitted waistcoats were found in the coffins of the two-year-old Danish prince, Frederik Christian (†1627) and his three-month-old sister Maria Cathrine (†1628), both children of King Christian IV (1577–1648) of Denmark–Norway and his morganatic wife Kirsten Munk. The waistcoats were adult-sized, perhaps their mother or father’s precious garments.⁴ Apart from one in the collections of the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm (NM.0134916) these two are the only brocade-knitted waistcoats preserved in Scandinavia (see Figs. 5.2 and 5.3).

Brocade-knitted waistcoats are knitted with strands of loosely spun silk filament, often in bright colours of coral, green, blue or yellow. The metal thread consists of metal wire twined around a silk core, white silk for the silver wire and yellow silk for the gilded. The metal does not entirely cover the silk core. This must have given the knitted material a glistening appearance while new, before oxidation tarnished the metal threads.

The shaping of this type of knitted waistcoat is generally rather basic. The bodices consist of three flat-knitted rectangular, or almost rectangular, pieces (two for the front and one for the back); the sides are straight or with merely a little narrowing at the waist by a gentle decreasing at the sides, while the centre front is straight. The armhole is slightly shaped by
the casting of a couple of centimetres off the back and front. All seem to have sleeves knitted from the wrist upwards, starting with a border (or a welt) at the wrist and then widening up along the arm by an increase on both sides of the seam. All the fronts and backs are equally knitted in this upward direction. On many, the welt was pulled and pinned, thus forming a scalloped or waved edge.

Although they differ in many ways, they can all be divided into at least two groups based on similarities in the patterns, shaping and knitting techniques used. Most of them have large floral patterns, some have smaller repeated pattern units framed by borders, and others have a pattern imitating frogging. They are knitted in stocking stitch and hence the pattern is due to a change in colour. Some have the motifs outlined by a single stocking stitch in a different colour and the centre filled with purl stitch. The waistcoats have a skirt or a widened welt, on some this is in the ground colour silk in basket stitch in purl and plain. Others have skirts with bands in garter stitch alternating with two colour pattern borders in stocking stitch as seen in the one from Roskilde Cathedral. Some of the waistcoats have a lining of plain linen. Probably the vast majority of the brocade-knitted waistcoats were originally lined, as otherwise, the floats of yarn on the reverse would have most likely been entangled when they were worn, and there is hardly any visible sign of wear and tear of the floating threads.

Most of the waistcoats comprise a ground colour silk with the motif in gold or silver. A few are worked in gold thread with the entire motif in silk, or merely its outline delineated in silk of the same colour as the skirt and welt. The style of the patterns resembles designs in woven fabrics from the late 16th or early 17th century.

**Damask-knitted waistcoats**

At least 14 well-preserved damask-knitted, silk waistcoats have survived until today, one in England and one in Scotland, one in Sweden and 11 (and a pair of sleeves) in Norway. All except the English example are knitted in the same repeat pattern: eight-pointed stars in a net of oblique lines, in the cross lines creating a diamond shape between the stars. From Denmark, archaeological finds of fragments of at least four of these star-patterned, silk knitted waistcoats are known. All except the English example are knitted in the same repeat pattern: eight-pointed stars in a net of oblique lines, in the cross lines creating a diamond shape between the stars. From Denmark, archaeological finds of fragments of at least four of these star-patterned, silk knitted waistcoats are known. Fragments of such a waistcoat were found in a captain’s chest in the wreck of a sunken Swedish warship near Kalmar.

The damask-knitted waistcoats are of the same kind of loosely spun, silk filament yarn as the brocade-knitted type, but the colours are less varied. A couple are bright green, and of
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At first sight, they are generally of the same shape and pattern, although not identical. They are fashioned wide at the hem narrowing to a raised waist. At the hem, a welt is knitted on before changing to the main pattern. The sleeves are narrow at the wrist and widen upwards and start with a welt. Some have the welt pulled and pinned forming a scalloped edge, just as in some of the brocade-knitted waistcoats. Most of them have a yoke starting with a border, immediately beneath the arms, giving the impression of a raised waistline. Some are knitted on the round while others are flat-knitted pieces sewn together.

Waistcoats knitted on the round have a line of two purls or garter-stitches at the sides. On the sleeves where the seams would have been, all the increases are made on both sides of this false seam.

They were all knitted with a closed front and a slit. All of the known monochromatic damask-knitted silk waistcoats have a purl, star and diamond pattern except one in London believed to have been worn by King Charles I of England and Scotland at his execution in 1649 (Museum of London A27050). This has a slightly different pattern but the welt, yoke and border around the slit are similar to the star-patterned waistcoats.

Most waistcoats are embroidered with gold and silver at the front, around the slit, as well as around the neckline and cuffs. The two found in England and Scotland are not embroidered; moreover, it has not been possible to determine whether or not the fragments of waistcoats of some of the archaeological finds were embroidered.


**Fig. 5.4: Diagram of the repeat pattern on the damask-knitted waistcoats: eight-pointed stars in a net of oblique lines; the cross lines creating a diamond shape between the stars (Drawing: ©Mette Jensen).**

**Pile**

A special feature of some of these damask-knitted waistcoats is a pile on the inside, made of the same kind of loosely spun silk filament thread as the waistcoat. Pile (see Fig. 5.5) is only seen on damask-knitted waistcoats, with only three of the extant silk damask-knitted waistcoats (one of those in Norway and the two in England and Scotland) which are devoid of pile to my knowledge. To my knowledge, none of the brocade-knitted waistcoats have a pile on the reverse.

The pile looks like small wads on the reverse and makes the waistcoat particularly soft, warm and suitable for the cold Nordic climate. In previous descriptions of these jackets, this pile is described as a “stitched on knotted pile”. On most of the surviving waistcoats, the pile is made of a bundle of 4–5 threads that are carefully threaded through the loop of a stitch and then secured with a knot. The knotting of pile is made with great care so it is not visible on the front side.

A closer study has revealed that, on some waistcoats, the pile was not added afterwards but had been made while knitting, where the knitting yarn was twisted twice around the pile and not secured with a knot. The pile yarn was carried over at the back floating on the reverse as in two-colour knitting, with the yarns just being twisted twice instead of knitting a stitch.

As mentioned above, the waistcoats preserved in Scandinavia are richly embellished in silver and gold. This embroidery was made after the pile had been added, which can be observed on the reverse where the embroidery stitches are sewn through, covering the pile.

**Shaping the knitted waistcoat**

Most of the damask-knitted waistcoats have slightly flared sleeves which are 2–3 cm wider at the cuffs than right over the welt. Some have later been changed to a tighter fitting sleeve (e.g. ABB593 Bergen Museum). This slightly flared shape is seen on most of the brocade-knitted waistcoats as well, the sleeves widening at the borders at the cuffs. A couple of the brocade-knitted waistcoats have an attached folded cuff added (473–1893 V&A, London; 20049285 Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire Brussels. It is interesting to note that the sleeves on the preserved knitted waistcoats actually do not match the revailing sleeve fashion of the first part of the 17th century.

In all the damask-knitted waistcoats, both the flat and round-knitted, the seam (or the false seam) of the sleeves was placed under the arms, starting from the lower armhole following a line on the inside of the elbow; as on most garments today. In contrast, a majority of the brocade-knitted waistcoats have the seam on the outside of the sleeve, the line going to the top of the elbow, starting on the upper back part approx. 10 cm from the shoulder, just like the back seam on a two-seam sleeve. Brocade-knitted jackets with this placing of the sleeve seam can have the sleeves flat-knitted or knitted in the round, while the brocade-knitted waistcoats with the seam placed under the arms, all have sleeves knitted in the round.

The neckline on most of the waistcoats seems to have been originally either straight across or with a little collar of approx. 1 cm. Some have a rounded neckline, shaped merely by folding the knitting under in the front (e.g. T 2205-1874, Museum für angewandte Kunst (MAK) Vienna and ABB593 Bergen Museum). A few have a lower neckline or a deep V-neck, but these lower necklines all seem to be a later alteration (e.g. F 0067-1935/36 MAK Vienna and 966.24 Royal Ontario Museum). The only exception is a damask-knitted waistcoat with a low square neckline. Here, the neckline is edged with a small knitted border; the stitches from the front and back are supplemented with stitches picked up along the sides of the neck (OK 1162 Kunstindustrimuseet Oslo). The few
depictions of women wearing these waistcoats mostly display a quite high neckline (see Fig. 5.7). Damask-knitted waistcoats were all knitted with a slit in front, although three of them have been altered, cut up at the front into jackets closed with ribbon ties. The original slit can be detected by a change in the pattern in the form of a border along the slit. Some similar waistcoats made from fine wool or worsted closed with ties are preserved; these too, are round-knitted and cut open in front (e.g. NM 521-1921 Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen).

In contrast, all the brocade-knitted jackets are made with two front parts. The brocade-
knitted waistcoats that were found in the coffins of Christian IV of Denmark’s children were made of two front pieces sewn together to form an 8 cm slit at the neck at the front. At the sides of the slit, the material was shaped into scallops, just like the scalloped edge that is seen on the lower part of some of the jackets.

A few of the brocade-knitted waistcoats are fastened with a lacing in front (e.g. T 4062 Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, München) while a number are closed with a row of small, closely-spaced buttons (e.g. AC3653 1980-32AC Kyoto Costume Institute). The only known example of a damask-knitted waistcoat with buttons is the one believed to have belonged to Charles I. Some of the jackets were closed with ribbon ties, while we do not know how the rest were fastened at the front. Closing jackets with ties at the front was fashionable in the early decades of the 17th century and several images depict women wearing jackets with a row of ties at the front. This fashion seems to have reappeared in the 18th century on simple everyday jackets worn by the lower stations of society, as seen on a painting by the Swedish artist Pehr Hilleström from 1773 depicting a woman buying ribbons from a tradesman.

The brocade-knitted waistcoats are often supposed to be joined together in only a slipshod manner, indicating a rapid production of the five patterned panels for the jackets with flat-knitted sleeves to be completed by the purchaser. This is not my impression of the jackets I have had the opportunity to examine closely. Often, the alterations may be done and sewn in a slipshod manner but most of the original stitching appears to be meticulously executed. The joining is sewn with the same silk yarn as used in the knitting. Side seams
are sewn with whipstitch through the outer loops of the first garter stitch on both sides. The sides of each piece of all jackets include a seam allowance, or rather a border of 3 or 4 garter stitches before the main pattern. On some of the jackets, this stitching is executed so carefully that it appears as if they are round-knitted. The manner in which the joining is made makes the seams visible and is probably intentional. They appear like the ‘false seams’ at the sides of round-knitted waistcoats or at the back of contemporary stockings. Seams on contemporary garments are often visible or may be emphasized by borders or embroidery; this can be seen, for example on Margaret Laton's waistcoat in the V&A collection which has embroidered borders of braided silver-gilt thread marking the seams.  

A comparative analysis of the damask-knitted silk waistcoats

When I compared all these damask-knitted silk waistcoats, it was evident that they fell into two groups (see Table 5.1). While the analysis reveals both similarities and differences, the latter enables us to see how the damask-knitted waistcoats clearly fall into two groups.

First group: In the majority of the damask-knitted garments, both the sleeves and the bodice were round-knitted. On most of them, the welt in garter stitch at the lower hem was knitted flat in two separate parts that were then joined together while changing to round knitting, thus leaving slits on both sides. Following the welt is a lozenge-pattern border in purl; on a few waistcoats, the border is a basket-weave pattern of purl and plain instead of the lozenge pattern. On some, there are some increases in a row immediately over the borders to allow for the different tensions when the pattern is changing. (This may occur on most waistcoats, but it was not a feature that I was aware of when I analysed most of them.)

Immediately below the yoke, before the knitting is divided in two parts at the armholes, is another border of lozenges. This border could be due to a need to cover the slight shift in tension that occurs when changing from round to flat knitting. This is not the case here as there is no border on the back of the waistcoat. Here, the star and diamond pattern continues. The pattern on the yoke at the front is knitted in oblique checks. The sleeves have the identical welts, borders and pattern as the bodice.

Most garments have sleeves knitted from the wrist upwards, but on some, the sleeves are knitted downwards starting at the armhole and casting off at the wrist.

Second group: Other waistcoats are flat-knitted, consisting of flat pieces sewn together to shape the garment – like most of the brocade-knitted waistcoats. These waistcoats lack a yoke, and they have the same pattern all over.

When dividing the damask-knitted waistcoats
into flat-knitted and round-knitted groups some consistent differences become apparent.

The only waistcoats with the sleeves knitted downwards are the flat-knitted type, all the round-knitted waistcoats have sleeves knitted from the wrist upwards. All the flat-knitted examples contain stars which are slightly bigger (10 stitches) than the stars on the items which were round-knitted (7 stitches). Only on the flat-knitted waistcoats is the pile knitted in, whereas in all the round-knitted waistcoats, the pile is stitched on afterwards.

As for the fragments of waistcoats recovered by archaeologists in Copenhagen, where it was possible to determine whether the item was flat or round-knitted, they were all found to be from flat-knitted waistcoats and had a pile that was knitted in. The technique used for this knitted in pile is closely related to the colour knitting in the brocade-knitted waistcoats, in the way the unworked yarn is carried over at the back. Here, instead of working a stitch, the ground knot yarn is twisted twice around the pile yarn. All the damask-knitted waistcoats with pile knitted-in were, in fact, as most of the brocade-knitted waistcoats, flat-knitted.

In contrast to the brocade-knitted waistcoats which are all made of five single pieces, damask-knitted waistcoats that are flat-knitted seem to be made of only four pieces. Originally, they were knitted with a closed front piece with a slit, then later cut open. All of the cut damask-knitted waistcoats are of the flat-knitted type, while none of the round-knitted type have been cut open.

Considering the group of round-knitted waistcoats, at first sight they appear almost identical, apart from the embroidery; but on closer scrutiny, one can see smaller differences in pattern and size. This indicates that they are made by skilled knitters, perhaps in some kind of putting out system, but with room for individual choices for the single knitter. Thus, on the other hand, the size could have been changed and adapted to the particular customer. On the other hand, other variations, such as a small change in the border pattern around the front slit or armholes, or a slightly different neckline, too, may be observed. These waistcoats were not made as exact copies of a model.

*These consistent differences in the damask-knitted waistcoats indicate two different places of production, with highly divergent knitting traditions.*

**The waistcoats in written sources**

In order to trace the use and distribution of these knitted silk garments in early modern Scandinavia a number of contemporary written sources were examined, the majority being probate records and merchant inventories.

The probate records range from c. 1550–1730 from towns in the Dano-Norwegian realm. Tracing these knitted waistcoats through contemporary written sources can pose difficulties, not only because terms used for garments are different from today but also because the meaning of the terms used back then is unclear. Exactly what is meant by *Nattrøje, Uldenskjorte* and *Camisole* which are terms used in probates, inventories, wills and customs registers in 16th to 18th-century Scandinavia? Could all three mean a knitted garment or a garment made of woven material?

*Nattrøje* is the term used most often in the Danish and Norwegian records. The garment was worn by commoners or artisans in the 18th century. In the 19th century, it was a knitted vest primarily worn by Danish peasant women between the shift and the bodice or stays. Several of these articles are preserved in Danish costume collections. The term is also used for a man's garment worn beneath a doublet or jacket, but over the linen shirt like the *uldenskjorte* (see below) – it is possible the name had changed over time so it could refer to the same garment.

In the probates from the 16th–17th centuries, the term *nattrøje* is used for a garment (for the upper body) that could be knitted (*bunden, knyttet, strik*) or occasionally sewn of costly woven material: silk damask, velvet etc., and embellished with silver and gold. *Nattrøjer* that are knitted are mentioned from about 1600, they are made of silk or wool – some of them very costly.

The word *nattrøje* means a night-jacket (waistcoat) or bed jacket. It is a puzzling term, for this garment was not used mainly for nightwear. The peasants used it as daytime wear under their sleeveless bodices or jackets. Some say they even wore these when going to bed, but this might be a later interpretation endeavouring to explain the name. Some of the *nattrøjer* mentioned in 17th-century records are so costly that it is not likely that they were meant for nightwear, often being among the most costly garments in the probate inventory.
Table 5.1: Comparative analysis of the damask-knitted silk waistcoats (© Maj Ringgaard). * = archaeological finds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present location</th>
<th>Accession number</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Round/flat</th>
<th>Sleeve</th>
<th>Pile knitted in</th>
<th>Pattern in border at front slit</th>
<th>Yoke pattern</th>
<th>Star</th>
<th>Number of parts in star</th>
<th>Yoke</th>
<th>Yoke pattern</th>
<th>Embroidery</th>
<th>Gauge/10 cm</th>
<th>Arm-span</th>
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<td>KBM 2307x 300.787</td>
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Table 5.1: Comparative analysis of the damask-knitted silk waistcoats (© Maj Ringgaard). * = archaeological finds.
The less expensive knitted waistcoats of wool could have been for less formal wear, being a softer and more comfortable garment than the boned doublets and other stiff garments of the time. The meaning of *nat* in this term is unclear, and historians and linguists who have explored the term have not reached any conclusions thus far.19

Uldenskjorte (= woollen shirt; Uldenskjorter – pl.) was for both sexes an overshift, mostly of wool, worn beneath a doublet or bodice, but over the linen shirt or smock. In the 16th century, it was used primarily by the upper classes and later on in the 17th century, by a broader group of people in other classes. It was a rather simply cut shirt or jacket, mostly red, open in front and cut with the back in one piece.20 In the 19th century, Uldenskjorter were still in use in some areas of Denmark and Norway. In the 16th century, they were worn by noblemen and even a Swedish king. The records of the Swedish Royal Wardrobe note the amount of material used for this garment, most often of red baize; from 1609 these were no longer made of wool but mostly of silk taffeta, and after 1619 of silk damask.21 According to Mathias Moth’s dictionary definition from the 17th century, an uldenskjorte “Er en natroje” (is a nattoje), *i.e.* identical garments.22

In the probate records from Denmark and Scania 1550–1660, uldenskjorter are found among all classes and in the possession of both men and women, for example in 1560 Anders Spandemager (Bucket-maker) in Malmo had two red shirts while Margrethe Toffelmager (Mule-maker) had three in 1583. The material they were made of is seldom mentioned, perhaps it was too obvious. The colour is mostly red, occasionally blue, and once yellow and often iridescent like with shot-silk (*vederskin*). Only in the later decades of the period studied is the material used to make the uldenskjorter sometimes recorded in the probates. When mentioned, it is a woven fabric, *e.g.* in 1651 the alderman in Holbæk left one of taffeta (*taftis*) and the year after, Peter Skomager (Shoemaker) one of *’brichs’* satin (*brichs adladshini*).23 The highest valued though was one of blue baize with miniver lining owned by the mayor of Odense in 1634. The reason for a fabric being recorded here could be that this fabric was unusual for this kind of garment.24

Probates and inventories from Malmo mention uldenskjorter that are expressly knitted, for example in the year 1598, the merchant Jacob Brun held 21 knitted uldenskjorter in stock: white, coloured, and half of them in children’s sizes.25 Moreover, according to Finnish records, these woollen shirts could be knitted as well as sewn from a fabric.26 Consequently, it is hard to determine the number of knitted garments to be found among the red uldenskjorter in the records where no fabric is mentioned.

Camisole can be a knitted jacket or of woven material. In the 17th century, this term was used in Denmark and Norway but only in probate records and wills from the upper stations.27 In the early 17th century records of the Swedish Royal Wardrobe, the term seems to be used for the same garment as a woollen shirt.28 In an inventory from c. 1700 of the clothes of King Frederik III of Denmark–Norway (1609–1670), both a Nachtcamisole and an Untercamisole are registered.29 In the royal collections, a red satin silk waistcoat embroidered with gold and silver dating from c. 1640 is still preserved. This garment which belonged to Frederik III was registered in 1651 in German as a “Naccarat Atlaschen mit Gold und Silber geticktes Cammisol” (a naccarat-red satin cammisol embroidered with gold and silver), and 15 years later registered in Danish as “en Røtt attlaches Nattrøje, broderit, vnderforit med grønt” (a red satin nattrøje, embroidered, with green lining).30 This could indicate that Camisol is the German term and nattrøje, the Danish for the same type of garment.

The term was used in 16th and 17th-century German for a garment for the upper body, both a shorter type for women and a longer type for men,31 and also for knitted waistcoats: In 1698, Christoph Weigel wrote that Italian knitters produced camisols and gloves of silk,32 and in 1744, Johan H. Zedler included Camisöler in his dictionary when referring to examples of knitted goods under the definition of the term knitting: “Stricken nennt man die Wissenschaft, dass sich dadurch nach der besten Forme Strümpfe, Handschuh, Mützen, Camisöler...” and that the essential items required for a master craftsmanship included, inter alia, a Camisol which was knitted all in one piece without any needlework being involved: “... ein Futterhemde oder Camisol, daran nichts genähet ist”.33

Freude and Heinrich obtained the privilege to produce knitted camisoles in 1674,34 and, in
1680, Friderich Boye requested permission from the King of Denmark to start industrial production of knitted stockings, camisoles or nattrøjer ("...camisoler eller nattrøjer, strømper oc andet saadant arbeide lade knytte oc forferde..."). The words camisole and nattrøje are used synonymously here as the text says ‘or’ (eller) not ‘and’.

It appears that all three words nattrøje, uldenskjorte and camisol could mean the same kind of garment. The terms used by the elite probably changed as the fashion changed, while the older term was still in use in popular culture. Camisol, being originally a French word, was primarily used by the higher stations. Towards the end of 18th century, the term camisol was also used for a coat or a sleeved garment with knitted sleeves. In the 19th century, peasants in the western part of Denmark used nattrøje as the term could have been introduced by German artisans, who came and worked in Denmark as specialists in their fields.

Knitted waistcoats are often mentioned in merchants’ inventories, these were some of the only garments, apart from smaller items like stockings and gloves, which could be bought ready-made in the early modern period. Other garments had to be ordered and made by a tailor or seamstress, if one did not obtain one’s clothes second-hand.

As mentioned above, a nattrøje was not always knitted. In some probate records, both knitted types and nattrøjer woven of velvet, taffeta, satin, armoisin (silk taffeta) or damask are mentioned; this means the same term was also used for some kind of jacket sewn of a woven fabric. The difference between a nattrøje and other jackets (trøjer) is somewhat vague. One possibility is that it refers to a sewn garment with knitted sleeves. In the 19th century, peasants in the western part of Zealand could call a jacket of linsey-woolsey with knitted sleeves a nattrøje. Knitted sleeves were produced for sale, in the 17th century they appear in customs records and merchant inventories. In 1678, the merchant Møller had 17 pairs of knitted sleeves in stock as well as 17 nattrøjer, while in 1696, Birgitte Jensdatter held in stock, in addition to 41 nattrøjer, 37 pairs of knitted sleeves, both for men, women and children, with or without pile, some of silk, some with embroidery. Detached sleeves are never mentioned in probate records, probably because such sleeves had already been attached to a garment when the deceased was alive. Knitted sleeves found in archaeological excavations in Copenhagen are found to have the same kind of purl patterns as the knitted waistcoats.

### Waistcoats in the probate inventories

In 1646, the mayor’s wife in the market town of Holbæk in Zealand owned a green, silk knitted nattrøje, a costly garment valued at 15 thaler which was almost the price of two horses. The prosperous merchant Hans Bøffke from Copenhagen, who died in 1681, possessed two silk knitted nattrøjer, a green and a red; the red is referred to as being old. They were in a trunk that arrived in Copenhagen from Lübeck after his death. The trunk must have suffered during transport because everything in it was water damaged and thus of no value. The trunk also contained two child-sized nattrøjer, most likely made of wool, although neither the material nor the colours were noted. The brewer’s wife Maren Lauritsdatter who also died in 1681 had possessed not merely one but five nattrøjer, of these, two were of silk: one blue and an older, red one. This blue silk-knitted nattrøje was the second-most valuable garment in her probate.

Silk knitted waistcoats are often some of the most valuable garments in probate records. In contrast to the preserved silk knitted waistcoats, only very few (3%) of the silk knitted nattrøjer mentioned in the probate records have both embroidery and pile, in contrast to 93% of those preserved. In 72% of the silk knitted nattrøjer recorded in the inventories, neither pile nor embroidery is mentioned. While 14% had pile (flas), 11% had embroidery (baldeyrede) with no pile. Most plain nattrøjer of silk were valued at 5 to 6 thaler. The very high value of some of the waistcoats where neither pile nor embroidery is mentioned indicates that some of them might have had it anyway. For example Jens Mouridsen from Copenhagen had two nattrøjer, a nacarat (bright red) valued at 10 thaler and a crimson item valued at 16 thaler, nearly the same value as an embroidered green nattrøjer valued at 12 thaler and an embroidered deer-coloured (hjortefarvet) item valued at 18 thaler in 1699. Thus, the costly embroidery in silver and gilt in the existing waistcoats in Norway and Sweden may indeed be the reason why some of these waistcoats have been preserved.

In some of the merchants’ inventories, most
of the silk nattrøjer are embroidered (haldyrede). Here, the colours mentioned in 1644 are red, blue and green, while the colours in inventories from 1688 and 1696 are yellow, pearl, black, purple and red. These differ somewhat from the colours of the preserved damask-knitted waistcoats (red, green and light blue). The merchants had many nattrøjer of wool or worsted, both with and without pile. Some of these were almost as costly as those of silk, but embroidery is never mentioned with the wool or worsteds, indicating that embroidery was apparently reserved for the noble silk. In the probates or inventories, we find no mention of the type of embroidery the waistcoats had, but on the extant waistcoats, they are all in silver or gilt silver wire. The only exception is a waistcoat which, in addition to the silver and gilt stem and foliage motif, has two figures in polychrome silk embroidery.\(^42\)

Only one of all the nattrøjer mentioned in the probate records is of the brocade-knitted type. Magdalene Klingenberg, who died in 1694 was the wife of the former Keeper of the State Papers (“Kongl: Majt: forfør Forwalter afner det stemplede Papir”). It states in her probate that her black nattrøje had silver “worked in” (sort silche nattrøye med sølf udi wirket).\(^43\) This would mean the pattern was knitted in, as all others with silver or gold decoration are called haldyret (=embroidered). This brocade-knitted item was apparently of lower value than the embroidered type – only 4 marks (6 marks = 1 thaler), this value is only a tenth of the blue waistcoat without embroidery that the brewer’s wife had in her possession. Indeed, it is less than the price of the brocade-knitted sleeves with gold motifs (med guld wirchet) for 1 thaler a pair that a merchant held in stock in 1696.\(^44\) Yet, all of Magdalene Klingenberg’s belongings were, for some unknown reason, valued surprisingly low.

Some probates mention variegated waistcoats (broget nattrøje) or floral waistcoats (blommet nattrøje).\(^45\) As only the material silk but not the technique is mentioned, it is not known if they were made from a fabric with woven patterns, or if they were brocade-knitted waistcoats.

The merchant Erik Jørgensen from Odense held as many as 17 silk knitted nattrøjer in stock in 1644, of these 14 were embroidered. A green waistcoat is recorded “with gold and silver without a pile” (grøn silche nattrøye med sølf och guld, uflosset), the value of this, 33 thaler, is about one third more than those in his stock with both embroidery and pile. This could be one of the few brocade-knitted waistcoats.

It is striking that none of the nattrøjer made of a woven material are found in the merchants’ inventories examined; these could apparently not be bought ready-made, but bespoke, i.e. the customers would have them made by a tailor or seamstress.

In the Norwegian probate records for 1660–1700 only once, in a probate from 1666, do we find mention of a nattrøje, sewn of a woven material, silk and quilted. This could be due to another term than nattrøje being employed for this garment, or they were out of fashion in this period or perhaps never had been in fashion here.

The sewn nattrøjer of woven material in Danish probate records are, in general, only found in records before 1660. Exceptions are a nobleman in Copenhagen who has two nattrøjer in a probate from 1708, and Queen Anna Sophie (1693–1743) who in 1743 owned two nattrøjer all sewn of expensive woven fabrics.\(^46\) This could indicate that this sewn version of the garment was not in use in general after c. 1650, but later reappeared among the elite in more precious materials and perhaps in a different shape.

Waistcoats with an added pile on the reverse (flos) are found both in the fine silk – the worsted, and the woollen type. Pile is often mentioned in connection with nattrøjer in probates and merchants’ inventories, where it is termed flos, plush or plussen. Since it is time-consuming and tedious to knot the pile, these waistcoats are of substantially higher value than the plain examples. Fur-lined gowns and jackets were very popular in this period, and are often mentioned in probates. The pile could be seen as a kind of imitation furlining. To my knowledge, waistcoats with pile are only found or mentioned in Scandinavia and especially in the areas that were part of the Dano–Norwegian Kingdom. To my knowledge, none of the brocade-knitted waistcoats contain a pile.

**Waistcoats of knitted wool, linen and cotton**

In probate records and merchants’ inventories, the vast majority of the knitted waistcoats
are made of wool, only a very small part is of silk. When nothing else is mentioned in the written sources, knitted nattrøjer are probably woollen or worsted. In 17th-century probates, 78% are of wool, 18% silk and 4% of linen; in the first part of the century, the silk proportion is slightly higher at 22%, and there are no waistcoats knitted of linen or cotton. In the merchants’ inventories, the percentage differs, as some of the merchants sold mostly finer goods for wealthy customers, while others primarily stocked goods for the less prosperous. For example, the merchant Jørgensen in Odense held many expensive waistcoats in stock in 1644, and of those, 80% were silk, while the merchant Møller who had a large drapery shop in the same town, had only 5% of the knitted silk waistcoats in 1678. The knitted waistcoats of wool also vary in quality from cheap items in locally produced coarse wool (ljembrundne) to expensive worsteds.

During the second half of the 18th century, we encounter fewer knitted nattrøjer in probate records. The Danish textile scholar, Dr. Erna Lorenzen examined clothing in probate records from the market town Århus in comparison with those from its rural hinterland. She finds almost no knitted nattrøjer in the town by the beginning of the 19th century, while many are still to be found in the probate records of the peasants. Not many knitted waistcoats of wool from the 17th or 18th century are preserved, but fragments from several have been recovered by archaeologists, and these are similar to the preserved damask-knitted waistcoats of silk.

The 19th-century peasant’s nattrøje is often made of soft woollen yarn and fulfilled or perhaps merely felted due to wear and tear and washing. This was not exactly beneficial to the purl pattern, as the pattern is almost invisible in contrast to those knitted of fine shiny worsted or silk. Here the damask-like effect is evident. This could point towards these woollen examples being copies made from locally produced yarn of a wool quality that was liable to felt, or the local tradition was to full the knitwear to produce a sturdier product. The archaeological find does not seem to be fulled, but this may be caused by the nap being lost due to its deterioration in the soil.

Some of the preserved damask-knitted waistcoats were made from combed yarn with long, smooth, shiny fibres (from a long hairy fleece) – very much like mohair, but with slightly thicker fibre. An example is a red nattrøje with a stitched on pile (nr. 521-1927) in the National Museum of Denmark. Some of the archaeological finds were of such fine shiny wool that the archaeologists mistook it for silk. This could have been mohair. Mohair wool was imported from the Middle East; these fibres were often called “camel hair”, the reason most likely being a mistaken translation of the Arabic name for goat. This error seems to have occurred in Sweden too. An example is the fine knitted stockings from 1655 belonging to Nils Nilsson Brahe: in 1710 these stockings were recorded as made of camel hair in the inventory: “1 p’ strumpor af swart Camelebåär”. In Anders Berchs samling, a collection of materials gathered in the middle of the 18th century by the first Swedish professor of economics, it is mentioned that the attempt to produce “camel hair” by cross-breeding a Swedish goat with an Angora goat was not successful.

Damask-knitted waistcoats of the same star-pattern and shape in wool knitted in Halland are held in Swedish collections, for example at the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm. Here we also find some waistcoats similar to the fine worsteds, but knitted of soft cotton yarn. One is known to be knitted in Halland in 1754 by a Pernilla Christiansdotter. The Victoria & Albert Museum in London has a similar cotton-knit jacket but with a somewhat different pattern. Halland was the area producing the most knitted goods in Sweden in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was famous for its stocking production which supplied the Swedish army after Halland was ceded to Sweden from Denmark in 1658. Knitting was probably known in the area much earlier. Already in 1645 it appears that stockings were produced here, since some peasants from the area of Markaryd were put on trial in 1645 and 1646 because they did not deliver the stockings and other equipment to the garrison in Laholm as directed.

In Sweden it seems that knitted waistcoats or jerseys became common first in the former Danish areas, where the knitted waistcoats were widespread by the 17th century. In the northern parts of Sweden, they do not appear until 150 years later. In Scania, the traditional knitted wool waistcoats used by the peasants, spedetröja, closely resembled the Danish nattrøje, especially those types found on
the Danish island of Lolland. Thus, knitting is likely to have been introduced to the rest of Scandinavia via Denmark. However, we do not know when knitting was introduced to Denmark, although it is likely to have come via German artisans. Knitting was long known in Germany. In Schleswig, three knitted fragments of unknown use dated to 1150 were recovered in an archaeological excavation. In 1563, a cap- and stocking-knitters’ guild was registered in Dresden. In the first half of the 17th century, knitted waistcoats were produced in Hammerum County in Jutland, the area that became the centre for knitting production in Denmark from the 17th to the 19th century. In the obituary of Cecilie Iversdatter who was born in 1618 in Vildbjerg near Herning, the priest wrote in the parish register that she earned her living by knitting nattrøjer until she married and moved to the eastern part of Jutland.

In conclusion, knitting seems to have spread from the Continent to the Danish kingdom at the turn of the 17th century, and only in the second half of the 17th century, does the technology move north, perhaps instigated by the Swedish take-over of the Danish possessions of Halland and Scania.

For men or women

As little is known about the preserved waistcoats, the question arises whether this garment had been worn by men or women. We know from the Danish/Norwegian probate records and merchants’ inventories that nattrøjer were for both sexes; but were there any gender differences in terms of shape, pattern or colour? The merchants’ inventories frequently note if they are for women or men, e.g. “j muskis silke quinde Nattrøye” (a woman’s musk grey silk waistcoat) or “3 røde mands Nattrøyer” (three red male waistcoats). This indicates that there must have been some sort of apparent distinguishing feature in the waistcoats; of course, this could be based on size, but perhaps there were other differences. Waistcoats for men were often of a little higher value than those for women, perhaps due to the need for more material and work for the larger male waistcoats.

Considering only the size of the analysed damask-knitted waistcoats in Table 5.1, it can be difficult to distinguish if it were worn by a man or a woman. The preserved waistcoats differ much in length from 53 to 80 cm (measured from shoulder to hem) but there is no relationship between length and size, the shorter being some of the widest. Looking at the arm-span one has to know if the garment had long or three-quarter length sleeves. It has thus far been possible to identify the owners of only two of the well-preserved garments. That with the biggest arm-span of 149 cm is supposed to have been owned by Charles I (Museum of London A 27050), while another with an arm-span of 129 cm was owned by Kristiane Henriette Broatkorb, but as this garment is altered and the sleeves are shortened, its original arm-span is unknown (Oslo OK 11 661). The latter is one of the flat-knitted waistcoats, which are generally of a looser fit than the round-knitted, having a low shoulder line with sleeves attached onto the upper arm. Seen from today’s perspective, that with the shortest arm-span of 118 cm is the most feminine, being close fitting with a deep square neckline (Oslo OK 1162). When considering the neckline, those with a high or a straight neckline have, in general, a larger arm-span than those with a square-shaped neckline, even when it is a high square neckline. Only one of the waistcoats with the original neckline preserved has a low neckline, most of them have a neckline only one or two cm deep in front and one cm in the back. Whether or not there is a similar link in arm-span, neckline, and possible gender among the brocade-knitted waistcoats requires further study.

In the probate records, nattrøjer sewn of woven fabric are equally distributed between the genders, while the knitted examples occur more frequently in women’s wear than men’s (67% of those mentioned are for women, 19% for men, 2% for children, and in the case of the remaining 12% nattrøjer, it was not possible to see whether they belonged to the husband or the wife). If one considers only nattrøjer of knitted silk, 75% are specifically for women. Thus we may conclude that they were worn by both men and women, although the probate records do show a higher occurrence of waistcoats owned by women.

Decoration

The way the decorative elements, patterns or embroidery are placed on the knitted silk
Some brocade-knitted waistcoats have a border framing the main pattern; this border frame runs like a woven border edging the jacket front and the upper part of the jacket skirt. The sleeves have the same pattern as the front and back, but often with a different border at the top and at the cuffs. On these jackets, it is evident from the location of the pattern that the garment was not originally intended to be worn beneath another.

The typical 17th-century waistcoats or jackets of fabric have patterns all over with no borders except a small lace edging. Even when the fabric is embroidered, this is done over the entire surface mimicking a woven pattern. Several linen waistcoats from this period, with embroidery in silk and metal thread covering the entire surface, have survived. Here the pattern is not adjusted to follow the shape of the jacket’s parts, although on some, the pattern is mirrored so the centre front is symmetrical.

The brocade-knitted waistcoats are constructed like these fabric jackets consisting of two fronts, one single back and two sleeves. The placing of the seam on the brocade-knitted sleeves could mimic the two-piece sleeves on the embroidered jackets. The shape of these jackets is quite similar to the knitted waistcoats, although they seem to have a tighter fit. They have no collar and are hip-length. The jackets have gores on the front and back adding width to the skirt, while the knitted jackets only have a little extra width by decreasing and increasing stitches at the sides. On some of the waistcoats, the skirt is shaped by a different knitting pattern, rows of garter stitch or by a check or wave pattern. The fashionable wings on the shoulders seen on many doublets are not found on the knitted waistcoats; and the cuffs found on most of the jackets are only on a couple of the brocade-knitted waistcoats.

In contrast to these all-over embroidered jackets, the embroidery on most of the damask-knitted waistcoats are like borders: mainly placed on the upper half of the front, along the front opening, around the neckline at the upper part of the back, on the lower part of the sleeves, and on the outside of the sleeves. It is placed so it would be visible when worn under a gown, kirtle, a jacket with shorter sleeves or a sleeveless doublet, while the parts of the waistcoats covered by the outer garment are devoid of embroidery. Only one of the damask-knitted waistcoats differs from this, having an all-over floral embroidery like the embroidered linen waistcoats mentioned above (see Figs. 5.8, 5.9, 5.10 and 5.11).

It is striking though how the kind of embroidery stitches used on the embroidered linen jackets is similar to parts of the embroidery on the purl-patterned waistcoats, in particular the plaited chain-stitch used for the metal-thread stem and the detached buttonhole stitch used for filling the interior of the flowers. However, the embroidery patterns, in general, are very different, and the combination of multicoloured floral patterns with silver or golden stems is not seen on the knitted garments found in Scandinavia. On the embroidered jackets, the seams are marked with a plaited silver braid. Similarly, several of the knitted waistcoats have a zigzag line in chain stitch where the seams would have been, if they had not been round-knitted. The embroidery has an oriental style, and the way it is placed especially around the front slit is similar to some Indian clothing as still seen today.

The range of brightly coloured silk used in the knitted waistcoats is the same as those used in contemporary embroidery, e.g. on linen waistcoats. Also the typical fading of especially the dark salmon red to a pale rose is seen in the embroidery. The coloured silk used for knitting came from the same source as the embroidery yarn; they were imported in a range of bright colours. However, there is definitely a certain fashion in the colours as well. The pale salmon-pink called livfarvet was a very popular colour in the middle of the 17th century.

**How were the waistcoats worn?**

These garments are considered to be part of informal dress. Either they were a kind of underwear, as it evidently was the case with Charles I’s knitted silk waistcoat, where as described in William Sanderson’s *Compleat History of the Life and Reign of King Charles II of England*, the placing of the seam on the brocade-knitted waistcoat could also be seen as part of the outer garment.
Fig. 5.8: Sketches of star-patterned, silk knitted waistcoats analysed for this study. From top: ABB 593 front and back; NF 1960-0520 front and back; VK 4074 front and back.

These are all round-knitted. Except for variations in size, all these waistcoats are knitted as identical garments, the same pattern at the yoke, the lower hem, at the wrist and at the front slit. The differences lie primarily in the later added embroidery and the colour. They all have a pile sewn onto the reverse side. See Ringgaard (2010) part 2 Bilag, B p.45 (ABB 593), p.55 (NF 1960-0520) and p. 60 (VK 4074) (©Claus Tversted).
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Fig. 5.9: Sketches of star-patterned, silk knitted waistcoats analysed for this study. From top: BY 03948 front and back; NK 59.1953 front and back; Tønneberg front and back. These three waistcoats are similar to those on Fig. 5.8 except for a different pattern along the front slit and at the armholes. They are all round-knitted and all with a sewn on pile. NK 59.1953 has particularly rich and beautiful embroidery. See Ringgaard (2010) part 2 Bilag B p.47 (BY 03948), p.49 (NK 59.1953) (©Claus Tversted).
Fig. 5.10: Sketches of star-patterned, silk knitted waistcoats analysed for this study.
From top: Cat. 0032 front and back; OK 1162 front and back; OK 8800 front and back. These waistcoats are all round-knitted. Cat. 0032 from Drummond Castle, Scotland is the only known star-patterned silk waistcoat found outside the Nordic countries. The knitwork is completely identical to the three items in Fig. 5.8, but it has neither pile nor embroidery. OK 1162 is smaller in size and more shaped and tight fitting than the rest. It has a very low neckline worked with a half diamond pattern. The patterns resemble those of the waistcoats in Fig. 5.9. This is one of the few without pile. OK 8800 resembles the waistcoats in Fig. 5.8, but instead of a diaper-pattern, it has a check-pattern on the yoke, at the lower hem and at the wrist. This is the only round-knitted silk waistcoat with this check-pattern. It has a sewn on pile. See Ringgaard (2010) part 2 Bilag.B p.53 (OK 1162), p.56 (OK 8800) (©Claus Tversted).
Fig. 5.11: Sketches of star-patterned, silk knitted waistcoats analysed for this study. From top: GM 4123 front and back; NK 747 front and back; OK 11661 front and back. All these are flat-knitted in four parts, the pieces front, back and two sleeves sewn to form the waistcoat. The front piece is later cut to transform the waistcoats into jackets. NK 747 and OK 11661 are also made shorter. On NK 747 the cut of parts are added to lengthen the sleeves, thus the check pattern's original place on the lower hem is now at the upper sleeves. These waistcoats do not have a yoke. The pattern at the lower hem, wrist and along the front slit are all check-patterns. The pile is knitted in during the knitting process. GM 4123 has a white pile, while the remaining waistcoats have pile in the same colour as the garment. See Ringgaard (2010) part 2 Bilag B p.62 (GM 4123, p.51 (NK 747) p.58 (OK 11661) (©Claus Tversted).
(1658) the King, prior to his beheading was “...unclothed... to his sky-coloured satten waistcoat”, or they were informal home-wear, like the banyan (slåbrok), a nicely comfortable, albeit highly precious, dressing gownlike garment. This could be a reason why brocade-knitted waistcoats were chosen as death shrouds for the children of Christian IV of Denmark.

It is, however, not likely that the nattrøje was merely an informal garment for women belonging to the Copenhagen bourgeoisie.
in 1650–1690. Looking at the probates, one finds this garment was among the most valuable garments – in some cases the most valuable. This signifies that among this group of the population, these garments must have been considered among their Sunday best.

It has generally been assumed that there are no depictions of these waistcoats. However, I discovered that in some depictions in church epitaphs and portraits of women, a glimpse of what is probably a nattrøje can be seen. The garment is almost hidden by the gown or doublet and is often covered by a partlet (see Figs. 5.6, 5.7 and 5.13) and sleeves of very fine transparent linen or gauze, but one can recognise the bright colours: red, green or yellow, as well as the embroidery along the neckline and cuffs. In a portrait of the Swedish noblewoman Ebba Lewenhaupt, one can see what could most likely be one of the brocade-knitted waistcoats. However, perhaps it is merely a nattrøje sewn of a woven fabric.

**Dating the waistcoats**

When the first knitted waistcoats were introduced to Scandinavia is unknown, but it must have been before the late 16th century, as a merchant held some knitted waistcoats in stock in Malmö in 1598. In England, production of knitted waistcoats could already have existed in the latter part of the 16th century from when there are several mentions of knitted waistcoats. An example is Yeoman John Truelove of Hornchurch who had a knitted waistcoat in his inventory from 1574. Some of the oldest preserved are children’s clothing, plain knit in stocking stitch. A knitted vest of fine wool for a small child dated to the mid-16th century is held in the Museum of London’s collections, and in an excavation in Groningen, Holland, a knitted baby jacket of wool dating to 1570–1600 was recovered.

Only a few of the preserved knitted silk waistcoats can be dated more precisely. Dating is mostly done on the basis of the pattern and fashion. The brocade-knitted waistcoats are, on the basis of their pattern, comparable to patterns in woven material, in general dated to the very end of 16th or the first part of the 17th century. The brocade-knitted waistcoats used as shrouds for the children of the Danish

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**Fig. 5.13:** A detail of the portrait of the noblewoman Ebba Lewenhaupt. She is either wearing a brocade-knitted waistcoat or an embroidered linen waistcoat. The floral pattern is seen beneath the linen sleeves, and also beneath the partlet worn around the neck and upper chest (Skokloster, Sweden).
king in 1627 and 1628 confirm this dating, as these waistcoats were not new when buried but showed signs of use.\textsuperscript{73} The dating of the damask-knitted waistcoat type is also vague. A pale blue waistcoat in Bergen, according to tradition, had been worn by Christian IV, but there is no evidence to confirm this tradition.\textsuperscript{74} The raised waistline of the round-knitted waistcoats is in line with the fashion of the 1620s, and one of them (OK 1162, Oslo Kunstindustrimuseum) has a deep square neckline. This was a typical neckline by the first decade of the 17th century and could be found occasionally until 1625.\textsuperscript{75}

On the other hand, there is a waistcoat of exactly the same type from half a century later found in the Swedish royal ship Kronan that sank in the Baltic Sea near Kalmar in 1674. Here, a now fragmented damask-knitted silk waistcoat was found in the captain’s chest. These fragments have the star and diamond pattern as well as pile and embroidery, as the vast majority of the round-knitted damask-knitted waistcoats.

The waistcoat that was supposed to have been worn by Charles I clearly belongs to the same group as the round-knitted star patterned ones, even if the pattern itself is different. Details like the false seams, borders, patterns on the yoke etc., are the same.

The dating is congruent with the dating of a very fine quality knitted worsted waistcoat with a similar pattern that was found in Copenhagen among infill in the city moat. It must have ended in the city moat before 1650, when the moat was filled, as it was found in its lower layers. This waistcoat is one of the few not having a star-diamond-pattern but a pattern resembling that on the silk waistcoat attributed to Charles I. It has a pile sewn on after knitting, the only known waistcoat with pile without the star-pattern. The waistcoat was fragmentary and shows several signs of wear and darning; it was probably cut into pieces before being discarded (NM 2240-1976 Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen).

The star and diamond pattern is found, with this one exception, on all known damask-knitted silk waistcoats, as well as on the damask-knitted 17th–18th century waistcoats of wool. There are small differences in the size of the eight-point stars and the lines between the stars, but, in general, they are alike. This pattern can be found in 16th-century pattern books, for instance in Peter Quentel’s Musterbüchlein für Ornamente und Stickmuster from 1527.

When she was buried in 1628, Christian IV’s daughter Maria Cathrine wore a pair of embroidered stockings.\textsuperscript{76} This embroidery has a great resemblance to the embroidery on the waistcoats. The damask-knitted waistcoat with a deep square neckline is one of the waistcoats with embroidery similar to that recovered from the Swedish royal ship Kronan. So either the waistcoat in the captain’s chest on the Kronan was quite old, when he sailed off, or this type of gold and silver embroidery with flower stems in plaited stitch and flowers of detached buttonhole stitch (punto in aria) stuffed with white wool or silk must have been popular over the greater part of the 17th century.

The majority of nattrøjer knitted of silk mentioned in the probates are from the period 1655–1690. Thus, perhaps the fashion was at its height in Denmark in this period, yet they were fashionable enough to be held in a merchant’s stock in 1696.

A reason for the two different types of waistcoats could be a change in fashion. This could indicate that the damask-knitted type of silk waistcoat is somewhat newer than the flat-knitted brocade type, and could be a fashion that replaced the brocade-knitted type. However, this is disproved by the brocade-knitted type mentioned in sources of a later date. For instance, Sir Thomas Isham’s tailor charged him 1 pound 5s 6d for “new Lining A purple and gold Silke knit wastcoate” in April 1680.\textsuperscript{77} The few examples mentioned earlier of brocade-knitted waistcoats in the Danish probate records are also from the second half of the 17th century (from 1644, 1694, and 1696). As late as 1712, a theft of a “green silk knit waistcoat with gold and silver flowers all over it” is reported in a London paper. This description of one of the brocade-knitted type shows they were worn well into the 18th century.\textsuperscript{78}

In North America too, knitted silk waistcoats were in use then, as evidenced by an 18th-century American newspaper where knitted silk waistcoats are mentioned: “silk knit waistcoat”, “white silk knit waistcoat” and “Saxon green knit waistcoat”\textsuperscript{79} (Saxon probably refers to the green colour made by the use of the new semi-synthetic dye saxon blue and not to the place where the waistcoat was produced). Here, no mention of any
pattern is made, so we do not know if they were brocade, damask-knitted or merely plain. 

We do know that the Christian IV’s children wore brocade-knitted silk when buried in 1627 and 1628 respectively, and the few others that could be brocade-knitted are found among the elite. This could indicate that in Denmark these imported waistcoats were for the elite only, while silk knitted and damask-knitted items could be for anyone prosperous enough to afford them.

Where were these waistcoats produced?

Although quite a number of knitted silk waistcoats are preserved worldwide, especially of the brocade-knitted type, we know very little about where these fashionable garments were produced. The brocade-knitted waistcoats are often referred to as Italian, although there is nothing specific that directly links them to this country. In 1698, Christoph Weigel wrote about trained knitters (i.e. craftsmen) and that especially in Italy, waistcoats and gloves are knitted from silk, sometimes mixed with gold or silver, intricately pierced and provided with elaborate patterns: “Die Camisol und Handschuh werden in Italien absonderlich wol von Seide, auch zuweilen mit Gold und Silber untermenget, künstlich durchbrochen und mit allerhand artigen Mädelchen und Figuren geziert gemacht.” This could very well refer to the brocade-knitted waistcoats.

It is assumed that these waistcoats came from one centre of production; 16th-century Italy had several knitting centres and was well known for producing knitted silk. One of the biggest centres, if not the biggest, for hand-knitted silk-stockings by the end of 16th century and the mid-17th century was Milan. Milan maintained its position as a centre of hand-knitting and endeavoured to keep out frame-knitting for fear of losing the occupations of thousands of knitters. In 1686, there were nine knitting frames in Milan and about 300 in London. Many of the brocade-knitted waistcoats are made of quadrangular pieces with only a little fashioning. This, along with the long floats on the “poorly finished reverse side,” has led to the suggestion that they were made on an early type of knitting-frame. The Spaniards are supposed to have invented a method working with gold and silver on the knitting-frame; a method imitated in England by Crane and Porter who patented it in 1768. This makes it doubtful that it was used for the widespread production of waistcoats a century and a half earlier; and as mentioned, some of the brocade-knitted waistcoats have round-knitted sleeves. Round-knitting could not be carried out by machine until the early 19th century. This indicates they were hand-knitted.

Italy was not the only possible place of production. Silk knitting was also present in many other areas, for instance in England, the Low Countries, France, and already in 1593, we find mention of a silk-knitter in Prague.

Nothing, however, links the damask-knitted type to Italy. This type is primarily found in what was then the Dano–Norwegian kingdom and those with star patterns are, with the single exception in Scotland, only found here. Likewise, waistcoats of wool with a similar damask-knitted star pattern are also only well known in this area. From the written records and preserved waistcoats, we can identify that this type and pattern were clearly preferred in Denmark.

The woollen waistcoats could have been produced in many places. Knitters’ guilds in many European countries mention, in a certain period, a vest or a waistcoat of wool among the items required to be produced in order to obtain a master craftsmanship, for example in Wroclaw 1573, Prague 1614, Bratislava 1651, Dresden 1653, Frankfurt am Main 1659 and Berlin 1697. As late as 1744, J. H. Zedler’s Lexikon states that the knitters’ masterpiece, among other things, was a waistcoat without any stitching: “eine Futterhemde oder Camisol, daran nichts genähet ist.” This is probably a round-knitted waistcoat, knitted together on the shoulders and with the stitches for the sleeves picked up on the armhole and knitted from the top downwards. The round-knitted silk waistcoats nearly fit this description, apart from the sleeves being knitted upwards and stitched on, but some fine wool nattrøjer from the late 18th-century are made in this manner.

As the knitters in the Nordic countries were not organized in a guild, the lack of written data makes it difficult to estimate their production. It is not known when precisely the production of knitted waistcoats began in Denmark, but as mentioned above, we do know there was one in Jutland in the first half of 17th century. Some incomplete records in...
Oslo declare that, in the 1670s and 1690s, detached knitted sleeves and waistcoats of wool were imported to Norway from both London and Jutland. The knitwear from Jutland was shipped off from Horsens but was probably produced further inland in the area near Herning famous for its knitted garments.

As mentioned earlier, in 1680, a Friderich Boye requested a permit from the king of Denmark–Norway to manufacture knitted stockings, camisols or nattrøjer. He was granted this privilege and also permitted to import the necessary wool and silk (and to pay the customs duty for this); but only with the proviso that he produced “fine knit work only”, so as to not harm the domestic production of woollen nattrøjer, indicating that the domestic production was of a coarser quality. In 1674, the earlier mentioned Mathias Freude and Augustin Heinrich requested the privilege to manufacture fine camisoles along with the establishment of a dye house for dyeing crimson and red. As they wished to obtain skilled knitters from Hamburg, they established their production in Holstein. All these men came from Germany, just as many of the other manufactures and journeymen artisans of that time, thus it is not unlikely that the knitted silk waistcoats too originated from Germany.

To protect Danish production, a tax was imposed on imported nattrøjer and knitted sleeves: 1 thaler for woollen items and 2 thaler for silk. This was a heavy tax, especially for the woollen nattrøjer, as it was about half the value set for many of those held in merchants’ inventories at the time. A place of production is not specified for any of the waistcoats in the merchant inventories investigated, although this is often the case with stockings in the same inventories where some stockings are listed as English, French or from Hamburg or Luneburg.

A sign though that the silk waistcoat could be of foreign import is evidenced by remnants of a red lacquer on two of the waistcoats, one brocade-knitted and one damask-knitted (Nordiska Museet nr. 221941; Bergens Museum nr. ABB593). On both waistcoats, the seal was situated on the reverse at the lower hem. Goods that were restricted according to the sumptuary laws were often provided with a seal as a sign of approval or after being cleared through customs. An example of this can be seen on a silk bodice in a Norwegian costume collection, a seal with the inscription C7 1787 that confirms the garment was customs cleared in 1787 during the reign of King Christian VII of Denmark–Norway (1766–1808). Regrettably, both the seals on the knitted waistcoats are not in a state where it is possible to decipher any inscription.

**Knitting technology as a marker of provenance?**

The analysis of the knitting techniques of the garments reveals that there could not only have been one place of production. We have two sets of quite similar star-patterned damask-knitted silk waistcoats that, despite their similar appearance are technically so different that they must have been produced by knitters with absolutely different craft traditions. One flat-knitted produced of four or five single pieces finished by stitching often using the very same yarn with which they were knitted; the other, round-knitted with only stitched seams at the armholes. The round-knitted waistcoats could originate from an area having a stocking-knitting tradition as stockings from this period are round-knitted and often have a purl pattern at the sides of the ankle: a damask-knitted clock.

It is evident that the round-knitted waistcoats of the damask type are not produced by the same knitters as the brocade-knitted types, as the knitting techniques utilised are so dissimilar. However, one could assume that the flat-knitted waistcoats of the damask-knitted type were produced in the same place as the brocade-knitted, as they all are made of flat, almost quadrangular, pieces and have the pile knitted-in, employing a technique resembling that used to shift the colours in the brocade-knitted waistcoats. There is, though, one consistent difference: all the flat-knitted, star-patterned waistcoats have sleeves knitted from the top down to the wrist and none of the brocade-knitted waistcoats, I have had the opportunity to examine closely, had this – they were all knitted from the wrist upwards. This is such a constant divergence that they must surely be of different origin.

It is evident from the reverse where the stitches are splitting and covering the pile that the embroidering took place on the finished waistcoats – whether this was sewn or knitted.
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Most of the waistcoats have embroidery of the type with scrolling foliage executed in detached buttonhole stitch, although others have a somewhat different kind of embroidery where the motifs are less detailed and made by couching and laid work. The embroidery must have been done elsewhere than the knitting itself, as evidenced by both types of embroidery being encountered on both the flat- and the round-knitted waistcoats. Perhaps the waistcoats were imported plain and subsequently decorated in the Danish realm; this could explain why the embroidered type is not known elsewhere. The oriental style of the embroidery could perhaps indicate that the waistcoats were sent off to the east with the Danish Asian Company to be decorated. However, this belongs to the realm of speculation, as to my knowledge, thus far, no written sources confirm this. Yet, the embroidering could indeed have been done within the Dano-Norwegian realm as well, there being several skilled embroiderers both in Copenhagen and other towns. A law from 1699 declares that, those who are permitted to wear gold or silver embroidery may only wear embroidery that was made within the realm, not imported.

The different places of production can be due to the diffusion and copying of fashion. A skilled knitter could easily imitate a new fashionable item. It is likely that this was the case here. The smaller differences in a product like the knitted silk purl-patterned waistcoats are due to the individual knitter. The pattern was not written down but the single knitter knew what he or she should produce by looking at a model (provided by the manufacturer) and soon learnt the pattern by heart. Perhaps each knitter may have had an individual way of solving a problem – or perhaps they merely altered a detail of a pattern, or even forgot some details. The latter can be seen, for example in the marking of the “seams” by a couple of garter-stitches where sometimes this is partly forgotten on one side, but later resumed when getting to areas with increases or decreases, where counting the rows is necessary.

Knitted camisoles or waistcoats of silk or wool could similarly have been copied in wool by knitters in Jutland and Halland. The copy was not exact, but rather inspired by the original to various degrees; thereby a regional difference may be discerned in garments of similar origin. A study of the traditional knitted sweaters in Northern Europe and the Baltic area indicates that there are areas with monochromatic knitwear and other areas where the knit is variegated, like the two major types of knitted silk waistcoats.

One could suggest that the Danish nattrøje and perhaps the Dutch and Guernsey fishermen’s ganseys are descendents of the damask-knitted type, while variegated knit like Estonian and Fair Isle knitwear are descendents of the brocade-knitted type.

A Danish speciality?

Monochromatic knitting was apparently the preferred mode in Denmark. It is striking that among about 1000 knitted objects or knitted fragments recovered in archaeological excavations in Copenhagen, the only item with more than a single colour was some mittens with bands in alternate colour yarn on the shaft. The only coloured patterns on the knitwear are embroidery on gloves and at the brim or welt of a cap.

The monochromatic damask-knitting with its purl patterns could be linked to a stricter almost minimalistic Protestant fashion in the Dano-Norwegian realm with a preference for monochromatic textiles in subdued colours (see Engelhardt in this volume). The preferred patterns were more moderate than the great floral patterns of the Renaissance, with the general appearance being more subdued or mute than in the Catholic countries. The star in the damask-knitted star pattern could be a symbol of divinity and supremacy, and the eternal and immortal. In Norway, the pattern is called the eight-petalled rose pattern, the rose being a symbol for the Virgin Mary.

The knitted waistcoat of wool with a star pattern is typical for the Dano-Norwegian kingdom. These were produced in the knitwear producing areas of Jutland and Halland. As this type of damask knit is almost unknown in the rest of Europe, it is likely that the silk waistcoats, if not produced in Denmark, were made primarily for customers in the realm.

It has been suggested that the damask-knitted silk waistcoats were imported to Norway from England. They could possibly also have been produced in Germany and arrived via Hamburg, perhaps being especially produced for the Dano-Norwegian market. Dare one suggest that the damask-knitted...
waistcoats could as well have been brought the other way: to England from Denmark–Norway? Could the star-patterned silk waistcoat at Drummond Castle have come to Scotland via the lively shipping traffic between these countries or via a marriage? Among the aristocracy, there were close connections between Denmark and Scotland/England, for example, Christian IV’s sister, Anne of Denmark (1574–1619) was married to King James VI of Scots and I of England, and was mother to the ill-fated monarch, Charles I.

Conclusion

Brocade-knitted and damask-knitted waistcoats are two main types of early modern luxury knitted silk waistcoats. These again may be divided into subcategories based on the fashioning and knitting techniques used that probably indicate several different places of production.

We may conclude that, in Italy, it was most likely the brocade-knitted type that was produced. It is not certain where the damask-knitted type of waistcoat originated, but, as apart from the one in England and that in Scotland, this type is only found in the Dano-Norwegian kingdom, the place of production is likely to be sought in Northern Europe.

The type of silk waistcoat with a damask-knitted star and diamond pattern was particularly popular in the Dano-Norwegian realm in the 17th century, and they were expensive. There are indications that at least some of them were imported to Denmark. Their precise area of origin remains unknown, although we may surmise that it may have been from the areas south of Denmark, perhaps Hamburg. They are likely to have been made by skilled knitters in some kind of putting out system, but with room for individual choices for the single knitter. The closing decades of the 17th century saw the beginnings of production within the realm, although still little is known about this. Some of the waistcoats were adorned with silver and gold embroidery; this was probably produced elsewhere, rather than where the knitting took place, perhaps in Denmark.

These waistcoats represent an encounter between the Nordic world and the foreign producers of this new type of luxurious textile that these knitted garments of precious materials stand for. The star-patterned silk waistcoat with its warm pile also represents an encounter, in that it was possibly a special type produced for the Nordic market elsewhere, to please and satisfy a fashion in the Nordic area; a fashion that not only spread among the noble families, but also became Sunday best for the more well-off artisans and merchant families in the towns.

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Notes

1 Ringgaard forthcoming.
2 Rutt (1987), 81.
3 In the Museum of London is a waistcoat believed to have been worn by Charles I at his execution in 1649. At Drummond Castle in Perthshire is a waistcoat that belonged to the 1st Duke of Perth (1648–1716), this has been in the castle and family ownership since then. Warburg (1988); Ostergård (1988). After the contents were analysed and the coffin restored, the child’s remains, including his garments were returned to the coffin.
4 1 in Gothenburg (GM 4123), 2 in Trondheim (NK 7477 and NK 59,1953), 3 in Bergen (ABB 593, VK 4074 and BY 03948), 4 in Oslo (OK 1162, OK 8800, OK 11661 and NF 1960-0520), 1 in Stälheim (Tønneberg) and 1 in Halden (the latter has not been studied).
5 Ringgaard (2010), 104, 131. Further information about the ship Kronan can be found on: http://www.kalmarlansmuseum.se/1/1.0.1.0/421/1/.
7 Ringgaard (2007).
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10 North and Tiramani (2011), 35.
12 Levey (1971), 188.
14 Ringgaard (2010), 99–121.
15 Approximately 1500 probate records were examined for this study. As not all probate records from this period have survived in various circumstances, the material quantity from the different towns varies. Probates from Norway: Skien, Frederikstad, Larvik, Stavanger, Oslo and Trondheim before 1700 (here there were no probates dating before 1660). Probates from Skania (Skåne) from 1660–1660. Danish probates from 1575–1690 from the towns of Grenå, Holbkåk, Kalundborg, Naksø, Odense, Randers, Ribe, Koge, Vordingborg and Næstved. Copenhagen probates are from the period 1675–1740 as no older probates from Copenhagen have survived.
16 Pehr Hilleström (1979).
17 Some translate nattrøje as nightshirt (e.g. Hoffmann 1988), but a night-shirt – a shirt-shaped garment of woven material to wear while sleeping – is called a nattrøje in Danish.
18 Peasants, in general, slept naked until the 19th century, see Venborg Pedersen (2009), 127–142.
19 Personal communication with linguisit, lecturer, Dr. Inge Lise Pedersen; see also Ploug (1979), 7; Warburg (1988), 155f. A similar use of the word night (nat = night) for a garment used informally in the daytime in this period could be a night cap, or a parallel in English would be the word bed in the garment bedgown (a woman’s short loose jacket, simply cut with the body, sleeves and skirts all in one piece, female working-class wear). Apart from nattrøje (nightcap) the prefix nat – is used in Danish peasant headwear, e.g. nattole and nattø often very elaborate with starched lace and linen and definitely not suitable for nightwear (see Andersen 1960).
20 Ringgaard (2010), 116.
21 Peasants, in general, slept naked until the 19th century, see Venborg Pedersen (2009), 127–142.
22 professor af angoriske bockar updrefne…1761." One includes the Angora goat’s wool, along with the hairs of other goats under the common, but incorrect, name of camelhair. The right name ought to be Kaemelhair, for in Arabic a goat is called Kaemel.
23 The meaning of brich is uncertain, it could mean from Brügge or from Brussels as proposed in Olrik (1903), 160.
24 Odense Byfoged Skifteprotokol 1626–35, Skifte efter Ore Knudsen, borgmester, Odense, 1634.
25 Malmo radstue, skiftedokumenter 1597–1599, skiftebrev nr. 303.
26 Aneer (2009), 182.
27 Ringgaard (2010), 116.
28 Aneer (2009), 182.
30 Flamand Christensen, 93–94.
32 “Die Camisol und Handschuh werden in Italien absonderlich wol von Seid........... Gemacht” Weigel (1998), 613 (913 in the online version).
33 http://www.zedler-lexikon.de. Entry: Strikken. ("knitting is the name of that science... that its best form enables the production of stockings, gloves, hats, camisol.").
34 Christensen (1943), 108.
35 Nordiska museet, Stockholm.
37 Ringgaard (2010), 116.
38 Probate of the merchant Rudolf Møller 1678–79, Landsarkivet for Fyn, Nyborg Byfoged; Landsarkivet for Sjælland, Gårdretten, skiftebrev 1683–1740, B.s. nr. 1: 1683 9 12–1697 12 23, skiftebrev nr. 1 Birgitte Jensdatter.
39 Holbæk byfogedarkiv skifteprotokol 1641–1650, Magdalene Hansdatter 1646; Københavns Byting, konceptskifter: 1681 1–1682 50, skiftebrev nr. 33 and nr. 59.
40 In the analysed inventory probates, uldenskjorte and camisol are only included under the term knitted waistcoats, if it is mentioned that they are knitted, similarly for nattrøjer in probates before 1620 or if a pile is mentioned. After ca. 1620, all nattrøjer are knitted except when it is mentioned that they are made of a (costy) woven fabric.
41 Skifte efter Gunnell Lauritzdatter, LAK, Københavns Byting, konceptskifter 1681–1717, skiftebrev 1699.
42 OK 8800, Oslo Kunstdindustrimuseum.
43 Københavns Byting, Borgeretten, Skiftebrev 1682–1730, Magdalene Klingenberg.
44 Københavns Byting, Landsover, Hof-og Stadsretten, 1683–1781 skiftebrev nr. 1.
45 For example Henrik Madsen, Alderman in Køge, 1655; Softtia Jenildaanther, Copenhagen 1682 and Hano Lauritsdatter Copenhagen 1681, Landsarkivet for Sjælland, Lolland-Falster og Bornholm, Københavns Byting, Copenhagen skiftekommission 1682–1776, konceptskifter: 1681 51–1682 94.
46 Aneer (2009), 182.
47 Landsarkivet for Fyn, Nyborg Byfoged. Rudolf Møller 1678–79; Larsen (1965), 322–349.
48 Andersen (1960), 139.
49 Brun Juuls Varelexicon (1807). “Man indbøfetter den angoriske Gedaeld tilligemed Haarene af andre Geder under det almindelige, men urigtige Navn Kameelhaar. Eigentlig skulde det hede Kæmelhaar, thi en Geed kaldes paa arabisk Kamel”. One includes the Angora goat’s wool, along with the hairs of other goats under the common, but incorrect, name of camelhair. The right name ought to be Kaemelhair, for in Arabic a goat is called Kaemel.
50 Ringström (2002), 180.
51 Stevnen-Hidemark (1990), 262. “Prof af angoriske getter s hær uti 4de generation af Swenskt gete slag, med angoriske bockar updrfredne…1761.”
52 Information given to the museum when purchased in the village of Abykls in 1873 (Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, inv. no. 1595).
53 Victoria & Albert Museum, London, inv. no. T.61–1939; this also has a star pattern, but the pattern is placed somewhat differently: as a border along the lower hem, along the front opening, and a vertical band on the centre back. The construction of the armholes and the sleeves is noticeably different, indicating a different place of production.
54 Johansson (2001), 94.
55 Nylén (1968), 321.
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57 Turnau (1991), 38.
58 Nøddskov (1992), 142.
59 Landsarkivet for Sjælland, Gårdretten, skiftebreve 1683–1740, Bs. nr. 1: 1683 9 12 -1697 12 23, skiftebrev nr. 1 Binging Jensdatter.
60 Landsarkivet for Sjælland, Københavns byeting, Københavns skiftekommission 1682–1776, konceptskifter: 1688 hr. Probate after merchant and alderman Claus Iversen, Copenhagen 1688–1690.
62 Rosseau (2005), 32.
63 For example, the jacket of Margaret Laton ca. 1615, V&A collection (T.228.1994) http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O11095/jacket-unknown/ (accessed October 2012).
64 Kunstdrumsmeksev Oslo inv. no. OK11661.
65 This can be seen if comparing the red flowers on Margot Laton’s jacket V&A T228.1994 with Gheeraert’s portrait (ca. 1620) of her wearing the same jacket V&A E.214-1994.
67 Here cited from Hilary Davidson, Curator Museum of London. Report: Knitted silk waistcoat. Believed to have been worn by Charles I at his execution, 30 January 1649. It is not known if William Sanderson himself had witnessed the beheading.
69 Malmö rådstue, skiftearkiv 1597–1599, skiftebrev nr. 303.
70 J. Huggett (1999), 85.
71 Museum of London inv no. 39.108/1; measures: length 37.2 cm, width at chest 2 x 23 cm.
72 Zimmerman (2007).
73 Ostergård (1990).
74 No. By-03948 Bergen Museum, Norway. The waistcoat was a gift from the archaeologist Anders Lorange in 1879.
75 Cunningham (1955), 82.
77 North and Tiramani, 88.
78 Rutt (1987), 81.
79 Alice Morse Earle (1903).
80 Rutt (19887), 81.
81 Weigel (1998), 613 (913 in the online version).
82 Belfanti (1996).
83 Levey (1971), 188.
84 Rutt (1987), 82. This patented invention is mentioned in Henson’s The Civil, Political and Mechanical History of the Framework Knitters in 1831, at a time when both fabrics and the invention were long lost.
87 “Zum Meisterstücke muß er machen ein schönen Teppich nach der Mahlerkunst von vielen Farben durchbrochen, ferner ein Futterhende oder Camisol, daran nichts genahet, ein paar feine dicke Strümpfe, ein paar Handschuhe und ein Manns- und Weiber-Pare...” http://www.deutsches-strumpfmuseum.de/industrie/hersteller_geschichte.htm (accessed July 2012).
88 Hoffmann (1988), 139.
89 Kjøbenhavns diplomatarium, VI, 1128, 742.
91 Kjellberg (1987b), 199.
93 Ringgaard 2010.
95 Engelstad (1958); 44, Kjellberg (1987a).

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Fashioning the Early Modern Swedish Nobility – mirrored in preserved 17th-century liturgical textiles

Lena Dahrén

The Lutheran Reformation was not as rigid concerning liturgical textiles in Sweden as in other European countries that underwent either a Lutheran or Calvinist Reformation. Thus, medieval ceremonial textiles, such as chasubles and altar frontals continued to be in use in Swedish churches, even though their use decreased. The primary difference in the Swedish Church, compared to the time before the Reformation, was the economic conditions as the church had been deprived of its valuables and therefore no longer had sufficient funds for the maintenance and renewal of liturgical vestments. When old vestments were worn out and the need for renewal of liturgical textiles increased in the early 17th century, it principally occurred through donations from local noble families. It is these preserved 17th-century liturgical textiles that form the focus of this chapter.

The Swedish nobility as donors

Due to its involvement in the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48), Sweden rose to prominence as a European Great Power in the first half of the 17th century. Almost a century had elapsed since the onset of the Lutheran Reformation in Sweden, and by this time, the nobility had established themselves as patrons of local parish churches in the countryside where their family manor was situated. The custom of patronage, Patronatsrätt, has been common in Sweden since the Middle Ages and it was achieved by noble families who either donated land or built the local parish church. In return, the family acquired a number of honourable benefits, such as the right of burial inside the church, and the right to hang the family’s coat of arms on the church walls. The patronage involved an obligation to protect and maintain the church and its property. It was, for instance, the patron’s duty to provide the church with all that was necessary for the celebration of Holy Communion and its concomitant textile adornments, such as chasuble, altar frontal and chalice-veils.

The donors manifested their position in
the local community and enhanced their posthumous reputation by attaching their family coat of arms, personal initials and year of donation on the expensive textiles. The families added burial-chapels of modern (17th century) architecture to medieval church bodies where sculptured coffins and coats of arms reminded people of the families’ glory. It was the same kind of manifestation as when aristocrats hang their initials, coat of arms and year of achievement on the facade of their town residence. It was a display of wealth that was expected from a noble family as a sign of their social status to follow decorum.³

Preserved liturgical textiles and early modern fashion: methodological considerations

This chapter aims to examine what a group of extant liturgical vestments can reveal about fashion in early modern Sweden. The theoretical perspective for the study is based on the general thinking of material goods as sources, a part of the field of modern materiality studies, as for instance presented in the historian Giorgio Riello’s work on dress and fashion history.⁴ Hence, three categories of sources are studied equally – artefacts, documents and portraits. This study takes its starting point from a number of preserved artifacts, in this case, four liturgical vestments dated to the period 1610–1650. The questions addressed to these sources are formulated from the preserved textiles and govern the chapter: Who are the donors? In what context were the textiles donated? In what context had they originally been used? Is there any commonality between the donors of the liturgical textiles?

Liturgical textiles were produced from the best materials obtainable.⁵ While some of these vestments had been made for liturgical use from the very outset, others were remade from precious materials that originally had served as fashionable dress but which now served a new function as liturgical vestments.⁶ Expensive material represented a social and economic value, and the vestments are carefully and continuously described in the church inventories with statements of donors and details of any change made to the vestments over the years. The reuse of older, earlier fashionable textiles in a liturgical context is an important reason for the preservation of costly imported silk, velvet, and a number of bobbin-made borders and edgings of gold and silver thread in Sweden.

The selected vestments for this article are all decorated with bobbin-made borders and edgings of gold and silver thread in a design with a similar character.⁷ Each textile is first described and compared
to the written inventory lists of the church. Later follows a comparison with the preserved textiles and dress painted in portraits in Sweden in the late 16th century.

When the donors of the textiles are known, studies can be made in private accounts concerning the purchasing and tailoring of textiles of this kind. Gold in this chapter refers to silver gilt and the metal threads are strips of metal wound around a core of silk.

### Extant liturgical vestments and their donors

Aspö Church in central Sweden has an altar frontal made of patterned, black, silk velvet pile on a red ground from c. 1600. It has a centre panel and super-frontal of green silk and gold brocade from the mid-17th century. Along both outer edges of the altar frontal panel’s width, a stripe of red silk has been added, with the seam trimmed with a bobbin-made border in gold and silver thread (see Fig. 6.1). At the centre of the altar frontal are the coats of arms of the noble families of Ryning and Gyllenstierna and the year 1614, all made of silver-plate.

According to the church inventory from the year 1701, the altar frontal was originally made of a velvet of brown pile in a floral design on a red ground and with a red super frontal trimmed with a silver bobbin-made border. According to the inventory, the altar frontal was repaired and “improved” in the year 1708 by the descendants of the donors. They added the red super frontal onto each side of the velvet altar frontal. A new super frontal was made of green and golden brocade with fringes and the same kind of fabric was utilized as a centrepiece of the altar frontal. This is how it looks today.

Österhaninge Church, in the outskirts of Stockholm, has an altar frontal and chasuble

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Fig. 6.2: A detail of an altar frontal centrepiece, Aspö Church, Södermanland (Photo: Lena Dahrén).
made of blue, cut and uncut velvet, on a white ground. The frontal is composed of three parts with bobbin-made borders of gold and silver attached over the two connecting seams. The super frontal is trimmed with a bobbin-made pointed edging in gold thread and bears the initials of the donors and the coats of arms of the families (of which one is missing). The chasuble is made of the same velvet as the frontal. On the back of the chasuble, there is a distinct cross made of two parallel attached bobbin-made borders of gold and silver thread, of which the silver is damaged. The vestments were probably donated to the church in the year 1620 by Baroness Elisabet Gyllenstierna (1581–1646) in memory of her husband Admiral Hans Claesson Bielkenstierna (1574–1620). The Bielkenstierna family were patrons of Österhaninge Church and resided at the local manor, Årsta.

Ripsa Church, in central Sweden, has an altar frontal composed of four pieces of red, plain velvet (see Fig. 6.4). The outer left piece is composed of three larger square pieces and a smaller triangular piece. The outer right piece is composed of one large piece with a small triangular piece added to the outside. The triangular pieces have stitch marks from earlier use. The central seam and the seam to the left are covered with bobbin-made borders of gold and silver of which the left is missing its lower part. The right-hand side seam has marks in the velvet from a removed bobbin-made border. The frontal is dated 1618 and bears the coats of arms of the noble families of Bielkenstierna and Gyllenstierna in silver plate. The initials NCS to the left refer to Admiral Nils Claesson Bielkenstierna (†1622) and GGS to the right refer to Baroness Gunilla Gyllenstierna (1586–1618). On the top is a super frontal composed of medieval embroidery of silk, gold, silver and pearls. The altar frontal was donated to the church in 1618 according to the last will of Gunilla Gyllenstierna. Stockholm Cathedral has an altar frontal of cut and uncut, green velvet in a symmetrical floral design from late 16th c. Italy. The frontal has a Latin cross of woven silver bands in the centre. Along with the altar frontal is a chasuble of a similar kind of green, small patterned velvet of a late 16th or early 17th-century style, used for dress (see Figs. 6.5–6.6). On the front side of the chasuble, there is a bobbin-made border of gold and silver thread beneath the attached embroidery. The upper part of the front of the chasuble is composed of several stripes of different green velvet. The entire chasuble is bordered with woven bands. The vestment was donated to the cathedral by Baroness Karin Axelsdotter Bielke (1550s–1612) in memory of her son Nils Olofsson Ryning (1588–1610) who was buried in the cathedral.

According to the inventory list of the
cathedral for the year 1674, the chasuble was made of green velvet with a crucifix and the coats of arms of the noble families Ryning and Bielke. There are no bobbin-made borders mentioned in the inventory at the time. In the year 1778, the chasuble was repaired by a professional embroiderer and it is probable that it was then that the three evangelists were transferred from the back to the front side and that the embroidered centrepiece was added. The bobbin-made border on the front is composed of four pieces which are 16 cm each in length. Due to its position, it must have been attached at the same time or earlier than the embroidery.

Comparison of the artefacts and the inventory lists

It has not been possible to connect the velvets to any specific kind of domestic textile or dress. Apart from the chasubles in Stockholm Cathedral and Ripsa Church, the items are all composed of whole pieces of cloth and there are no signs of cutting or stitches that can reveal the earlier use of the velvets. Clothing and domestic textiles preserved from early modern times are few, probably due to female dress, kirtles, skirts and zimmaras as well as wall hangings, draperies and baldachins being made of large straight pieces which were possible to reutilize without traces of its original use.

However, the assumption that old clothing was used for making or repairing liturgical vestments is strengthened by the fact that 14 kirtles were listed after the chasubles in the inventory of Stockholm Cathedral. These can be assumed to be a kind of spare material for repairs or even for creating new items.

The gold and silver borders on the altar frontal and chasuble in Österhaninge Church and the chasuble in Stockholm Cathedral are
made in exactly the same design, material and technique which suggests that they might have the same origin (see Figs. 6.3, 6.5 & 6.6). The border from the cathedral is composed of four pieces of the same length (16 cm) which is probably a reused border which has been cut into adjusted lengths for a specific trimming. It has not been possible to associate the velvet
with a specific kind of domestic textile or dress, and it is possible the velvet in Österhaninge was originally made for a liturgical textile as it is velvet of an early 17th-century style.

**Liturgical textiles and early modern dress in Sweden**

The number of portraits in Sweden from early modern times is limited. They are mostly made by unknown, probably local, artists and they are often naïve in their expression compared to contemporaneous paintings in England, Spain, Italy or France. However, they demonstrate clearly and accurately that dress was a means to express social belonging, status and identity. I have chosen to describe and discuss the only three known portraits in Sweden which depict dresses with golden trimming of the same kind as the bobbin-made borders of gold and silver on the vestments.

A portrait shows a woman, assumed to be Princess Sofia Vasa (1547–1611) Duchess of Sachsen-Lauenburg and the daughter of the Swedish King Gustav I Vasa (c. 1496–1560) (see Fig. 6.7). She was portrayed c. 1580 in a dress of red velvet with small geometric designs trimmed with bobbin-made borders of silver, her sleeves are made in a bright material, and she has a white ruff and cuffs. A pearl-embroidered bonnet with a small crown shows her status as a princess. Bobbin-made borders are attached in two parallel rows from the waist downwards and along the hem. The bodice is striped with four rows of bobbin-made borders and the same kind of border is seen on the padded shoulder rolls.

In the mid-16th century, the new royal family, Vasa, desired to show their legitimacy as the ruling dynasty in the kingdom of Sweden. It is plausible that the members of the Swedish royal family strove to dress in the same manner as men and women in other royal and princely courts of Europe. The dress worn by Princess Sofia is, for instance, striped in a similar way as the dress seen on a portrait of Christina of Denmark (1522–1590), the daughter of King Christian II of Denmark (1481–1559) who later became the ruling Dowager Duchess of Milan and Lorraine (see Fig. 6.8).

Another portrait painted in the year 1596 displays Countess Amalia von Hatzfeldt (c. 1560–1628) (see Fig. 6.9). She wears a dress in red, silver, and orange with a zimarra of dark velvet trimmed with bobbin-made borders of gold and silver along the hem and placed diagonally on the padded shoulder rolls. She
Fig. 6.7: Unknown woman assumed to be Princess Sofia Vasa, c. 1580, unknown artist, NMG 426 (National Museum, Stockholm; Photo: Hans Thorwids).
also wears a pearl-embroidered bonnet, and white ruff and cuffs. The Countess was born in Germany and arrived at the ducal court in Nyköping in mid-Sweden in the year 1579 as a maid of honour to the Duchess Maria of Pfalz (1562–1589), first spouse of Duke Karl (1550–1611), later King Karl IX of Sweden. After the death of the duchess, her ladies-in-waiting were dismissed and Amalia was married to the king’s cousin, Mauritz Stensson Lewenhaupt (1559–1607).

In a painting of an unknown princely couple, the woman wears a dark dress with a silver design and a black velvet zimarra trimmed with borders, white cuffs and ruff in the same way as Countess Amalia von Hatzfeld’s (see Fig. 6.10). The painting gives an idea of domestic textiles of the time,
such as the red velvet tablecloth with golden frogs. The text in the painting refers to King Christian IV of Denmark (1577–1648) which is not likely to be true as the clothing the couple is wearing refers to the late decades of the 16th century.

According to the three above described paintings, there is good reason to believe that
the kind of bobbin-made borders preserved on the church vestments were first used as trimmings of costumes worn by women of high social status in the late 16th century, such as Princess Sofia Vasa, the unidentified Danish princely woman, and Countess Amalia von Hatzfeld.

The cut gold and silver borders on the chasuble in Stockholm Cathedral and the parallel borders on the Österhaninge chasuble and altar frontal give the impression that the donors had a large amount of this border to reuse, enough for trimming a dress or zimarra. The cut pieces of the border on the chasuble of the cathedral might originally have trimmed padded shoulder rolls of the kind as seen in the portraits, as the length of the pieces would fit the need for that kind of trimming.21

A royal and noble network of donors

The four vestments were donated in the early 17th century by the second highest level of Swedish nobility, namely barons and baronesses. What did these donors have in common which can help to explain their ability to donate these kinds of expensive textiles?

Even though their names are known from the coats of arms, initials and church inventories, no information can be found in their family archives concerning the donations and the original use of the textiles. However, bobbin-made borders of this kind can be seen in paintings of Nordic royalty and high nobility from the second half of the 16th century.

The family tree of the donors reveals an intricate net of relationships through marriage among the nobility in Sweden at the time (Fig. 6.11). The vestments in Aspö, Ripsa, and Österhaninge Churches were donated by three sisters, the daughters of Baron Nils Göransson Gyllenstierna (1526–1601). The fourth donor (of the vestment in Stockholm Cathedral) Karin Axelsdotter Bielke was the maternal aunt of the sisters as well as also
being a sister-in-law of one of them, Kerstin Gyllenstierna. Two of the sisters, Gunilla and Elisabeth Gyllenstierna, were also each other's sisters-in-law as they were married to two Bielkenstierna brothers.

The father of the three sisters was the ambassador of the Swedish king Erik XIV (1533–1577) to England around the mid-16th century. His mission in England was to negotiate Baltic trade, and to advocate for a marriage between the Swedish king Erik XIV and Elizabeth I, Queen of England. He also held the commission to purchase silk, velvet, golden passementerie and other luxurious artefacts for the young king, his family and the members of the Swedish court to wear at the coronation of King Erik XIV in Uppsala in 1561. What Baron Nils Gyllenstierna may have bought for himself and other Swedish noblemen in London or Antwerp at the same time is not known.

Another line of the family tree links to a half-cousin of the three sisters, Gunilla Johansdotter Bielke (1568–1597), married to King Johan III (1537–1592) the successor of Erik XIV. She eventually became Queen of Sweden in the year 1585.

There were also other kinds of personal relations between the donors and the Swedish royal family. The grandmother of the sisters Gyllenstierna, Elsa Posse, had been a lady-in-waiting to Queen Katarina Jagellonica (King Johan III's first spouse) in 1569. Several of the donors had themselves served at the royal courts. For instance in 1602, Admiral Nils Claesson Bielkenstierna had been in the service of Duke Karl. The Baroness Elisabet Gyllenstierna had been lady-in-waiting at the royal court to the dowager Queen Kristina the Elder (1573–1625), the second spouse of King Karl IX.

Gifts of dress and other textiles
Dress and dress materials constituted parts of payments in the 16th and 17th centuries. The value of dress, textiles, and other dress accessories given to the ladies-in-waiting and Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber and Bedchamber at the court of Elizabeth I of England was higher than the payment they received in cash. As in England, clothing as gifts or material for costume was part of the salary of the servants at the Swedish royal court. In the year 1560, Duke Erik gave a red coat with red silk and gold passementerie to his servant Christoffer Andersson. The social and economic value represented by this clothing given as a gift combined with their beauty was probably one of the reasons why these textiles were preserved or reused for other purposes.

Close relations to the royal court through kin or service may have been a basis for princely gifts of costly dress and other textiles. Silk, velvet and bobbin-made borders of gold and silver were for the top level of society only, where they were utilized as domestic textiles or female costume. Curtains, drapery, skirts and
kirtles were made from large pieces of cloth with a minimum of cutting which makes it hard or impossible to identify a reused item without a letter of donation or an account from the tailor who made the changes in the textiles. Thus far, no letters or private accounts have been found concerning these specific donated textiles. However, there is a note in the royal accounts in 1588, under the heading for Changes that King Johan III donated a chasuble of blue “Cartock” with a lining of “dwelk” and a cross of broad gold and silver passementerie to Harg Church south of Stockholm. 27

Conclusion
For the present study, a group of four liturgical vestments were selected, all made of silk velvet and trimmed with bobbin-made borders of gold and silver. They had been donated to churches in central Sweden in the period 1610–1647, by women of noble families in memory of a deceased son or husband or bequeathed in a will of a woman who had died in childbirth. It was a manifestation of the donors’ position in the local society in accordance with decorum.

Some of the vestments were possibly originally made as church vestments while others were remade to serve a new purpose as a liturgical vestment. However, there is no documentation in family archives referring to the textiles and their original use before the donation nor are there any marks of stitches, size and forms of composed velvet which can provide any indication of its original use.

The silk velvets are of the 16th and early 17th-century kind. It is likely that some of the fabrics in the vestments were originally used in fashionable costumes or domestic textiles like bed curtains and hangings, canopies and wall-hangings in the late 16th century. Domestic textiles, kirtles and skirts were all made from large pieces of straight fabric, which is hard to identify when reused for chasubles and altar frontals.

The gold and silver bobbin-made borders of the vestments can be recognized in portraits from the late 16th century. They were used as trimmings of costumes, worn by royal and high noble women in the period 1570–1600, such as Princess Sofia Vasa and Countess Amalia von Hatzfeld.

Silk velvet and bobbin-made gold and silver borders were imported to Sweden. It was of a kind of material that was restricted to the highest level of society and it was not easy to achieve. However, exclusive material could be received as precious gifts, as part of a salary, or as a favour given by a patron to a servant. The donors of the vestments were related by blood to Swedish queen Gunilla Johansdotter Bielke, King Johan III’s second wife, and some of them had been in service at the Royal court. They were also related to Baron Nils Gyllenstierna who had been the representative for King Erik XIV in London c. 1560 when negotiating a proposed marriage between the king and Elizabeth I, and, who was in charge of the purchase of luxurious textiles for the coronation of Erik XIV in the year 1561.

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Notes
1 The Lutheran Reformation was introduced to Sweden in the 1520s, but not fully completed until the 1590s.
3 Burke (1993), 155.
4 Rielo (2009), 24–47.
5 Eastham (1976), 31.
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19 Branting (1928), 492–493.
20 SSA, Storkyrkan, Lla 1:39 fol. 28r.
21 Arnold (1985) 42, 105: illustration 298. This picture differs from the image in Arnold’s book in that the bobbin-made trimming on the shoulder roll on Amalia von Hatzfeld’s portrait is attached on the diagonal. In Arnold’s book, they are straight.
22 Tegel (1751), 321–324.
24 Jones and Stallybrass (2000), 19.
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Abbreviations

Pnr. = Pietas nummer
SLA = Slottsarkivet (Royal Archive) Stockholm
SSA = Stockholms stadsarkiv (Stockholm City Archives)
ULA = Uppsala landsarkiv (The Regional Archives of Uppsala)
ATA = Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet (The Antiquarian-Topographical Archives), Stockholm

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Reflections on Dress Practices
and How to get to know the Past

Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen

As a cultural historian with a special interest in 18th-century dress, I have often felt envious of my colleagues focusing on current society. Situating oneself in the field of science seems easy when all the relevant theories suit the sources and theoreticians have the same contemporary focus. Thus, I am still conscious that each situation I involve myself in – as a human being and a scholar – is so complex and dense that all analytical approaches can represent no more than parts, specific angles or points of view. This fragmented perception is often interpreted as a part of today’s societies in flux and understood as a contrast to the durability of more stable cultures. If focusing on change at all, cultural historians have searched for slow changes, what delays changes, or even what prevent changes.

Understanding contemporary society as fluctuating, what would happen if I were to connect this understanding with admiration for cultural theories that stress practice and performativity and transmit it to historical sources? Speaking of hybrid configurations of nature and culture, the biologist and cultural theorist Donna Haraway emphasizes that “to be one is always to become with many”. Thereby, she accentuates interaction and transcends the boundaries between nature and culture, subjects and objects, humans and non-humans. In contemporary culture, the phenomenon of interest can be observed and human actors may be asked to reflect on their own situation. Cultural historians “are there”, in situations that become real when they attend. And when it comes to research on materiality, the realities “become together with something” – together with things.

I was not there at the end of the 18th century; I can never recollect being there. I was not there, but things were there. However, tangible objects which were there, and for various reasons are preserved, are also present for us today. Analyzing some textiles from the last decades of the 1700s, I have transferred this performative approach to historic sources, and attempt to apply Haraway’s expression “becoming with” in the sense of “became with” when examining these artefacts today.

This performative material approach follows me throughout the paper, and I let my “companion species”,2 the material objects, take precedence in the text. This is visualized with thorough descriptions of garments as they encounter me in museum storages in today’s reality and is highlighted as a separate layer of text set in italics.
Inside the museum’s cool storage area, stacks of brown cardboard boxes are neatly arranged on shelves along the walls and in the middle of the room. The boxes are marked with museum number and item description. Two shelves with six boxes in one shelving unit are labelled “Stays”. As the boxes are lifted down and spread out on a table, they can be opened. Under each lid, a layer of white tissue paper meets me, and only when it is folded to the side, do the upper garments appear. I then encounter an eye-catching variety of colours and materials. The items of clothing can be lifted out and spread out over an adjacent table.

Textiles made into garments are my primary sources, and as far as their provenance is known, they belonged to farm women from the areas surrounding the capital of Norway. I write “farm women” and thereby I relate to the peasantry and the manner in which the king ranked the 18th-century population in the kingdom of Denmark–Norway. The geographical area surrounding the capital cannot easily be mapped. Most of my material has its origin in Hedmark, south-eastern Norway, where I have carefully investigated all known clothing from the second half of the 18th century. I have also searched the archives in this region thoroughly. However, the area is open and undefined, as I have conducted research in adjacent districts, such as Gudbrandsdalen, Akershus, and Ostfold as well, albeit to a lesser extent. My geographical selection is neither arbitrary nor absolute. The region differs from other Norwegian districts, where specific local dress practices occurred at the time. Simultaneously, similarities are seen in other regions where I have not had the capacity to conduct research.

I would argue that the historical practices I examine did not exist in, nor grow out of, a vacuum. My material sources have their siblings in neighbouring countries, on the Continent, and in Great Britain as well as in the United States. This material, as presented in fashion history and analyses of historical dress, gives resonance to my Norwegian sources.

With the strong consciousness of not being present, my questions, however, stress processual aspects, and I am concerned with the performance of practice. To avoid a static, empirical description, I focus on the interaction between human and non-human actors, persons and things. This corresponds to Valerie Steele’s approach in her book “The Corset. A Cultural History”:

Corsetry was not one monolithic, unchanging experience that all unfortunate women experienced before being liberated by feminism. It was a situated practice that meant different things to different people at different times.

Her arguments bring me to some questions I wish to examine, where the goal is to place under scrutiny the situated practices of a certain group of women. What did these persons do, how did they dress, how did they actually put on
their clothes, and finally: what did this clothing do to them? I am aware that it is the human actors who dress, but what do the objects do, what do the clothing items do to those who wear them? When species like humans and things meet, with reference to Haraway, I argue that textiles exert agency. My aim is to reveal how this entanglement of materiality and mind is advantageous to understanding dressing practices in early modern Norway.5

I was not there, but the clothes were there, together with those who wore the garments. They were also there along with others observing them dressed, writing about it in their diaries, travel descriptions and topographic literature. Such books belong to three different literary genres, sharing the intentions of a true story, which I push to their limits to obtain small, scarce pieces of knowledge from a distant time different from ours.

Norwegian and European stays
Stays originate far back in European fashion history, and depending on whether the perspective of lacing or cut is chosen as the starting point, the origin differs. During the late Middle Ages, European fashion turned to more shaped and complicated cuts, and together with Spanish Renaissance fashion with stiffened bodices, they can be held as the starting point of European stays.4 From the time when fashion ideals in the early 17th century presented separate stays worn visibly, their looks correspond with Norwegian sources.

This type of stays is seen in artistic depictions from 17th-century European courts, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London holds a pair of sleeved silk stays with a separate triangular stomacher dated to the 1660s.7 A similar pair of stays is seen in the Dutch painter Gerhard Terborch’s (1617–1681) painting, “The Concert” from about 1675.8 To my knowledge, no Norwegian stays of this age are preserved, nor am I aware of any having been depicted. Few researchers have paid attention to this period of “fashion-like” dress in Norway, and the vast majority of studies focus on specific local dress traditions, usually referred to as folk dress.10

According to the British dress historians Avril Hart and Susan North, stays turned from being visible to invisible during the 1660s, as from then on they were regarded as underclothes.11 Two conditions occurred concurrently, both influencing these garments. First, the un-reinforced “Mantua gown” came into fashion.12 Secondly, in 1665, French stay-makers were granted permission to establish a guild distinct from traditional tailors.13 Stays continued to be important, but as the stay-makers developed increasingly sophisticated and specialized skills, the quality of stays was regarded through guild privileges, and less through visible high-fashion stays worn by female customers.

Most stays held in western museum collections date from the 18th century. Those in non-Scandinavian collections are similar to those held in Scandinavian collections, whether they originate from Danish, Swedish or Norwegian women of rank14 or Norwegian farm women.

Shaped bodies
When all the stays are presented on the tables, it becomes evident how the bodies are missing. As impossible replacements for the three-dimensional body, the stays are folded over rolls of tissue paper, and corresponding paper rolls are placed under the garment’s shoulder straps. Some of the stays can be completely unfolded and laid flat on the table. Several stays weigh heavily in my hands when I lift them up.

The bodies are missing and can never be replaced either with tissue paper or tailor’s dummies. The materiality of the clothes gives us, however, a vague feeling of the bodies to which they once belonged. The relationship between the length of the stays and the bodies’ back length may be measured. The garments let us know how much the waist and chest measured, but not of the body natural, rather the shaped body, the body as clothing created it. This leads me from the clothes to the body, not to remain with the body, but to investigate the interaction between bodies, clothing and human consciousness from a phenomenological point of view. Phenomenology emphasizes that the dualism between the physical body and mental consciousness is erased and is replaced by a mutual dependence. Consciousness is “being towards-the-thing through the intermediary of my body [...] we must therefore avoid saying that our body is in space, or in time. It inhabits space and time,” Merleau-Ponty claims in his book Phenomenology of Perception.15 He thus
emphasizes our dynamic world inhabitancy by body flesh and body consciousness. According to Merleau-Ponty and newer theories on materialization, perceptual consciousness is not merely a matter of thought about the world, but also bodily presence and bodily orientation in relation to it. To this phenomenological approach, I add the materiality of clothing and clothes as extensions of the material body.

How humans relate to the world is not final or static, as the philosopher Annemarie Mol asserts. When bodies are moulded into new bodies, the versions appear differently, as the phenomena are done differently within different practices. Therefore, they appear multiple. In this multiplicity, the body’s physical appearance and interconnected external phenomena are entangled. External phenomena may be the garments clothing the body, and in my approach, the clothes challenge the extensibility of the material body. The relations between consciousness, the fleshly body, and the objects which the body is involved with are always changing, and when elements of the entangled entity change, the connected whole changes. Taking this approach to investigate how bodies are clothed and presented as dressed, dressed up and undressed, the body and clothing are seen from a new perspective.

As a pair of stays is placed against the hard tabletop, a metallic sound is heard. This is textiles made into clothing, but they cannot possibly consist of textile material only. Textiles do not “clink” when put on a table. “Clink”, there it was again, this metal against the tabletop. This time it came from the upper front of a pair of stays. There, through a hole, an end of rusty metal is poking through the textile. It must be made of steel, as it is hard, and heavy, and rusty.

The solid steel rods which are pressed into sewn compartments parallel to the front edges of the stays are completely straight. Rods made of steel make no room for the female curve between waist and bust, but instead shape a straight and flat torso. Several stays also contain back boning in sewn compartments parallel to the centre back seam and some also on a diagonal. Most of them are made of baleen. The seams which hold the piece of clothing together are also stable and stiff, called “boned seams” in Norwegian, having the effect of extra boning. Despite the straight and flat shape, the stays’ bust is accorded more space than the waist, moulded by the cut of fabrics.

As a result of the cut, seams, compartments and boning, I can envision V-shaped conical torsos. Several stays seem long; they extend down over the abdomen at the centre front. At their lower edge, the fabrics are divided into scallop-formed tabs trimmed with leather tape, and I visualize how tightly laced stays splay over the hips when worn.

In Norwegian, they are termed a “laced waist”. The connection between the pieces of clothing and their terms are important, fashion historian Valerie Steele claims, as terms clarify the relationship between the physical body and the garments. In French, the oldest known stays were termed corps à la baleine which means “baleen body”, soon shortened to “corps”. Stays boned with baleen both add something to the body natural as an extension of it, and simultaneously the relationship between the body and the garment replace the body natural. This approach considers the female body as not being enough in itself. Parallel to the French “corps”, the English word “stays” means support. The female body alone is insufficient in itself, it needs to be supported. In Norwegian, Danish and Swedish, “laced waist” is the adequate term, which is also used in 18th-century sources and literature. Today, as well as in the 18th century, the abbreviated form “waist” is also in use. Being the waist, the body’s waistline, which is constricted, the term is connected to how the stays are closed, being the lacing which fastens the garment, but also to how bodies are moulded and shaped. As the word “waist” in Norwegian is also equivalent to the word “life” itself, it is easily associated with “laced life” or “constricted life”. Thus the replaced, supported, disciplined and constrained consciousness constitutes part of the term’s connotations.

Lifting the stays out of their boxes, they appear unequally heavy. Some are short, some are long, some are small, others are large, but different sizes cannot entirely be the reason for the differences in weight. It has to be the metal. Some stays lack the steel boning in front. Several of them have certain evidence that the rods were there; the channels are ripped up and boning extended. A little rust on the textile is the only residue left. But some stays have no such traces. They are, and must have been, unboned.

Different stays shape different bodies. Unboned stays can be laced as tight as boned stays, but the bodies acquire different shapes. While the lacing ribbon is fastened at a pair
of unboned stays, the front edges are pulled together tightly, and a curve from the waist to the bust appears. The breasts are gathered together closely. The upright, conical shape made by the stays with straight steel boning is replaced with a softer line from waist to bust. This type of stays also has its European siblings, as Valerie Steele describes it:

One type of stays were (sic) known as “jumps”, the term apparently deriving from the French jupe, which in the eighteenth century referred to a short jacket. Designed to fit more loosely than fashionable stays, jumps were either boneless or only lightly boned.23

“Jumps” were always front closed, according to Steele.24 However, boning is not the only part of stays which affects the shaping of the body. Several stays consist of only four shaped pieces, two front panels that cover the front and the sides, stitched up with the two back panels. The back panels are stitched up at the centre back as well. Side seams are not placed at the body's sides, but further in at the back. Some stays also contain darts which add to the moulding of the desired shape. All stays have edges bound with leather. The leather secures the boning and stabilizes the fabric edges.

All stays are composed of two layers of fabric. Seams of more or less straight dashed lines run over the outer layer. Each stitch is sewn through both layers, making the stitches appear as lines on the inside as well as the outside.

The stitches are called back-stitch, making the under stitch twice the length of the top stitch. On all stays, the rows of stitches are diagonal on the front panels, sloping towards the centre bottom. The diagonal lines thereby make an optical illusion of the desired slim waistline. By measuring the different stays, they reveal a rather wide range of sizes. They measure from 65 cm as the smallest26 to 83 cm for the largest28 waistline. The desired look was not necessarily achieved by the tightest lacing. The proportions between waist and bust could be equally important. According to the French author Francois Alexandre de Garsaults, who in 1769 published the book L'Art du Tailleur, the ideal stays “should not fold, but still have enough freedom for the body to move, without altering its shape, and at the same time support the body without causing pain [. . .]. It applies even to something as interesting, that of preserving the beauty of the female waist, a pleasure given all those who wear stays.”27 Garsaults underlines agility, body movement, and support, and at the same time, emphasizes that stays should not cause pain, but offer the gift of a beautiful waistline. This beautiful waist is offered partly as a vision for the viewer, partly as a concrete moulding of the body shape. It is obvious that the straight steel rods shape the body and hold it in position. But the boning is not the sole factor in this. The hand that fastens the grip and constricts, making the boning affect the body, also plays a role, although the other garment components also have an effect. In the parts of the stays that consist of the two layers of fabric and the rows of stitches, the garment is stable as well. The two layers of fabrics are strictly held together. Both human and non-human actors cooperate in an affective way to “bestow on the female body the gift of beauty to her waist”.

The bodies, baleen-bodies as well as the Norwegian steel-bodies, became together with garments a socio-material entity28 of both humans and things. The human actors are present in the forms of their fleshly bodies and their consciousness, but also in the forms of their actions when shaping bodies in stays: “the constrictors”.

Single bodies

The front panels of the stays lie edge to edge, weighed down on the tabletop by steel rods. Parallel to the rods, on the inside, there are rows of eyelet holes, round holes through both layers of fabric, whipped with thread, most of them with natural coloured linen thread, except one with blue linen thread and one with green wooden thread. At the bottom, the eyelet holes are placed directly opposite each other, then the row of holes are parallelly offset, and finally at the top, another parallel displacement makes the two upper holes appear straight opposite to each other again. If I visualize a lace ribbon, it must have been placed at an angle between the holes.

The eyelet holes are bound with stitching in a whip stitch, different from many European stays, which are bound with buttonhole stitches. No original lacings from Norwegian stays are known in museum or archive inventories. However, two pairs of stays have reminiscences of such, stitched to one of the lowest eyelet holes. On one of them, the material is a leather tape, on the other it is a silk ribbon. These traces of leather tape and silk ribbon correspond well with what most fashion historians write;29 18th-century
Fig. 7.2: As a result of the cut, seams, compartments and boning, I can envision V-shaped conical torsos. Several stays seem long; they extend down over the abdomen at the centre front. At their lower edge, the fabrics are divided into scallop-formed tabs trimmed with leather tape, and I visualize how tightly laced stays splay over the hips when worn (Hedmark Museum; Photos: Erik Mostue).
stays were fastened with one piece of lacing, starting from the bottom going upwards in a spiral. When I think of the lacing done this way, I understand the function of the offset eyelet holes. They make the lacing pull the sides together evenly, and the stays remain stable when fastened. On the contrary, the front edges on a pair of stays where the eyelet holes are not offset, are not as stable when laced with a piece of tape. The edges then slide and become displaced.  

Some garments are impossible to unfold. Their front panels are connected to the shoulder straps, which makes the three-dimensionality impossible to efface. It seems like the garment insists on some reminiscences of the body once wearing it.

When dressing in a pair of stays like these, they can be put on just like any kind of jacket. Arms are carried through the openings between the front panels and the shoulder straps, front edges are contracted at the centre front, and the stays are ready to be fastened by lacing. Constricting the stays tightly to the body makes the body flesh move. The belly is flattened, the malleable flesh on the outside of the bone structure is pressed upwards, and the breasts are pressed together and upwards. In stays, breasts appear as unified with a distinct cleavage. The body's proportions are altered. Waist and chest measure differently before and after being laced. The waist can be compressed 2–5 cm, and the bust up to 8–10 cm, as demonstrated by experimenting with historical copies.

Whether Norwegian farm women's stays can be characterized as "jumps" or "stays", all of them are fastened at the front. Thereby they differ from the majority of the 18th-century stays, as represented in western literature of fashion history, which are usually fastened at the back. These were called "closed stays", in contrast to "open stays", being open in front, as Valerie Steele explains it. In European fashion, open stays were followed by a triangular stomacher hiding the lacing. All hitherto known Norwegian peasant stays have front lacing and none is laced at the back. None of them have stomachers or reminiscences of such. How the stays are fastened is not only of structural importance; it affects the moulding process of the body and necessitates the participation of different actors.

Closed stays cannot be put on in the same way as open stays. Closed stays have to be held up in front of the body. Arms are carried through the openings made by the front panel and the shoulder straps. Then the stays are ready to be laced at the back. And here, the most basic difference between open and closed stays appears. A pair of closed stays cannot be handled by only one person; it has to be laced by another. All peasant stays in Norway are open stays. These women shaped their bodies themselves.
Covered and uncovered bodies

On the tabletops, is a colourful sight. There are shades of red, from terracotta to cerise; there are light blue and saturated blues, and green. Full colours mingle with pale fields of white, fallow and grey. They are alike, but also different. Materials vary, from the simplest natural coloured linen to shiny, colourful figured worsted fabrics.

In boning, lace, cut, sewing, and stitches, most moulding elements are visible. Nevertheless, the materials and fabrics also affect the moulding of the body. The simplest fabrics, linen of variable coarseness, are also found in Sweden as well as in other European countries. Colourful, shiny worsted fabrics, on the other hand, may hardly find their parallels, with the exception of some items made of silk. European silk stays are different, however, as they are constructed of several layers of fabrics, while the decorative layer of silk fabric is placed as a covering. The silk is not directly involved in shaping the body. Stays like these may have both an outer layer of an exclusive fabric and an inner layer of some soft lining. Both these layers are less dependent of the parts that mould the shape and shape the body. Lifting the stays from their boxes to the table make them move. They cannot be folded in sharp folds, but fluctuate in undulations. They seem steady, stable, but not complete stiff. In these stays, both inner and outer layers of fabric are directly involved in moulding the body. Both the English worsted and home-made linen are steady and firm, and may enact in body moulding differently than silks.

Some fabrics are large-patterned, with multicolour figures against a two-colour background. The back panels manifest an ideal of symmetry. Foliage unfolds from the centre back seam axis, making symmetrical curves. Compact and conventionalized flowers are placed on a horizontal level on the back panels, on front panels and some of the tabs. When the fabrics were cut into patterns, the figures were consciously exploited.

It is striking how many symmetrically constructed back panels the stays display. Envisaging women dressed in these stays, standing in a row and seen from behind, it would be clear how the fabric's patterns were mirroring each other with the back seam as the centre line. Together, the pattern figures and the diagonal stitches accentuate a tapering back from the shoulders to the slim-looking waistline.

The patterned worsted fabrics obviously affect the stays decoratively and, at the same time, exploit the patterns and contribute to the impression of slim waistlines. However, what role do these materials play in the practice where such stays were used? Other scholars have explained stays covered in rich materials as connected to the distinction between dressed and undressed. At European courts, dressing was performed as a happening where people of rank were invited to participate and the negligee became visible as well as formal dress. Thus, jumps and stays worn as undergarments or for informal use could be exclusive, displaying the owner's status. An example of this type of jumps, worn as informal clothing but still in rich materials, is presented by the fashion curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Eleri Lynn. These jumps could be worn under an informal robe, which was open in front and made the jumps visible.

Avril Harth and Susan North emphasize that decorative stays could also express the competence of the tailor: “While stays were a practical garment and not meant to be seen, their construction and finishing demonstrate fine craftsmanship and an eye for decorative detail.” No Norwegian stays even come close to such expression of tailoring skills as the example illustrated by Harth and North, although several have beautifully and regularly sewn stitches, some even stitched in figures.

Some garments turn when lifted from their boxes to the table, and on their back panels, hooks and eyes stitched to the garments can explain the metallic sounds. Most of the hooks and eyes are not to be mistaken for anything else than brass, some of them with a little green corrosion. Others are made of white metal, maybe steel, and others again are rusty as only steel can be. The hooks and eyes are stitched to the stays on the lower parts of the back panels and in the garment's sides, approximately at the waistline, I imagine, as I am dwelling on the feeling of how the garments are lonely, missing their bodies. Are the hooks placed at the waistline, a little over, or perhaps a little below?

The hooks and eyes stitched to the stays, directly on the garment or on a strip of leather which covers the outer layer of fabric, act in the process of wearing stays. While boning, seams, fabrics and leather underpinned, shaped, and stabilized the body beneath the stays, hooks controlled other garments. Archival sources, paintings, preserved garments and contemporary literature agree that in most of the 18th century, these farm women wore
Fig. 7.4: Foliage unfolds from the centre back seam axis, making symmetrical curves. Envisaging women dressed in these stays, standing in a row and seen from behind, it would be clear how the fabric’s patterns were mirroring each other with the back seam as the centre line. Together, the pattern figures and the diagonal stitches accentuate a tapering back from the shoulders to the slim-looking waistline (Hedmark Museum; Photos: Erik Mostue).
outfits consisting of several separate garments. Norwegian farm women began to wear one-piece dresses as late as the 1790s.\textsuperscript{40} 

Stays were always worn over a shift, both among European aristocrats and among Norwegian peasants. Other garments distinguished different groups of rank. While various types of gowns were required as formal dress for people of rank, farm women wore either hip-length or three-quarter-length close-fitting jackets with petticoats and skirts on top of shifts and stays. The outer style of caps were also an indispensable part of these women’s attire. This “three-piece dress”, consisting of stays, jacket and skirts, relates to an older era in European fashion history and continued as informal dress by women of rank. Concurrently, such ensembles were preferred by peasant women for formal occasions.

The close-fitting jackets accompanied stays and skirts, but did peasant women always wear such jackets over their stays? The outer skirt could be connected to the stays with hooks and eyes. Yet, were lower parts of the stays always hidden beneath the outer skirt? The available sources are ambiguous about this.\textsuperscript{41}

Almost all images of peasant women from the actual area depict this ensemble of skirts with jackets.\textsuperscript{42} Only a few paintings show a pair of stays, either because they are visible under an open jacket or because the pictured woman is not wearing a jacket at all. All females showing their stays or parts of their stays are depicted on informal occasions, sometimes working. It is hard to know for certain if stays were always worn with a jacket, but according to a written description dated 1792, from Østfold in the southeastern part of Norway, this was a common combination.\textsuperscript{43} Other written sources from eastern Norway confirm this, but it is not possible to ascertain if the discussed stays are boned or not. Paintings from the same time period visualize the female body with a soft curve from waist to bust, and no pictures display farm women moulded into the conical V-shape made by steel-boned stays.

Searching the museum collections, I discover some stays and jackets kept as ensembles, most of them referred to as bridal dress. One example has both stays and jacket made of worsted fabric,\textsuperscript{44} another ensemble is made of silk, with an accompanying worsted skirt.\textsuperscript{45} Both pairs of stays are lightly boned or lack boning completely, and can be characterized as jumps. These ensembles confirm that the stays and jackets constitute parts of ensembles and used together, but it is not certain if this was the only alternative. Stays can be used without a jacket, and jackets can be used without stays.

The complete ensembles substantiate that occasions are more important than geographic variation or changes over time in the discussion of which garments could be visible and which remained invisible. This also corresponds with the wearing of stays in other countries relevant for comparison. English working-class women also wore visible stays in the 18th century.\textsuperscript{46} These women were dressed in a similar manner to males who removed their jackets, as costume historian Anne Buck indicates.\textsuperscript{47}

Both Buck and the historian, Professor John Styles argue that British women wore stays during work and in informal situations. Valerie Steele also claims that stays not only constitute a part of the basic wardrobe, they were indispensable: “Indeed, for a poor woman, the irreducible minimum consisted of stays and petticoat.”\textsuperscript{48} According to these scholars, women from different ranks of society always presented themselves with their “body shaped”, and the female body could not conceivably be unlaced.

**Body temporary**

When the “steel-boned” body was appropriate, the farm women in this study laced themselves and shaped their bodies. Being in their “steel-boned” bodies, they shared a practice with women of rank. In privileged women’s lives, the laced body was the only body they presented in public. Only in their most private moments, when sleeping and naked, were their bodies naturally shaped.

Farm women, however, had other leeways for their “body multiple”,\textsuperscript{49} and a shaped body in stays was only one among several possibilities. In addition to the constricted body, graduated from heavily-boned stays with steel rods, to unboned jumps, they could present the body unlaced. These naturally-shaped female bodies occur in topographic literature and travel diaries. In Hoff’s description from Østfold, we meet farm women dressed in shift and petticoats, wearing no stays or jackets.\textsuperscript{50} British travellers visiting the eastern part of Norway in 1799 are surprised by the informally dressed
farm women, appearing in only their shift and a single petticoat:

The country women when working wear nothing upwards but their shifts — which are made higher than those in England — sometimes a coloured handkerchief is thrown over their shoulders; but there are no stays or other covering to the waist.¹¹

Eighteenth-century travellers describe in great detail how such outfits without stays were accepted dress among peasant farmers. No housewife admonished her maid for serving visitors while wearing her shift and petticoat. Malthus and Coxe, two of the travellers, both refer to this as a common practice in Sweden as well.¹² At the same time, both Malthus and several other writers describe women dressed in skirts with jackets, ready for church or weddings.¹³

These farm women’s materializations of the body multiple are situated in practices. At work, inside or outside during summer, and for informal occasions, they are unlaced. For other occasions, they lace, either to present themselves as laced in visible stays or laced but less visible with a jacket covering the stays. Both visible and less visible shaped bodies were moulded by open stays, and the farm women could do the shaping themselves. “Body laced” is thus “body temporary”, and not part of an irreducible minimum form of dress. This approach nuances earlier understandings of “body laced”, as presented by Steele.¹⁴ Materializations of farm women’s bodies are not essential, as they appear different in varying contexts, and they are neither solely Norwegian nor expressions of peasantry. They appear in shared cross-social practices beyond social rank and geographical affiliation. Heavily-boned bodies present farm women and socially more privileged women in the same shape.

In light of this, I turn again to Donna Haraway, to conclude with her: The constricted bodies and consciousnesses “become with textiles” in the way they are “done”. Thus, farm women’s bodies are not materialized as final; they are not shaped once and for all, but are dynamic bodies that participate in different social correlations where dress is part of the ongoing constitution of the body and mind as one entity. I have to be aware that these “bodies temporary” were part of complex contexts that do not reveal all their nuances to me today just as they had not done for 18th-century foreign visitors. The dressed farm women appear a little more nuanced to me, though, than many scholars have asserted before, and the Norwegian females of peasantry seem a little less static, as they appear from my perspective.

Farm women’s bodies “became with many”, and stays were some of those many “species”. Eighteenth-century females, however, are as absent in today’s museum storage facilities as they are in my experience. Carefully, I lift the stays back into their boxes again, place tissue paper between each garment, before I close the lids and replace the boxes on their shelves, assuring myself that the labels are in their correct positions. In their engagement with me today, the written stories from the 18th century, more recent stories about other stays in other museums, and items of clothing are all some of “those many” that this story about a past dress practice “became together with”.

Acknowledgements

This text has become together with several, and I would like to express my gratitude to the textile historians and artisans Mona Løkting and Jon Fredrik Skauge for fruitful discussions on the entanglement of theoretical and practical issues. Colleagues at the Hedmark County Museum and Norwegian Folk Museum, and my PhD fellows at the University of Oslo have provided helpful comments. I owe special thanks to Dr Roar Lishaugen for his perceptive criticism and comradely support. Last but not least, thanks to my supervisors, Professor Saphinaz Amal Naguib and Professor Brita Brenna, who made thoughtful suggestions on an earlier version of this article. I would also like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the Hedmark County Museum, which enables me to work on my doctoral thesis, and the Arts Council of Norway for supplementary funding.

Notes

1 Haraway (2008), 4.
3 For this survey, approximately 20 pairs of stays were studied.
4 Steele (2001), 1.
5 This article stems from my ongoing PhD studies, where I examine dress practices in Norwegian rural areas in the last decades of the 18th century. More specifically, I focus in this section of my thesis on how clothes “make” bodies and gender. Only the “making” of gendered female bodies is examined in this article.
Conversely, Cunnington and Cunnington claim (1992/1951), 87; Andersen (1977), 32. This is tested on a copy of stays, where the eyelet holes are placed parallel to each other.

The seam is also called “English seams” in German literature, according to Rasmussen (2010, 188). The seam is known in several countries, but seems to be extraordinarily frequent in Norwegian peasant garments.

For instance, Cunnington and Cunnington (1992/1951); Backlawski (1995); Hammar and Rasmussen (2008).

I follow Steele’s use of the term here.

The term ‘corset’ appeared at the end of the 18th century when women’s dress was undergoing a radical change. Old fashioned stays did not suit the emerging high-waisted styles and although the terms ‘stays’ and ‘corset’ coexisted for several decades, the corset won the linguistic battle as successfully as it triumphed over the natural human shape.” Baclawski (1995).

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I follow Steele’s use of the term here.

The Danish fashion historian Ellen Andersen emphasizes that, although stays are made of exclusive fabrics, their tabs often are made of simpler materials. She argues that these simple tabs were covered by the skirt to underpin it, while the decorative tabs in the front and back were visible (Andersen (1977), 127). The Norwegian national-dress expert Klara Semb (1884–1970), on the other hand, claimed that stays like these were used over time, and she interpreted hooks and eyes as secondary additions at a time when stays were reduced to underwear, even if they were made of costly fabrics. (Klara Semb’s archive, Norwegian Institute for Folk Dress). I suggest that nothing in the materials or stitches supports this interpretation.

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The Queen of Denmark: An English fashion doll and its connection to the Nordic countries

Cecilie Stöger Nachman

The costume collections at the Museum of London hold a beautifully dressed doll from the 18th century. Although the doll is called “The Queen of Denmark”, it is quite likely that she had never set foot in Denmark. Nevertheless, she illustrates a fascinating encounter in European fashion history, an epoch where she and similar dolls served as fashion models for men and women from the royal and noble families in Europe. This chapter attempts to trace her roots in European history in order to focus on the role she and her contemporaries played in the dissemination of trends across pre-19th-century Europe and the possible links between European and Scandinavian fashion.

The origin of “The Queen of Denmark”

The 55-centimetre-high doll dated to c. 1760 forms part of the exquisite dress and fashion collection at the Museum of London. A Miss Edith Sampson donated it to the museum in 1927. To as far back as the 1820s, the history of the doll is quite well documented, but prior to this, its origin is difficult to discern. The doll is believed to have been presented by an English princess to Elizabeth Sampson (b.1748), the middle daughter of Thomas Sampson, at one time chaplain of the Royal Hospital at Chelsea. In 1759, the later King George III acted as godfather to Thomas Sampson’s youngest son. Therefore, it is likely that the aforementioned princess was King George III’s youngest sister Caroline Matilda (1751–1775), who married Christian VII, King of Denmark, in 1766. Their marriage was unhappy right from the outset, but that tale is lavishly covered in books (e.g. The Visit of the Royal Physician by Per Olov Enquist) and films (A Royal Affair by Nikolaj Arcel).

“The Queen of Denmark” and her lookalikes: the fashion dolls

“The Queen of Denmark” is made of painted wood with inserted black glass eyes and a wig of dark brown, piled-up human hair. She wears a sack back gown (robe à la française) with a matching petticoat of striped pink and yellow Spitalfields silk taffeta and pink silk stays. Recent conservation revealed her underwear beneath, consisting of a fine linen chemise, linen stays, three linen petticoats and a stiffened hoop of boldly-striped linen. The earring, locket and wig are later additions,
but otherwise she is an exact replicate of a fashionable woman of the period and desired features such as an oval face, almond eyes, fair skin and a long, swanlike neck are exaggerated in her design.

“The Queen of Denmark” is not similar to the typical small-scale toy dolls of the time, which most often were rather simply made and dressed in assorted, patched remnants of textile, which cannot be matched by other visual documents of actual garments. She is taller, and therefore closer in scale relative to her adult viewers, more refined in her carving and painting, and her outfit is a precise scaled-
The fashion dolls, also referred to as "fashion dolls" of the 19th century were rather primitive in their workmanship, the most likely explanation for the origin of "The Queen of Denmark" is that it is a so-called fashion doll. Although usually produced of wood, the fashion dolls could also be made of wax or cloth and be either life-sized or miniature, male or female. The format and appearance of the fashion dolls overlapped with other genres of functional representational figures in the early modern period, such as the ceremonial and funeral effigy; the artist's lay figures (which could also be either life-sized or miniature) and the Catholic religious figures, which during the Baroque and Rococo periods were frequently attired in upper-class fashionable dress made in fabric. Furthermore, it has been hypothesised that the production of various three-dimensional figurative images in the 17th and 18th centuries employed similar techniques and formats even if they were intended as objects with very different functions.

The carving of the miniature wooden fashion dolls, such as "The Queen of Denmark" type, is similar to that of the plain wooden toy doll manufactured for centuries throughout Europe and carved on a lathe; with a round head, sharply turned into a neck and then out into rather broad shoulders, a tiny waist and then broad hips. The back is sliced off from the neck downwards resulting in flat shoulders and hips. These are pierced and a rod of wood passed through to which moveable arms and legs are attached. Therefore, it can be difficult to distinguish the physical features of the two types of dolls, as well as to ascertain their very different purposes. The fashion dolls were made as objects for adult consumption and not intended for the amusement of children. However, they were often handed down as toys for children after having fulfilled their purpose as mannequins.

The history, function and impact of fashion dolls

The fashion dolls, also referred to as Pandora's or poupées de la Rue de Saint-Honoré, were like paintings and engravings among the earliest methods of illustrating contemporary fashion in full and copiable detail in an international marketplace long before the glossy fashion magazines and moving images of today. The dolls played an essential role in the emergence of European fashion as both a social trend and a creative genre. At a time where the production of textiles represented a significant investment of time, labour, and resources, and would cost much more than the actual tailoring of a garment, it was important to see what one was spending one's money on. The three-dimensional fashion dolls provided a quick understanding compared to a two-dimensional illustration and therefore served as a highly useful way for textile merchants to promote their goods.

The Fashion Museum in Bath holds a fashion doll's court dress dated to the same period as "The Queen of Denmark". This dress is made of brocaded silk woven with silver thread and is richly decorated with silver-gilt braid and silk flowers. The proportions of the width of the skirt and the length of the train are accurate and indicate that it is made to scale, as is the construction of the boned bodice. On the other hand, the fabric and silver lace trimming are overwhelming and out of proportion. This peculiarity is not so evident in the less ornate silk taffeta design in which the "The Queen of Denmark" is attired.

The fashion dolls’ material history is sketchy and little is documented about them. The dolls have always been shrouded in mystery and even in their own age some have doubted their existence. The dolls can be studied in paintings and written accounts, but in general, few primary sources documenting their existence are available. The first known written account of a fashion doll dates back to 1391 where Queen Isabeau of Bavaria had dolls sent to the Queen of England to give her an impression of the fashions worn at the French court. Another record dates from a century later where Queen Anne of Brittany in 1496 ordered a large doll to be made and dressed for the Spanish Queen Isabella. What began as a royal extravaganza in the 14th century was widespread and systemized during the 17th and 18th centuries; it became a business. Written sources from 18th century France even refer to a registrar’s office in Paris, established to ensure that all fashion dolls were “carefully scaled according to standard sizes” before they were allowed to be sent abroad.
Fig. 8.2: The Queen of Denmark fashion doll. Object No. 27.76vb, Image Id. 823925 (© Museum of London). The 55-centimetre-high fashion doll dated to c.1760 is made of painted wood with inserted black glass eyes. She is an exact replica of a fashionable woman of the period. The earring, locket and wig are later additions.

restricted in their daily life and were unable to travel freely, the dolls served as unique transmitters of contemporary fashion in a time before the development of mass-reproduction methods. Primarily sent from Paris and London, the dolls were rushed in coaches to the rest of Europe to convey the latest fashion trends. Some English-produced fashion dolls were also shipped to the North American colonies, where England exerted the dominant cultural influence. The dolls were considered so precious that they sometimes
The Queen of Denmark: An English fashion doll and its connection to the Nordic countries

Fig. 8.3: The Queen of Denmark fashion doll. Object No. 27.76vc, Image Id. 823925 (©Museum of London).

The Queen of Denmark wears a sack back gown (robe à la française) with a matching petticoat of striped pink and yellow Spitalfields silk taffeta and pink silk stays.

even had diplomatic immunity during times of war.\textsuperscript{14}

A few dolls also made their way to the Nordic countries. Thus, in Stockholm a small fashion doll dated to the 1590s is on display in Livrustkammaren (The Royal Armoury).\textsuperscript{15} The miniature doll was acquired by King Charles IX's court to disseminate the fashionable Spanish dress of the 16th century.\textsuperscript{16} In 1664, Sophie Amalie of Brunswick-Lüneburg, queen of Denmark and Norway, received a French fashion doll. The queen was known
for her sumptuous lifestyle and she made French taste fashionable. In Copenhagen from 1716 and onwards, Madam Louise Rosset held the monopoly to exhibit the fashion dolls delivered monthly from Paris to her shop in Købmagergade. During the dolls’ brief stay in the capital, the local tailors and women from the upper classes had the opportunity to examine and copy them. Today, we can only guess at the excitement these exotic fashion dolls aroused in their Nordic spectators. Records also describe how Catherine the Great (1729–1796) sent dolls from St Petersburg to Stockholm to show her cousin, King Gustav III, the original and novel items she herself had designed for her grandchildren.

The rise and fall of the fashion dolls

As mentioned previously, the fashion dolls served as an early marketing tool for textile merchants and mantua-makers, especially during the 18th century where a far-reaching consumer revolution started in England. Within a few generations, objects, which for centuries had been the privilege of the very rich, were within the reach of a slightly larger part of society than before. The desire to consume was not a particular 18th century novelty, but the ability to do so was new. Fashions changed with an astonishing speed and the consumerism of commodities changed from being dictated primarily by need to being dictated by fashion. This commercialisation of fashion can even be encapsulated in the history of the fashion doll. Whereas the first fashion dolls served only an elite, the later fashion dolls aimed at a newly established mass consumer market and perhaps even more significantly, where the former was court controlled, the latter was controlled by business. Consequently, the fashion doll became a persuasive item of commercial propaganda, vital for the growing fashion industry. Eventually, the fashion dolls made their way into the department stores, shops, and middle class homes. However, the cost of this commercial success was that the dolls lost their status and magic.

The epoch of fashion dolls came to a rather abrupt halt (at least in their past form) with the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, but other factors also contributed to their disappearing role as trendsetters. The industrial revolution in Europe, and in particular in England, increased the importance of the middle class, thereby making fashion more widely available and thus less elitist. In order to meet the growing demands of the consumers, the hand-made three-dimensional dolls were replaced by the much cheaper, industrially produced, two-dimensional paper dolls and by illustrated fashion prints in journals and magazines.

Conclusion

Seen in retrospect, the fashion dolls constitute a remarkable chapter in European fashion history as they represent a first attempt to promote fashion as an international product associated with commercial interests. The dolls contributed to a top-down dissemination of trends, leading to a homogenisation of fashion across borders. Thus, “The Queen of Denmark” can be seen as a symbol of early globalisation and part of an international network of fashion, which also included the Nordic countries. Consequently, she is not merely a beautiful artefact but also remarkable evidence of a fashion encounter among European women of a certain status.

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Notes

1 Goldthorpe and Staniland (1986), Chapter 1.
2 Goldthorpe and Staniland (1986), Chapter 1.
5 Fox (1972), 48–49, 181.
6 Early (1955).
7 Boehn (1966), 144.
8 Images available online from Bridgeman Art Library (object no. FMB 329169).
9 Cumming (2004), 56.
10 Steele (1988), 25.
11 Boehn (1966), 136.
12 Boehn (1966), 136.
13 Hurlock (1984), 132.
14 Boehn (1966), 140.
15 Images available online from livrustkammaren.se (object no. 77 (56:15) 260).
16 Tydén-Jordan (1987), 47.
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At the Nordic Fringe of Global Consumption: A Copenhagen bourgeois’ home and the use of new goods in the mid-18th century

Mikkel Venborg Pedersen

Entrance

The expansion of oceangoing commerce is one of the more important aspects in the development of (early) modern Europe and our present-day experience of an international consumer society. It is closely linked to the European colonial expansion from the late 15th century onwards. This was a process in which also the Scandinavian double-kingdom of Denmark–Norway with the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein participated, with its capital Copenhagen as the epicentre. Colonial influence on everyday life was broad and multifaceted; however, it was perhaps most visible in new consumer possibilities and the pursuit of European fashions. Northern Europe, and hence also Scandinavia with Copenhagen as a commercial hub, imported manufactured goods on a wider scale than ever before with new foods and raw materials drawn in from around the world. The appearance of these goods coincided with a new civility in middle and upper class society, for instance in new ways of eating and drinking, living and socializing; in reality it covered most of life. The import and logistics of colonial goods stimulated a consumer society, technical innovations, new products, marketing strategies, and commercial institutions as well as philosophical thought, as demonstrated by recent research, above all on British and French material.1

This chapter examines these influences in one specific setting in Copenhagen in the 18th century and it focuses on people culturally encountering the new colonial goods and European fashions arising from them. In one way, Scandinavia was on the fringe of colonial consumption and many new fashions and traits entered the Scandinavian countries through Germany, the Netherlands, France and Britain. In another way, due to Copenhagen’s position as the centre for both the Danish–Norwegian realm and pivot for re-export of colonial goods to all of North-Eastern Europe – and to Britain, the Netherlands, and Middle Germany as well – it was possible to purchase everything in the Danish capital. One thing is the possibility, though; another thing is
the wish. How did the new things find their way into the homes and daily routines of the city’s inhabitants and how did people come to terms with the new possibilities? These questions will be investigated through the probate inventories stemming from Gjerløff’s partial and reoccurring bankruptcy during these decades will form the empirical basis together with artefacts of the collections of the National Museum of Denmark, where three state rooms of the apartment are shown as part of the Modern History Galleries. Through a careful reading, the guiding questions will be followed in context. However, before entering the concrete world of Mr Gjerløff and family we shall, first, have a brief introduction to the Danish–Norwegian colonial realm; secondly, we will consider some major aspects of the new European consumer culture of the 18th century. Since a chief source material is the artefacts themselves (or descriptions of them) we shall, thirdly, dwell for a moment on the study of material culture before dealing with the house and family of Gjerløff. The remainder of the chapter contains the analysis and tale of colonial goods in the home of the Gjerløffs before taking our leave from it.

Hence, the chapter also forms a modification to the perhaps common notion of fashion as having solely to do with garments. It was, and is, much broader than that. Fashion addresses economic and cultural exchange, it touches upon social norms and standards, has to do with the domestication of specific culturally informed manners and customs. European fashions, themselves so heavily influenced by the European colonial contacts, met in Scandinavia both the countries’ own colonial experiences and people striving to live up to international fashion vougues, whilst often understanding them in their personal and/or domestic way, from their own cultural perspective. In this chapter, we shall restrict ourselves to the immediate and concrete presence of colonial goods and items in the Gjerløff home, though.

**A World of goods**

In today’s debates, we often speak of globalisation, internationalisation and world trade. We tend to see them as traits of the 2nd half of the 20th century, yet, neither globalisation, internationalisation nor world trade are new. These processes began to gain significance with the European expansion into the rest of the world, forming a major impact on the early modern world. One first step was Christopher Columbus’ expedition to America in 1492, which he thought was India, another the circumnavigation of Africa by Vasco da Gama in 1498 opening up the oceangoing trade routes to the Far East. From then on and paramount from the middle of the 17th century onwards, Europe’s dominance grew, and from sometime in the 19th century until the dissolution of the European colonial empires after World War II, the continent dominated the entire globe. Denmark–Norway took part in colonialism as well, from 1814 Denmark alone when Norway was ceded to Sweden. In the tropical lands, Danish colonisation lasted from 1620 till 1917. In addition, there were the North Atlantic parts of the realm: the originally Norwegian tax-lands of Iceland and the Faroe Isles and, in its own way, Greenland, the latter two mentioned still today constitute semi-independent parts of the Danish realm.

In 1618, the first Danish ‘Indian Fleet’ sailed out from the port of Copenhagen. Two years later, the small fleet arrived in Ceylon, present-day Sri Lanka, negotiated with one of the local princes and obtained the right to trade from a strong point on the Indian mainland, soon to be founded as the Danish colony Tranquebar. Protected by Fort Dansborg, Danish trade with pepper, cotton textiles, dye-wood, nitre, spices and other local produce began, in addition to Chinese and Japanese porcelain. Much was traded along the Eastern coast of India, and in 1755, the Danish colony was followed by the settlement Frederiksnagore, or Serampore, close to Calcutta in Bengal, which was to become the main seat for Danish activities. As indicated, the Chinese trade too was extensive. In 1732 a new and all Eastern trade company was founded, The Royal Chartered Danish Asiatic Company, which rapidly developed into the largest enterprise in the realm. Next to porcelain, tea especially boosted the profits of the Company’s shareholders, usually making 85–90% of the ships’ cargo value; although porcelain and silks were esteemed goods to take back home too. The colonial trade also benefitted greatly from the Danish neutrality
in the multiple European wars of the time. However, with the English Wars of 1801 and 1807–1814, when Denmark allied herself to France during the Napoleonic Wars, trade came to a standstill and never really regained its previous heights. In 1843, the Danish Asiatic Company was dissolved. In 1845 the Indian possessions were sold to Britain.

Danish trading houses also partook in the Atlantic triangular trade. From the Danish forts at the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), gold, ivory, and, from the late 17th century, slaves were traded. Bought from the chiefs of the African inland, the slaves were taken to the main fort Christiansborg and sailed to the Danish West Indies, as was the case for the other powers active in the triangle as well. In the Caribbean, Denmark had been present since the 1640s. About 20 years later, trade seemed so promising that it was decided to settle in the area. The Danes took up residence on the island of St. Thomas, featuring one of the area’s best natural harbours. The colonisation itself primarily occurred with immigrating English, French and Dutch planters and merchants seeking a refuge under the neutral Danish flag. In 1718 the smaller neighbouring island of St. John became part of the colony, almost entirely used for plantations. The same was the case with the bigger St. Croix, bought from France in 1733. On St. Thomas, the town of Charlotte Amalie with Fort Christian formed the colony’s trade centre, whereas on St. Croix, the town Christiansted with Fort Christiansvaern became the seat of colonial government. Moreover, on St. Croix, the smaller town of Frederiksted with Fort Frederik administered local affairs. The islands primarily produced sugar, which in the late 18th century was Copenhagen’s chief export article. With the Danish ban on the slave trade in 1792, enforced in 1803, and the British ban which followed soon after, as well as the Danish abolition of slavery in 1848, the economy of the islands deteriorated.
African forts were sold to the United Kingdom in 1850; the West Indies to the United States of America in 1917.

The tropical colonies had in Denmark–Norway a kind of equivalent in the North Atlantic, as indicated. A young, Danish or Norwegian lad with an adventurous mind thus gained for himself many new possibilities for seeing the world. The tempting possibilities now stretched from whaling in the Arctic through European trade in the Baltic and also in the Mediterranean, where he ran the risk of being taken slave off the North African shores, to long years on board Chinamen of the Asiatic Company or sugar ships to and from the West Indies. Moreover, civil and military servant families flourished, sending out fathers, brothers, sons and nephews to overseas positions. Merchants’ offices in the once so modest Copenhagen now contained despatchers from all over the world. For most of the Danish population, however, the colonies were and remained places one may have heard of, not places one had been. But through consumption possibilities of the foreign goods, the new world came closer to their daily lives.

**Consumption and status**

During the same period, and impacting one another, a process began, which by historians is labelled the European consumer revolution. Alongside went the perhaps better known industrial revolution. As a result as well as a trigger, a general increase in wealth took place that even became noticeable among the wider population, although it must be mentioned that the same centuries witnessed the rise of a hitherto unknown proletariat as well. In Denmark this new wealth made its impact from sometime around the middle of the 18th century, after the end of the Great Nordic War of 1700–1720, and the plague and agricultural crisis in the 1730s. During the 18th century, a mutual benefitting triangle of consumption, colonies and (early) industry was formed in Europe, making a new and greater consumption possible.

This also meant new patterns of consumption. A novel and hitherto unknown demand for goods and services arose. Northern Europe imported manufactured goods, new foods and raw materials. The appearance of these articles coincided with a new civility in middle and upper class society. The import and logistics of goods stimulated a consumer society and many of the new goods fitted nicely into the all-embracing conspicuous consumption as well. The 18th-century society was (also) a rank society, social status held greatest importance. Consumption is not merely for obtaining goods and/or services and/or following fashions. There is also a consumption aiming to fulfil social norms and maintain oneself on a certain (or, dare one wish: better!) social hierarchical level. This is, of course, above all studied in the wake of the American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen’s celebrated and contested notion of conspicuous consumption, underlining the hierarchical aspect of the matter. Equally, consumption is often used to present oneself in a positive light, but in reality, it is not merely conspicuous consumption that has this effect. “Inconspicuous consumption transmits its own message and so does conspicuous refraining from consuming”, the British cultural historian Peter Burke points out. In the narrow meaning of conspicuous consumption, people acquire objects in order to compete with others. In a broader, looser, less reductionist meaning, conspicuous artefacts are acquired because of what they symbolise. To this, we shall return in a moment.

When it comes to the consumption of goods starting to pour into Europe as a (wished for) consequence of the colonial endeavours, above all, items of luxury came into play. Even though tea and coffee, cotton, sugar and the ubiquitous potato are everyday commodities today, they were not so in early modernity. They were luxuries in the commonplace understanding of the word as something which can be done without. Therefore, they were also most apt to demonstrate status through conspicuous consumption. However, luxury is both a concept and a cultural phenomenon, and in both capacities, already in early 18th century Europe, it provided the focus for hundreds of political and satirical pamphlets dealing with luxury as either an economic trigger or as a vice; the conceptualization masking either liberal(ist) or conservative opinion makers’ ideals for society. This went hand in hand with luxury already becoming more widespread in society and also appearing in new forms. The availability of luxury goods coincided with a new civility in the European bourgeois and upper classes’ eating
habits, interior designs and socializing forms constituting a distinct civilisation process, to follow the historically well-informed German sociologist, Norbert Elias’ notion. The Norwegian-Danish 18th-century moralist Baron Ludvig Holberg only found this an advantage. With coffee, tea and chocolate, he wrote in one of his numerous epistles on the ways of his contemporaries, women of polite society could now visit each other without returning in a drunken state after too much beer and schnapps. Cotton began to find its way into fashion textiles, undergarments and bed-linen opening a possibility for a hitherto unseen level of hygiene, frequent washing at high temperatures as these garments require, and thus much supported by medical doctors of the contemporaneous revolution in hygiene.

Much of the new consumption featured goods from the colonies. The Europeans brought, in ever increasing amount, the World into their living rooms. Exotic food and drink, new textiles and decorative items, such as light furniture, ceramics, glass, metalware, clocks, porcelain, and much more besides poured into the markets and shops of European towns. For example: tea, dye-wood and shawls from the East; ivory, gold and exotic wood from Africa; sugar, rum and cotton from the West Indies and Americas eventually became well-known features of also Danish and Norwegian homes. The centre for it all was the capital, Copenhagen. Here most of the companies had their warehouses and offices; notably only Flensburg and Glückstadt in the Danish duchies of Schleswig and Holstein obtained any royal favours for colonial trade. Already in the beginning of the 18th century, all imaginable goods could be purchased in Copenhagen.

A town does not merely constitute of a collection of houses in one place. Towns are, and were, perceived as other kinds of societies than villages. Not only did they look and smell differently, people also behaved in other ways and according to other standards, treasured other things and nursed other problems. The towns were often perceived as something distinctly civilised; the towns were not merely economic, military and political centres but also models of a well-ordered state and the refinement of manners and customs. Social life and trade too worked in an ordered and sophisticated way; at least this was the view of the townspeople themselves and also that of the government and other authorities, informed by mercantilist philosophy. It was also in towns one first had to – and perhaps was able to – deal with the impact from the world outside. Thus, in towns one usually possessed other and more things than villagers would do. Towns became places where one could acquire things and obtain knowledge of how to use them, otherwise only possible in a few other places, such as in manor houses.

Material culture

When dealing with all these goods and items of colonial origin, methodologically we are referred to written sources, broad contextual empirical knowledge, and also an interpretation of the artefacts themselves. However, this is not necessarily that straight-forward an approach.

One of the essential features about man is that he manufactures and uses artefacts. Man is, as the traditional argument goes, *homo faber*, the creator and user of artefacts. When consuming, man is *homo edens*, an eating man, and thus interacting with goods, things, bits and pieces. Artefacts can, as everything else, serve as indicators of culture, as indicators of cultural conceptions, values and choices, as they are created to be used, consumed, desired. However, to study material culture to a degree demands a somewhat different historical method. As a source, material culture appears in a different shape from what is normally used in historical (or contemporary for that matter) research. Often, the things also have to be linked together with more common written sources. On the surface, it should be easy to study these beds, tables and chairs, cups, and saucepans, inventories and probate estates after deceased persons. However, they are not so easily understood. Where were they placed in houses? What things were used for status consumption or display? What was not? What things were intended to be permanent, and which items could be done without? How should one at all understand these silent pieces and hundreds of pages of sparsely described inventory?

Perhaps, it is useful to think of a doctor who, based on a patient’s symptoms, makes a diagnosis of a certain (abnormal) condition, as the German ethnologist Martin Scharfe suggests. By this, he means using techniques of evocation and qualified guesses, and
understanding culture as both manifest and non-manifest, as webs of significance and as acted documents. Thus, in many ways, Scharfe’s symptoms are the same as the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz’ cultural symbols. They are both a model for and a model of reality and they are concrete manifestations of “ideas, attitudes, values, belongings or conceptions, they are as public as marriage and as visible as agriculture”, as Geertz famously states.17

There are some difficulties combined with this approach, to which Scharfe is not blind. Most important is perhaps a tendency to neglect that most artefacts were usually made for a specific purpose. The number and function of historical objects is perhaps a bit blurred for many of us today, surrounded by a multitude of things we at times do not quite know what to do with. In early modernity, most people did not own that many objects. Things were first and foremost acquired for their functionality. However, this does not mean that they could not contain other references as well. A cupboard was made for, and most often purchased (or ordered) because of a need for the storage of other things. This is its function. It could be in a certain style and thus also signify a certain time and/or certain socio-economic context. This strict notion of sign implies a fixed and foreseeable relationship between the signifier and the signified, as it is understood in structural(ist) informed semiotics. However, it does not so much imply a quality of the artefact and its use as it denotes our schemata developed to place an artefact in a socio-economic, geographical, temporal or other fixed context. This leaves need for a third way of approaching an artefact, as mentioned above, namely as a cultural symbol. A cupboard can thus also be perceived as an open-ended, multi-vocal symbol containing all kinds of references traversing time and space. For example, a certain object may be a token of conspicuous consumption or of a belonging to a certain social group or cultural horizon shared with a selected group of others.18

This three-sided conceptualisation of function, strict sign and open-ended symbol will be kept in mind when we approach the things in the apartment of the Gjerloffs. It also means that perhaps there is no need to change methodology in spite of somewhat varying source material. However, we may need to armour ourselves with a bit more imagination than is often permitted, dare a ‘qualified guess’ or pursue what the American historian Nathalie Zemon Davis has called “the social creativity of the so-called inarticulate”,19 that is: allow ourselves to evoke pictures of how it may have looked like, knowing well that such a familiarisation will eventually be a vain attempt to recapture the past. Hence, the strategy must be one of, at times, close description of details, reproduced stories, realist assessments and faintly seen contexts.

A house and a home

Although, the 18th century too, was witness to consumption on the streets, in clubs and coffee-houses, it was mostly in the homes that things were gathered, either as a means of production or as consumption in the quest for comfort, pleasure and/or status. In this section, we shall visit the inhabitants of the home in Magstræde. Through their belongings, they too expressed different meanings. As argued above, there exists no simple way to analyse the relationship between material and social life, but one possibility is to see artefacts as carrying both functional, significant and symbolic meanings. Sometimes it is obvious, a large house often means plenty of money; huge amounts of silverware stand as a bid in status competition. However, quite a few things also broadcast more subtle meanings, only readable to those who hold the key to the code in advance.20 Artefacts, such as an item of furniture, makes clear cultural statements about shared and accepted values – and their changes.

This becomes evident already in the ground plans of the houses, where there was an interplay between what to display and what to keep private. This very categorisation between what is often labelled life on the front-stage and the back-stage21 is also a child of the 18th century’s changes in housing and dwelling, which found its forerunner at royal castles and grand manor houses a few centuries before.22 However, there is more to it. Things were mostly placed in homes situated in a house, where families lived as part of extended households. The house is, for one, a home, the heart of everyday life. Here, cultural values encounter technology, and economic and ecological conditions. Here, one can view compromises between personal choices and the traditions
and boundaries that constitute the reality of life. The house is a protected and protecting environment, which offers shelter against the elements, wild animals and malicious people. It provides a scene for social life; here, daily work is carried out and things and possessions are stored, framing daily routines. Work, rest, food and social life converge here, symbolised by the dower chest, the bed, the table and chairs, the clock and the deathbed. Public meets private; from the pump in the yard to the warmth of the bed. Production, reproduction and consumption coalesce in the house.23 And, it is in the house that the most important arena for status consumption is situated.

This being the case, the play between public and private in a home also shows that households were complex social institutions, by way of which most peoples’ physical and emotional needs were met. Through acquiring and preparing food, shelter, clothes, income, and nursing, most people in a household worked at home. Cooking, eating, raising children, visiting and reading were all activities leaving substantial marks on the material goods in the house, and all members of a household had their task to perform. The more specific housekeeping assignments were mostly part of the female domain, however. A study in English middle class women’s use of time over a hundred years from 1660–1760 has shown that cooking alone occupied about three to four hours a day. Cleaning consumed two hours, tending fireplaces another hour, eating two hours, and education of the children engaged three to four hours a day. Eight hours of sleep had to be fitted in, too. Approximately three hours per week were set aside for baking bread and brewing beer, washing took four hours, and another four hours were spent visiting. During the year, these women also found room for two days of food preservation, another two days of washing and twelve days of shopping.24 The picture is recognisable for the Danish wife of a chemist in Copenhagen, Anne Christine Becker, who kept a diary from 1787–1790.25

To cover all these and many more responsibilities, in most homes the household consisted of varying degrees of both family members and servants. The number of the latter varied with that of the former; were there many small children, more servants were needed and vice-versa. People of the professional classes and artisans also kept apprentices, as was the case in the household of the chemist, Becker, in Copenhagen in 1787. It consisted of the family and three students of pharmacy, the apprentices, a servant, a coachman, a farmhand and a laboratory helper and no less than four maids.26 Our porcelain dealer, Gjerlof, lived in 1787 in Magstræde with his wife, Else Marie, he 79 and she 59 years old. Their son Gabriel, aged 24, lived at home, although he was mostly away serving on board the Asiatic Company’s Chinamen. The oldest daughter, aged 29, was already married and lived in Norway with her husband, but was visiting at the time of the census. The family was waited upon by the 38-year-old widow Karen Margrethe and maid Anne of 25. Three other sons had been born, but they all died in infancy. No apprentices were present, as he in his old age lived only off the rent from his tenants.

Such people surrounded themselves with more or fewer things. In contrast to conditions in the 16th century, during the 17th and 18th centuries Europeans began to own more things, their houses became better built and more spacious, leading to a sectioning of the house designing one room to one function; the invention of sleeping chambers and dining rooms are cases in point of this civilisation process. With these remarks, we have also arrived at the point where we can visit the apartment of porcelain dealer Gjerlof in Copenhagen, focusing on the colonial goods in his possession.

The Gjerlof family’s home

In the National Museum of Denmark’s Modern History Galleries, three rooms have survived from the apartment that Royal carpenter Dietrich Schäffer between 1738 and 1745 had decorated on the bel-étage of his newly built town house on Magstræde 6 in Copenhagen.27 Panelling, wall paintings, doors, supra-portes and ceilings are from the original apartment and the floors stem from a contemporary house. The furnishings are in the period of a few decades later. The rooms on this floor and their counterparts on the other storeys were situated towards the street but also a side-wing belonged to the house, containing kitchen, scullery, chambers and staircases. The front house was a three-storey-high building of five windows’ width and a brick-built façade. The
rest was made of half-timbering, just as it was common in Copenhagen of the period. The brick-built façade was a demand from the town authorities after Copenhagen’s fire in 1728 and it also served to display his status. By all tokens, Schäffer knew what suited an elegant new house. He himself had served as a carpenter at Christiansborg Castle, which in the same decade was built and decorated according to the highest European standards of royal residences. Schäffer worked with doors and panelling, and in his own home the woodwork is of the same high quality.

Access to the apartment was through staircases in the side-wing. From the stairs, one entered a small entrance hall, not quite usual in bourgeois homes of the period. The small entrance led to the kitchen and a chamber, what concerns us more is that access was also obtained to the middle and most elegant of the three rooms towards the street, the parlour. On each side of the parlour was a cabinet. The parlour was for entertaining and receptions, the one cabinet for private family life. Containing a niche with an elegant bed, the other cabinet was in part to sleep in, in part to receive female guests; all manners of conduct that Schäffer must have seen unfold at royal castle and which, in general, trickled down into bourgeois homes of the period. Panelling, wall-paintings, ceilings and a niche for a bed have all contributed to the elegance of the Schäffer home.

As far as the other rooms are concerned, it is known that they too to some degree were panelled and had plastered ceilings. In the kitchen the chimney dominated, featuring iron plates and rings, only to become common in general interior equipment some hundred years later with the introduction of the iron kitchen stoves. This modern feature enabled the following of fashions in cooking, with rings and plates the fire could be controlled to a degree enabling fine cookery to be pursued.

Thus, the apartment was a distinguished dwelling living up to the dominant ideals for a bourgeois home. The other storeys too displayed solid equipment and decoration, although of course not of the same standard. Further up, elegance waned off to come to naught under the roofs, where superfluous things were stored and the servants found their rooms. Hence, the house in its occupancy also showed the social standing of the owner and tenants; the highest ranking tenant lived above the owner, who occupied both the ground floor with a shop and the bel-étage.

At least, this was the case after 1749, when Schäffer sold the house to Johann Gjerløff, who dealt with Saxon porcelain, and other sorts of items. He also held interests in the Copenhagen faience factory in Store Kongensgade, where his brother Christian served as director. The earthenware factory was one of many enterprises supported by mercantilist politics. Here, it concerned glazed faience, which had risen from being a poor European replica of Chinese and Japanese porcelain to an article in its own right. However, Johann Gjerløff was also his own brother’s competitor. From around the same time, he began to trade in Saxon porcelain, that is: from the factory in Meissen. Founded in 1710, it is Europe’s oldest porcelain factory and still today one of the finest. That same year, the chemist J. F. Böttcher finally succeeded in copying the hard shiny porcelain, and even though the imported Eastern porcelain maintained its place as sought after articles, the European qualities from Meissen – and soon other factories as, for instance, Nymphenburg by Munich and Sèvres at Paris – became popular.

The porcelain trade did not prevent Johann Gjerløff in selling table-tops from his brother’s faience factory as well, which were used for the highly cherished small tea-tables. (see Fig. 9.2) On such a table, the tea urn could stand without ruining a refined wooden table top. However, the competition between the two brothers led to several court cases between them from the 1760s onwards, mostly initiated by Christian Gjerløff. For better or worse, in 1766–67 Johann Gjerløff proclaimed his brother “a rascal” and accused him of both fraud and theft. The fraternal response was to demand Johann Gjerløff declared himself insolvent, which after several minor negotiations finally occurred in 1772–74, when liquidation proceedings were undertaken. After highly complicated negotiations, they ended up with, in total, four inventories covering the items taken from the estate to be sold to cover the debts. By collating information in these inventories and their annexes describing the artefacts of Magstræde and other belongings, it is possible to gain a picture of how the three rooms looked like, being aware also of items not taken out to cover debts, most notably the family’s clothes and, probably, some of the silverware.
In the bed chamber (i.e. the cabinet with the niche) the requisition commission in part found Schäffer’s beautiful room, in part at least a tea table made of mahogany (see Fig. 9.3). It may be surprising to find a tea table in a bed chamber, but women of standing – or with appearances to keep or rank to obtain – would receive guests in their boudoir till mid-afternoon. Thus, this room was only in part a private room, which explains both the presence of the tea table and also the six chairs with leather upholstery along with an armchair and two stools. The latter may belong more to the bed than to the leather chairs, which better – for us – can be perceived as living room furniture. This impression is underlined by a double-sided drop-leaf table, a so-called luncheon table, pointing towards the socialising qualities of the room. For us more recognisable as bedroom equipment is a dressing table featuring a mirror in a porcelain frame. Here, Mrs Gjerloff could have her hair combed and powdered each morning. A hint of rouge on the cheeks and some red pomade on the mouth would be in period as well.

Within the niche stood a bed, a highly modern constructed canopy bed gathering the bed-curtains in a top of carved wood, perhaps even with a feather plumage for decoration at the top. The bed was curtained with chintz, one of the period’s many expressions for cotton fabric. Fittingly, the word stems from the Indian chint, and it was used to denote colourful and embellished linen, at times also treated with a wax covering. Two other curtains of chintz are also mentioned, in all likelihood they matched those of the bed and were meant for use at the sides of the niche. A niche was a great improvement in interior comfort, making comfortable and intimate rooms available. Behind two sets of curtains, one could sleep warm and snug in this bed. The bed itself was laid with three feather filled eiderdowns, four pillows and a set of linen sheets, which was

Fig. 9.2: Faience table top from the factory in Store Kongensgade, Copenhagen, run by Johann Gjerloff’s brother Christian. The earthenware table top is ornamented with a motif leading thoughts to China, from where also the tea came (National Museum of Denmark; Photo: Arnold Mikkelsen).
The sleeping chamber with its niche and bed, in the present-day galleries curtained with yellow silk and floral cotton fabric. On the bed and the cradle likewise patterned cotton fabric. Furniture of exotic wood furnishes the room, which in its entirety constitutes a showcase for colonial consumption (National Museum of Denmark; Photo: John Lee).

the normal bed of the day. In the room, an inlaid chest of drawers (with two drawers) also found its place. In front of the windows, curtains both protected against drafts, and by their modernity were a sign of savoir-faire, thus symbolizing the elegance of the house. They would usually be made of linen and ordered in a scalloped design.

The bedroom's furnishings were followed by those of the parlour. Two smaller consoles with marble tops must have been placed between the room’s three windows. At one wall, a large writing bureau stood ostentatiously, the cupboard above the writing leaf featuring doors with inlaid mirrors. A writing bureau was a piece of furniture in the highest fashion and mirrors were most cherished in indoor decoration. This was so because mirror glass was very expensive – a quality of its own in a parlour mostly meant for entertaining and, hence, showing-off – and contained the further
advantage that it made a relatively small room seem much bigger at the same time as it made the light from candles play in a thousand facets. This was, what a heart desired – and Mrs Gjerloff had it! Of the exquisite items in the parlour, there was also a cabinet clock; clocks working by winding regulators instead of weights were still a novelty and highly desired articles. It may suit the bureau. Most probably, along the walls of the room, six cane chairs were placed. This is a surprisingly modern feature, perhaps imported from the East, perhaps of domestic cane after the Eastern wickerwork ideal; in any case worth presenting in the parlour. In front of the windows were curtains, also here.

In the other cabinet, stood a mahogany card table, with a tabletop of green leather. Mahogany is in itself an exotic and fine wood, brought back from long expeditions in far-away-places, and a card table was to be used for pursuing one of the favourite pastimes of the

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*Fig. 9.4: The parlour with its exquisite panelling, wall paintings, floors and ceilings. Chairs with upholstery of red silk and a chest of drawers furnish the room, fairly closely resembling the descriptions of the Gjerloffs’ home (National Museum of Denmark; Photo: John Lee).*
day, also when entertaining. Games à quadrille were in favour but did the company consist of three or five people, it was l'hombre which ruled the table. With the excitement of playing went a small treat of assorted chocolates and a glass of exotic wine, perhaps obtained from Madeira or the Canaries passed by ships on their long colonial journeys. It could hardly be more exotic! In the cabinet, seating was offered by a canapé, a light sort of sofa, with yellow silk upholstery and some chairs. The fabric could be imported from China but, more likely, could also be of French Lyonnaise origin. For the storage of porcelain and other delicacies there served a chest of drawers with a marble top and a bureau made of the expensive and refined rosewood. Another table of mahogany wood with two side-leaves was also in the room, most likely used when serving tea and coffee. Here too, the window was covered with curtains.

Next to the furnishings of the three rooms, to which we shall confine ourselves, the commission also listed kitchen utensils of pewter, brass and copper. Mrs Gjerløff possessed at least four teapots, a tea urn, and two coffee pots of copper besides a mortar of bronze for spices or coffee beans and a scale of brass, just to name items pertinent to this chapter. In addition, many iron pots and pans, grills and carving forks, fire tongs, chandeliers, irons, buckets and bowls were in the house. Of silver there were, among other things, a tea urn, a dozen spoons, a soup spoon, a fish spoon, a sugar tong and a milk spoon, the latter a small spoon with holes used to skim cream. In another room, the commission found a coffee pot of porcelain with silver plating, a teapot on a swing and six pairs of coffee and six pairs of tea cups. Moreover, two slop basins were mentioned, followed by six wine glasses, eight bottles and six carafes. The beds of the children are also listed; they resembled that of the parents, but the curtains were made out of the exotic gingang. The word stems from Malay and denoted an often very colourful cotton fabric from the Far East, often somewhat cheaper than the chintz of the parents’ bed, mentioned above, and thus fitting for a children’s bed. The children too had tables and chairs in their room; in their schoolroom there was a bed as well. In 1769–74, before all the tragic deaths, four children lived at home.

The above-mentioned inventory did not cover all the expenses, so another one was drawn up adding more silverware. Now a soup spoon, six spoons, a sugar tong, four teaspoons and another milk spoon came into play followed by plates, serving platters, candlesticks, milk-jugs and measuring cups of pewter. Well-polished, pewter could pass for silver to the quick eye. Furthermore, copper and brass items too had to be delivered, including several cooking pots, a candlestick and a colander. Pots and saucepans, three teapots, a tea urn, a coffee pot, quite a few single and double brass candlesticks, a coffee grinder, several irons and fire tongs went the same way. Also of porcelain, stoneware and earthenware new things had to be poured into the gaping chasm of insolvency. It is obvious that these items mostly concern eating and drinking, which was one of the most important areas of (colonial luxury) consumption just as they in themselves often were imported or copies of import goods. Thus, in Magstræde there were also a large coffee pot and a similar teapot of porcelain with plates of silver and of the same set six pairs of teacups and coffee cups as well as two slop basins.

Mrs Gjerløff could serve dinner as well, presented on plates and platters of Saxon porcelain; hardly surprisingly. An abundance of dishes and bowls, flat and deep plates for the use of twelve persons were in her possession. Next to some other non-matching plates and dishes, some even with a chip and most likely from an older set of china, also five Chinese dishes of emerald and several Chinese porcelain blue and white bowls and dishes belonged to the mistress, indubitably, all imported goods. There must have been much more but this was what the court commission took away to cover the debts, besides six carafes, six wine glasses and eight bottles. The latter were used to carry wine from the cellar casks to be placed on a side table. The carafes were either for water or used as decanters.

The manner of serving food was not quite as it would become in the 19th century, where the serving system of today found its form. The ideal of the 18th century was a serving à la française, ideally consisting of three rounds of servings from dishes, platters and bowls. First the entrées, dominated by soups but also including other dishes, fish for instance. All food would be on the table at once. After this round, the table would be laid again for the main course; they too consisting of different temptations, with roasts as the mid-point, but
also, for example, vegetables in sauce and, in very modern places, boiled potatoes. The same pattern would appear again with the desserts, naturally now the sweet kitchen would show its creations, not least, and increasingly based on the colonial import: sugar. On the table, the different serving plates and bowls would be placed in symmetrical patterns. The actual eating would take the form of sampling a bit here and a bit there. Glasses had to be filled from the buffet – or from bottles, carafes and decanters at a side table.31

This high standard was hardly possible to achieve at the Gjerloffs’ on a daily basis. However, for formal occasions, the ideal of serving several rounds of servings on an elegantly laid table was most likely aspired to. Yet, on an everyday basis, in this house too, the menu must have constituted of porridge, salted herring and rye bread, although the merchant’s son Marcus Bech recollects from his childhood in Copenhagen in the 1790s that his parents took him along to visit their friends, where they were served one to two courses of food and thereafter cake, wines and punch. Dinner parties often featured six courses, which the young Marcus found “very splendid!” Champagne was rarely served but always “there were many, fine wines”. After dinner, cards came on the table; the curious boy saw fortunes circulating on these tables made of ebony wood.32 In the home of the earlier mentioned chemist, Becher, dinner usually consisted daily of two courses, often porridge followed by a bird or roast, unless it was “fish day”. For pudding, the Bechers had cake or sweets. At smaller parties, the menu was changed to open sandwiches, wine and cake.33

**Envoi**

At the Gjerloffs’, matters proceeded according to the standards of the day; there is no reason to doubt this. This brief insight into their home gained from the bankruptcy proceedings tells of a bourgeois environment in the middle of 18th-century Copenhagen living up to its ideals and partaking in the rising consumer society’s pleasures (and curses). In spite of the bankruptcy, Gjerloff succeed in saving his home...
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in Magstræde, although it is said that thereafter he was a broken man, primarily living off the income from his tenants. At least, the General Customs Office in 1783 stated that Johann Gjerløff “is an old citizen of this town who used to live from the porcelain trade but lost this business when the porcelain factory in this town was founded and the ban against foreign porcelain was put into force, by which he shall have fallen in yet poorer circumstances.” The latter is already known to us, the factory in question must be the Royal Danish Porcelain Factory, which was founded in 1775 with mercantilist inspired support and rose to become one of the finest porcelain factories in Europe. The purpose of its foundation was to compete with Meissen and the other European factories as well as with Eastern products, as they both required importing, which according to mercantilist philosophy had to be avoided. Indeed, the son Gabriel Gjerløff continued to trade in porcelain, though naturally of Royal Danish produce and never to the degree of his father.

Mrs Gjerløff’s thoughts about the fall from worldly glory may perhaps be traced in her nephew, the Danish Romantic poet Adam Oehlenschlæger’s memories, where he mentions around 1800 that: “My mother had a sister, married to a wealthy merchant Gjerløff, who owned his own house in Magstræde; sometimes she made us morning visits and we her, but we never saw her husband. When she once heard that I was to become a merchant, she said with mockery: ‘A merchant without money equals a violin without strings’. That was all the comfort I got from her.” For Danish poetry, it was a blessing that the young Adam chose another path than trade – after all he has written the Danish National Anthem: *Dær er et yndigt land*. For Mrs Gjerløff, a long life seemed to have taught her well of the world’s travails. Johann Gjerløff died in 1800, 92 years old. In 1809, she sold the house in Magstræde, three years after the death of her son Gabriel in 1806. This was immediately before the great catastrophe in Danish colonial and European trade in 1807, when the second round of English Wars broke out and Danish world trade was severely disrupted. The same year, Copenhagen was bombed by the British, the Danish colonies occupied, merchants could not sell their goods and were ruined, ships were captured, and, in 1813, the kingdom of Denmark–Norway itself went bankrupt, followed by the secession of Norway to Sweden in 1814; the price of peace in post-Napoleonic Europe. The 18th century too had ended and even though Denmark continued as a colonial power after the English Wars, it was never the same again. Yet, colonial consumption lasted. Today, it is so intertwined with our everyday lives that we can hardly discern it from other kinds of consumption.

Notes
1 Many references could be made, but two newer studies have been highly inspirational: Berg and Clifford eds. (1999) and Berg and Eger eds. (2003).
2 This chapter draws on a much bigger material from a research project, conducted by the author, where all the aspects implied in this brief article, as well as many others are addressed. In general, the author’s book on luxury, *Luksus. Forbrug og kolonier i Danmark i det 18. århundrede* (in Danish with a substantial English summary) deals with this colonial impact on Denmark, analysed through five main examples of which the apartment treated in this chapter is one.
3 Feldbæk and Justesen (1980).
4 Danish Foreign Ministry (1980).
5 Hornby, Ove (1980).
6 The notion is, of course, after Norbert Elias (1980).
7 Veblen (1899).
8 Burke (1994).
10 Elias (1980).
11 Ludvig Holberg was born in Bergen in Norway in 1684 and died on his estates in mid-Zealand, Denmark in 1754. He went to Copenhagen in 1702 as a university student. In 1706 he visited Oxford, in those days for a Dane a rather unconventional choice, and here he decided to become a learned author, who wrote for the general public, very much in the spirit of the Enlightenment whose biggest spokesman
he became after returning home to Denmark. In 1717 he became a professor at the University of Copenhagen. He was a prolific writer, on ethics, history, morals, politics and much more besides. He is also considered the father of Danish theatre, much in the way of the French Molière, and Holberg's plays are still often staged in Denmark. In 1747 he was granted the title of baron.

The basic argument in this section on the study of material culture has in a somewhat different and much expanded form been published in Venborg Pedersen (2003), where the present author reviews studies on consumption too, published in the last twenty years, for instance the very solid Roche (2000), which follows the British studies on the same themes, notably Weatherhill (1996) and the opus magnum of consumption studies: Brewer and Porter eds. (1994); Berg and Clifford eds. (1999) and Berg and Eger eds. (2003) too are highly useful in this context.

The argument is further unfolded in: Venborg Pedersen (2005), 111–118, and (2009), 17 and 74–108. The history of Schäffer's house and apartment is treated in Møller (1997) and (1998).

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The Theft of Fashion: Circulation of fashionable textiles and garments in 18th-century Copenhagen

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Popular consumerism spread throughout Europe in the early modern, and continued to change and reshape European societies during the 18th and 19th centuries. Canadian historian Beverly Lemire has successfully uncovered the relationship between crime and popular consumerism in early modern England to illustrate the importance of clothing as desirable, easy to recirculate, and of great potential importance to the social standing of thieves and retailers.1 Inspired by Lemire’s work, the purposes of this chapter are to examine how the second-hand trade may have operated in the capital of Denmark, Copenhagen in the 18th century, and to explore how fashion, textiles, and garments may have been circulated. In addition, it will investigate the role of textiles produced in the colonies, such as Indian cottons, in relation to circulation. In order to do so, newspaper advertisements, contemporary accounts, reports of arrestees, and records of thefts are examined. In addition, Denmark’s response to the popularity of foreign goods, as well as domestic textile production is briefly considered.

Consumption, demand and circulation of fashionable goods in 18th-century Copenhagen

Luxuries in terms of dress, furnishings and food and drink were a common desire for Danes in the 18th century. Newspapers remarked on the power fashion held over people. At the onset of the 19th century, a pietistic Copenhagen-based newspaper comments extensively on fashion and how it influences the city and its inhabitants: “Fashion is the ultimate master, far more powerful than the despot”.2 These “habits, fashion and desire for glittery” signified the downfall of the less wealthy, and fashion was entirely to blame for their demise.3 Fashions were always changing and came” from Turkey, Zealand, England and soon Greece”, craze upon craze spread in the city.4 Contemporaries believed that fashion usually spread from the upper classes downwards, although, this was not always the case. For example, at the onset of the 19th century, a recent fashion of “being practically naked almost down to the shoulders” was a
German fashion that came with a cook’s maid from Hamburg. At dances, the women were “practically naked, and bear no shame at this”. Their Danish contemporaries were not only concerned with the morality of the bearer of luxury fashions, but were actually far more concerned that most fashionable garments, textiles and accessories or products were manufactured abroad, thus giving the country a constant need for large overseas trade, which was considered detrimental to the country’s finances. A newspaper writes that “everything that a cavalier or a lady wears, from the English soles to French pomade which they use to smother oil on their hair”, as being of foreign origin. Particularly, the purchasing of silks and “glittery stuff” from China and English cloth did not aid the country’s finances. “The foreigners always win in this exchange, since they receive actual cash – whereas we mostly get stads og fias, unnecessary splendour”. Since this was considered a problem throughout the 18th century, in 1735, a governmental body, commonly known as Kammerkolkollegiet (the commercial agency) was established to ensure that the imports of textiles from abroad were limited. This they did by granting extensive privileges to companies in Denmark to produce all manner of textiles. Textile merchants’ stores and warehouses were searched regularly, much to their annoyance, and were usually found to contain textiles that were illegal to import and trade. This attests to both how sought after these fashionable foreign textiles were and also that they were indeed in circulation.

There was a large import of silks as well as other fashionable textiles from Europe, particularly France and Britain. In addition, Chinese manufactured silks too found their way to the Danish consumer. Towards the middle of the 18th century, a wave of chinoiserie swept through Denmark, as did English manufactured, simple and cheap cotton goods which became so popular that they caused a decline in the import of heavier fabrics, such as French velvets and French silk. Colours were increasingly plentiful, and mixed. Cotton came into popularity as imports from India and China through the expanding Danish trade with India, particularly in the second half of the 18th century, with cottons being the most common good traded between India and Denmark, although the volume of the overall trade had decreased during this period. As much as 80 percent of a shipload could be made up of cottons. This tendency matches the development in English imports during the same period. From the 1780s onwards, the majority of the Indian cottons brought to Denmark came from Bengal; these were appreciated for their simplicity and ability to withstand wear and tear well. Examples found in the Danish National Archives of textile samples sent from India to Denmark in the early 1800s also demonstrate a variety of coarse and some finer textiles, most in double or triple coloured weaves, such as the Bidjudapants or Nicanes (see Figs. 10.1 and 10.2), with the exception of a flowery chintz (see Fig. 10.3) and a classic gingham (see Fig. 10.4) as well as the popular handkerchiefs.

Copenhagen was truly a city of trade and traders. All were welcome to trade there, those from the East and West Indies and the French, and the amount of people engaged in trade continued to rise throughout the 18th century. With political tensions between England and Denmark increasing at the end of the century, as the Danes held onto a policy of trade neutrality, English merchants no longer came to Copenhagen, but some English goods still made their way to Danish shops and stalls. Vimmelskaftet and Østergade, two prominent shopping streets even today, were paved with boutiques. A number of places around Copenhagen sold garments and textiles: Gråbrødretorv, next to stalls selling meats, and at Børsen, where on the ground floor the coarser types of textiles, such as linen and tow (blår) could be purchased, whereas on the next floor up, more demanding customers could purchase luxury items, silks and finer textiles as well as various dress accessories. In addition, the city hosted a number of specific second-hand merchants, the marskandiser.

**Inspiration from abroad**

At the onset of the 18th century, Danish society looked mainly to France for its inspiration to all things fashionable. Fashionable dress was a means of displaying one’s social status. It was a person’s attire that was deemed the most important feature of an individual’s character. However, as the early 18th century was the time of the mercantilist economy and the merchants’ rise to power, it meant that fashion became more inspired by the bourgeoisie. In
addition, Danish fashion may also have found some inspiration from the Enlightenment movement which brought about freer fashion and preached of a society, inspired by, and in harmony with, nature. These philosophical tendencies spread to the bourgeoisie, who shifted the focus of their inspiration to come from a number of sources with less emphasis on aristocratic traditions. Fashionable female dress for the upper classes, at the beginning of the 1760s and onwards, favoured a slim silhouette, which required satin and other less densely woven textiles, such as muslin. Another tendency that came into popularity was that of the garb of classicism. These two styles in fashion, the English and classicism, shared some similarities which meant that they were easily adapted as fashionable for their ease and comfort. For these styles, different types of textiles were required, such as light silks, satin, and taffeta (taft), a smooth linen or silk fabric, as well as muslin, netteldug, a light, open cotton textile and other thin fabrics.\textsuperscript{18} These types of fabrics could be used to make a chemise. It is noteworthy that the majority of the textile samples sent to Denmark from Tranquebar, the Danish colony on the Coromandel Coast in India, mostly constitutes coarser textiles rather than the types of more delicate textiles such as muslin. Comparing this to the rise in cotton imports in the latter half of the 18th century, this signifies that there was, in reality, a division within the textiles preferred by the various classes between the very fine and delicate fabrics and the coarser and sturdier varieties. The coarser textiles would also have been used by the lower classes as furnishing textiles, a use for which they were particularly well suited.

**Colonial goods for sale**

Newspapers from the latter half of the 18th century showed a variety of clothing goods for sale in Copenhagen. Many goods, such as bed linens, bed hangings, and other textiles for use in the bedroom, were sold to settle probates or deceased people’s debts. Further, many were sold as new goods, auctions are advertised, and all manner of textiles were available for purchase. For example, there were a number of auctions of the Danish trading companies from Iceland and the Faroe Islands advertising knitted stockings (hoser) of various qualities:
“2002 pairs of long semi-fine stockings, 6350 stockings short ditto and 3426 pairs of coarse stockings”, and another advertising a vast variety of textile goods, such as dyed yarn, phys (a velvety textile), callemanke (calamanco), flonell (flannel), golgas flonell (two-faced printed flannel), naccorat serge (a somewhat light woollen textile of the middle price range in one of the most expensive and clear red dyes, i.e. naccorat), stribet danziger stoff (striped danziger), knitted hats, blue and white flowered cotton, red and white flowered cotton, white cotton; red, blue, green and black chillert, bleached Copenhagen or Icelandic linen canvas (lærred), as well as a number of “other types of linen”.

Occasionally, there are advertisements of Asian goods from China and India. One particular advertisement offers a staggering amount of accessories, garments and textiles, where items, such as fans, Chinese ribbons, blue and coloured chintzes and mother-of-pearls on a string are for sale. More common items, such as gingham, various woollens, damask, various cottons, scarves, gloves, hosiery and thread were also available. This tendency to have a number of different items on the market appears to have continued throughout the 18th century. In addition, however, were textiles of all colours, widths and styles which “surpass all other manufactures seen to this date” from the royal cloth manufacturer (fabrique), and even a notice that informed the reader that the royal cloth manufacturer could copy any English or French textiles, as long as the buyer provided complete samples for copying. Products from the royal wool manufacturer are also announced. Other than the traditional coarse textiles and bed hangings, the occasional appearance of goods to be used in textile production were also offered for sale, such as indigo, which had clearly arrived from the colonies as part of a shipload that also carried sugar, coffee, ginger and medicinal plants. One notice described how actual garments, inspired by English fashion “which has been much admired” were for sale. They consisted of velvet shoes, decorated with ribbons and “extraordinarily beautiful hats with silk ribbons” for women and “a completely new shape of hair nets” (hårpung) and silk hats for men, all purchasable in a shop in Østergade. A brief announcement proclaimed that goods from the East Indies would be auctioned. In 1775, an auction was to take place in the former home of Major General
de Longueville's wife, where a number of fashionable items, including cottons, muslins, callevapper (a form of calico, typically black or red cottons from India, brought to Denmark from Tranquebar[39]), coloured nanquin[34] (nankeen) textiles, ginghams, scarves, hemp, mats and linen canvas were also for sale.[35] Other auctions included bleached and unbleached linens as well as other types of linens besides flannel with a floral pattern, naccorat sarge and various cottons.[36] One auction offered indigo, litmus, Chinese silk damasks and fine cotton goods alongside coffee, candles, butter and prunes, as well as another that offered Brazil wood.[37] At the very end of the 18th century, in 1791, the newspaper, Adresseavisen contains numerous advertisements for auctions or other sales of textiles and fashionable goods. The goods on sale in 1791 were very similar to those of previous years: linens, nankins (nankeens), hats, chintzes, stockings, cottons, East Indian goods such as "ginghams of all patterns", "all sorts of black and red scarves" and dyed yarns.[38] The goods advertised indicate that there were numerous options to purchase a variety of fashionable textiles in Copenhagen – at least, for those who could afford it. Furthermore, they suggest that a variety of goods were indeed in circulation amongst the citizens of Copenhagen, and that there was always interest in purchasing more fashionable goods from the next trend.

Silk bans and other sumptuary legislation

By European standards, the Danes held onto sumptuary legislation for textiles and garments for a long time, but from the end of the 17th century and in the 18th century, legislation was mostly concerned with trying to keep foreign produced textiles, mainly silk, out of the country and unavailable to customers. New acts of sumptuary legislation were promulgated in 1693, 1724 and 1783. The legislation of 13th March 1693 regulated the various types of textiles permitted to various groups of citizens, for example it banned the use of phys, a velvety type of textile as well as decreed that all silks owned by Danes must be registered and stamped.[39] In addition, legislation describing ranks, by up to 55 different ranks in total promulgated between 1671 and 1746 also supported sumptuary legislations. As elsewhere in Europe, these acts of legislation provided great difficulty for those who were to enforce them, and in Copenhagen, this ungrateful task fell to the police.[40] The enforcing of the sumptuary laws proved practically impossible, and was a great cause of discontent amongst the citizens. When all the already imported silks in the country were to be stamped by state officials, it led to the first legislation stating that it was illegal to disrupt or assault an official at work.[41] That silks were owned by almost all classes is evident from the fact that later, farmers’ wives too were allowed to own silk, which they had had in their possession prior to the legislation. As late as 1797, it was still forbidden to import printed chintz and some types of woollen goods, although several other types of textiles were permitted to be imported at this stage as well.[42]

Domestic textile production and the problem of supplying demand

Domestic textile production was attempted in numerous state-funded undertakings, such as Guldhuset which produced broadcloth, mostly used to supply the Danish military, although that was not the original intention, as well as at the previously mentioned royal cloth manufacturer to name a few. The production that took place here was insufficient to cover demand, and the qualities too expensive to be competitive, despite the state making favourable agreements with suppliers and buyers.[43] Similarly, the royal cotton manufacturer (Kongelige Bonnids Manufactur) was never successful either. As various acts of sumptuary legislation were introduced with the purpose of limiting the need for the import of, for example fashionable textiles, the state would need to supply the consumers with domestically manufactured goods in their place. Although Guldhuset also produced some finer broadcloth of a more dense thread count, used for the facings on officers’ uniforms, the production was, in fact, never large enough to supply any wider groups of buyers, and as such, never became an economic success. Nonetheless, some contemporaries, such as the Danish historian, Bishop Erik Pontopiddan argued that the Guldhuset manufacture had “satisfied expectations by retaining a great sum of money in the country”.[44]

Although some Danes experienced a considerable increase in their prosperity during
this period of mercantilism, it remains true that a large part of the population lived in poverty, in less than splendid conditions and dressed thereafter. The poorer people of Copenhagen had scant opportunity to take part in the immediate changes in dress fashion, but they surely recognised a general trend – that the parts of the population which could afford a little extra, were eager to obtain fashionable garments, let alone any type of garments no longer in fashion. Amongst them, are to be found the thieves who stole garments and textiles and either sold them on or traded them as second-hand goods.

A thief’s attire

When a person entered a prison or was taken into custody, a note was made in the arrest records of what they “had on them”. This would have been one way to assess if some of the stolen goods had remained with the thief, by simply accounting for the number of garments the person had on them. For the historian today, these records offer insight into the dress of the very poorest of citizens in Copenhagen in the late 18th century. Although the records do not consist of actual textile samples, such as the unique collection of the Foundling Museum in London, they provide details of the garments, fibres, colours and designs that were worn by those lowest in the social hierarchy. These records show what the vast majority of those arrested and accused of having committed a theft wore was typical of those occupying the bottom layer of society at the time, and that they very rarely possessed any highly fashionably items. A typical set of garments worn by a male would consist of a shirt, a waistcoat, a pair of breeches, a jacket (trøje), a pair of stockings (either white or black, often woollen) and shoes, a scarf and a hat (see Fig. 10.5). The jacket (trøje) was typical of the lower class attire. For women, the typical outfit would consist of a shirt, a jacket, a skirt, an apron, a scarf, stockings and shoes and these would be complemented by a night cap or bonnet (natkappe), typically of a coarser material, and/or a knitted waistcoat (nattrøje). Some of the arrestees are described as wearing only rags, and one, Thomas Clemensen, was even provided with a shift, an undergarment, as his clothes were otherwise nearly non-existent.

Women’s dress is typically described more specifically than the male raiments in this source. For example, the female arrestees wore red and white silk scarves, brown “starched” cotton skirts, a white linen scarf with a red trimming, a red satin woolen petticoat (klokke), a skirt worn as an outer or inner skirt, cotton shirts, old purple under skirts (underskirt), capes with lace lining, a “high red” silk scarf with brown stripes, camlottes skirt (possibly a woollen fabric), cotton stockings, a printed linen apron, a yellow cotton shirt, a homemade striped shirt, a chequered night bonnet, a white shirt with red flowers and a knitted blue waistcoat (see Fig. 10.6). The descriptions of the arrested women’s clothing indicate that although their attire had elements of fashionable clothing, such as silk scarves and starched cotton skirts, these women were neither richly nor fashionably dressed, according to the standards of the upper classes. What must be remembered, however, is that some of these people lived in extreme poverty, and others, who were only slightly better off, such as peasants are likely to have worn clothes of better quality and condition as well as more elements of fashionability.

Nonetheless, it is remarkable that some types of textiles, notably nanquin (nankeen), have reached this group of inhabitants. Mostly nanquin is used to describe a garment, probably a form of trousers, which testifies to how this term for a textile has transformed into such a typical garment that even the gaoler who wrote the documents knew of it. This signifies that some of the textiles imported from the East were solidly ground in Danish culture and fashion, which speaks volumes for their circulation. That nanquin also formed the basis of sailors’ trousers, perhaps made the widespread use of this garment not so strange after all, but this staple item in the sailors’ outfit only adds to the argument that what was once a fashionable and expensive textile had been turned into something more generally available, less luxurious and more sturdy.

Stolen goods: underskirts, shirts and waistcoats

In terms of investigating what was actually stolen, a few of the arrestees are listed as having more than one item of each garment on them. Carl Soeborg, a boy of 14, had two pairs of stockings as well as two shirts (skjorter); Anne
Cathrine Lorentzdatter had two old purple underskirts (underskiørter), Gertrud Magdalene Pisch had three old skirts (skiørter), Johanne Bentsdatter Holmberg had two shifts (kofter) and four shirts (skjorter) as well as three knitted waistcoats (nattrøyer); Peter Johan Nelle had two shirts (skjorter) and four scarves (tørklæder), Catharina Mericka Sørensen had two shirts (skjorter) and two waistcoats (nattrøyer), Anna Andersdatter three old skirts (skiørter), two pairs of mittens (vanter), two knitted waistcoats (nattrøyer) and two scarves (tørklæder). However, none of them match the number of garments that Inger Nielsdatter had on her: two shifts (kofter), four skirts (skiørter), three aprons (forklæder), two pairs of mittens (vanter), two knitted waistcoats (nattrøyer) and two scarves (tørklæder). However, none of them match the number of garments that Inger Nielsdatter had on her: two shifts (kofter), four skirts (skiørter), three aprons (forklæder), two pairs of mittens (vanter), two knitted waistcoats (nattrøyer) and two scarves (tørklæder). These quantities of garments found on the arrestees signify a number of things. First, that the accused thieves in question had in fact stolen actual garments but were so unfortunate that they were caught before
they were able to sell them or rid themselves of the stolen goods otherwise, but also that what they had stolen were most likely not the most fashionable items on the market available to the citizens of Copenhagen since they are not silks, muslins or other types of fashionable textiles. This further suggests that these particular thieves were unable to steal any garments or textiles from upper class citizens, probably because they did not have any regular
contact with them, as opposed to, for example servants and other employees. Moreover, it also suggests that the thefts committed by these individuals were not committed with the intention of supplying an upper class second-hand trade in fashionable items, but rather to supply the middle and lower classes, or themselves, with any type of available garments. Finally, what is also remarkable is that no particular fashionable accessories were found on the people arrested. This further supports the claim that the thieves targeted (or were only able to steal from) the middle and lower classes. A counter argument could be made that these few people who wore more than one garment of a particular type wore them to keep warm, as the reports are often from the winter months, but I believe that if this were the case, more thieves would have worn more than one piece of each garment. It is also possible to argue that the grounds for their very arrest were precisely the clothing they were attired in, which speaks to the likelihood of the extra clothes found on their persons having been stolen. Of course, exactly why some of these people wore additional garments we will never know for certain.

Another form of theft, grave robbing, appears to have become a common occurrence, particularly in Assistents Kirkegård (the assistant cemetery), situated outside Copenhagen at this time. In 1803, the bourgeois and somewhat pietistic newspaper Skilderie af Kjøbenhavn wrote that grave robbing was perhaps the worst sort of theft to take place in Copenhagen, but also that everywhere in Copenhagen the thieves appear to be greatly concerned with developing their skills and appear to be successful in this endeavour. Grave robbers should have been punished more severely than common thieves, according to the newspaper, because they robbed something sacred which could not be replaced, unlike the things stolen from wealthy merchants, who could easily purchase new goods. Recent archaeological excavations in the cemetery show that many different textiles and fashionable items could have been robbed from graves, as some have been robbed whereas others still contain textiles. When one corner of the cemetery was excavated for reburial in connection with the extension of the Copenhagen metro, woollens, cottons, and some silk textiles were found, all mainly as fragments.

In the cities and larger towns of Denmark, the most common so-called petty thefts included clothing or items. Thefts occurring could include a number of different things. Household textiles, actual garments, and a number of other items could be stolen by thieves sometimes operating in groups, or as individuals. Mostly these groups were serial offenders, who would steal repeatedly. In one of the major investigations of the history of crime in Denmark, Tyge Krogh, a Danish historian, describes how one of those involved in “The Great Nightmen’s Conspiracy” (Det store natmandskomplot), Mikkel Natmands’ sister Birte, had stolen a number of garments from a servant girl of a Zealand manor house. Thereupon, Birte had been apprehended by the trader who rented the larger part of the manor house, and upon claiming back the stolen items from Birte, he decided to let the matter rest. This he did, argues Tyge Krogh, because taking the case forward to the courts would cost more than the value of the goods itself.

In December 1729, J. Ochsen had six windows broken and had two netteldugs and two lastinggardiner, curtains, in English called “everlasting”, a tightly woven stout textile, to the value of 4 rigsdaler stolen. Other examples of stolen goods are napkins, aprons, linen (lodر)، bedsheets, and various garments, such as capes, hats, shirts, and shifts from servants. It was claimed that it was the soldiers who were billeted in town who were the thieves. Clothing and household textiles were an investment, particularly for those less well off. Therefore, it would also potentially have been disastrous to have one’s clothes or household textiles stolen. That was certainly the case for a captain who put in a notice in the newspaper to the effect that whoever would bring back the inventory stolen from his ship in early April 1761, or could provide any information about the thief, would be highly rewarded. Amongst the stolen goods were bunk clothes and sailor’s clothing (køyeklæder and søeklæder).

Circulation of stolen goods
Regrettably, there are no records indicating where stolen textiles and garments were deposited and resold in the city. Although, some claimed that stolen textiles and garments were sold on the local square, but as there was no proof of this, no case could be raised.
Fig. 10.7: A Jewish garment salesman, early 19th-century Copenhagen (From J. S. Senn and G. L. Lahde Klædedragter i København (1806/1968), København: Forlaget Torben Grøndahl).
However, there is no doubt that a market existed for the second-hand trade in textiles, garments, and perhaps even also in accessories, as this market would enable affordable clothes to be made available in a larger variety to those less well off. Successful thieves were able to supply second-hand merchants with illicit goods. A variety of second-hand merchants were to be found in Copenhagen. Cadastrals in Copenhagen detail that "marskandisere" were residents, had shops there or owned the plots, amongst them, for example Peter Andersen and Anders Michelsen in Snarens kvart.

In addition, the street "Klædebod," cloth stall, was a place where numerous cloth stalls were to be found in the city. Perhaps even those with the occupation of "klædehandler" or "klædekræmmer," cloth tradesman, dabbled in second-hand goods (see Fig. 10.7). It is also quite likely that a certain amount of private trade would have taken place, and this would have presented another opportunity for thieves to sell any stolen goods, as indicated by the claim of stolen goods being sold in the local square. Whether in the private or more public second-hand trade, housewives, servants, traders and gentlefolk alike would know where to go to do their shopping.

**Circulation of textiles in general**

Beverly Lemire believes that “financial limitations did not restrict the desire to own and display material symbols of respectability and gentility bruited in newspapers, arrayed in glittering shop windows, flaunted on the backs of devotees of fashion". Albeit on a somewhat smaller scale, it appears to have been no different for the inhabitants of Denmark.

When taking into consideration the degree of difference in economic situations experienced by the inhabitants of Copenhagen in the 18th century, it is evident that it was only a fortunate few who were in reality able to...
buy the most fashionable textiles, garments, and accessories as new. This means that as in London, the large bulk of the citizens of Copenhagen would have required access to a second-hand market to obtain the desired items. Everyone had the chance to go to the market stalls at Børsen or Gråbrødre Torv (see Fig. 10.8) to purchase new items of dress or fashion, or to some of the shops on Vimmelskaftet and Østergade, but not all would have been able to afford new items. It was common to purchase used clothes. For plays or perhaps also for masquerades, some costumes and other requisites may have been acquired at a local marškandiser, a second-hand merchant. Second-hand merchants are likely to have also sold stolen goods. The newspaper advertisements for fashionable goods do not list second-hand items in particular, but it is likely that these merchants, too, participated in this trade, and that it was not necessary for them to advertise their goods as widely as the new goods, perhaps because those less well off knew where to go to buy garments second hand.

Conclusion

The Danish archives of the history of Copenhagen and the thefts committed in the city bear some witness to what was actually stolen, but most importantly, provide insight into what was worn by the thieves themselves when arrested. From the attire of these poor inhabitants of Copenhagen, as described by the prison personnel, it is evident that some of the fashionable types of textiles at the end of the 18th century, for example satin, cottons and silks had also reached the bottom end of society. The combination of garments worn by these people were not necessarily of the latest fashion, but were mostly remnants of previous fashion, such as the night cap and the knitted waistcoat (nattrøje), which in the early to mid-18th century were also worn by fashionable ladies. Other garments, such as the jacket or shift had always been a garment worn by most women, and so it is only natural that they are also part of the female arrestees’ attire at the end of the 18th century. Although there is no evidence that accessories that had been fashionable previously in the century, such as wigs and fan had been stolen in 1791, this merely means that either these particular fashions never reached other parts of society or, mostly in the case of wigs, that they had become so unfashionable by the end of the century that they were no longer interesting for thieves. Far more thefts most likely occurred than the number of thieves who were accused of stealing, which indicates that there may have been a much wider circulation of fashionable goods which is invisible in the historical record. However, it also seems likely that the goods stolen were more likely to be every-day garments rather than the highly prestigious and expensive garments, if what the average thief wore is to be used as evidence. Although there are some examples of fashionable and more expensive textiles found on these persons, they are few and far between. The stolen goods also appear to have been easy to circulate, as there are only few thieves who still had any additional garment of each type on their person when apprehended. It is never those who have been arrested for theft who have the most splendid garments described in detail in the arrest reports, although these did contain elements of fashionable textiles. An example of this is sailors and others who were arrested for other reasons, who are often described as wearing fine and fashionable clothes.

The inhabitants of Copenhagen were just as concerned about their appearance as other Europeans in the 18th century. It was possible to purchase a large variety of fashionable textiles and have them made into garments. Most of these textiles originated from outside Denmark and gave cause for the Danish government to ban imports and attempt to restrict the interest and accessibility to these textiles for the general population by introducing various acts of sumptuary legislation and by attempts to increase industrial production at home. In addition, there was an existing trade in second-hand textiles and garments which was also supplied by thefts from the middle and lower classes. The second-hand trade supplied by illicit stolen goods was mostly directed towards the lower and middle class citizens, or to be purchased for particular events such as masquerades. Some textiles of Asian origin, such as nanquin and silk, were worn and used by all classes, including the thieves themselves. This indicates that although there may have been a preference for coarser and sturdier textiles among the middle and lower classes, they were not immune to some
fashionable textiles such as silks and satin either. Copenhagen was truly a busy metropolis filled with traders supplying the demands of the inhabitants who aspired to look their best.

**Notes**

1. Lemire (1990), 255.
10. Andersen (1997), 75–76.
34. Andersen (1997), 52.
42. Andersen (1997), 11.
43. Andersen (1997), 52.
52. Andersen (1997), 52.
60. Andersen (1997), 11.
64. Andersen (1997), 52.
70. Andersen (1997), 52.
73. Andersen (1997), 52.
75. Andersen (1997), 11.
76. Andersen (1997), 52.
82. Andersen (1997), 52.
100. Andersen (1997), 52.

According to Maj Ringgaard (pers. comm.), although the original name *nattrøie* which can be translated as a “night jacket” suggests that it may originally have been used for sleeping in, it was used in the 18th century as daytime attire. Throughout this text I refer to “*nattrøie* /night jacket” as a knitted waistcoat.

It is somewhat peculiar that a male is provided with a shift. I believe it is simply the scribe who has written the report who has written shift rather than shirt. However, the perception of a shift as a garment purely worn by females may have changed over time, and at the time the arrest report was written, it may have been perceived as something both males and females could wear.


Rapporter over arrestanter. Landsarkivet for Sjælland m.m., Landsover- samt Hof-og Stadsretten, Kongens Foged. 1773–1845, Rapporter over arrestanter, 1773–1793: 1791.

Engelhardt Mathiassen (1996), 96–97. It would also be pertinent to study the pioneering Danish textile scholar Erma Lorenzen’s work on what people wore in and around the city of Århus, Lorenzen (1975).


We know from Beverly Lemire that it was very common in England for servants to steal textiles and garments from their masters. This is most likely also the case in 18th-century Denmark. Unfortunately it is not possible to explore this aspect of thefts and circulation of second-hand fashionable goods in this chapter.

Recently, during the archaeological excavations at the cemetery in conjunction with the extension of the Copenhagen metro, some graves were indeed found to have been robbed. For example, some remains had clearly been removed from one coffin to another. Fortunately, some graves still contained preserved textiles. All remains have been reburied, but samples have been taken from the textiles for further analysis. Personal communication with Charlotte Rimstad, Københavns Museum.

Personal communication with Charlotte Rimstad, Københavns Museum, April 2012.

A series of interrogations of thieves took place in the second half of the 18th century in the city of Aalborg, for example: LAN, B37–213. Politiforhor om indbrud 8–12/2 1747; 15/2–2/5 1752. Historian Jørgen Mührmann-Lund, PhD has examined all these interrogations, and found none of them to contain any specific mention of Indian textiles. Silk appears to be a more dominant feature. These records would also help shed light on the illicit second-hand trade in fashionable textiles and garments, but regrettably, it has not been possible to include this material in the present article.

Westerby (1937), 222–224.

*Natmand*, or here called nightmen (author’s own translation), acted in the cities of Denmark as chimney sweepers and emptied the latrines, alongside butchering horses, flaying cattle, burying naturally dead animals and occasionally lending a hand to the local executioner as and when needed. Krogh (2000a).

Krogh (2000a), 35.


*Københavnske Danske Posttidender*, no. 33, 24th April 1761.

Report by one the officers who collected the information. Lauridsen (1969), 25.


Today called Skindergade.

It may also be interesting to note that new parts of the city growing in size in the 18th century were called *Kladebo Kvarter*, the cloth dwelling quarter (author’s own translation), i.e. the areas between Skindergade and Norrevold, and parts of Østerbro and Norrebro, both areas outside the inner city and beyond the city moats). Other merchants who sold clothing were the *galanterikræmmere*, who sold mostly fashionable and more luxurious wares than the second-hand merchants and cloth stalls. Salmonsens konversationsleksikon, second edition, vol. IX (1915–1930): http://runeberg.org/salmonsen/2/9/0344.html (Accessed 30th April 2012).

Lemire (1990), 256.

As mentioned in the Prologue, it should also be noted that Denmark not only consisted of the Danish realm as we know it today (some borders have changed) but in fact also included Norway, Schleswig-Holstein and a number of colonies further afield, i.e. Greenland, The Faroe Islands, Iceland, the Danish West Indies, and a number of trading stations in Guinea in West Africa and in India. As this chapter focuses on Copenhagen, I have chosen not to include further trade statistics and other information on the rest of the realm.

*Skildrer af Vore Tider*, No. 1, 1790, 89. Unfortunately, there appear to be no surviving records of the *marskindse* and their trade in 18th-century Copenhagen. This may be another indicator that the books that would have existed perhaps held information that the merchants would not like to have published.

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Bolette Marie Harboe’s Bridal Dress: Fashionable encounters told in an 18th-century dress

Kirsten Toftegaard

Fig. 11.1: The two portraits of the landowner and chamberlain Johan Frederik Lindencrone (1746–1817) and his wife Bolette Marie Lindencrone (1750–1800, born Harboe) were painted 25–29 June 1787 by the well-known Danish portrait painter Jens Juel (1745–1802). Johan Frederik Lindencrone commented in writing on his own portrait that “the likeness was fairly excellent” and of his “dear wife” that “the portrait was exceedingly like her.” (From Johan Frederik Lindencrone’s private archive, RA (The State Archives), 5588-o, pk. 9. Quoted in Poulsen (1991), 128–129.) (The David Collection, Copenhagen; Photo: Pernille Klemp).
In 1768, 18-year-old Bolette Marie Harboe (1750–1800) was married in Holtug Church at Stevns in south-east Zealand, Denmark to Johan Frederik Lindencrone (1746–1817) of the mid-Zealandic estate of Gjorslev. She was the daughter of the Danish historian and bishop, Ludvig Harboe (1709–1783). Johan Frederik Lindencrone was the son of supercargo\(^1\) Christen Lintrup (1703–1772), who was ennobled in 1756 as Lindencrone. In 1774 Johan Frederik Lindencrone (see Fig 11.1) became a titular Councillor of State, and in 1780, chamberlain to King Christian VII of Denmark (1749–1808).

On her wedding day, the 13th of May, Bolette Marie Harboe wore a sack dress, the French robe à la française, together with a matching petticoat. Since 2012, the dress belongs in the collection of the Designmuseum Danmark together with several pieces of furniture from the same family, that is to say with the same provenance.\(^2\) The gown and petticoat are made of ivory coloured satin-woven silk fabric with floral silk embroidery. The embroidery was most certainly executed in China à disposition, which in this particular case meant that the embroidery pattern was designed in advance in Europe prior to the embellishment of the
fabric and sewing of the gown. Made for a specific garment, the embroidered silk fabric was then brought to Europe and, in the case of this wedding dress, tailored to Bolette Marie Harboe’s own measurements. It is believed that Bolette Marie Harboe’s father-in-law, supercargo Christen Lindencrone, known in Copenhagen as ‘the Chinese merchant’, ordered the embroidery of the silk fabric through his contacts at the Danish Asiatic Company.

This chapter explores the cultural and fashionable encounters that can be told in a single gown from the 1760s. It goes on to discuss the origin of the silk fabric and the traffic of fabrics between China and Europe. Both Chinese and Danish artisans contributed to the final result – the bridal dress. Studying the petticoat and gown, it is obvious that some of the sewing was done prior to the embroidery either in China or in Denmark. This leads to some thoughts on the import of fabrics intended for clothing and the import of semi-manufactured and ready-to-wear clothes. A confusing element constitutes of some flower festoons along the two front edges of the open gown, which have been turned into vertical arches unlike the garlands.
on the petticoat which are embroidered horizontally. Were the arches embroidered strictly after an existing design from Denmark or was it the Chinese interpretation of a European design?

**Trade in silk, cotton and exotics**

In the latter part of the 17th century and in the course of the 18th century, Europe experienced a huge demand in Asian commodities and products, such as spices, tea, porcelain and textiles, all of which had an important impact on the way Europeans lived their lives. The craze for everything exotic brought along a number of different textiles for clothing and for domestic use, often imported in bulk from both China and India—a practice, which continued far into the 19th century. Before trade with Europe expanded, both China and India had for centuries exported commodities to other Asian areas, especially the Indonesian Archipelago. In Chinese and Indian decorative arts, foreign taste and preferences were met in shape and decoration.

From the first half of the 17th century, Denmark had traded with various parts of the world, with Danes settling and establishing colonies and trading stations in India, Africa, the West Indies and the North Atlantic. In China they were reduced—like all other Westerners—to establishing trading stations. In the port town of Canton, they hired factories for offices and for storage facilities while waiting for ships to sail back to Europe. In the time of the sailing ships, western trade was a seasonal affair depending on shifting winds and currents.

From the beginning of the 18th century, Canton became the main port and centre of European-China trade. Situated on the delta of the Pearl River on the southern coast of China, Canton, today called Guangzhou, was founded during the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC). In 1715, the English East India Company was the first to establish a factory in Canton and later in the same century, 13 Western companies had settled with factories. From 1757 onwards, Canton was the only port open to Chinese foreign trade. The official trading was organized by the Chinese authorities and buying and selling were taken care of by a hong-merchant especially designated by the European supercargo. Although the so-called ‘foreign devils’ were not generally liked within the local population, they were popular among the Chinese merchants.

In most European countries, the Asiatic Companies held the sole right to trade with countries like India and China. The crews of the ships were paid some of the wage as a percentage of the Companies’ trading profits. It was also the Companies’ policy to allow captains, supercargoes and other officers right down to the crews of its ships to engage in a specified amount of private trading for their individual profit. Each voyage from Europe to China and back again took between one to two years and involved many dangers. It was the possibility to gain a small fortune through private trading that encouraged the crew to endure the hardships. One of the preserved negotiation protocols from 1737–1738, from the ship *Slesvig*, documents that the crew bought, at their own expense, goods such as lacquer work, furniture and fashion accessories—all merchandise, which the Company did not trade in.

The companies generally limited their purchasing in Canton to the bulk buying of tea, silk and porcelain. As payment, the Chinese only accepted mirror glass, lead and money made of silver. The textiles from India were silk and cotton textiles. The latter were either plain woven, single coloured, striped or checked and painted, printed, and resist-dyed textiles. From China, cotton, silk yarns as well as silk fabrics for gowns and for bed hangings were imported, as for instance single coloured without pattern; damask, woven in one colour; patterns woven in several colours; and embroidered or painted fabrics. Both the Chinese and Indian embroidery were not only produced for the general market but also sold when commissioned by private customers through the trading companies. Although the satin stitch was the most commonly applied, a great variety of stitches were used in Chinese embroidery. Embroidered bedcovers were imported to several European countries and due to the low production cost, embroidered garments were also sold in Europe. The reputation of the high quality of Chinese craftsmen’s embroidery skills was widely recognised. In 1770, Charles Germain de Saint-Aubin wrote in the *Art of the Embroiderer*: “The Chinese, patient and hardworking people, embroider in flat silk, twisted silk, and thread
spun from bark with a precision which has no equal. The different ways in which they guide their silk and the extreme neatness and care with which they work conserve all the sheen and freshness of their colors. ……There is no country where work is done in such abundance, so neatly, and at such a low price”.

As formal attire in the 18th century, the use of French and Italian silks was prestigious, not least because of the distinctive rustling sound of moving skirts. This, when wearing an 18th-century dress made of the fashionable Indian hand-drawn, mordant and resist-dyed cotton, one would add underskirts in plain silk to achieve the essential ‘frou-frou’-sound to the fashionable but silent cotton textiles. Chinese silk offered a worthy alternative to French and Italian silk fabrics. The popular and informal men's robe known as a banyan could be made of either Indian chintz or Chinese silk. The banyan was based on a kimono-styled T-shaped cut and introduced into Europe in the second half of the 17th century. As a flirtation with an Asian dress form, it was a fashionable robe to wear when being portrayed.

In the 18th century, Chinese painted silks were imported to Europe as dress and furnishing fabrics, but regrettably there is no evidence as to what extent painted Chinese silk fabrics were used in the Scandinavian countries. It seems that painted clothes and furnishing fabrics were not usable in the humid weather of the northern European climate.

‘The Chinese merchant’ of Copenhagen

On the 25th October 1730, the first Danish ship from the Asiatic Company Cron Prinz Christian left Copenhagen for China. In the beginning of August 1731, the ship anchored on the island of Wampo, 22 km from Canton. The supercargo and his assistants went into Canton, and rented a factory from where they traded with the Chinese merchants. On board the ship was the 27-year-old Christen Jensen Lintrup (1703–1772) as one of the supercargo’s four assistants. Christen Lintrup was born in the small market town of Logstør in Jutland, and although we do not know the occupation of his father, we do know that after finishing school, Christen Lintrup became apprenticed to a merchant. From 1730 to 1742, he travelled to China five times, advancing each time on the pay roll, and on his fourth voyage in 1738 reaching the position of superior supercargo or chief negotiator. Several skills were demanded of a supercargo: apart from being well-mannered and trustworthy, diplomatic and linguistic skills were needed. And above all, a negotiator had to be experienced in economic matters, and obviously in negotiating and trading. Due to his private trading, like many other supercargoes, Christen Lintrup built a lasting fortune on the basis of his successful voyages to China for which the citizens of Copenhagen named him ‘The Chinese merchant’. By 1742, after his fifth and last voyage to China, Christen Lintrup had become a wealthy man. He bought several country houses, and in the same year, at the age of 39, he married the 19-years-younger Mette Holmstedt, daughter of the director of The Asiatic Company and mayor of Copenhagen (1734) Frederik Holmsted (1683–1758). In 1746, they had a son, Johan Frederik Lintrup, later Lindencrone – the future husband of Bolette Marie Harboe.

The embroidered bridal dress of young Bolette Marie Harboe

The ensemble, which is the topic of this chapter, is a sack dress, the French robe à la française consisting of an open gown with padded hips, with pleats at the back, and a skirt, and petticoat. These pleats in the back fold out all the way from the neckline. The pleats were later known as Watteau pleats after the French painter Antoine Watteau (1684–1721). Double flounces finish the sleeves. Regrettably, the original stomacher is missing. The dress would have been worn with detachable engageantes and a neckerchief in thin linen or fine cotton batiste round the neckline. Engageantes were ruffed cuffs made of either fine linen or bobbin lace, pleated and attached to the gown's half-length sleeves. The sack dress and the petticoat are made of ivory coloured satin woven silk with floral embroidery executed in untwisted silk, primarily in satin stitch. The embroidered design depicts flower garlands across the front of the petticoat and alongside the front edges of the open gown on both sides, narrow flowering braids on the sleeve flounces and strewn floral sprays across the entire garment.
Recognizable flowers are chrysanthemums, cornflowers, pansies and roses.

In the 18th century, the colours and designs of silk fabrics for clothing changed from year to year – even from season to season. In contrast, the cut and silhouette of the clothing changed at a much slower pace. To a certain extent, it was the silk fabric and the milliner’s accessories, like ribbons, bows, laces and embroidery that showed whether a person was up-to-date with the latest fashion. After the mid-18th century, English fashion moved towards semi-formal dress permitting the wearer more freedom to engage in outdoor life. This enabled people to enjoy strolls in the countryside or horseback riding. French fashion, however, remained formal, with padded hips and opulent ornamentation, which was only affordable to the higher end of the upper classes.

**European or Chinese silk?**

According to conservator Maruta Skelton and scholar of American civilization, Leanna Lee-Whitman (1986), there are apparently at least four features which allow us to differentiate between a European and a Chinese silk fabric from the 18th century: the width of the fabric, the contrasting colour of the selvedges, temple holes, and the finishing of the fabric. The petticoat of Bolette Marie Harboe’s bridal dress is sewn of five lengths of silk fabrics in two different widths. The three front pieces are woven in a loom width of 74.50 cm with a 0.60 cm rose stripe in both selvedges. The two back pieces are woven in a loom width of 54.50 cm with a 0.80 cm rose stripe and four gold threads in the selvedge. The skirt of the open gown is made of six lengths of fabric each woven in a loom width of 74.50 cm with a rose stripe in the selvedge.

Considering the characteristic widths mentioned by Skelton and Lee-Whitman, the normal weaving width of a Chinese silk is from 71–72 cm to 78–79 cm unlike the European silk weaving width which is from 49–50 cm to 58–59 cm. This indicates that the five lengths of the petticoat consists of Chinese as well as European silk, whereas the six lengths of the skirt of the open gown should all be of Chinese origin. A contrast colour at the selvedge is not regularly found in western silks, but always in Chinese silks although yellow and green are the most commonly used colours. In both widths in the sack dress and the petticoat, the contrast colour is rose and the smaller widths even have four gold threads in the rose stripe in the selvedge. Regrettably, the temple holes do not shed light on the supposed origin of the silk fabric as they should be placed randomly in European silks while placed with 2–5 sequential holes in the Chinese silks. In the narrow width in the petticoat, which is supposedly of European origin, the temple holes are found in an uninterrupted row at a distance of 3 mm. In the broader widths, which are supposedly of Chinese origin, there are more randomly placed temple holes at a distance of about 1 cm and other examples of holes with the same distance as in the narrower widths.

In conclusion, neither the widths, the colour of the selvedges nor the temple holes indicate a single clear origin of the satin-silk woven fabric. Furthermore, what contradicts the conclusion of the dress as being made of both Chinese and European silks is the fact that there is no visible difference from one width to the other. However, the finishing of the silk fabric is shiny and soft which indicates a carefully calendaring which is considered a characteristic mechanical method of finishing Chinese silks. A comparison of the silk fabric in Bolette Marie Harboe’s bridal dress with other samples defined as Chinese silk, both in provenance and by the examination of textile experts, the ‘soft’ handle of the silk fabric of the bridal dress points to a Chinese origin.

The conclusions by Skelton and Lee-Whitman on how to draw up a systematic method for differentiating between 18th-century Chinese and western silks are perhaps a little rigid. A turn of a century makes no boundaries in changing production skills in weaving or traditions, neither in China nor in Europe. Furthermore, it is indisputable that weaving skills developed within a span of hundred years. Although a number of skilled craftsmen were drawn to Canton because of its open trade with European companies, there were several silk suppliers in other towns in China and it is possible that a workshop would use a rose selvedge or another way of using temples in the fabric in order to distinguish itself from competing workshops.
How to make a dress

Of the petticoat’s five fabric widths, the three front pieces woven in a width of 74.50 cm were sewn together before the embroidery was executed. This is quite conspicuous, because the design of the embroidery is executed across the two seams, which are sewn with a 2 mm backstitch followed by a ca. 5 mm tacking stitch with a twined thread, probably made of silk. The remaining three seams of the petticoat and the six seams of the open gown are sewn irrespective of the embroidery with small tacking stitches of linen thread with very little twining. The two slightly curved seams in the petticoat and the similar two seams in the open gown forming the characteristic silhouette to fit the hoops are sewn in the middle of the widths of 74.50 cm not following the selvedge, but without cutting in the fabric, and furthermore, without any regard for the embroidery. These seams are sewn with the same linen thread as seen in the other seams, here however, with the use of backstitches. The use of different sewing threads and sewing methods indicates that the seams of the dress were made both in China and in Denmark – two seams made in silk in China and most of the sewing made in linen thread in Denmark.

A type of semi-manufactured clothing gained popularity in tailoring in the 18th century. The pattern for the embellishment of the fabric was chosen and designed according to the outline of a set garment following which it was, for instance embroidered or printed in a workshop, before the garment was actually sewed. The French term for this kind of design is *décor à disposition* (see Fig. 11.4). Examples of European clothing made of Chinese embroidered silk exist in western collections. Many of these pieces of clothes were embroidered in China often *à disposition*. In Bolette Marie Harboe’s bridal dress, the design was clearly European and the embroidery was executed in a workshop in China, probably in Canton. Other examples were embroidered front panels of men’s waistcoats, which were sent to the West uncut while the backing and lining were added with European domestically manufactured fabric, and the waistcoat was made to fit the customer’s measurements. However, in 1784–1785, Captain John Green (1736–1796), in his account books for the cargo of the first

Fig. 11.4: A semi-manufactured man’s waistcoat made of warp ribbed silk fabric in a loom width of 56.5 cm, uncut and embroidered before sewing (*décor à disposition*). The front panels are laterally reversed. The right front panel could be used intact, whereas the left front panel has to be cut from pocket height downwards. Both pocket flaps are loosely appliquéd on top of the silk fabric, ready to be removed and be replaced after the sewing of the waistcoat. In the lower right part of the fabric, 15 embroidered circles will be turned into buttons. Backing and lining will be added to finish the waistcoat (Designmuseum Danmark; Photo: Pernille Klemp).
American ship *The Empress of China* that sailed from the newly independent United States to China and back again, recorded both uncut waistcoats and already made up waistcoats. Ready-made breeches too, were imported to the United States from China in these last decades in the 18th century. This import of ready-made clothes from China increased in the beginning of the 19th century. In Europe, ladies' undergarments were made up of Chinese trade silks, but it is possible that they were ready-made in China, partly due to the Chinese craftsmen's ability to produce neat and cheap clothes, partly because undergarments did not need to fit perfectly. However, we do not know to what extent ready-made clothes were imported to the Scandinavian countries in the late 18th- and early 19th century – this needs to be investigated further. Silk shoes, silk umbrellas, parasols with ivory handles and fans of silk and ivory were fashion accessories which were often brought home by private individuals either for sale or for family use.

**The embroidery design on Bolette Marie Harboe's bridal dress in a global context**

At first, when foreign goods arrived from India and China, it was the strange and exotic aesthetics that became fashionable. From the 17th century when imports increased, the Chinese artefacts supplied for the European market were mostly decorated in the Chinese tradition, while the shape of the object could be modified to suit western taste. One might say that the aesthetic of the objects was determined by the producer. However, in the 18th century the fascination seemed to have disappeared, the symbolism of Chinese ornamentation lost its charm. The Western merchant discovered that in order to satisfy the customer's demand he should introduce new designs to Chinese craftsmen with the purpose of commissioning goods adapted to Western taste. The objects made for export entered another phase where the customer's choices were more predominant. The parallel in Chinese craft to the western *chinoiserie* – the Western imitation of Chinese art forms – was called *yang shi*, oceanic, i.e. western style. The Europeans sought designs similar to those they could obtain in the West, albeit at a higher price, and floral designs still influenced decorative arts and were universally accepted.

Occasionally, actual objects were brought to China to be copied, but more often, as in the case with Indian craftsmen, engravings with accurate designs were sent to Canton and presented to craftsmen as models. However, the European designer could already have been influenced by *chinoiserie* or by Chinese, Persian, Japanese or Indian art. Patterns and motifs were exchanged between Europe and the Far East to the point where the origin of the design was no longer recognizable. The result was the emergence of a unique mix, a hybrid, of art and artisanship from many parts of the world.

Around the mid-18th century, the interest for the exotic had to compete with other fashionable whims in Europe. In 1738 and 1748, when the ancient Roman towns of Herculaneum and Pompeii were discovered, artists travelled to Italy to visit the excavations and to make accurate drawings, which were converted into copperplate engravings. The prints acted as information and inspiration for those who did not travel themselves. In Rome, the German art historian and archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) preached the new aesthetics. The fashion for the new style – the “edle Einfalt und stille Größe” (noble simplicity and quiet grandeur) as Winckelmann coined it – began to invade the arts, in architecture, paintings, sculpture and decorative arts. From the end of the 18th century, the garland rose and fell in popularity, but it never really disappeared in architecture and the decorative arts. From the end of the 1750s, it gained popularity again, within the neoclassical style and was used to decorate
pieces of furniture, textiles and other forms of decorative arts.24

On the petticoat belonging to the open gown of Bolette Marie Harboe’s bridal dress, the garlands are turned horizontally as a garland should be according to Western taste, but the festoons along the front edges are turned into vertical arches. The design of the four arches in two rows at each side could be a misinterpretation of the concept of a festoon by the Chinese artisan, who probably was unfamiliar with European clothing style combined with preferences in decoration style. It could also be an artistic freedom executed by the European designer and handed over to the Chinese craftsmen to embroider. However, the arches are clearly meant to decorate the two front edges of the open gown. The four arches in two rows are graduated both in size and in the curve, the size and the curve increasing further down the skirt. Thus, in spite of what we seem to perceive as a misunderstanding of the festoon as a decorative element, the Chinese artisan or the European designer understood the basic rules of artistic proportions (see Fig. 11.5).

Bolette Marie Harboe’s bridal gown bears witness to several cultural and fashionable encounters. The dress is made of silk fabric probably woven in China. It is most likely that her father-in-law, the supercargo Christen Lindencrone had provided for the fabric: he may have bought it unembroidered in China himself between 1730 and 1742 on one of his five journeys to China and then later had it brought back to China to be embroidered à disposition. It is very unlikely that the embroidery was executed around 1740, in the years which coincide with the excavation of Herculaneum and Pompeii. As we have seen, the neoclassical style only became fashionable in the late 1750s. Another possibility is that he ordered the fabric to be purchased in Canton through The Asiatic Company, and had it decorated after the latest fashion around 1767. We know that he continued to be a wealthy man after his years as a supercargo for The Asiatic Company. In Copenhagen in 1768, when Bolette Marie Harboe married, silk embroidered fabric in the neoclassical style was probably rare, but, undoubtedly extremely fashionable. As a result of the observations concerning the sewing of the petticoat and the open gown, it is likely that most of the dress was sewn in Denmark, apart from the two seams in the front of the petticoat, which were made prior to the embroidery. The two seams were sewn with silk thread in different sewing stitches than to the rest of the dress.

Although the cut of Bolette Marie Harboe’s sack dress and petticoat indicated a somewhat old-fashioned style of rococo, the style of the embroidery design made à disposition in China in 1768 was highly fashionable and pointed towards a period reigned by a new style – neoclassicism. Thus, the dress in itself communicates an encounter between two stylistic periods within the decorative arts – the rococo and the neoclassical.
Notes
1 According to the Oxford English Dictionary online, supercargo denotes a “representative of the ship's owner on board a merchant ship, responsible for overseeing the cargo and its sale. Formerly also: an agent who superintended a company's business abroad”, and thus its chief negotiator. www.oed.com (accessed 28.02.2014).
2 Collection of Designmuseum Danmark 18a–c/2012.
3 A factory constituted a combined office, warehouse and living-quarters.
4 Jourdain and Jenyns (1950), 12.
5 The hong-merchant was a member of the Chinese guild of merchants – hong means a storehouse.
6 Clemmensen and Mackeprang (1980), 114 and 129.
7 Clemmensen and Mackeprang (1980), 116.
8 Clemmensen and Mackeprang (1980), 142.
9 Saint-Aubin (1983), 16. The publication is a translation of the original book from 1770, published by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
10 Jackson and Jaffer (2004), 265.
11 Clemmensen and Mackeprang (1980), 114 and 129.
12 Clemmensen and Mackeprang (1980), 105–158.
14 The cut of the dress resembles a cherry and white striped brocade sack dress dated 1770–75 from Snowhill Manor, reproduced in Arnold (1972), 34.
15 On the photo, a separate piece of guipure lace has been inserted to create the illusion of the missing stomacher, and is probably not originally a part of the dress.
17 Temples are weaving tools consisting of two crossing rods having metal pin points protruding at each end. The temple is placed on the already woven piece of fabric on the loom, the pins pierce the fabric's selvage on both sides in order to keep the next portion of fabric in the same width as the already woven piece.
18 The silk fabric is wrapped around a wooden roller which is placed on a stone base plate. The silk fabric on the roller is subjected to heavy pressure from a rocking stone moved forth and back on top of the wooden roller. Skelton and Lee-Whitman (1986), 135.
22 Maser (1970), V.
23 Eriksen (1963), 345.
24 Eriksen (1963), 344–351.

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Luxurious Textiles in Danish Christening Garments: Fashionable encounters across social and geographical borders

Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen

Today, and even more so in the early modern period, pregnancy and childbirth is, and was, a serious and dangerous matter for mother and baby. In early modern Denmark, the very practice of christening was potentially fatal for the newborn. Considering the baptism rituals a passage of the newborn from being a pagan to Christian, and a valid member of society, baptism, in the terms of the French ethnologist and folklorist Arnold van Gennep could be called a rite de passage, as will be elaborated later. As for baptism in early modern Denmark, the legislators were interested in both the symbolic, religious practices in church and in the mundane festivity connected to christening, and they wished to legislate on both matters.

In baptism as a ritual practice, the clothing of the baby played a crucial role and still does. In this chapter, the clothing in focus is not the white cotton garments, which in the late 18th century became fashionable for grown women as well as for newborns; the focus is on quite different garments. In the collections of Danish museums, several christening garments made of precious silks, printed cottons, ribbons and metal lace are found. They represent a colourful glimpse into ritual practices of the 17th to early 19th centuries, where luxurious textiles, in spite of sumptuary laws, travelled across social borders and were used in other social and cultural settings. Women’s dresses and furnishing textiles were reused as garments and caps in combination with bows, embroidery, and lace. Noble families and, which might be surprising, families of peasants and fishermen used these garments, and thus they represent a fascinating social dissemination.

These colourful baptismal garments constitute the primary source material of this chapter. It will be combined with Danish laws and statutory instruments which can provide relevant information about luxurious textiles included in import prohibitions and sumptuary laws. Registrations of more than 180 of these garments are published by the Danish Ministry of Culture. Clothing from the collection of Den Gamle By (The Old Town), the National Open Air Museum of Urban History and Culture situated in Aarhus, will serve as examples. In so far as tangible objects can be said to represent humans and their interaction with each other, I suggest that these garments
These early modern examples of clothing illustrate fashionable encounters between Denmark and the foreign producers of luxury textiles. They also represent a fascinating and fashionable encounter between different stations of Danish society from the 16th century to the mid-19th century. The first date relates to the changing baptismal practices from 1536 to the beginning of the 17th century. Thus, this chapter will open with an account of these changes. Then baptism is discussed as a *rite de passage*. Thereafter a linguistic clarification of the Danish terms for baptismal clothing, *kristentøj* and *dåbskjole*, follows. Over the centuries, many terms have changed meaning and, of these two, especially the term *kristentøj*. This must be kept in mind in order to make solid and pertinent conclusions. Then the garments themselves are examined, and the types, dating and provenance of *kristentøjer* looked at in order to learn more about their specificity, with the collection of The Old Town providing examples. Finally, *kristentøj* will be considered in the light of legislation in order to study these fashionable encounters more closely.

**Practices of baptism and clothing**

Baptism practices in the early modern Nordic countries could indeed have fatal consequences for babies. The Danish cultural historian Troels Frederik Troels-Lund (1840–1921) compiled vast quantities of empirical information on many aspects of life in the Nordic countries in the early modern period. From 1879 to 1901, the first edition of the 14 volumes of his principal work *Dagligt Liv i Norden i det sekstende Aarhundrede* (*Daily Life in the Nordic Countries the 16th Century*) was published. During the 20th century, the work was republished several times. Troels-Lund gave a dramatic and heartbreaking description of all the dangers for the newborn on the way to and from church in a snowstorm. Some of his descriptions on the subject have a slightly humorous touch as when he refers to an account by a Swedish vicar from the year 1800:

“... the godmother rode with the baby wrapped up in her gown which was gathered up and tied around her waist. Once it happened that a godmother lost the baby on her way from church and [she] did not miss it before someone from the procession asked about it. They naturally rode back and found the baby lying unharmed and cheerful on the road.”
The Swedish vicar concludes that “it did not necessarily happen because of negligence” but rather because: “it is not easy for a woman in the darkness or with rain and snow lashing in her face to steer a horse and shift for the baby at the same time.”

In pre-Reformation times, in the early 16th century, the priest carried out several rituals of exorcism either outside the church or in the porch. The font stood immediately inside the church door, because as a pagan, the newborn could not be carried into the church before the exorcism and the symbolic purification in consecrated water in the font had been carried out. The babies were undressed and immersed three times in water. As the churches were unheated, this could indeed be fatal for the newborn especially during winter. After these ceremonies, the new member of the Christian congregation was dressed by the priest in a white garment and a white cap, none of which garments have, however, survived. After the Lutheran Reformation in Denmark in 1536, several elements of exorcism were abolished. The priest no longer blew three times under the baby’s eyes to frighten the demon out of the little pagan and make room for the Holy Spirit. Neither did he place salt in the mouth of the newborn and symbolically clean it by touching its nose and ears with a finger moistened with spittle. The custom of the priest giving the baby a lit candle to hold after the baby had been immersed in water was also abolished. Candles were considered to be an integral (non-Protestant) part of Catholic baptismal practices.

During the second half of the 16th century, the complete undressing and immersion of the newborn was gradually abandoned, which meant that the baby could be dressed from home without considerations of having to remove its clothing again during the rituals. Around 1580, the common ritual was the pouring of water, the so-called infusion, and during the 17th century, the so-called aspersion, the wetting of the baby’s head as today, became the norm. These changes in the rituals surely did not occur without controversy and they had direct influence on the babies’ baptismal clothing. The white garment and cap were no longer used. Instead, the newborn was dressed at home in luxury clothes.

The most valuable part of the clothing was a sort of blanket which was used as a kind of outer garment. It was probably identical with the so-called bearing cloth or christening palm in written English sources from the 16th and 17th centuries. Sometimes, probate records have information about baptismal clothing, and a few examples follow here. In the archives of the then Danish, now Swedish, town of Malmö, is a probate record for Elline, the widow of alderman Mads Dall Jyde, 13th October 1594. In their estate was listed *Jt christen kleded aff rot fløfuel och een brun fløuels list …* which denotes a christening cloth of red velvet and one brown [swaddling] band of velvet. Its total value was three marks, hardly a large amount at the time as an old black cloak in the same probate record was valued at six marks. The deceased Mads Dall Jyde had been married before and the daughter of his oldest son (also deceased) was an heiress. If one imagines that the baptismal clothing was from the baptism of the oldest son, it might have been very old indeed in 1594 which perhaps could explain its low value.

In 1642, the noblewoman, Idde Arenfeldt owned a bearing cloth of red and white flowered velvet, lined with red taffeta and trimmed with silver galloons. Idde also owned a *kristenble*. This particular garment, the *kristenble*, has a form and design much like the stomacher of women’s dress, and today it can be hard to distinguish between the two. Idde Arenfeldt’s *kristenble* was embroidered with silk and gold. A stomacher was fastened at the breast of the swaddled newborn (see Fig. 12.2).

Another probate record can provide some information on the entire ensemble of baptismal clothing for a baby in the early 17th century. From the Danish town of Odense, a probate record for Hans Thoffelmager (mulemaker) and his wife, 2nd November 1602, reports that they owned the following garments for baptism: *1 christen buffen medt 41 smaa sølf knapper, 2 lister att suøbe barn vdj medt 1 suøbe kleded, 1 christen lagen*. Translated into English this means “1 cap for christening with 41 small silver buttons, 2 bands with which to swaddle baby 1 cloth for swaddling, 1 christening cloth.” The fine cap alone had the value of two thalers. The two bands with which to swaddle the baby and the swaddling cloth had a value of two thalers all together and finally, and very interestingly, they owned, *1 christen lagen*, 1 christening cloth worth three marks.

Today, *lagen* translates as sheet, but in the 17th century it had a much broader meaning.
For instance, the term could be used about any sort of fabric hanging down and in 1759 it specifically denoted the fabric containing the seedcorn which peasants used when sowing. Perhaps the *christen lagen* was made of linen, and compared with the value of the swaddling bands it was not an expensive item. The Old Town owns swaddling bands but none with a provenance of christening. There seems to be a connection between the ritual of aspersion and the introduction of more elaborated garments. When aspersion became the norm, babies were still swaddled but they were also dressed in garments covering the entire body. This connection probably has both practical and metaphysical explanations. When one was not obliged to undress the baby as part of the ritual, one was able to dress it in a more intricate manner, and the elaborate baptismal garments also had connotations of protection against evil.

Pursuant to the Danish Law Code of 1683, a baby should be baptized within eight days of birth at the latest, or a penalty in silver had to be paid. This was a changed version of a royal prohibition of the 23rd May 1646 postponing baptism more than eight days in the villages and
four days in the market towns. If the baby was too weak to be brought to church, there was a possibility to baptize it at home, but

_Børn, som for deris Svagheds Skyld ere hiemmedøbte, skulle, saa snart de komme til pas, foris til Kirken, og deris Daab af Præsten stadfæstis og forkyndisi i Faddernis Nærværelse paa den sædvanlige Maade_,

which means that the newborn “should, as soon as they were well, be brought to church, and their baptism be confirmed and proclaimed by the vicar before the godfathers and godmothers in the usual way.”

The Danish Law Code reflected the attempt to unify legislation under Danish absolutism which was imposed in 1660–61 by the Assembly of the Estates of the Realm. Where the laws regarding baptism were respected, the babies were very young indeed when christened.

In the collections of The Old Town this is highly visible when scrutinizing the tiny and elaborate samples of 18th- and early 19th-century headgear used as christening caps (see Fig. 12.3).

The smallest cap in the collection is dated to just after 1800. It is made of striped silk rep with a lining of linen tabby and the measurements approximate a woman's fist: From forehead to the back of the neck it measures 15.5 cm. It has been estimated that around 1800 one third of all newborns were christened at home and later presented at church.

The law on baptism within 8 days of birth remained unchanged until 1828 when a statutory instrument on baptism was released on the 30th May. Section one states that children born in the period from the 1st March to the 1st September should be baptized within 8 weeks of birth, but what was new is that:_

_hvorimod der tillades Forældre at udsætte Daaben af de Børn, som fødes i den øvrige Tid af Aaret, til den først, paafølgende Mai Maaneds Udgang_,

which means whereas parents are allowed to postpone the christening of those children born the rest of the year until the end of the following May.

It follows that all through the 17th, 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, babies of law-abiding parents were christened a few days after birth if no health problems prevented this.

**Baptism as a rite de passage**

In his seminal, anthropological work _Les Rites de Passage_ (1909), the French ethnologist and folklorist Arnold van Gennep analyzed rituals and found a tripartite sequence therein enabling a person to change social position. These three different phases are separation, transition and incorporation, which as a whole constitute a _rite de passage_, a rite of passage. Following van Gennep, baptism can be seen as a _rite de passage_ where a person, the newborn, through ritual and social practices makes a transition from being a pagan to Christian and becomes an approved member of family and society. The newborn, being a pagan, was separated from society and special measures had to be taken for protection. Before 1857 for instance, the Danish Inheritance Act was closely related to baptism. A baby could not inherit from its father if the latter died before the baby was baptized. As such, the little newborn pagan was separated from society and from the Christian Church.

The rituals of baptism may be seen as the transition proper from one social position to another. The consecrated water, the readings from the Bible and all other rituals were all part of this transition. Finally the newborn, now a baptized person, was incorporated into society.

In a poetic form, exactly these three phases can be seen in an early modern hymn. In 1739, the pietistic, Danish rural dean, poet and subsequent (from 1741) bishop, Hans Adolph Brorson translated and adapted a hymn, in which the late 17th and early 18th-century vocabulary and religious symbolism of baptism were presented in a condensed form. The Danish title of this originally German hymn written by Paul Gerhardt in 1667 was _Du folk, som kristne kaldes vil_ which means “You people, who wish to be called Christians.” It has five verses of which the three in the middle most distinctly show the religious atmosphere in which the christening garments, now preserved in Danish museum collections, were used:

_Verse 2:_

_Du var, før du til verden kom,_

You were, before you were born,

_og før du noget gjorde,_

and before you did anything,

_alt under vredens strenge dom,_

under the harsh damnation of wrath,

_fordømt, fortabt og borte;_ dammed, lost and gone;
du havde af forældres blod from the blood of your parents, you had
et sind, som var din Gud imod a mind which went against your God
og ville ham ej kende. and which did not want to know him.

Verse 3:
Al denne ulyksalighed, All this unhappiness,
alt det, dig skade kunne, all this which could harm you,
det sank i dåbens vande ned sank into the waters of baptism
og evig gik til grunde; and perished eternally;
alt, hvad ved Adam var forsøt, everything, which by Adam was transgressed,
og ved dig selv var ilde sket, and happened badly to you,
har Gud i dåben druknet. God has now drowned in baptism.

Verse 4:
De sorte lænker sank som bly The black chains sank as lead
i dåbens frelse-vande; in the redeeming waters of baptism;
Gud lod dig fri og skøn og ny God let you free and lovely and new
i nådens rige lande: in the rich land of grace:
han gav dig borneret og navn he gave you children's rights and a name
og tog dig i sin milde favn, and gathered you into his gentle embrace,
som alle himle hører. which bears every heaven.

In the second verse, the terrible situation of being separated from God and society is presented. The poor pagan is damned and lost. In the third verse, the transition through the purifying water is the theme, and finally the fourth verse shows the lovely incorporation into the rich land of grace. The symbolic death of the pagan and the ritual rebirth of the Christian through the consecrated water points to a rite de passage. Baptism was a serious matter which had to be carried out as soon as possible after birth.

As a little twist to complete the story, the Designmuseum Danmark owns a kristentøj with Brorson's own baptism in 1694 as its provenance. It might be the oldest existing kristentøj dated by provenance in Denmark, and indeed, it is the oldest published as such. It is made of silk satin embroidered with silver, purl and spangles and is trimmed with bobbin lace. It is probably an example of a reused furnishing textile, a tablecloth or the like. During its early period in 1885–1895, the Designmuseum Danmark (then the Danish Museum of Art and Design) purchased the garment from a descendant of Brorson, Cathrine Steenbach Lauridsen, and she provided this information to the museum.

Kristentøj and dåbskjole

Here, in this section, the Danish terms for two quite distinct types of christening garments are discussed. Especially the oldest term kristentøj, has acquired new meanings over the centuries. As a first step, in discussing these garments, a linguistic clarification is necessary. The term kristentøj (in the plural kristentøjer) is an archaic term no longer in general use. The first element kristen means Christian, and the related verb kristne is archaic as well. Basically, kristne denoted changing pagans into Christians, to christen. The term has been used both in relation to missionary work and to baptism as such. The second element tjøj is one of those remarkable linguistic formations which have an abundance of meanings when used as a suffix.

In 20th-century Danish, the term kristentøj had become a specialist term used solely for baptism garments, made of precious, often coloured fabrics from the 19th-century and earlier, and no longer for those ritual garments in general. The modern Danish terms for baptize and baptism are døbe (verb) and dåb (noun). It follows that in modern Danish society, the term for this sort of garment is dåbskjole, the first element denoting baptism and the second, kjole, signifying garment, dress, gown and also dress coat. According to the British costume historian Anne Buck, garments used for baptism in England from the mid-18th century were so-called robes:

evidence [from the 1741-entries of the Foundling Hospital in London] shows how the gown with sleeves was replacing the sleeveless mantle, a significant development
According to Ellen Andersen, one of the pioneer researchers of Danish dress, fashion and textiles, the sleeves in the babies’ garments were a late-18th century novelty in Denmark, which can be seen in connection with the fact that the arms of the newborn were no longer being swaddled. Thus, at the time, there was a time lag in Danish fashions in children’s attire compared to that in England.

The garments called kristentøj can have the opening in the front or in the back and can even be what in English would probably be called a mantle, an unshaped length of fabric. Hence the choice of the English term ‘garment’ (for christening/baptism) is used for kristentøj in this chapter.

One frock-shaped garment (Fig. 12.4) from the collection of The Old Town should be mentioned in this context to illustrate this discussion of terms. First of all, it is in fact called dåbskjole in the register and indeed a very early example from the late 18th century. It is all white and has the shape so often used in the 19th and 20th centuries, namely a bodice with short sleeves, skirt gathered and sewn to the bodice, an opening in the back and drawstring hems at the waist. One peculiarity is, however, that the skirt is quite short; the total length of the garment is just 85 cm. The other frocks made of coloured fabrics have total lengths of between 98 and 140 cm. Another remarkable feature is that this specific garment is made of an older fabric from the first part of the 18th century. It is a very fine, linen fabric in tabby weave with large, embroidered, white floral motifs supplied with a sort of reversed appliqué using bits of a slightly coarser linen tabby sewn onto the reverse of some of the elements in the pattern giving it a luminous elegant effect. It is sewn of reused fabric and made of bits and pieces. It might originally have been used as a lady’s negligee. The only provenance data is that it came from the Bie family, a name which in Denmark belongs to three different families of commoners.

The term dåbskjole was probably used in the register when this garment was accessed in 1968 because it is white and because of its shape, but in the 18th century, the correct term would have been kristentøj. In this chapter, kristentøj are in focus and not dåbskjoler. The next sections focuses on types, dating and provenance of kristentøj in order to learn more about their specificity. The collection of The Old Town is used to exemplify these aspects in the light of legislation and as fashionable encounters.

### Types of garments

In this chapter, I focus on garments covering the entire body. Of these, The Old Town owns 37. In this enumeration, trojer, i.e. doublets and bindelin, i.e. bodices closed by tapes, and single stomachers are excluded. They are three types of garments solely for the upper part of the body, but in some cases kept without the part of the attire that would have dressed the rest of the newborn’s body. Doublets, bodices and stomachers would have been used either with the body of the baby covered with swathing clothes and swaddling bands and possibly supplied with a bag-shaped garment. One set of baby clothes, probably for christening, is dated to the first quarter of the 19th century. The ensemble consists of cap, shoes and both
such as the use of metals. Lace and borders of gold and silver were popular embellishments of kristentøjer. Folklorists of the 19th and 20th centuries have focused on these elements of protective strategies which were not considered proper Christian. For instance, a garment dated to 1762 which will be examined later (see Figs. 12.8 and 12.9 below) has a tiny pocket intended for a lucky penny so the child would never want for money. The kristentøjer with sleeves indicate that the baby’s arms were not swaddled. Nine of the kristentøjer in the collection of The Old Town are bag-shaped without hoods and three of those have doublets to match. The rest of the bag-shaped kristentøjer have sleeves or openings for a baby’s arms. Just one is bag-shaped with sleeves sewn directly into the bag. Eight are bag-shaped with a bodice stitched onto the bag, and most of the bodices have sleeves. Ten of the kristentøjer in question are shaped as frocks, if the garment of embroidered linen tabby mentioned above and other borderline cases are excluded. To conclude, as far as the models are concerned, the majority of these kristentøjer is dated to between the latter half of the 18th century and the middle of the 19th.

Furthermore, at least three garments are quite different: one is a curved length of richly decorated silk with a matching doublet, another is a rectangular length of embroidered silk damask with straps over the shoulders and detachable sleeves. The third is a length of fabric and two doublets. Two of the frock-shaped and one of the bag-shaped garments have pillows sewn onto them. Finally, two ensembles of kristentøj have an additional, rectangular piece of fabric containing a pillow and closed by tapes (see Figs. 12.6 and 12.7). These are roughly the models of the ritual garments in question. The next section will discuss the difficulty in dating them.

**Dating the garments**

One method of dating garments was by embroidering the date onto them, probably indicating the date of their first use for baptism. In general, of the published garments for baptism in Danish Museums, those dated in this way are few indeed: Of more than 180 kristentøjer published by the Danish Ministry of Culture, merely eight have dates from 1793 to 1838. The oldest Danish example of kristentøj...
dated in this way is from 1717. It is from Amager, the island next to Copenhagen, the date and the initials O.P.D/K.I.R.D are in couched gold thread. Today, it is owned by the National Museum of Denmark. The two Ds in the initials denote ‘daughter’ from the praxis of naming girls which was gradually abandoned after 1828 onwards.

Just one kristentoj in the collection of The Old Town has a date sewn onto it, namely 1762, with chain stitching at the bottom of the white lining. The only information about its provenance is that in 1927 it was given as a gift by Mrs. Xenia Vagn Jacobsen in Copenhagen. She was the second wife of Vagn Carl Jacobsen, the grandchild of the founder of the Carlsberg Breweries. Mrs. Jacobsen reported that she had bought the garment from the antique dealer Andersen, of Ryegade, in Aarhus (see Figs. 12.8 and 12.9).

The dating of the remaining christening garments in the collection of The Old Town was included in the task of describing garments for the register. This thorough consideration of the totality of fabrics, decorations and cut and, when known, a reliable provenance, constituted a second and often practised method of dating garments. Accordingly, the oldest kristentojer in The Old Town date from the middle of the 18th century but several of them are made of much older fabrics. For instance, a bag-shaped garment with sleeves, which in themselves date it to the latter part of the 18th century, is dated to approximately 1762.
Fig. 12:8: The only outfit of kristentoj in The Old Town with a date sewn on the inside of it. The provenance is not very helpful in deciding the original circumstances of its production and use or indeed if the date is correct. According to the antique dealer Mr. Andersen, from whom the donor had bought it, it had come from a family in Nibe, a small Danish market town in northern Jutland (Den Gamle By; Photo: Lorents Larsen).
1800 by its edging of a striped silk ribbon but the embroidered silk used as the front of the garment is much older, at least by 100 years and perhaps even longer as the fabric may originally have been used for furnishing purposes or for a dress at the very end of the 17th century. It is lined with red printed cotton which might be imported. It has a floral motif in pale blue and white (see Figs. 12.10 and 12.11).

The third method of dating garments is by reliable provenance. As mentioned above, an ensemble of kristentøj consists of a length of fabric and two doublets. The fabric is of very fine cotton mixed with approximately \( \frac{1}{5} \) or \( \frac{1}{6} \) of other plant fibre, probably linen, and it has a tamboured floral motif in animal fibres, though not sheep wool.\(^4^3\) The garment has, as one of the few, a precise provenance as it was made specifically for the christening of Kirstine Raun-Byberg in 1801. She was the daughter of Niels Raun-Byberg, who was a clergyman in the village of Hornslet outside Aarhus from 1792 to 1835. It was probably made of one of the long, fashionable shawls of the 18th century. The length of fabric is extended with a small case for a pillow. The shawl may have come from the family at Rosenholm Manor who used Hornslet Church as its memorial chapel, but nevertheless, a clergyman might have had the flair and the money to purchase such a fashionable item.

The fabrics and embellishments in the light of legislation

The kristentøj were made at a time when, just as in other European states, Danish sumptuary laws were issued regularly; thereby, at least two kinds of fashionable encounters were at stake. One was the encounter between different stations of society as the garments were made of fabrics and embellishments not permitted to peasants or millers. The legislation was mentioned from the pulpit a couple of times.\(^4^4\) Another was an encounter among various early modern states because these garments were made of precious, often imported fabrics, and contained a wide range of embellishments not necessarily produced in the realm of Denmark–Norway.

Provenance is the only indication as to the stations of society which originally used these extant garments. Nine of the 37 garments in the collection of The Old Town regrettably have no provenance, most of these came from the former Aarhus Museum and from a time when it was the item as such that interested those in charge of forming the collections. Even when some information concerning the provenance exists, one still lacks fragments of information to complete the entire picture. Four of the garments come from manors. The two frock-shaped garments with pillows in fact have manors as their provenance. The donor of one of these, who was the owner of the entailed estate of Benzon, Mrs. Mylius-Benzon, reported that this specific garment had been lent to the peasants for the baptism of their newborn. It is made of small pieces of brown, narrow-striped, mid-18th-century silk brocade, probably reused from a woman's dress, and has rich embellishments of silk ribbons in bows and rosettes, silver lace and an edging of silk gauze. Having sleeves, it is sewn in the latter half of the 18th century (see Fig. 12.12).

Eight garments come from farms and most likely, another seven too probably from farms; two were used in millers’ families. Concerning
Fig. 12.10 (left): The front of a bag-shaped garment with sleeves which can be dated by the striped silk ribbon. It has a slit in the back enabling a swaddled infant to be easily placed in it. The front is made of embroidered silk with a mirror imaged patterning of multi-coloured motifs of birds, flowers and deer. Probably originally meant for furnishing purposes or a woman’s dress (Den Gamle By; Photo: Thomas Kaare Lindblad).

Fig. 12.11 (right): The back of the bag-shaped sleeved garment in Fig. 12.10 is made of red printed cotton with a floral motif (Den Gamle By; Photo: Thomas Kaare Lindblad).

one of the kristentøj from a manor, namely Frijsenborg situated northwest of Aarhus, some research was done in the 1920s. It was conducted by Petra Julie Holm who was married to the founder and first director of The Old Town. She was appointed curator in 1938 and was one of the pioneer researchers in Danish dress, fashion and textiles. She had a profound interest in kristentøj, and of 37 entire garments in the collection today, she collected or bought 26 of them. According to the register of Aarhus Museum, this specific garment was bought from Mrs. Ahlgreen, a peasant’s wife in the village of Røgen west of Aarhus, and her great-grandmother is said to have received the garment as a gift from the countess of Frijsenborg. The following quote of Mrs. Holm, from the register of The Old Town can show the complicated journey across social borders of just one garment:

At an inquiry in 1929, the seller stated that her great-grandmother (who was married to the cooper Jakob Jørgensen in Farre) had served as a housekeeper at Pot Mill, and that it was the mistress there, to whom the old countess had given the garment, when she [the wife of the miller] had her first child baptized in church, and the mistress of Pot Mill gave it to her own housekeeper when the latter married.

As any other information in the register, the provenance should certainly be subjected to general source criticism, but these fragmentary items of information are what we can build on, and, at least, we can conclude that three of the kristentøj were used in millers’ families at one point. It is not possible to know if any in the Krag-Juel-Vind-Frijs-family of Frijsenborg had first been baptized in this garment. Yet, the fabric and embellishments probably came from garments in the manor.

The garment is one of two outfits of
**kristentøjer** in the collections of The Old Town made of velvet. As mentioned above, several **kristentøjer** in probate records were made of velvet. The Pøtt Mill garment is made of printed velvet. The frock is trimmed with silk gauze and small bows of silk ribbons and the sleeves and neckline are edged with a tulle lace. The other is a stomacher of black velvet trimmed with gold and silver lace and embroidered with silk and gold and coloured glass beads, which belongs to a bag-shaped garment with a big hood from Værebro Mill.7

Another garment was used by a family of fishermen, one comes, as mentioned above, from the Reverend Niels Raun-Byberg in Hornslet. Four come from merchant towns, but when and how they arrived there is not known. For instance, a **kristentøj** from a merchant town is a bag-shaped garment, with a large hood in which to place the baby (see Fig. 12.13). It is obviously sewn from a woman’s dress as the edged slit from the skirt can be seen. It is trimmed with passementerie. Its provenance indicates that its owner was a widow from the merchant town of Kolding, but no specification of social status or name is given. However, in the 18th century, only a noblewoman was permitted to dress in full silk dresses of silks like these. Yet, the laws were not necessarily always observed, as a statement from the 1750s made by the Reverend Hersted of Brønshøj, just outside Copenhagen indicates. He writes that the peasants of Brønshøj are better off than ordinary peasants because of the market in Copenhagen:

“The dress here, especially of those young people with rich parents, is sumptuous compared to elsewhere, with brocade and silver work; and indeed frills in dress have grown enormously during the last 50 years so it will be even more expensive for a man to bring his daughters up according to the dictates of fashion.”8

Most of the important information on their provenance indicate farms and mills, merchant towns and, to a lesser degree, manor houses.

As fashionable encounters are the subject of this anthology, let us dwell on the royal ban on luxury consumption of 16th April 1736.9 In section one, a time limit of two years was stipulated, after which all use of gold and silver in clothing, brocaded silks, and multi-coloured, floral silks was banned. Only Chinese fabrics which were carried on Danish ships were permitted. Section two decreed an immediate ban on the import of the following goods: gold and silver galloons; ribbons; brocaded silks and multi-coloured flowered silks; and palatiner which were a type of collar made of fur, velvet or other fabrics embroidered with gold or silver or decorated with metal lace.50 The above-mentioned garment from a family of fishermen is, in fact, made of a multi-coloured, floral, silk brocade dated to the 1730s. It is embellished with various silk ribbons, one with silver threads woven into it, gold lace, and a stomacher embroidered with silk and glass beads which might originally have derived from a woman’s dress. It is lined with silk damask. It was in use until approximately 1890 in a rather poor family.51

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**Fig. 12.12:** A richly embellished garment from the entailed estate of Benzon, now the convent of Sostrap. The donor reported in the 1920s that it was lent to peasants for baptism (Den Gamle By; Photo: Thomas Kaare Lindblad).
Section six of the statuary instrument of 16th April 1736 provides us with a glimpse of an explanation as to why such a crossing of social borders was possible. It stated that common people can be clothed in light and striped silk fabrics, for instance taffeta. Artisans and poor people living in basements were prohibited from wearing silks or half silks. The same applied to servants, and here came the loophole from the legislators: servants, however, are allowed to be given these forbidden luxuries by their employers. An 18th-century ancestor of the fisherman of the small peninsula of Thyholm in northern Denmark might have been a servant of some noblewoman who sent her a no longer fashionable dress, ribbons and stomacher to be reused in a new and ritual context.

The 19th of February 1753 saw the promulgation of yet another of the several royal decrees which appeared in a steady flow from the legislators of the absolute monarchy in Denmark. Here, it was forbidden to import or use any foreign silks and items of wool and cotton, ornamentation, clothes and their embellishment. The legislators endeavoured to make this ban last into the future. It was stated that the ban was meant to apply to already invented things, and, what today seems somewhat unrealistic, also to future inventions. Goods of these sorts manufactured in His Danish Majesty’s realm were permitted, as were also goods delivered from China or ‘East India’ by the ships of the Danish Asiatic Company. Yet another loophole was incorporated as one was permitted to use whatever one already owned of foreign fabrics, jewellery, and such. If people knew the law at all, one would imagine that they would refer to this passage if they were caught with forbidden luxuries in their possession, in order to avoid punishment.

Of the 37 kristentøjer in the collections of The Old Town, 29 are made of silk fabrics for the most visible part of the garment. The majority of these are mid-18th century fabrics, six are sewn of early 18th-century and even older silks, and a couple are made of late 18th-century silk fabrics. The rest of the garments are made of half silks, cottons, linen, with just one made of wool. Not every garment is lined, but when they are, the lining could be made of banned fabrics as well. Eleven of the kristentøjer have a lining of various types of printed cottons and chintzes, another handful have a lining of

Fig. 12.13: A bag-shaped garment with a large hood and matching jacket with sleeves. The brocaded mid-18th-century silk was obviously originally sewn as a woman’s dress. The edged slit from the skirt of the dress can still be seen at the left, but has no functional purpose in the kristentøj (Den Gamle By; Photo: Thomas Kaare Lindblad).
printed or plain-coloured linen and a few are lined with silk or fabrics of wool. On the 11th February 1755, a royal ban on dyed and printed calicos and chintzes was issued. As was seen with the import of silks, there was a convenient loophole incorporated in the royal decree as an exception was made for those fabrics which came from India with the Asiatic Company. On the 21st May 1760 a public notice stated that it was legal to sell cottons printed in Denmark. Two more important loopholes in 18th-century legislation are pertinent to us. On the 25th April 1768, a royal public notice was issued. It stated that anyone was allowed to sew ordinary clothes for maids, and the highly noteworthy passage that they were allowed to repair and remake other women’s clothing, if they were able to do so. Moreover, it repeated the royal decree of 23rd April 1762 which stated that anyone was allowed to sew and sell corsets, jackets and the like, which is needed for the clothing of children under 5 years of age and this, of course, might also include baptismal clothing.

And the most important loophole of all in this connection could be seen already in the royal decree of 6th October 1736, only half a year after the decree of the 16th April in the same year and is indeed seen as a clarification. As mentioned earlier, the decree of 16th April 1736 had time limits and bans against gold and silver in clothing, multi-coloured brocaded silks and flowered silks, and an immediate ban on the import of gold and silver galloons, ribbons and palatiner. It also stated that common people may be clothed in light and striped silk fabrics, for instance taffeta. Artisans and people of the lower estates were not permitted to wear silks or half silks. As far as the regulation of 6th October 1736 was concerned, exceptions to the ban were stated in sections one and two. These are light brocaded taffetas if they cost less than 8 to 9 marks, black brocaded damasks, other plain silks worth less than 3 thalers per two feet, and kristentøj and burial clothing too are excepted.

Thus, from October 1736 onwards, people of all ranks were allowed to consume luxury fabrics in the ritual circumstances of baptisms and funerals. The exception for kristentøj is not removed explicitly again, even when taking into consideration the often quoted royal decree of 20th January 1783 concerning the limitation on the use of luxury goods by peasants in Denmark, Norway, and the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Children or kristentøj are not mentioned in any of the highly detailed bans mentioned in this decree. For instance, section nine is so detailed that it states that servants are only allowed silk in their hairdos, necklaces and stockings, and section 12 states that servants may not use the services of a hairdresser. Two months later, the royal decree of 12th March 1783 clarifies matters further. One theme regulates the celebrations of life, for instance section one which states that it is forbidden to serve wine and coffee at childbirth, baptism, church services and funerals, but the use of luxury fabrics and embellishments in kristentøj remain unmentioned.

**Conclusion**

Legislators in early modern Denmark were interested in both the symbolic, religious practices in church and also the mundane festivity connected to christening. Baptism can be seen as a rite de passage where a person, the newborn, through ritual and social practices makes the transition from pagan to Christian to become an approved member of family and society. Prior to 1857, the Danish inheritance legislation was closely related to baptism. An unbaptized baby could not inherit from its father if the latter were to die before the baby was baptized.

After the Lutheran Reformation in Denmark in 1536, christening practices were gradually transformed as was the clothing of the newborn. When the so-called aspersion, the sprinkling of water on the baby’s head as today, became the norm, parents could use more elaborate clothing for the ritual occasion. Luxury textiles and expensive decorations were used in the kristentøj, the colourful christening garments which were made in several variations. All of which could be seen as an important element in protective strategies as well as being part of the festivity as such. From the royal decrees and regulations, one can follow the attempts of the Absolute Monarchy in Denmark to limit the use and import of luxurious textiles and embellishments. From October 1736 onwards, persons of all ranks were allowed to consume luxury fabrics in the ritual circumstances of baptism and funeral.
In conclusion, it is striking that during the early modern, baptismal practices underwent several fundamental changes which today are documented in extant garments in Danish museum collections. They represent a colourful glimpse into ritual practices of the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, where luxury textiles, in spite of sumptuary laws, travelled across social borders and were used in other social and cultural settings. Women’s dresses and furnishing textiles were reused as baptismal garments and caps in combination with bows, embroidery and lace. Kristentøj are today witnesses of global consumption and the use of luxury textiles and decorations, and, not least, of a fascinating reuse of garments for rituals in a ranked society.

Notes
1 Objects from Danish Museums registered in the database of the Danish Ministry of Culture: Museernees Samlinger http://www.kulturart.dk/mussam (Accessed 6th June 2012). The National Museum of Denmark has its own database which is not published by the Danish Ministry of Culture. The museum owns almost 100 kristentøj which is the Danish term for these specific garments. I wish to thank Mikkel Venborg Petersen for this information. The collections of the Designmuseum Danmark are structured by techniques and not by types of garments, so no record of the number of kristentøj is available. I wish to thank Kirsten Toftegaard for this information.
2 In 2006–2007, Den Gamle By, The Old Town, exhibited more than 100 items related to baptismal clothing. This chapter is an extension and elaboration of this work.
3 Much has been written about this, for example Leone and Little (2012).
4 An example of the 1880s’ coloured frock-type baptism garment in the collections of The Old Town is published in Mathiassen (2009), 56–57. Another example from The Old Town is no. 0824x0004, a red-checked dress in plain weave cotton, dated to c. 1888. In Christiansen (2008), 79–80, is seen one from c. 1874 from the Koge Museum, Denmark. Guldborgsund Museum, Denmark owns one robe, no. T054/1982, probably dated to 1850–1880 which is of an older design, namely the bag-shaped garment, but this is an exception.
10 I wish to thank Camilla Luise Dahl for this information.
11 Kaiser (1995), 72. In Norwegian, the terms are dipsmek or kristnumlei, Christie (1990), 29.
12 I wish to thank Camille Luise Dahl for this information.
14 Danish Law 1683, Volume 2, Chapter 5, Section 6, Secher (1891), 230–31.
16 Danish Law 1683, Volume 2, Chapter 5, Section 8, Secher (1891), 233.
17 Alstrup and Olsen (1991), 171.
18 Klein (1863), 347.
19 Den Danske Salmebog (1969), Nr. 405.
20 Author’s own translation.
21 Bloch (2006), 64.
22 I wish to thank Kirsten Toftegaard for information about this specific garment and a fruitful discussion on the topic.
23 In the linguistic discussion the Ordboeg over det Danske Sprog has been used: http://ordnet.dk/ods/ (Accessed 23rd July 2012).
24 It would be beyond the scope of this chapter to present them all, but a few examples will give an impression of the connotations of this one word. Four terms still in use are, for instance selteny meaning harness, krevting meaning vehicle, varvking meaning tools and sylting meaning jam. If ty is used by itself, it denotes both fabrics, and also garments and clothing in general – as also the German term Zens. Used as a prefix, ty signifies different things related to clothing, to production, distribution and maintenance of clothing and also, for instance the term mykty meaning armoury.
25 Holm (1928/29); Boyhus (1965).
26 They are related to Old Norse terms for dipping which in fact was what occurred during christenings in 16th-century Denmark but not today.
27 Buck (1996), 36.
28 Ellen Andersen was a curator at the National Museum of Denmark, 1936–1966; Andersen (1977), 159.
30 In comparison, the National Museum of Denmark owns almost 100. I wish to thank Mikkel Venborg Pedersen for this information.
31 Boyhus (1965), 49–50, interprets a bodice from 1761, no. 4,120 as the oldest christening garment in the collections of the then Lolland-Falsters Stiftsmuseum, now part of Museum Lolland-Falster.
33 Not all museums participating in the joint publication of collections by the Danish Ministry of Culture have published precise information about shape, embellishment and provenance of the garments, but almost 100 of the over 180 published garments are reported to be bag-shaped and approximately 40, frock-shaped.
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Fish-bones and Fashion: 
The influence of whaling on women’s clothes in early modern Europe

Christina Folke Ax

On the Danish island of Rømø, black or dark blue was the colour of mourning during the early modern period, and there was a distinct possibility that women on the island would have to wear this colour from a young age for fathers, sons or husbands perished at sea. Rømø is situated in the Wadden Sea close to the present border between Denmark and Germany and belongs to the group of islands called the North Frisian Islands. The men of these islands had long been sailors and many of them worked as captains and crew on Dutch and German ships that went to the Arctic every summer to hunt for whales, seals and walruses. This was a highly dangerous occupation. The sailors risked dying from sicknesses such as scurvy, accidents on board the ships or during the hunt itself. Furthermore, as the whales were found in the vicinity of pack ice, the ships were in constant danger of being caught between the ice floes. Temporary entrapment might result, or, in the worst cases, the ship’s hull was crushed by the immense pressure of the ice. To the women on Rømø and the other North Frisian Islands, this line of work not only brought with it the very real possibility of becoming a widow, but it also left them in charge of managing the farms, as the men were away from home from early spring until the autumn. Thus, whaling and sealing not only shaped the lives of men, but also that of women. Indeed, it did so to such an extent that the impact of whaling was reflected in the clothes women wore.

It is the women of the North Frisian Islands and their families that are at the centre of this chapter as well as the products that the men brought home on the ships. Some of these products, namely the baleen, or whale- or fish-bone as it was called, were used as part of the fashionable attire among the ladies of the European elite. To the upper echelons of European society, whaling thus became part of reshaping women’s bodies. The situation was another in the North Frisian maritime communities. It is difficult to determine whether the women on the Frisian Islands used baleen for their dresses, but, as it will become evident, their clothes were, at least
indirectly, shaped by the whaling economy. This chapter aims to analyse how whaling in the Arctic influenced women’s clothes and lives in early modern Europe by, on the one hand, demonstrating how the products from the whaling industry were used in fashionable women’s dresses, and on the other, analysing how the costumes and lives of ordinary women on the North Frisian Islands were influenced by the fact that it was their husbands, sons and fathers who caught the whales. The island of Rømø is the chapter’s primary focus, but comparisons will be made with the neighbouring islands of Föhr and Amrum, Germany, using studies of other researchers; in particular the historian Martin Rheinheimer.3

**Life in the Wadden Sea**

The Wadden Sea is characterised by broad shallow areas that become extensive mudflats at low tide. The movements of sand and water shaped the Frisian Islands and life on them. The island of Rømø was divided into a western part consisting of uncultivated dunes, whereas settlements and arable land were found in a narrow strip along the eastern part of the island. The soil was sandy and meagre, and husbandry was the main form of farming. Grain was only grown for subsistence. Farming could thus best be described as a supplement to the economy.4

As in other maritime societies, farming was the responsibility of women. It is perhaps telling that, according to the 1787 census, there was only one male servant on the part of Rømø that belonged to the Danish crown,5 and he was employed by the priest. The rest of the servants were women and they only numbered 25.4 In addition, help was also hired on the mainland during the busy seasons and, in the census, a couple of men were listed as labourers without a fixed position.

In a place with limited natural resources, it was necessary to rely on other means of income. This, perhaps more than any other factor, led Frisian men to work at sea.7 According to Martin Rheinheimer, who has studied the communities on Amrum and Föhr, the reliance on seafaring and the dangers at sea meant that there was a surplus of women on these islands. It was therefore much easier for men than for women to find a marriage partner and to remarry. This placed women in a more difficult situation and the likelihood of becoming a poor widow was greater than that of becoming a poor widower. On Rømø, there indeed were more widows in charge of a household than widowers.8 This may have strengthened the independent position of women on the islands even further, a hypothesis that however requires further investigation.

Seafaring also set its mark on society in other ways. In contrast to the farming areas, the seafaring economy was, to a large extent, based on money earned through salaries or shares of the catch. It was possible to earn a good living as captains on whaling or sealing ships, but this carried with it the risk of returning with only a small catch or worse, losing one’s own life in the process. The sooner one ended one’s sailing career and went ashore forever, the better. As a consequence, money was invested conservatively in property (farms and land), but also in low-risk loans; for instance to those whose financial and moral backgrounds were well-known or to larger communities.10

Undeniably, loans were not an entirely safe way to keep one’s money. When the Danish state went bankrupt in 1813, the inhabitants of Rømø lost their savings which they had invested in loans to people on the mainland.11

**Whaling in the Arctic Ocean**

The inhabitants of the North Frisian Islands were Danish subjects, but the proximity of the islands to the large German and Dutch cities meant that they had access to the major players in the whaling and sealing industry: namely the Dutch and German shipowners who competed with the British for the whales in the Arctic waters. In the early 17th century, Dutch and British sightings of whales near Svalbard, a group of islands north of Norway, initiated whaling in this area, not to mention the strong competition among various nations for the right to fish in these waters. Eventually, the whale populations became too scarce in the waters near Svalbard, but the whalers followed their prey into the pack ice. The Danish state claimed supremacy over the region because it was believed that the entire frozen sea between Svalbard and Greenland constituted part of Greenland, thus part of the Danish–Norwegian realm. It did not, however, prevent the Dutch and the British from claiming the right to hunt...
for whales in these waters. The struggle among the nations meant little to the Frisian mariners. The islanders from the North Frisian Islands were not limited by national borders, but were found on Danish, German, and Dutch ships, though rarely on British ships. The men from Romø were mostly involved in the hunt for seals on ships fitted out from the city of Hamburg. The ships were smaller, but if the opportunity arose, they would catch whales as well. Nevertheless, the islanders were also to be found on the bigger whaling vessels sailing from other ports.

An important prey was the slow bowhead whale, providing the whalers with fat, which was melted into oil, baleen and bones. The bowhead (*Balaena mysticetus*), also known as the Greenland whale, can grow up to 16–18 metres long, with its head making up one third of this length. The layer of fat is 30–50 cm. There are up to 380 baleen plates on each side of the mouth hanging from the upper jaw. The plates can grow up to about 4 metres in length and act as a sieve that allows the whale to filter small sea animals, mainly animal plankton, from the water.

**Whalebones and European fashion**

Baleen is an amazing material that can be utilized in a variety of ways. Whales provided the Inuit in Greenland, Northern Canada and Alaska with many essential items. The meat and fat constituted an important part of the diet.
and, as elsewhere in the world, the oil was used for lighting in houses. The bones and baleen were used for buildings and tools.16

Similarly, baleen, and bones had a multitude of uses in Europe. The baleen plates are hard and smooth on the outside, and on the inside they are covered with long fibres that resemble hair. It is these hairs that make up the sieve mentioned above. Baleen can be separated into many smaller strips while still retaining its strength and flexibility. This made it a useful material for whips and umbrellas, but also for dresses. As the dress historian Norah Waugh observed in the 1950s, European whaling and European fashion have gone hand in hand since the start of Basque whaling in the 12th century.17

One of the first uses of baleen in European dress was found in the skirt called a vertugade, or farthingale in English. The farthingale was a hooped petticoat with hoops made from baleen, although, other and cheaper materials could be used as well. The hoops widened in size from the waist to the hem, thus stiffening the skirt artificially. In addition, baleen was also used to support and stiffen the upper part of the body. Two pieces of linen were sewn together at the sides, and the front was kept rigid by inserting a piece of baleen, horn, wood, metal or ivory between the layers of linen and tied there.18 The moralists at the time looked with great concern on this kind of dress. Not only was it thought to be ugly and disfiguring, but their concern was also that it was thought to help women conceal pregnancies.19 The farthingale went out of fashion in the beginning of the 17th century, but was kept as a formal dress at some of the most formal European courts, such as the Portuguese and the Spanish.20

The use of baleen as a means to stiffen and shape bodices into the desired figure never disappeared completely. In the beginning of the 18th century, it proved popular once again for supporting very extensive skirts of heavy silks, velvets and brocades. The bodice became longer, but it still consisted of layers of linen with baleen inserted and kept in place by rows of stitches; often they were inserted in various angles to make the appearance less rigid. In the mid-18th century, the stay-makers were so technically advanced that they were able to lay two or more pieces of baleen across the top front part of the bodice to give roundness to the bust, whereas straight pieces across the shoulder blades kept the back flat. It was slow and hard labour to produce the bodices and skirts as all the stitching was done by hand and the baleen had to be cut into strips and varied in thickness according to the position on the body.21

The bodice was worn with a hooped petticoat or panier. Linen was stretched firmly over hoops of baleen held in place by stitches, as was the case with the bodice. Rows of baleen were inserted from the waist downwards and there were extra rows on the sides to keep them extended. The skirt could also be supported by separate hip pads tied around the waist, the so-called poucheur. This form became increasingly popular in the middle of the 18th century. To begin with, the skirt was bell- or dome-shaped, but gradually it flattened at the front and back and instead widened at the hips. By the 1730s and 1740s, it became so voluminous that ladies had to walk sideways through doors and took up extra space at the side when sitting down. Reportedly, the French queen had an extra chair at each side to support her skirt when she sat down. The movement of the hoops, however, was considered by contemporaries to provide elegance and lightness to the walk, and, when ladies walked downstairs it also allowed

Fig. 13.2: Dangers of the Whale Fishery 1820. Whaling was carried out from small rowing boats launched from a mother ship once the whale had been spotted. When the whale had been harpooned, it dived and the boat would be dragged behind it by a rope tied to the harpoon. A common risk was that the boat would be tipped upside down when the whale resurfaced. This was also a popular theme in many illustrations of the whale hunt, such as this one from William Scoresby’s An Account of the Arctic Regions with a history of the northern whale-fisheries. The illustration is made from a drawing by James Waddel describing a real accident in 1802 (Photo: ©National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London).
a glimpse of ankles and shoes – and perhaps more. This, and the fact that ladies took so much space when walking around, was of course frowned upon by moralists, although they welcomed the fact that the skirt kept men at a decent distance.22
From the middle of the 18th century, the large skirts were mostly used for parties and as the formal dress at court. The use of baleen however, had a brief renaissance in corsets and crinolines made in the 19th century until it was replaced by other materials, such as bamboo canes or steel that was lighter and thus in a sense more comfortable for the women to wear. In addition, steel could be tightened even further to give a narrower waist.

The costume of the women on Romø

Whereas it is fairly easy to find descriptions and paintings of the clothes of the upper classes, it is difficult to determine what ordinary people actually wore in the 18th century. There is simply a lack of sources describing this part of the population and their everyday life during that period. One may rely on information found, for instance in inventories made at the time of death, descriptions by travellers, or paintings of so-called folk costumes. These sources are by no means unproblematic, however. In this context, it is especially important to note that the majority of these sources are from the 19th century, and thus from a later period than the one that is the primary focus of this chapter.

The women on Romø were not part of the fashionable society in the European towns and cities and, as stated above, it is difficult to find definite proof that the women of Romø and the other Frisian Islands used baleen to stiffen their skirts. This does not imply that they could not be inspired by new cuts and finery if they came into contact with it. In their description of clothes among ordinary people 1830–1880, museum curators dr.phil. Erna Lorenzen and Ulla Thyrring write that “traditionally”, the bodice of ordinary women’s dresses had baleen sewn into the lining.23 It is not clear from their description, however, how widespread this tradition was, but it suggests that a tight upper bodice was fashionable among ordinary women as well as among the elite. Peasant women in early modern Europe are often described as tied to the home or village. There is no doubt that this holds true to a large extent, especially on islands, such as the North Frisian Islands, where a boat was required to reach the mainland. Nonetheless, to consider the lives of women on the islands as entirely isolated ignores their close contacts to some of the important cities in Europe resulting from their husbands’ sailing and trade. Such contacts imply that they had the means to be informed about life and fashion outside the islands and it is not unthinkable that some tendencies in European fashion were adopted. To assume that the clothes of common people were frozen in time is to ignore the eternal complaints from the authorities over the extravagant consumption habits of common people. The clothes of ordinary people did change, although not with the same speed as in fashionable society. Whether this was due to a lack of means and/or inclination is not known.

According to museum curators Ellen Andersen, Erna Lorenzen and Ulla Thyrring, as well as the local historian Thade Petersen, the everyday costume of women on Romø was made from homespun (vadmel) and consisted of a sleeveless bodice that was sewn together with a waistcoat of the same colour. The dress was known as a pi. The colour is most often described as red, but the pi could also be other colours, for instance black. Underneath was worn a cotton blouse, and, for those who could afford it, the bodice was decorated with buttons made of silver. The women only buttoned the lower buttons so the upper part of the bodice was left open to show the blouse beneath. Over the skirt the women wore an apron. For church and festive occasions, a coloured dress would be worn on top of the pi, whereas a black or dark blue dress was worn during mourning. The costumes worn for special occasions had a wide and pleated skirt, and the bodice had three pleats that were stiffened and revealed the white lining. As was customary on the Frisian Island, the women on Romø wore scarves around the neck and head. The headscarf was supported by a pointed hat worn beneath it. According to Thade Petersen, the women wore special headdresses at church and for mourning.24

Romø, along with the neighbouring island of Fano and a few other places in Denmark, is described as a place with an especially old and long-lasting clothing style. Erna Lorenzen and Ulla Thyrring explain this with a reference to conservatism in the population; national sentiments that, after 1864 when Romø was annexed to Prussia, supported an interest in holding on to a red dress; the colour of the
Danish flag, or simply due to a lack of means in the population.\textsuperscript{25}

One might assume that an island where a traditional clothing style was upheld would also have an especially fine tradition for weaving and embroidery. This is however, not the case. According to local historian Ester Kappelgaard, there is a scarcity of finer textiles in the homes due to the women being occupied with the more essential task of maintaining the household and farm, while the men were away at sea.\textsuperscript{26} The women on the island, thus, had less time for other chores, such as making the fabrics for their own clothes. It could also be the case that the income generated through whaling and sealing provided the women with means to buy the fabric they needed for their clothes, and that they, thus, did not have to weave it themselves.

The women from the island did, however, make products that were in demand among those who wished to decorate their clothes with finery. The census from 1787 reveals that most unmarried women and girls on the Danish part of the island were occupied in making lace.\textsuperscript{27} The region around the town of Tønder, which included Romo, was renowned for its lace-making. Women on the island would make the lace at home and sell it to merchants in the towns through travelling peddlers who also provided them with the patterns.\textsuperscript{28} The connection to the lace market may also be reflected in the fact that Hans Peter Hansen who married the widow Margaretha on the farm, *Kommandorgården* (The Captain’s House) supposedly was a lace merchant in the town of Tønder before he married and settled on the island in 1767.\textsuperscript{29} Thus, the women – similar
to the men – played their part in keeping Europe fashionably dressed. Moreover, their involvement in the lace industry, further connected the women to the world outside their home island and it also meant that it was not only the men who operated within a monetary economy. It is likely that the men brought the silver buttons, scarves and cotton fabrics home from abroad when they returned in the autumn, but it is also possible that the women purchased some of the finery themselves from the peddlers to whom they sold their lace.

Conclusion

Norah Waugh claims that the vanity of women brought the whales close to extinction. In the 19th century, the population of whales in the Arctic had diminished to such a degree that whaling was no longer profitable in these waters and therefore moved to especially the Pacific and Antarctic waters. Nevertheless, it may be an overstatement to blame women for the fate of the whales. For shipowners, the most valuable commodity from whales was oil. There is no doubt, however, that the love of voluminous dresses helped create a market for whale products and thus contributed to the whaling economy. And to fashionable society, baleen constituted a useful – and expensive – material that would enable women to reshape their bodies to fit the ideal of the time.

In contrast to the ever-changing dresses of fashionable women, the dresses of the women on Romo seemed modest and old-fashioned to scholars from later periods who studied the clothes of ordinary women. However, the dresses of the women on Romo, and indeed their entire lives, were also shaped by whaling. Whaling, which took away the men all summer – and in some cases for good – left the women in charge of tasks and positions that in agrarian communities belonged to men. They had little time to produce fine textiles for themselves. However, whaling and seal hunting created the foundation for a society based on a monetary economy; a characteristic feature that may have been strengthened by the lace-making of the women. It was also a society with strong ties to the Frisian, German and Dutch areas, and these connections were also evident in the costume of the women even though they never, or seldom, left the island. It would be a mistake to think of such women as untouched by the different waves of fashion.

An interesting comparison can be made between the costumes and the buildings on Romo. As mentioned earlier, the surplus from the whaling and sealing business was invested in land and buildings. Characteristic features of these buildings were their Frisian architecture, decorations with Dutch wall tiles, and painted walls and ceilings, often in the typical red and green colours so beloved in most Frisian areas. It is noteworthy that after the end of the whaling and sealing adventure in the 19th century, very few changes were made to the rooms. The surplus was no longer there, and the farms froze in time, so to speak, until two of them were acquired by the National Museum of Denmark in order to represent elements of a bygone way of life. The transformation of Romo into a place with a very well preserved traditional costume may very well have been part of the same development.

There are few women mentioned in the history of whaling and sealing. Granted, hunting and sailing were the business of men. It was men who boarded the ships in the European harbours; men who had to manoeuvre the ships in the pack ice; men who threw the harpoon; and men who risked losing their lives in the cold waters. Nevertheless, the history of whaling and sealing is not complete without understanding that it also played into the lives of women in early modern Europe, whether they belonged to fashionable society or were busy attempting to keep the sand out of the fields on an island in the Wadden Sea. After all, it was women who had to pull the black dress over the red pi, when the men did not return from the frozen sea.

Notes

1. Petersen (1979), 182–183. Also other colours were used during mourning. In the 16th and 17th centuries, elite women would, for instance, sometimes wear a white veil. Engelhardt Mathiassen (2011), 69.
2. Until the middle of the 18th century, the whale was believed to be a fish, but even after it was categorized as a mammal, it was often referred to as a fish, and thus the whalers went “fishing” for whales.
3. This chapter is based on studies conducted in connection with a project on how the hunt for whales and seals in the Arctic Ocean in the 18th and early 19th centuries influenced life and culture on the North Frisian Islands and in particular on the island of Romo. The project is part of the
research initiative, “Northern World” carried out at the National Museum of Denmark. This consists of more than 20 projects focusing on a broad range of themes related to the North Atlantic region. The themes include questions connected to the role of climate change, cultural landscapes, networks and exchange and cover a time span from the Ice Age to the present. For a description of the projects and researchers involved, see http://nordligverdenen.natmus.dk.

5 As part of the Duchy of Schleswig, Romo’s land was divided between a Royal possession, in the King’s capacity as duke, and a ducal possession of other ducal dynasties.
6 Census of 1787, Ribe county, parish of Rømø.
7 Kappelgaard (1970), 65.
8 Waugh (1954), 167.
9 Census of 1787.
10 Rheinheimer (2005), 141–165.
13 Lorenzen and Thyrring were pioneers of Danish textile research.
14 Andersen (1952), 29; Lorenzen and Thyrring (1977), 59 and 98; Petersen (1979), 179–183. Thade Petersen was born on the island of Romo in 1866 and his account of the costume of the women on the island relies on his own experience or living memory at the time.
17 Census of 1787.
18 Lorenzen and Thyrring (1977), 58; Skoubye (1968).
19 Kappelgaard (1970), 22.

Bibliography

From Doll Cups to Woollen Sweaters: Trends, consumption and *influentials* in early 19th-century southern Disko Bay, Greenland

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The arrival of foreign whalers and Danish colonists in West Greenland in the early 18th century was a direct result of the demand for baleen used in crinolines and corsets fashionable in Europe and blubber used in the streetlamps and buildings of European metropolises, households and factories. In return for baleen and blubber, the local Inuit received European commodities, some of which became fashionable and thereby potential tools for social agendas of distinction and emulation for the Inuit of colonial Greenland in the 18th and 19th centuries. This chapter explores the potential in applying theories on adoption patterns as understood by 20th-century social theorists, such as Torstein Veblen, George Simmel and Charles King, to early 19th century Greenland. In this context, especially the concept of *influentials* as social drivers in the adoption of new products is poorly described in relation to western Greenland in the period 1800–1850. Trade in European commodities in this period, was monopolised by the Royal Greenlandic Trading Department (RGTD), which kept detailed records of the colonial trade and communities in west Greenland including the examples utilized in the present chapter; Egedesminde and Christianshaab in Southern Disko Bay (see Fig. 14.1). A study of these documents allows for a reconstruction of consumption patterns in order to analyse the role of European commodities in the negotiation of social position in the colonies.

The analysis focuses on how specific sumptuous goods such as teacups and woollen sweaters were used by a growing Inuit upper social stratum, such as catechists,1 trade company employees, housekeepers of the Danish colonists (*kiffaq*) and persons of mixed Inuit/Danish decent. Cases from the colonial account books (*Grøndlænderbøger*) illustrate variations in the local consumption of European sumptuous goods on a multiple scale, such as individual, household, family and between colonies. The purpose of viewing the cases within a sociological perspective is to bring to light the social values and aspirations as they are performed through consumption
in a highly specific colonial context through material culture.

**Colonial Greenland as a market in the 19th century**

The colonisation of Western Greenland began in 1721 with the arrival of the Danish–Norwegian missionary, Hans Egede, his family and a staff of craftsmen and soldiers. From the very outset, trade was an important factor in the colonisation and soon surpassed missionary work in importance. During the 18th century, a series of factories and outposts were established along the west coast of Greenland. Each factory was manned by a Danish staff led by the chief factor, who also ran the local shop. The staff further included one or two deputy factors and carpenters, coopers, cooks and other manual labourers depending on the size and requirements of the factory. Outposts were manned by manual labourers and craftsmen and a manager answering to the chief factor of the nearest factory.

Contrary to other colonial encounters in the Arctic, trade and mission were dealt with by separate staff, but were interconnected as the Danish–Norwegian monarchy relied on the income of the shifting trade companies to sponsor missionary work; the local factor chief supplied priests and catechists with provisions and other goods. After the liquidation of three consecutive joint stock trade companies, the Danish king, Christian VII (1749–1808) founded the Royal Greenlandic Trading Department (RGTD) in 1776. Although this and all previous companies had a trade monopoly in Greenland, competition with Dutch and British whalers was fierce in regard to whaling and trade along the west coast of Greenland. This is evident in many letters to the managements of the shifting Danish companies from local factor chiefs demanding goods of similar quality or as low priced as those sold to the Inuit on the foreign ships. Samples of popular commodities, e.g. glass beads, were sometimes sent to Copenhagen or Bergen with requests of similar goods for the colonial shops. The Inuit were quality-conscious customers. This is also clear from an incident in Christianshaab when coarse and cheap Icelandic blue kersey was introduced. The Inuit preferred the well-known, finely woven, English kersey even though the price was nearly double. The Inuit also witnessed and responded to fashion changes in European glass beads, clay pipes and pottery, e.g. the introduction of transfer printed faience in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This is evident in the archaeological material from Inuit settlements in west Greenland. Early 19th-century Greenland was affected by the Napoleonic Wars and was blockaded by the British Navy from 1807 to 1814. However, the supply of European goods did not cease, as some of the annual Danish supply-ships bypassed the blockade and the British king, George III permitted the Greenlandic colonies to be supplied by a Scottish merchant company from 1810. In preceding years, the supply of European goods to Greenland was unstable. The practice of trade, marriage and other types of interaction between the colonists and Inuit was heavily regulated in the *Instrux of 1782*. To prevent price dumping between colonies, pricelists for commodities were issued each year also stating the value of blubber, skin, baleen and eider-down exchanged in return by
the Inuit. The price system was differentiated, setting higher profits on commodities in the category of “sumptuous goods” than on so-called “necessary” and “useful goods”. Some goods, e.g. European food and alcohol, were prohibited from sale to the Inuit. The reason behind this policy was partly economic, as 75% of the profit of the RGTD derived from the Inuit hunting sea mammals. Blubber, baleen and skin from whales and seals were not only used for food and raw materials by the Inuit, but also worked as their currency in the trade with Europeans. Making the Inuit dependant on European food was not in the interest of the RGTD. However, the categorisation of goods as “sumptuous”, “necessary” or “useful” also reflects a policy of civilization according to which the introduction of luxury items was seen as harmful to the Inuit and their culture. Such ideals were difficult to meet in a competitive market, and consequently coffee, tea, sugar, sugar candy, bread, peas and groats were released for sale to the Inuit from 1806 but only in exchange for skins.

Trade with foreign whalers was not the only way to circumvent RGTD regulations. A parallel trade system existed in most colonial communities. Here, local colonists exchanged provisions and other prohibited commodities for fresh meat, berries, skin clothing and tobacco purses sewn by Inuit women.

Disko Bay

Our case studies of Inuit consumption of European goods are the colonies of Egedesminde and Christianshaab (present-day Aasiaat and Qaqigiannguit) in Disko Bay in the trade years 1806, 1816 and 1826. Egedesminde was the main colony of the region and a central location for those travelling along the west coast of Greenland or to the inner part of the bay. Egedesminde had 51 inhabitants in 1805 with 339 people living in the surrounding district. The inhabitants of Christianshaab in the inner part of the bay, numbered 31 in 1795 with a total of 483 people in the district as a whole in 1805. The detailed trade accounts of the RGTD allow for an analysis of, not only the goods sold in each colony, but also of individual consumption in a detailed timeline, as each transaction of the colonial shop was recorded with the name of the Inuit purchaser, date, the type and amount of goods bought, the local products traded in return, and the balance owing. These sources of individual consumption patterns are unique in colonial history and the elaborate annual census lists and probate records further allow for a comprehensive reconstruction of the purchasers’ social backgrounds. This colonial source material provides a unique opportunity to reconstruct individual consumption patterns to explore the negotiation of social status through consumption preferences among the Inuit.

Social trend theory and the role of influentials

Trend theory focuses on the mechanisms regulating how and why consumption preferences change in areas, such as clothing, furniture, crafts, food and design. Trends can be defined as a tendency for a number of people to behave in a similar way within a specific context. Trends tend to be driven by symbolic value as opposed to function and necessity. Therefore, trend theory provides a novel approach to exploring the social mechanisms at play in the consumption of particularly sumptuous goods among a rising upper social stratum, such as Inuit catechists, trade company employees, housekeepers of the Danish colonists and persons of mixed Inuit/Danish descent in the colonies in the early 19th century. The focus is on what the British essayist, William Hazlitt termed the “race of appearances” in 1818. The suggestion is that appearance and consumption are linked to social positioning in terms of defining, expressing and renegotiating status representation. According to theorists, such as the sociologist Georg Simmel and economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen, status ambitions motivate the emulation of higher classes, who in turn take flight into different taste preferences only for the process to start over once the adoption process has reached a certain level. Simmel argues that trends are driven by a tension between social equalization and individual differentiation. This creates a vertical dynamic, a trickle-down-effect, as generated through the double movement of distinction and imitation. The question is whether this social dynamic is evident in Egedesminde and Christianshaab where consumption takes place under controlled conditions in a society that is smaller and peripheral to the Western
European metropolitan context of Veblen’s and Simmel’s work. The chapter explores this theoretically based question through empirical data collected from Danish RTGD records.

The management scholar, Charles W. King uses the term *influentials* for those initiating a process of *social contagion* where a new style or product is adopted by the consumer after commercial introduction by the designer or manufacturer. Although King writes in the 1960s, the notion of social contagion and the idea of *influentials* as the personal transmitters of preferences may still be applicable in an attempt to determine the social implications of consumption in Southern Disko Bay.

King proposes that *influentials* inspire change vertically — *i.e.* a *trickle-across* movement — which implies that social status is not necessarily equal to economic status which is in contrast to the hierarchical motion argued by Simmel and Veblen.

A theoretical issue in this analysis of colonial consumption and trend theory is the question raised by sociologist Colin Campbell concerning the understanding of *emulative desires* in Veblen’s theory of consumption. Campbell argues that consequence is at risk of being confused with intention when it comes to the role of emulation. According to Campbell, it is essential to look at what is being emulated and why. Some products are desired for their own sake. Campbell mentions coffee, tea and sugar as examples of such goods because of the physical stimuli they yield. He distinguishes between *imitative* and *emulative* behaviour. Imitation may be an activity but not necessarily a motive. The question then is whether the consumption that took place in Greenland stems from emulative desires and thereby involves status display? Due to the nature of the historical documents, it is difficult to determine whether or not the purchase of the objects in our case study had emulative intentions. We will, however, attempt to establish how the acquisition may, at least in part, be seen as stemming from social demand when looking at, for instance rings, red kersey, red woollen muffaties, blue teacups, snuffboxes and Faroese sweaters. Although most of these items do have a practical function, apart from the rings, they are all items which are in public view as part of a dress or used when entertaining guests, e.g. at the well-known Inuit coffee party termed *kaffemik*. We suggest that the data indicates that change as a social value — what the philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky terms “the renewal of forms as a social value” — played a role in the adoption patterns in colonial Greenland.

**Who were the influentials in 19th-century Greenland?**

The question of who constituted the *influentials* in early 19th-century colonial Greenland is complex. According to the trickle-down theory, individuals or groups initiating a process of social contagion through the adoption of products are to be found in the higher classes of society. In traditional Inuit society and in colonial times, skilled hunters, who could support large extended families, not only of their own relatives but also other widows and foster children, were respected in their community. Often, these were also owners of an *umiaq*, long seafaring skin boats used for travelling and for whaling. The economic surplus of such skilled hunters could provide the basis for a high consumption of European commodities.

However, in many publications on Greenland’s colonial history, those expected to be most influenced by European culture and lifestyle were employees of the mission or the RGTD, housekeepers of the colonists or Inuit who travelled to Denmark for education, e.g. midwife training in the second half of the 19th century. The recruitment policy in the RGTD...
and mission staff was dictated by the RGTD’s demand for local marine products. Thus, only persons of mixed descent with a weak physique and/or lack of hunting skills could be employed. In the second half of the 19th century, such people married mostly among themselves and tried to follow European norms of behaviour, lifestyle and dress to gain social acceptance from the colonists. The provisions, that constituted a part of their salary, gave these families a privileged position, freed from a total dependency on hunting, which was envied locally. This made many traditional female tasks, e.g. preparing the catch for food and materials for clothing a rare event in these families. In response, some members became housekeepers, kiffaq, in the European houses and probably brought European ideas of civilisation, ethics and lifestyle, into their own family. Some female kiffaq also became the wives of colonists or mothers of their illegitimate children. These families can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century and may have created a demand for European luxury items among other social groups. Indeed these families are perceived as an emerging upper social stratum in colonial Greenland. Skilled hunters were essentially also a part of the upper stratum, but the eskimologist Hans Erik Rasmussen uses the term, upper social stratum, to refer to families of mixed descent making the term somewhat ambiguous. In this study, both hunters and persons of mixed parentage are considered to be potential influential, but the term, the upper social stratum, will be used according to Rasmussen’s definition.

However, their fellow Inuit may have perceived the upper social stratum differently. One aspect of trend theory, which is applicable to colonial Greenland but with different connotations to Europe, is the notion of the leisure class. No Inuit could consume without producing. Even Inuit catechists and RGTD employees had to hunt and collect in their spare time in order to survive. Indeed, they were encouraged to do so by the RGTD. However, according to historic sources, other Inuit considered Inuit colonial employees as unproductive and their adoption of a European lifestyle was a topic of local ridicule. Members of the upper social stratum were often made the brunt of jokes rather than admired as role models. This is particularly true for the catechists, most of whom had a low income and little time for hunting. Some catechists managed to obtain higher salaries and claim influence in the communities. One example is Lars Abel Schmidt from Egedesminde, who received a raise in his salary to 16 rdl and half provisions. The salary of an ordinary catechist was 1 rdl. However, Lars was no ordinary catechist, but taught Greenlandic to the local missionary and proofread his sermons and bible translations.

The ambivalence in Inuit perception of this social group makes it useful to explore whether members of this so-called upper social stratum were influential in the local market or if this role belonged solely to the skilled hunters?

Here, we will only indirectly shed light on the consumption patterns of Inuit men in the upper social stratum, as the account books of the RGTD employees are not included. However, the consumption patterns among their wives, children and relatives as well as other Inuit are analysed below. Furthermore, the less detailed copies of the account books of RGTD employees indicate that the sources used below cover 76% of the total Inuit consumption of European goods including provisions for mission- and RGTD employees in the trade years 1806, 1816 and 1826.

**Teacups, rings and Faroese sweaters**

The account books of Egedesminde and Christianshaab offer detailed source material for analysing the role of influential and the adoption process of new items (see Fig. 14.3). Purchases recorded by the date and name of the buyer combined with information on their social background from the colonial census lists may form an ideal model for exploring the social contagion and display of status as described by Simmel, Veblen and King. The detailed recording of goods sold to individual buyers leaves us with a complex dataset concerning the relationship between social status and consumption. As suggested already, trends are defined by change and may be seen as a product of social demand. In that sense, some popular products are not immediately inherent to trend mechanisms because the level of consumption is constant, thereby eliminating the importance of influential and social demand. In 19th-century southern Disko Bay, such commodities could be gunpowder, lead, gunflints, sewing
needles, tobacco, coffee, sugar and candy sugar. Our analysis is based on a comparison of the dates of purchase of 99 commodity types in the following categories: accessories, clothing, tableware, ribbons, cooking vessels, bed linen, fabric, toys, perfume, personal equipment, guns and furniture. Many commodity types are either bought over long time spans or purchased in a particular season, e.g. food in the winter. Such commodities are outside any possible trend mechanism. However, six commodity types were bought on dates so close to each other that the conditions for social contagion led by influentials are present.

The 6th of July 1815 in Egedesminde was a very special day regarding the number of customers and trade. This day had the highest number of customers in the entire trade year: 23 people. More than a third of the annual trade of the colonial shop in Egedesminde was made on this one particular day. The annual Danish supply ship must have arrived immediately prior to this date and new commodities filled the local shop. This interpretation is further confirmed by the departure of the supply ship Hvidfisken on the 16th July.

The 23 buyers represent 21 families and the account books indicate that not only were many goods sold, many of them were very expensive, e.g. stoneware plates, painted earthenware plates, British tin-spoons, straw boxes, painted boxes, woollen bed linen, Faroese sweaters, iron drills and a foundry ladle.

Small, “finely lacquered paper snuffboxes” were another expensive commodity type sold to three Inuit on this particular day. The buyers were Jacob Iluat, who was Rasmus Andersen’s stepson, Andreas vel. Oke who was Pippik’s father-in-law, and the widow Helene vel. Eguanna. Yet another type of snuffbox was bought by Johanne, the daughter of the late Akartloq and wife of catechist Lars Abel Schmidt. Whether these items were desired for their own sake or whether one of these consumers belonged to the influentials, thus initiating a process of social contagion is uncertain. However, assuming that certain groups in the community were influentials due to their status in society, Jacob Iluat, who was the stepson of a Danish sailor, may have initiated a process of social contagion when purchasing the snuffboxes on 6th July 1815. The same is true for Johanne, who was married to a well-paid and important catechist and was
among the women with the highest level of consumption in the three trade years. While only one other snuffbox was bought that year, on the 16th of November, the case is still pertinent in determining the social order as played out through consumption. Helene was a widow, which was a low social position in traditional Inuit society. However, Helene had a level of consumption matching the wives and daughters of low-ranking European RGTD employees in Egedesminde. She was an independent, modern woman in the sense that she supported herself financially by collecting substantial amounts of eider-down.

Most of the shopping was done by men on behalf of the entire household, so the few women who did have their own page in the account books of the colonial shops must have been noted locally and thereby played a social role. A widow like Helene stands out from most of these women, who either belonged to the upper social stratum as defined by Rasmussen, or were the wives of skilled hunters. This illustrates how colonial trade also offered new possibilities for women to be financially independent.

That Inuit social networks were closely connected to the households is evidenced by members of the same household frequently shopping on the same dates, whether they were biologically related or not. Individuals involved in consumption and display of social status are, however, clearly distinguishable in certain cases.

A number of “blue teacups” were also sold on the 6th July 1815. The cups were bought by three different women: Regine (Rasmus Andersen’s daughter), the widow Helene vel. Eguanna and Birgitte, who was the kiffig at the local chief factor’s house. Birgitte extravagantly bought three pairs of cups. Moreover, one pair of cups was purchased by Regina and Helene, whereas Birgitte and Regina purchased a pair of red woollen muffaties, and Helene bought two pairs. A month later, on August 9th, their example was followed by a well-paid catechist, Jens Hansen Væver and the following day by Lydia (Birgitte’s servant), who both bought a pair of “blue teacups and red woollen muffaties”. Lydia’s inspiration most likely comes from her mistress Birgitte, who was, as many other kiffig, a woman of mixed descent. Concerning the teacups, Birgitte may herself have been inspired by her employer, the chief factor and merchant in Egedesminde, to whom she was close, as she was also the mother of his illegitimate children. Birgitte bought many European “sumptuous goods” in the trade year 1816, but had an average level of consumption in terms of the quantity and quality of commodities in the surrounding years compared to other women.

Birgitte is interesting in relation to trend mechanisms due to her complex social position. Her material preferences may very well have been influenced by other women in the community indicating that, in Simmel’s terms, she was motivated by combining social equalization with the desire for individual difference. At the same time, Birgitte might be seen as an influential because of her relationship with the chief factor of the colonial district, and she may have inspired others outside the household. The purchases made by Regina, Helene and Jens Væver may be seen from this perspective.

Social competition was more common between households than within them, which is illustrated by the following examples. On June 10th 1816, two men, Gustav and Gidion, bought one and two “ordinary finger rings” respectively at the shop in Christianshaab (see Fig. 14.5). Another ring was purchased by Samuel Uriotak (son of Johannes) on the 16th June. Two days later, Søren, who lived in Gabriel’s household, followed this apparent trend and purchased four similar rings. The age of Samuel Uriotak is unknown, whereas the three other young men were between 19 and 21 years old according to the colonial census lists.

Two of these young men, Søren and Gidion, were also following a parallel trend, which began on the 28th of May when Kalliak and Poul Thorning bought, what was termed...
“Faroese” sweaters in the account book and price lists. Another sweater was sold to Søren at Gabriel’s on the following day. The next such Faroese sweater was bought on the 1st of June by Andreas Reimar, who was followed by Hans v. Nessuit and Benjamin on the 10th and 15th of June respectively. Gudmund and Gideon bought a sweater on the following day and Andreas Omak brought another Faroese sweater home from the colonial shop two days later. Gideon made the next purchase of a Faroese sweater on the 26th of June. Many of the buyers of these so-called Faroese sweaters are 19- to 22-year-old men, in the same age group as those buying rings. The only exceptions are Poul Thorning aged 37, Benjamin aged 28 and Andreas v. Omak, who was 30 years old in 1816. The rising popularity of the Faroese sweaters cannot be seen to stem from their novelty value – as was the case with the purchases on the 6th of July 1815 – because the purchases were made in the last two months before the arrival of the annual supply ship. However, the popularity of the Faroese sweaters was not due to a limited range of sweaters at the end of the trade year. There were other types of sweaters available as documented by the purchase of a “Jutlandic” sweater by Poul’s brother Jacob Thorning on the 17th of June. Another type of sweater, the “Icelandic” sweater, is known from the contemporary pricelist of the RGTD. This suggests that the purchases, to a certain extent, may have been motivated by social demand. Wool sweaters had become popular for men in the summer as an alternative to the warmer skin clothing (see Fig. 14.6). In this sense, the sweaters might have been considered fashionable, or in Lipovetsky’s terms, the sweaters might be seen as an example of a renewal of forms as a social value. This shift could have rendered the sweaters an ideal item for the display of social status and the process of social contagion.

The social background of all the men mentioned above cannot be reconstructed as the census lists kept by the missionaries are missing for the trade year 1816. However, we know that none of the men purchasing rings belonged to the upper social stratum and the rings did not serve any ritual purpose, such as engagement or wedding rings. It seems that they were bought for adornment alone, highlighting social distinction as the motive for buying
the rings. According to her diary, the Danish midwife, Henriette Egede was appalled by the number of rings the governor’s kiffaq, Arnaq wore at her birthday celebration.46 In addition, coffee was served in dolls’ cups, which Arnaq had purchased on a journey with the governor and his wife to Copenhagen. Henriette Egede’s testimonies resonate a general Danish colonial discourse, in which the Inuit are seen as helpless children being raised to mature civilization by their colonisers.47 By attempting to impress her employers, Arnaq fails to engage in a display of European fashion in a proper manner, at least, in the eyes of her European spectators. The same could hold true for Søren at Gabriel’s, should he choose to wear all of his four rings at the same time. However, such an extravagant display of commodities with no practical function probably worked well in the social competition among the Inuit themselves.

The case of Arnaq confirms the use of consumption for social distinction. The acquisition of the cups was motivated by social demands rather than functional needs or practical limitations. Arnaq seems to be engaging in the “race of appearances” through individual differentiation by buying cups in Copenhagen, a place out of reach for most inhabitants of the community. The rather extravagant display of rings and the luxurious nature of the doll teacups might be seen as a negotiation of social currency that clearly communicates colonial values and ideals that by being distinctly different from Inuit ideals may have represented social status at that particular time.

The matter of the Faroese sweater seems to support a trickle-down effect, although the background of one of the possible influential is complex. According to colonial sources, Poul Thorning was an excellent hunter, but he was also the son of a Danish RGTD assistant,48 thus essentially Poul represents both of the expected influential groups. Seen in this light, Poul could be the principal influential, but so could Kalliak, who was an excellent hunter and traded in both colonies. Both men could have initiated the sequence of sweater purchasing, if we regard the purchases in May and June as interconnected. It is also possible that the process of social contagion was initiated by Andreas Reimar, another hunter of mixed descent, who was in the same age group as Gidion and Gudmund. Some inhabitants of colonial Greenland may have been inspired by individuals their own age rather than emulating members of the upper social stratum or successful hunters, in this case represented by Poul Thorning, Kalliak and Andreas Reimar. This is reminiscent of the case of the rings where change may be seen as spread by personal transmitters vertically, in this case...
determined by age, rather than hierarchically determined by the upper stratum.

Seen in the wider time frame of the trade years 1806, 1816 and 1826, woollen clothing was worn by different groups in the two colonies. In Christianshaab, woven caps and woollen sweaters from the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Jutland were bought by hunters with both a high and low level of consumption indicating different levels of hunting skills and consequently varied social positions. In contrast, sweaters were only bought in Egedesminde by RGTD and mission employees including the catechist Lars Abel.
Schmidt. The sole exception is the skilled hunter and umiaq-owner Jens v. Upernangitsok, who had a high consumption of European commodities. For expensive textiles in the RGTD assortment like calico fabrics, kersey and homespun (Hjemmegjort Tøi) from the Danish realm as well as linsey-woolsey, the pattern is reversed, as they are bought solely by skilled hunters in Christianshaab and are documented in accounts of hunters with high, average or low consumption in Egedesminde. The almost exclusive use of sweaters by the upper social stratum of Egedesminde could be a result of a much larger group of RGTD employees in this colony as opposed to the situation in Christianshaab, where trade and mission employees constituted a minority.

The consumption patterns of Jens v. Upernangitsok, mentioned above, confirm the economic possibilities for skilled hunters to purchase vast amounts of goods and thereby potentially function as influentials. On one particular day in the trade year 1818, he bought six feet of canvas, nine feet of wallpaper, six feet of coloured homespun, two Greenlandic hymnals, a straw box, three feet of floral silk ribbons, a pair of woollen muffaties, a Faroese sweater, four feet of woollen ribbons, a small plaster statuette and four weights (a total of 60 g) of coloured thread (Figs 14.7 and 14.8). Jens was accompanied to the shop by Andreas from his household, who bought woollen stockings and also a Faroese sweater. Present in the shop on the same day was Anokana, who also bought a small plaster picture and a book containing the New Testament, a catechism and an ABD, the Greenlandic equivalent of an ABC, along with various textiles.

Wearing sweaters in Egedesminde may have held different social connotations in 1816 and 1818. However, this hypothetical change in social connotations can only be confirmed by further systematic analysis of the latter trade year. It remains uncertain whether Andreas and Anokana were inspired by Jens v. Upernangitsok or vice versa as they went shopping on the same day. However, what the event does reveal is that skilled hunters could be influentials in Egedesminde. It is also possible that members of the same household – in this case Jens and Andreas – might influence each other in their purchasing preferences. It is likely that it was Jens, as the head of the household, who was responsible for initiating the social contagion. Jens owned an umiaq and had a high level of consumption. Andreas’s social position is unknown, but it is likely to have been lower. As mentioned above, textiles were desired as commodities, particularly among the skilled hunters of Christianshaab. Not only were textiles among the most expensive goods and therefore held obvious potential for display of status, but especially when used for clothing, they are also efficient for the public display of social positions and aspirations. This is also true of the expensive red kersey in 1826. On the 7th of April, a small amount of this fabric was sold to Abraham vel. Kose and Jørgen vel. Ardvitsiak. This purchase was followed by Godtlib vel. Danuarsueitsiak’s a week later. In addition, red kersey was bought by Thomas, the son of Kaniok and Thomas, the brother of Thimiak on the 22nd of April. Regrettably, the search for the social background of these men in the colonial sources has not yet been successful.

The case of Jens v. Upernangitsok is more evident and leads to three essential conclusions. The possibility of change in the connotations of wearing sweaters in Egedesminde from 1816 to 1818 may illustrate the dynamic character of trends in the context of the cases. Secondly, this illustrates that the trickle-down effect at times existed within the traditional social unit of the Inuit: the households. Finally, the social position of Jens vel. Upernangitsok confirms that skilled hunters were also involved in the social competition, even in colonies with a large group of RGTD and mission employees.
Conclusion

The aim of the chapter was to explore the extent to which appearance and consumption are intertwined with social positioning as described by social theorists, such as Simmel, Veblen and King. Despite the complex social makeup of the Danish colonies of Egedesminde and Christianshaab, the analysis of trend mechanisms through a series of case studies indicates that, to a certain extent, the tendency towards combining social equalization with the desire for individual differentiation appears to have been operating in the first half of the 19th century in southern Disko Bay. The social emulation appears to have been primarily hierarchical, following a trickle-down movement, where the upper stratum and skilled hunters initiated changes in purchasing preferences. Generally speaking, this movement was seen both inside and between the most important of social units, the Inuit household. The apparent desire for social distinction through renewal of form as a social value inside a household was seen in Egedesminde in houses belonging to both groups of influential: the colonial employees of mixed parentage and the skilled hunters. The latter were often the head of Inuit households. At the same time, in Christianshaab, a trickle-down effect is visible from the skilled hunters, who were the most prominent influential in this colony, as the upper social stratum of colonial Inuit employees (as defined by Rasmussen) were few.

In the cases of the blue teacups, Faroese sweaters, red woollen muffaties and snuffboxes, individuals representing the two groups of influential are indubitably involved in the initial stages of the sequence of purchases supporting an interpretation of social contagion stemming from the skilled hunters and the upper social stratum. Both groups seem to be influential in Egedesminde, whereas only the former group seems to be involved in the “race of appearance” in Christianshaab due to its low number of colonial Inuit employees. However, the detailed census lists and account books also reveal that some individuals are positioned between the influential groups, e.g., skilled hunters of mixed parentage.

The purchases of the rings and partly also of the Faroese sweaters illustrate that a trickle-across movement was also present in southern Disko Bay particularly in relation to a specific age group of unrelated men. Perhaps growing up in the same community and competing, e.g., in rowing kayaks and hunting created a social bond among these men, which also formed the basis for social competition or bonding through European commodities. These cases appear to follow King’s suggestion that influential motivate a vertical process of emulation where social status is not necessarily the equivalent of economic status.

Thus, the process initiated by individuals inspiring change could operate on both a horizontal and vertical social plane. The same might be said for the cases involving Birgitte and Arnaq. That shopping was predominately done by men on behalf of other household members, challenges the study of influential and the social aspects of consumption. Other family members may have been present at the colonial shop pointing out things to buy, although everything was recorded in the name of, e.g., the head of the family or household, as they handed in the common produce of their family or house: blubber, baleen or seal skin in exchange. Consequently, the inspiration shown in the account books of the RGTD does not necessarily reflect the influence held by the person stated as the buyer over other Inuit, but rather between the social groups of the persons involved. This implies that an influential might be personal, but is connected to the entire family. However, as families generally represent a single common social stratum, the process of social contagion might be seen as taking place between families rather than between individuals.

The notion of social status and upper stratum is complex in Western Greenland at the time. However, the elaborate records of the mission and the RGTD allow us some insights into the relation among trends, consumption and influential.

It is generally accepted that trends hold the key to their own destruction in the sense that when an innovation has been adopted by a greater number of participants, new markers must be found in order to reinvigorate the power of distinction. Since the census lists and account books from the colonies studied in this chapter document the acquisition of new items rather than look at how the items were discarded, it is impossible to map the full life cycle of the products. There is no detailed documentation of the unregulated and uncontrolled parallel trade systems taking place at the time, or the illegal trade with foreign whalers.
In addition, knowledge of other means of acquiring new items through, for instance the practice of exchanging, gifting or inheriting sumptuary goods can only be acquired through further analysis of the colonial probate records which were not kept as systematically as the trade records. Thus, it is a relevant, though nevertheless restricted insight we have gained into the social aspects of consumption through the lens of trend theory. However, judging by the records, there does seem to be a “race of appearances” seen in the cases of, for instance the rings, teacups, and Faroese sweaters, albeit this race is tempered by practical and geographical confines of early 19th-century Western Greenland.

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Notes
1 A catechist is an Inuit layman serving as a priest. They received a certain degree of education and held a high social status in the local community.
2 The factories were known as colonies in Danish, thus Greenland was commonly referred to as the Greenlandic colonies in the plural. Consequently, the factories of the RGTD will be referred to as colonies in this article.
4 Gad 1969, 57; Frandsen (2010), 500.
5 Gad (1976), 313.
7 Gad (1984), 200–2.
8 Frandsen (2010), 93–124.
12 Marquardt and Caulfield (1996), 111.
13 “Trade years” are a colonial term for the period between the 1st of July and the 30th of June. For instance, the trade year 1806 covers the period between the 1st of July 1805 to the 30th of June 1806. The administration of the Danish colonies in Greenland was run within this temporal framework, as the supply ships reached Greenland in early July after the disappearance of the sea ice.
15 Hazlitt (1818), 203–206.
16 Simmel (1971).
18 Simmel 1971, 296.
19 King (1963), 112.
20 Campbell (1993).
21 Campbell (1993), 40.
23 Rønsager (2006), 196.
24 Frandsen (2010), 37 and 46.
26 Gad (1976), 363.
31 Rdl is the abbreviation for Rigsbankdaler, the most valuable Danish species of coin in the 19th century.
32 Kragh (1875), 8 and 160.
33 Toft (2010), 160.
34 Grønlænderbog, Christianshaab 1805–6; Grønlænderbog, Egedesminde 1806–16; Grønlænderbog, Christianshaab 1814–1820; Grønlænderbog, Egedesminde 1816–20; Grønlænderbog, Christianshaab 1821–1829; Grønlænderbog, Egedesminde 1825–33.
35 Designation, Egedesminde 1818–1819; Mission journal, Jacobshavn 1754.
36 Toft (2010), 199.
37 Konossementer 1790–1821 NKA 01.0276.10 æske 1.
38 The abbreviation v. or vel. was used in the colonial sources to connect the several names of the individual Inuit, e.g. their Christian name, previous names and nicknames. Multiple names for the same person were used to identify specific persons, as many Inuit had the same Christian name.
42 Seiding and Toft (2011), 293.
44 Grønlænderbog, Egedesminde 1806–16 and 1816–1820.
45 Designation for Egedesminde distrikt 1826–1827; Mandatslister Christianshåb/Qasigiannguit 1812–1820.
46 Diary of Henriette Egede 1832–1833 A301/102.
47 Seiding and Toft (2013), 125.
48 Ostermann (1940), 118–124.
49 Hovedbog Egedesminde 1808–1818.

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From Abundance to Asceticism: Religious influences on perceptions of luxury in Denmark and Great Britain in the 18th century

Juliane Engelhardt

In the course of the 18th century, fashion was transformed from what in brief could be characterized as a demonstration of wealth into a much more modest and downscaled appearance. At the beginning of the century, powdered wigs, silk stockings and sumptuously embroidered dress for both upper class men and women were an external indication that physical labour did not constitute a part of everyday life. This was, by the end of the century, replaced by somewhat simpler dresses and suits in dark colours, which not only signalled a change of attitude concerning work, but also a new conceptualization of luxury. This chapter investigates the religious origins of this change, and suggests that Puritanism in England and Pietism in the German States (Germany in short), and in the kingdom of Denmark–Norway provided important ideological and behavioural input in this transformation from an extravagant to an ascetic dress code.

This chapter is a comparative study of Denmark and Great Britain. It examines how prescriptions of modesty and self-restraint written by the English puritan, Richard Baxter (1615–1691) and the German Lutheran, August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), among others, influenced the public debates on luxury at the end of the 18th century, albeit in a secular way. In the final discussion, these treatises are seen in context. Thus the focus of this chapter is not the material culture of fashion as such, but the social impact of religious ideas on dress and behaviour.

The Culture of representation

The culture of high court had developed since late mediaeval times and found one of its culminations in the splendours of Louis XIV (1638–1715)’s court at Versailles in France. The lavishly decorated castle in Versailles was among the grandest in Europe, and the centre of a great deal of festivity. The display of wealth and enjoyment played an important role in the political justification of the king’s absolute power, and constituted what latter day historians have termed a culture of
Fig. 15.1: In the course of the 18th century, the extravagant dress code of the court culture was increasingly ridiculed and criticized for standing aloof from the world. The caricature illustrates this very well, as the wig and feathers on the head of the woman at the forefront are so tall and voluminous that a bird has nested in it. She has the face of a witch, and her male companion, tickling her chin, not only has a big belly, but also an unpleasant face. The two giggling girls in the background are more modestly dressed. The cross on the necklace of the girl at the right attests that she is a Christian. Its presence on this picture probably is a witness to her decency (The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Collections of Maps, Prints and Photographs; Date and illustrator of the picture is unknown).
representation. This culture is most notable in situations which today are considered as both private and intimate, namely morning and evening rituals. These were public ceremonies during which the king performed before an exclusive audience when he did his morning and evening toilettte and ate his meals. Only those belonging to the very top of the nobility were allowed to watch the king actually go to sleep, and it was considered a special privilege to hand the queen her underwear. The French court was the role model which nobles and absolute monarchs in the rest of Europe persevered to imitate. For instance, Frederick I of Prussia (1657–1713) was known for his glittering royal household. The expenses for maintaining his palaces, festivities and private zoo allegedly accounted for 7% of the national budget. In the Danish state, the king too was portrayed as the absolute centre and sun in society. Both Christian V (1646–1699) and Frederik IV (1671–1730) visited Louis XIV as crown princes, and as kings, they pursued the gaudy court life they had experienced at Versailles. In reality, however, the early absolute Danish monarchy until the middle of the 18th century was a “budget-monarchy”, as their display of wealth was primarily expressed in mere ceremonies, not in constructing grandiose castles.

Splendour as a political language of power reflected a social order in the European societies that was deeply hierarchical. The orders of rank attached certain privileges to each estate which were reflected in the style of dress and thus visible in clothing. The sumptuary laws prescribed that outer appearances should be a precise indicator of one’s social standing and place in the hierarchy of ranks, and it was forbidden to imitate the appearance of another rank. The lower orders should thus wear garments of wool and flax, the middle rank decorations, wigs or ribbons, and only the nobility were allowed to wear masks, powdered wigs and dresses of silk and velvet and gold embroidery. However, the sumptuary laws were widely ignored and, as will be demonstrated later, complaints were widespread that the lower orders wore clothes above their standing, as this led to a confusion of ranks.

In the second part of the 18th century, the political culture and the perception of legitimate power changed. This was, not least, fuelled by the rise of a public sphere which became the new platform for the exchange of ideas, information and criticism. Whereas the basic political sentiment in the culture of representation was distance between the king and the people, the public sphere was now slowly opening to a wider and much more differentiated circle of people than those belonging to the top of the orders of rank. Participants in the public debates on forms of government, civil rights and the necessity of enlightenment were predominantly from the economic and educated middle classes. They insisted that the crucial criteria for participation in public debates should be rationality and plausible argumentation. They also influenced perceptions of absolute monarchies with ideas of a social contract, and emphasized that it was the people who possessed sovereignty and had only temporarily transferred it to its ruler. The king was increasingly believed to be, in the words of the Prussian king Frederick II (the Great) (1712–1786), nothing but “the first servant of the state”. His father, Frederick William I (1688–1740) had already dissociated himself from the representational culture of his own father, as he saw himself as a promoter of an ascetic lifestyle. In his political testament, he instructed his successors not to indulge in excessive eating and drinking and not to tolerate theatres, masquerades or public dancing. In Denmark, crown prince Frederick (1768–1839), later King Frederick VI, who from 1784 ruled on behalf of his mentally ill father, Christian VII (1749–1808), gained a reputation for his hard-working, temperate lifestyle. He reportedly slept in a camp bed and his favourite attire was an old military uniform.

The call for religious reform and asceticism

Why did this change from ostentatious abundance to puritan utilitarianism come about? Why was Louis XIV’s lavishness considered to be almost a duty whereas Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were criticized for excessive consumption, and many monarchs in Europe made a virtue of demonstrating in public that they pursued a sparse life? One of the reasons was the Puritan and Pietistic movements, which enthusiastically called for asceticism. The Puritan movements in England arose from dissatisfaction with the lack of
consistency in the Reformation introduced by Henry VIII (1491–1547) in 1533 and his successors. One of the principal counts in the Puritans’ criticism of the Church of England was that the ecclesiastical liturgy and attire were heavily influenced by the Catholic Church. In protesting against this, Puritans dressed modestly and in toned-down colours. They were nicknamed Puritans and Precisians by opponents because of their rejection of the grandiose church rituals and fundamental reading of the Bible, the nicknames originally implying disdain. Whereas the Puritans were deeply involved in the English Civil War (1642–1649), the Pietists in Germany and the Scandinavian countries made an effort not to engage in church politics and refrained from disrupting the state churches in their respective countries. Nevertheless, they launched a severe criticism of the contemporary orthodox Lutheran churches for propagating rigid systems of learning and dogmatic interpretations of the Bible. In the pietististic worldview, it was not crucial to believe in the right way, but to believe in a vigorous way; to read the Bible personally and experience Christianity in an emotional, heart-felt manner. The publication of Johann Arndt’s Vier Bücher vom wahren Christentum in 1603 was a precursor of pietism, but it was inaugurated by Philipp Jakob Spener’s Pia Desideria, which was published in 1675. In this treatise, Spener complained about the spiritual misery and increasing moral decay which he believed to be widespread, as people indulged in material pomp and excessive drinking and eating. In spite of Puritanism and Pietism representing two different confessions, Calvinism and Lutheranism respectively, they had several similarities, which make it pertinent to compare Great Britain and Denmark. Both movements emphasized conversion and rebirth, and operated with a clear distinction between true and false Christians. They also both emphasized that the convert’s intensified faith should be reflected in simplicity in material goods and a distinct awareness of using time in a profitable way. And finally, both Puritans and Pietists emphasized Praxis Pietatis, i.e. that faith should not only be an inner state of mind, but also be expressed in charitable deeds.

Puritan ideas were popularized in the 17th century through numerous books and pamphlets targeting both the higher and lower orders. A shared characteristic of these was their disciplining commands of everyday life. This is in particular true of Richard Baxter’s The Saints’ Everlasting Rest (1650), The Christian Directory (1664–65), and The Poor Man’s Family Book (1674); of John Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s
devoted to warning against idleness and sloth.

In the following chapters, Baxter instructed the reader on how to practice a true pious faith by reading a chapter of the Bible morning, midday and evening, and by a continual awareness of whether one’s thoughts, words and deeds were in accordance with the Christian commands. True Christians condemned vanity, never adorned themselves, never pursued worldly possessions and never spoke about trivial affairs; every word they uttered should be wise and thoughtful. They only ate and drank a minimum, as this should only be done of necessity and never as a purpose in itself. Every night, they kept an inner account of how the day had elapsed and considered whether it had been in accordance with a pious lifestyle.

In The Christian Directory, Richard Baxter also called for humility. He characterized pride as man’s inordinate lifting up of himself above the estate appointed to him, and a striving to be greater than God intended. This was an offence against the first and last commandments. True Christians should avoid all ostentation, and adopt a nature of humility. Warnings against covetousness, love of riches and worldly cares were a general feature throughout the book. Baxter agreed that pursuing riches was necessary in so far as it allowed man to breed his children and promote good works for church and state. For this he should be thankful. However, when people pursued worldly prosperity and the pleasures of the flesh, it distracted the mind from desiring God and salvation. This was the evil pursuit of riches:

*When the Riches which we have are used but for the pampering of our flesh, and superfluous provision for our Prosperity, and nothing but some inconsiderable crumbs or driblets are employed for God and his Servants, nor used to further us in his service, and towards the laying up of a treasure in Heaven. These are signs of a worldly covetous Wretch.*

In the following chapters, Baxter instructed the reader to redeem his time carefully and be on guard against time wasting and gluttony. He gave instructions against evil and idle thoughts and speech, on how to govern the senses, the eyes, taste and appetite. Most space was devoted to warning against idleness and sloth. Felicity was not to be found in the temporal world and he recommended a life of self-denial in order to prepare oneself for redemption on the Last Day. Baxter devoted a special chapter to give directions for those who were already wealthy. These people should be aware that riches may please their flesh, but did not make them better Christians than the poor. Wealth reconciled not God, and he who had no better was an undone man. It was not sinful in itself to be rich, but Baxter complained about the lifestyle of the rich and their erroneous beliefs about not having any societal obligations. Wealthy people, he wrote, often regarded it as their privilege to live without any profitable labour and eat and drink as their appetite desired. On the contrary, riches should call for far greater self-denial and watchfulness against sensuality. The rich should labour as constantly as the poor, although not in the same kind of work. Wealthy merchants should not keep their wealth to themselves or their children, but be aware that God had given them their wealth to further the good of others; [...] “let it be your care and business to do good. They should keep daily account of their use of money and ask themselves: What good have I done with all that I have this day or week?”

Although Pietist instructions for everyday life were never as elaborate as the puritanical, it was highly evident, and asceticism was also believed to be a distinct feature of being a true Christian. August Hermann Francke was the leading figure in the Pietistic movement in Halle, Germany, where he established comprehensive pedagogical and social institutions: Franckesche Stiftungen. He advised his followers on how true Christians should conduct their lives in the essay: *Schriftmässige Lebens-Reglen*, which was published in 1695. In the first paragraph, Francke stated that there were many opportunities to sin and that it was therefore of utmost importance always to have God present in one’s thoughts. Similarly to the instructions of Baxter and Bayly, Francke taught the reader that true Christians never spoke more than necessary, and then only when they were given the opportunity by God. They spoke reverently, thoughtfully, meekly and with humility. A true convert should avoid talking about worldly affairs, and when he did he should only speak of useful matters. Francke also warned that “der Lügen-Geist herschet drinnen”, meaning that man had a natural predisposition to exaggerate when telling stories. Swearing and
mean language were among the greatest sins and God and Jesus should only be spoken of with the greatest reverence. When engaging in society, it was equally important to be useful and, as it was impossible to avoid association with the godless, the convert should try to improve them. When it came to comfort and pleasure, true Christians should always show moderation and sober-mindedness, and decline if somebody urged them to excess in eating and drinking, as this was an attempt to make them sin against their god. True Christians would never laugh, as it could lead to rashness. In general, they would always be useful and always considered the utility of the things they engaged in. The Lebensregeln ends with the statement that no one should consider themselves to be worth more than other people, and those who behaved ostentatiously and lavishly should be considered a burden. The Lebensregeln thus contained a gleam of egalitarianism, although not elaborated.

Francke did not touch upon excessiveness in dress in the Lebensregeln, but this was a theme in his writings for ecclesiastical reform. In Glaubisches Gedenkbüchlein from 1693, Francke complained about the general profanation of the Sabbath (Ruhetag) as many people spent the day on worldly occupation, instead of matters of the heart. Francke stated that it was not a sinful habit to dress in clean clothes, but it was to be considered a sinful and purely temporal habit when people regarded the Sabbath as an opportunity to flash their pomp and splendour. They came to church not to hear the words of God, but only to see what clothes others wore, thus creating a culture of shallowness. God’s true children always sought after Christian fervour and would never let the devil worm of appearance into their hearts. In another work on ecclesiastical reform, Projekt zu einem Seminario universalis from 1701, Francke criticized those who wore pearls, rings, precious stones and other jewellery as this was only done through vanity. When raising a child, one should teach it true piety and avoid vices. This implied that when the child received new clothes, the parents should never make comments on how wonderful the child looked. Nor should they encourage the child to adorn him or herself as this was not pious behaviour. The parent should also beware never to speak in flattering terms of wealthy people, but teach the child to be thrifty. In order to do this, giving the child a piggy bank was a useful pedagogical tool. In two sermons held in Halle, Francke more explicitly attacked the tradition for demonstrating high estate via pomp in dress. He maintained that God divides mankind into two groups: those who sowed for the flesh and those who sowed for the spirit. To sow for the flesh, was to look with admiration and envy at people in proud and flashy clothes and think to oneself: So ein Ding muss ich auch haben. Those who adorned their bodies with jewellery and fine clothes were making room for the Devil into their hearts and thus sowed their own condemnation.

In a sermon on the duties towards the poor, Francke attacked the higher estates for dressing in expensive clothes and purple robes. Where in the Bible, he asked, does it say that you are of a noble estate hence you must dress in noble clothes? Francke continued that those who dressed pompously were fools who only wished for worldly honour and reputation. What did God in heaven say to that? He saw the splendid clothes, but he also saw that the same people chose to ignore the misery and suffering in the society surrounding them. And, in this respect, their outer appearance was trivial. True honour was not assigned to people living in pomp and abundance, as only those who helped the poor would be redeemed.

Francke’s instructions on the conduct of everyday life were well observed in his institutions in Halle. The teachers were instructed not to wear luxurious clothes, wigs, silk stockings or jewellery. However their clothes should be decent and clean. Neither should the teachers attend dancing comedies, nor fools’ games, nor laugh and make fun. When engaging in conversations, they should speak with modesty and prudence. In Copenhagen, an orphanage (Waisenhaus) modelled on the orphanage in Halle was established in 1716. Here, the teachers received similar instructions. To sum up, the ethos in the Puritan and Pietist teaching was an ethos of modesty and sincerity. The general tone in the instructions was humility and avoidance of excess in any matter; not merely in material goods, but also in speech and temper. Modesty in dress was both thematized as a separate topic, and was a part of the Pietist’s general call for simplicity and sobriety. The ascetic instructions entailed implicit criticism of the artificiality and display of excess characteristic of court culture.
traditional rank society, people who dressed lavishly deserved respect. In the worldview of the ascetic movements, extravagant appearance did not deserve respect, but was a sign of a hollow and superficial personality. Luxurious clothes and ostentatious materialism signaled that consciousness of sin was absent, whereas in traditional society, one of the ways the aristocracy had demonstrated its position at the top of the societal hierarchy was by not engaging in work – with the wide skirts and tall wigs signalling that physical labour was not a part of their lives. This was contrary to the strong working ethos promoted by the Puritan and Pietistic movements. In their worldview, constancy in labour, performed with seriousness and discipline, was a precondition for obtaining the grace of God.

The public debate on luxury

The question of the impact of Puritanism and Pietism on the Enlightenment has been widely debated among historians and sociologists throughout the 20th century and this debate is still very much alive. There is no doubt that both movements played a significant role in their own era. Puritans played an important political role as they actively opposed absolutism and supported parliamentarism during the English Civil War. Pietists never engaged in politics in the same way the Puritans had done and their influence remained primarily cultural. Frederick William I of Prussia supported the Pietistic movement, among others, by obliging every applicant for a government position to study for four semesters at the Pietist universities in Halle or Königsberg (present-day Kaliningrad, Russia), and by introducing compulsory school attendance. In the Danish-Norwegian-Schleswig-Holstein conglomerate state, King Christian VI (1699–1746) in reality made Halle Pietism the official form of Protestantism, employed Pietists in high clerical positions, introduced decrees on the observance of the Sabbath and banned theatres and dance. Confirmation, which was a personal affirmation of the Christian faith, became mandatory in the Danish realm in 1736. The catechism used by the students to prepare for their confirmation was written by the pietistic bishop, Erik Pontoppidan, and had several similarities with Spenser's Catechism. It remained the official catechism until 1794, and thereby Pietism was propagated to the population at large. However, the focus of this chapter is not the immediate impact of the movements, but their long-ranging effect on the public discussions of luxury in the late Enlightenment, as it is possible to observe some continuity in the arguments and patterns of thought. The following does by no means claim to be an exhaustive survey, but rather attempts to pin down basic trails of arguments and compare and contrast the Danish and British debates. Debates on the economic and moral consequences of fashion and luxury were lively during the Enlightenment and numerous publications on the topic were issued. One trail had a predominantly economic character, as excessiveness was seen as the primary source for the poverty of the state. Another trail focused on the morally corrupt implications of excessive materialism, and passion for ostentatious consumption was described as a corrosive illness, which destroyed virtue and good manners.

The economic criticism of luxury was, first and foremost, directed towards the import of goods from other countries, as this, it was claimed, caused a deficit in the national balance of payment. In the Danish state, complaints were raised that extravagant goods were produced in foreign factories thus undermining domestic industry. As it had become fashionable to dress in accordance with French fashion, and to buy mirrors, chairs and beds produced in England, money was transferred out of the country. The Society for Civic Virtue was established in 1785 in order to promote simplicity in dress and encourage the inhabitants to buy goods produced in Denmark “as we use too much of foreign goods, and have only a little to sell to foreign countries.” Especially in the period 1801–1807, when Denmark was involved in the Napoleonic Wars on the French side and was attacked by the British Navy, the calls for simplicity in the public debate were widespread. Several royal proclamations were issued, which ordered the population to reduce abundance and encourage modesty and industry. Thus it was a basic premise of many economic discussions that sumptuousness was the primary source of the poverty of the state, and citizens were urged to demonstrate their love of country by limiting the consumption of luxury. These arguments were primarily a
Fig. 15.3 (opposite page): This satirical picture illustrates the shifts in fashion in the years 1789, 1796 and 1801. Fashion as such is considered to be ridiculous; the test only asks which is the most ridiculous one. The men and women on the picture are drawn with elongated bodies, and the two men in the foreground to the right are too short-sighted to see each other properly. Can it perhaps be a metaphor indicating that fashion makes people narrow-minded?

(Anonymous French caricature, date unknown).

reminisce of the restricted import policy of mercantilism in Denmark. Yet, among defenders of economic liberalism, excessive materialism was linked to licentious behaviour and lack of patriotism.29 Liberal thinkers, such as the French philosopher François Voltaire and the Scottish philosophers David Hume and Adam Smith, did not see luxury as a problem as such, on the contrary they applauded man’s striving for increasing material welfare, but also stressed that wealth should be pursued in a way beneficial to the country as a whole. Luxury was only bad if used in an unpatriotic way. The ideological foundation of this perception was the Dutch-born British Philosopher, Bernard Mandeville’s essay The Fable of the Bees from 1714, in which he argued that selfishness and vanity were not evil dispositions if they were “civilized” and used in the service of the common good. This notion of the public benefit of man’s vices became incorporated in the ideology of liberalism; when man’s basic instincts, such as greed, envy and ambitions were pursued in a socially acceptable manner, society as a whole would profit and prosper.30

Public discussions on luxury in Denmark and Great Britain were not only concerned with the national economy; they also contained a distinctly moral tone. Vanity and greed were regarded as desirable vices in so far as they caused industry and diligence. However, they could lead to a moral slippery slope.31 The British magazine, The School for Fashion warned throughout the two volumes published against the moral dangers of indulging in fashion and luxury. The opening dedication To Fashion describes it as corruptive to morals, hostile to domestic happiness and dangerous to the health, the virtue and happiness of the female world. Especially, fashionable young women were in danger, as they: “[…] indulge themselves in mode of conversation, latitude of expression, and freedom of demeanor, which the courteous of a former period would have blushed to practice. This is the first step to profligacy, because a want of modesty leads to the sacrifice of chastity in the married character.”32 The author continued that the present mode of appearance reflected a very high degree of immorality because it was immodest and showed contempt for reason and religion. Not even prostitutes would appear in the fashion of the present day in any public place. In the first chapter, the reader was introduced to a wealthy couple; the husband was a respected proprietor and possessed a natural generosity and benevolence. However, his wife was a different kind of creature as her extravagance, love of magnificent dresses, finery, masks, feathers, flowers, gauze, ribbons, hats and garlands was beyond bounds, her pursuits were riotous pleasures and her heart corrupt. Thus she was portrayed as vulgar and completely lacking in charm and virtue. In the subsequent chapters, readers were presented with accounts of her material excessiveness in all aspects of life, turning the domestic household into a theatre scene displaying abundance. Each chapter ended by stating a moral lesson that true virtue was neither to be found among the rich and wealthy, nor among the lower orders, but among the educated middle classes, who knew the rules of polite conduct and good taste: “[…] it is most certain, that the virtue to be found among mankind, is chiefly to be met with among the middle class. The excessive luxury of those in high stations, and the extreme poverty and ignorance of the lower ranks, is undoubtedly the chief cause of that depravity.”33 Thus the world of the wealthy was described as a world of pretence and depravity.

In both the Danish and British debates, the denunciation of luxury sometimes took the shape of a denunciation of modernity as such; built on a notion of a paradise lost. It was a recurrent theme that, simplicity was far greater back in a distant past. In wistful phrases, it was described to the reader how people in antiquity applauded frugality as they knew that true honour did not come from opulence. Since then, man had alienated himself from the natural state and believed that he could find happiness in the material world. In the public debate, a sarcastic tone of voice was often used to complain about fashion Junkers, face powder heroes, and licentious balls and masquerades. The minutes of the Society for Civic Virtue prescribed in detail how the members should behave thriftily; only cold supper was allowed, only one room in the house should be reserved for parties, and festivities at weddings and baptisms should be subdued. The members should never enjoy pure alcohol, only punch, and of course tea and coffee, their clothes should be made of domestic fabrics and kept in sober colours,
and stockings made of silk were not allowed. The rules were actually for the benefit of the national economy, but they also had a moral emphasis. The members should demonstrate their self-restraint and inner virtue by dressing modestly. The ascetic conduct of life should permeate the members’ entire mentality and in line with this, the minutes prescribed how every member every single day, morning, noon and night, should reflect on every one of his deeds and ask himself: is this for the good of the country? There are some clear similarities between these rules of conduct and the ideals propagated by, for example Baxter and Francke as these prescribed the convert always to have God present in his/her thoughts and to examine their conscience every night on the day that had gone. Nevertheless, by the end of the 18th century, the religious origins of this habitus were forgotten, and became expressed in secular terms; the goal was no longer to honour God, but to promote the welfare of the fatherland.

The cry for simplicity was unambiguous in the Danish public debate throughout the 18th century. However, there was a change in the focus of the groups in the population that had a primary responsibility for not dressing in the correct manner. In the mid-18th century, complaints were widespread that the lower orders strove to dress above their estate. It was argued that people should dress in order to make the differences between the estates visible; when people of the lower
orders dressed in pomp it would lead to the destruction of the social order. Extravagant clothing was reserved for the wealthy, and not to be worn by commoners.\textsuperscript{35} Debaters thus supported the sumptuary laws and the determining of the social hierarchy. The opposition to social mobility among the lower orders is congruent with the predominant attitude in the Enlightenment movement in the mid-18th century. This changed in the final decades of the 18th century. Claims for social equality increased, and attacks on the prerogatives of the nobility became widespread during the French Revolution. Members of the Society for Civic Virtue argued that the society was a forum in which [...] the Rich and Noble can unite with those, who are not Rich and noble. Although the society pleaded for simplicity, its members also distanced themselves from the sumptuary laws exactly because these discriminated people socially.\textsuperscript{36} A prominent member of the society, Tyge Rothe, who was also a prominent participant in the public debates in Denmark in general, stated that what was optimal would be a citizen aristocracy (Borger-adel). He argued that expensive clothes did not create true nobility whereas people, who could persuade the public by reason and argumentation, constituted the true nobility. Another example is an article, published by an anonymous author in one of the leading magazines in Denmark, Minerva, which discussed the public expenses used at a royal wedding in 1790, and recommended that these should be kept to a minimum.\textsuperscript{37} More generally, it was emphasized that the royal family’s way of life should be characterized by virtue and simplicity and thereby be a role model for the rest of the population.\textsuperscript{38} This was different to the representative culture at the outset of the 18th century, in which the king was on display and the people constituted the audience.\textsuperscript{39} The perceptions of the royal family as distant figures did not disappear in the course of the 18th century, but it was definitely a change that they were regarded as role models for the rest of the population, and that commoners’ identification with royals was considered to be important.

Participants in the public debate in Denmark could not criticize the royal family publicly because of the censorship. Instead, some of them launched harsh attacks on the nobility, picturing it as a part of the population that lived in isolated estates, puffed-up, morally corrupt, and unable to reason and sponging on society at large:

\begin{quote}
Had I become one of those unhappy overdressed chaps [...] who, disdaining humanity, and in spite of common sense, Virtue and good manners, step forward confident of their ancestors and painted Shields, and hardly had any idea of what human beings are; then I had been a fool [...] the noble man can only be raised to be a noble man, which is, to nothing.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

The above quotation reflects a continuous power struggle between the educated middle classes and the nobility. However, it reveals more than that. It was an overthrow of the aristocratic culture and the public display of rank and wealth. Concerning luxury, it was no longer the lower orders who were held responsible for dressing above their estate, but the nobles who were attacked for dressing exactly as their estate prescribed in traditional society. Moreover, their outer splendour was pictured as a hollow and superficial culture and lack of virtue. This discourse also echoed the discourse of the Puritan and Pietistic movements, but in a secular language and understanding, as there were no references to Christianity.

Denunciation of luxury did not lead to the praise of poverty, as people still found it important to demonstrate that they were successful, but wealth found more subdued expressions. Instead, new codes of taste and conduct were established, emphasizing among others, that clothes should demonstrate good taste. According to an article published in Minerva, the watershed lay not between those who consumed luxurious food and clothes, and those who did not, but in the manner in which it was done. The writer found those who ate turtle soup and drank imported wine in an obviously greedy manner, repulsive, whereas those who dressed in neat and clean clothes and behaved modestly tasteful. This is in line with the dress code recommended by Francke mentioned above. In the British debate, the concepts of taste and elegance were also pointed out as crucial factors and defined as “a natural or instinctive propensity to the beautiful, elegant, and sublime, disliking as much the paltry tinsel of the tawdry, as the dryness of the merely neat, or awkwardness and insipidity of the elegant [...]” All things strikingly brilliant and flashy were described as vulgar, whereas good taste
From Abundance to Ascentism: Religious influences on perceptions of luxury

Fig. 15.4: Whereas the European emperors were previously portrayed as dignified and distant figures, at the end of the 18th century they were often pictured in a more toned down appearance. This watercolour painting by Johannes Senn depicts the Danish king Frederick VI and his wife and two daughters in 1813 as a respectable middle class family on a stroll in idyllic surroundings. The extravagance of his predecessors is gone, and the king is seen wearing an old military uniform, reputedly his favorite attire (Rosenborg Castle; De Danske Kongers Kronologiske Samling).

was sublime and refined, originating from a natural disposition. Modesty and good taste thus became integral parts of what contemporaries termed polite society. The term describes the emergence of new codes of conduct developing among the rising middle classes, opposing, in their own terminology, the etiquette of the court with the etiquette of the city. Conduct books and courtesy guides prescribed that men of honour were characterized by a good character: refinement and rectitude, restrain of passions, and also by sensibility as opposed to the duplicity of the court. This etiquette also implied a dress code...
which should not indicate poverty, but taste, seriousness, and a dedicated commitment to industry.\textsuperscript{43}

Conclusion

The religious writings on luxury were written in the 17th and the first decades of the 18th century. The heyday of the Puritan and Pietist movements was more or less over in the second half of the 18th century. Yet, some of their basic ideas survived, albeit in a secular version and leaving out the religious element. This chapter has shown that a distinctive feature of the public debate on luxury in the second half of the 18th century was warnings of its corrupt potential on public and private morals. Although these warnings were expressed in secular terms and outlook, the discourse of a contemporary moral decay and a world out of joint has clear similarities with the Puritan and Pietistic movements. Both the religious movements and the debate on luxury in the late Enlightenment contrasted outer splendour with inner virtue. Wealth was not disapproved of as such, but it was emphasized that it should be used for the common good, through either reinvestment or charity, and never be seen as a short cut to salvation. Thus the demonstrative display of wealth was ridiculed, vulgarized, and considered to be morally suspicious.

Although this has been an investigation into the discussions on luxury in Denmark and Great Britain, a brief look at the changes in fashion in colonial USA indicates the same pattern; femininity was from the 1750s divorced from outward display and restrained propriety was cast as the true signifier of high status.\textsuperscript{44}

The purpose of this investigation has not been to conclude that the ascetic religious movements were the sole reason for the changing perceptions of luxury. The inspiration from Greek antiquity has not been dealt with here, but was definitely a highly significant source of stimulation, as was the emphasis contemporary economic thinkers increasing placed on the importance of a large and industrious population. Moreover, rejections of luxury were also widespread in Catholic France, and this challenges the special status allotted to the Protestant reform movements in this chapter. However, the object of this chapter has not been to provide an exhaustive explanation for the changes in fashion in the course of the 18th century, but to isolate the religious factor in a more complex picture of change.

In his seminal work, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, the German sociologist Max Weber claimed that one of the characteristics of modern western capitalism was a distinct asceticism, as control with affects and wants become a goal in itself. Weber stated that the source of this asceticism was the Pietist, and especially, the Puritan movements, as they promoted a life of self-control and a faith, which should always be present in the believer’s thoughts. Ideally this was a complete life system, a Lebenswelt, as he termed it. This ideal continued in the modern forms of capitalism which developed in the 18th century onwards, as this was characterized by a life devoid of pleasure, with thrift and a high level of duty towards one’s career. This chapter has not dealt with capitalism as such, but it has in effect sought to exploit and perhaps even develop Weber’s theory and demonstrate that, what earlier was pronounced as religious ethics pointing at distinguishing between true and false Christians became secularized and integrated in a new spirit, expressed in etiquette and rules of conduct. These reflected the early movements, but were now linked to the rising middle classes’ notions of a healthy state and national economy, as well as personal virtue and good morals.

The constant urge to be thrifty and spend time in a useful way furthermore illustrates Max Weber’s statement that the Puritan and Pietist movements promoted a democratization of monastic life, in that it became the obligation of every Christian, and later every citizen, to demonstrate his or her inner virtue through systematic self-control every day.\textsuperscript{45}

The French sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice is equally pertinent as an analytical point of view in this context. Bourdieu does not focus on the secularization of religious norms, but on distinctions in taste and positions in the public and private sphere. At first glance, the showdown with the aristocratic culture seems to reflect a struggle between economic capital, possessed by the nobility, and cultural capital, which the rising middle classes were in the process of creating and which they believed they could lay exclusive claims to. However, such a dichotomy would be a simplification, as
Fig. 15.5: Classical Danish design, which developed in the decades following the Second World War, has a functionalistic and simple appearance. This chair, designed by Hans Wegner and simply named “The Chair”, is no exception. It can be regarded as a late heir to the ideas of good taste developing among the middle classes in the early modern period; it is ascetic and downscaled; comfortable, but not designed for hours of relaxation. Everybody knows it costs a fortune, but still it is a world apart from the ostentatious demonstration of wealth characteristic of the nobility in the 17th century. Today, The Chair and similar goods from the golden era in Danish Design are popular in well-educated middle class Danish households. They represent Bourdieu’s cultural goods, as they are believed to imply an aesthetic disposition, an ability to recognize good taste, and thus indicate that the owner possesses a certain amount of cultural capital. The religious roots of this ascetic design are forgotten, but the plain and unpretentious style without superfluous adornment was originally inspired by American shaker furniture (Designmuseum, Danmark; Photo: Pernille Klempt).
the pointed display of power and wealth was also an expression of cultural capital. Instead, along with Bourdieu one may characterize this as different positions and different ways of creating cultural capital. The middle classes did not oppose economic capital as such, but maintained that this was not sufficient; wealth without culture and good taste had no value or status. The decisively new aspect in this was that, within their field, cultural capital was detached from economic capital. It was a demonstration that high societal status was achievable without material wealth, and this was opposed to aristocratic culture. The aristocratic field used overwhelming wealth to mark distinctions to the mob. The rising middle classes were aspiring to a higher societal status and recognition and used their material taste and preferences as a status marker and tool of distinction. The quotation from Minerva, mentioned above, which stated that what was crucial was not whether one ate turtle soup or not, but the way it was eaten, is a very fine illustration that the cultural distinctions among this new segment were also expressed through embodiment.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1 When referring to circumstances prior to 1708 England is used, and Great Britain thereafter. Please note that all the originally Danish quotations in the text have been translated into English by the author.
5 The Church of England is, on the one hand, the ancient name for the Christian Church of England, stemming from the 7th century, on the other hand it was formally established during the reign of Henry VIII, then changed, and regained its form during the reign of Elisabeth I, Queen of England (1533–1603) and with the Restoration of Charles II Stuart (1630–1683).
6 The full title of the treatise is Pia Deideria oder berglches Verrlagung nach gottglaullicher Besserung der wahren Evangelischen Kirchen samt einzigen dahin einfaltig abwechen christlichen Vorschügen.
7 The full title is the Saints’ Everlasting Rest: or, A Treatise of the Blessed State of the Saints in their enjoyment of God in Glory.
8 [...] fitting out speeches, apparel, provisions, furniture and all our deportment and behavior to the meanness of our parts, and place, and worth. This is the very Nature of Humility [...] The Christian Directory, part 1, chapter IV: Directions against pride and for humility, 182–185. The quotation is from p. 183. Later in the same page, Baxter defends the magistrate’s right to wear apparel suitable to their rank.
9 The Christian Directory, 204.
11 “Doubtless the rich, if ever they will be saved, must watch more constantly, and set a more resolute guard upon the flesh, and live more in fear of sensuality than the poor, as they live in greater temptations and dangers” Baxter then lists the temptations of the rich: Pride, fullness of Bread, Idleness, Time wasting Sports and recreations, lust and wantonness, tyranny and oppression of people below them. The Christian Directory, 492.
12 Both quotations are from p. 493. In The Poor Man’s Family Book Baxter also advanced criticism of the grandiose lifestyle of the rich; “The Children of most Great men and Gentlemen; whose condition make it seem necessary to them, to live in that continual fullness, (or plainly) pomp and idleness […] as that it is as hard for them to be Godly, sober persons [...] as a Camel, passage through a needle’s eye [...]” This quotation is from chapter 7, part 8, 269–272.
14 Peschke (1699), paragraph VIII.
15 Peschke (1699), paragraphs XXIV, XXVI and XXVII.
16 Peschke (1969), 78–79.
19 Francke (1729) 18–33.
23 See, e.g. van Lieburg and Lindmark (2009) and Gierl 2011.
26 [Anon] (1772).
27 Hooper (1786); [Anon] (1787).
28 Royal proclamations and ordinances were issued in 1783; in October and in December 1808; in 1809; in November and in December 1810; and in June and in September 1811.
31 See, for example Lang Nissen (1800), 15; [Anon] (1792a) vol. 5, 37–40 and vol. 6, 41–42; [Anon] (1792b) vol. 25, 194–196.
32 The School for Fashion (1800), vol. 1, xi–xii.
33 The School for Fashion (1800), vol. 1, 16–17.
34 De første fem og tive Vedtægter som ere antagne af Selskabet for Bergerdyd den XIV September 1785, [The first twenty-five regulations, which have been passed by The Society for Promoting Civic Virtue on September 14.] Copenhagen 1785.
35 Moltke, (1758); Sommerfeldt, (1772); [Anon] (1772).
36 Rothe (1786), 9.
38 See, for example Thaarup (1794), 32–41.
40 [Anon] (1790b), quotations are from pages 273 and 276. Similarly, the British Magazine The School for Fashion contained an article in vol. 1, 1800, pp 183–194, which was one long argument that high rank and nobility do not in themselves deserve honour.
41 [Anon] (1793) the quotation is from p. 268.
42 The Carlton-House Magazine 1793, 246; Carter (2001) p. 1. The juxtaposition of the middle classes with people living in the city was predominantly an English phenomenon, as I have not come across this in the Danish sources.

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Circulating Images of Unmanliness and Foreignness: Collector Niclas Holterman and European caricatures in Sweden around 1800

Patrik Steorn

Already during the 18th century, it is possible to identify the beginnings of today’s global media and fashion-oriented popular culture in the taste and the consumption patterns of the increasingly influential bourgeoisie of Western Europe. The visual culture of opera and theatre stages, fashion illustrations and popular novels was spread through printed engravings and etchings. Portraits and other paintings that had a great impact on popular culture were similarly mass produced in the form of graphic works. There was a public fascination with prints and engravings during this period, and the various kinds of images circulated across the national borders and travelled into new settings and contexts.

The rich collection of European caricatures, once belonging to Niclas Holterman (1758–1824), a Swedish merchant and proprietor, today in the holdings of The National Library in Stockholm, and his personal archive at the National Archives in Stockholm provide the sources for this case study on the transnational character of early modern print culture in Europe. The following text contextualises the personal and professional background of Niclas Holterman as well as his consumption and collection of prints, and provides a brief overview of Swedish caricature in the 18th century. With a particular regard to “The Man of Fashion” as a regularly caricatured figure in the continental production of prints, the aim of this chapter is to study the circulation of European caricatures in Sweden around 1800, as well as the cultural ideas on fashion that were circulated together with the print-sheets themselves.

Caricature in Sweden in the 18th century

Caricatures, with both political and social subjects, were a vital part of the lively European culture around printed images. English, German and French caricatures of the period are represented in most Western art museums, and represented in exhibition catalogues, whereas the Nordic countries are rarely mentioned at all. The production of caricatures seems to have been very slow
in the North before the 1800s. By then, the modern printing techniques of xylography and lithography had been introduced, and the publishing houses, the press and their audiences had increased in number.  

Caricature has rather, at least in Sweden, been considered an art of drawing that was practised within the intimate sphere of friends and colleagues. The satirical drawings of artists J. T. Sergel and C. A. Ehrensvärd sketch political, social and private issues with a sharp pen. The drawings should be considered to be semi-private as they were circulated not merely between the two friends. A larger group of associates constituted the circle of viewers, and these men and women were also recurrent actors in the sketched scenes. In the early 1800s, artists such as Pehr Nordquist and Carl Jakob Mörk would draw scenes from the urbane life in Stockholm with an ironic twist, and thereby inaugurate a century with a more abundant local production of caricatures. Swedish caricatures were rarely published in the 18th century, or at least only a few have survived in the archives.

Caricatures nevertheless existed in Sweden before 1800, as they were imported from England, France and Germany. The collection of Niclas Holterman, at the National Library of Sweden has not been much investigated, but contains around 400 loose print caricatures,
placed in 5 volumes. They are all dated to the decades around 1800, roughly 1770s–1820s, and they are primarily of English origin even though a few are in French. The only plate in this collection that seems to have been issued from within a Swedish milieu is “Mme. St. Romain”, of a dancer from Hamburg performing in Stockholm around 1800, engraved by a Swede, Mårten Rudolf Heland (see Fig. 16.1). This motif is clearly connected to the lure of a cosmopolitan and enticing life in the metropolis. Swedish consumers could purchase domestic and imported print sheets through local print shops, but also during their travels abroad and through international contacts.

Niclas Holterman worked in the Swedish East Indian Company that imported Chinese tea, silks and porcelain to Europe through Gothenburg, the largest harbour city on Sweden’s west coast between 1731 and 1813. The company had considerable commercial success, especially in the later part of the 18th century, which enabled a group of bourgeois

Fig. 16.2: Carl Fredrik von Breda: Niclas Holterman, oil on canvas, 1797 (Österåker Church, Södermanland; Photo: Karl-Erik Jansson).
entrepreneurs to establish themselves in Gothenburg during this period. His father, Martin Holterman (1715–1793), was an immigrant to Sweden from Hamburg, Germany, and was one of the Directors of the Company. Niclas’s brother Johan Peter (1757–1793) was also active within the enterprise. In the late 1790s, Niclas Holterman left Gothenburg as he was able to buy Forsby Manor, a large estate in the fertile county of Södermanland in central Sweden. This acquisition is a sign that the Holterman family did make a considerable social career. The journeys of the Swedish East Indian Company were, however, not merely commercial and economic ventures. As several scholars have indicated, they also served as a platform for transnational exchange with Asia in the natural sciences, shipbuilding and navigation as well as interior design and architecture. If we consider that a large part of the goods that were imported to Gothenburg were in turn re-exported within Europe, most of it to England, we might also add European popular culture, such as print images to these exchanges. The environment of transnational communications provided by the Company, possibly worked as a platform that enabled Niclas Holterman to develop a taste for English caricatures.

National and transnational circulation of caricatures

Even if Holterman primarily stayed in the Swedish countryside after the 1790s, he kept an apartment in central Stockholm, at Norrlandsgatan 10. It seems he was well connected to the urban entertainment cultures of the time, not only in Sweden, but also in other parts of Europe. England seems to have held a particularly strong appeal for him. In a portrait of Holterman from 1797, he displays that he had adopted an informal and comfortable English style in clothing and hair (see Fig. 16.2). The painter, Carl Fredrik von Breda, was born in Sweden but in 1796 he had just returned to Stockholm from a six-year-long stay in London. The artist had worked in Joshua Reynolds’s studio, exhibited at the Royal Academy and painted portraits of a prominent English and Swedish clientele. The connections to London and English aesthetics surely gave the artist a cosmopolitan allure that stimulated sitters such as Holterman to engage him.

In the National Archives in Stockholm, there are several documents that reveal that Holterman was in continuous contact not only with the Swedish capital but also with other cities in Sweden and in Europe. The archival sources cover the period 1810–1824, but it is highly probable that they reflect patterns of consumption and circulation of artifacts and ideas occurring in Sweden since, at least, the 1790s. From the innumerable number of bills in the archive, it may be noted that Holterman purchased garden plants from Newcastle, tea from Gothenburg and tickets to the Stockholm Opera. Caricatures and engravings, separate issues of magazines and journals, subscriptions to papers, as well as Mme de Staël’s De l’Allemagne, several titles by Walter Scott and other topical books were purchased in Stockholm. Bills from 1823–24 attest that he acquired art magazines, Costumes de France, a publication called Voyages du Nord with accompanying plates, and a number of French folio portraits, and in 1820, three caricatures were bought from London through an agent in Gothenburg called the widow of A. A. Fröding.

There are, furthermore, receipts which indicate that caricatures were also bought directly in England. According to these documents, three caricatures were bought in 1822 from Jonathan Watson, an engraver, print seller and publisher at Vere Street/Bond Street in London (see Fig. 16.3). This is known to have been a fashionable area in the city during this period. The collection’s register at the National Library lists only three caricatures made in 1822, which suggests that those were the ones that were purchased on this occasion: “Draughts. Pl. 4. A Bad Move” (see Fig. 16.4), “Back-Gammon. Pl. 5. A Hit” (see Fig. 16.5) and “Theatrical Pleasures. Pl. 6. Turning out half satisfied” (see Fig. 16.6), all made by Theodore Lane and published by George Humphrey. The first two plates illustrate the dangers of playing board games – in the first, a man falls off his stool and loses his wig and glasses, in the second, a stout man shoves a dice-cup into his opponent’s mouth. The third plate depicts theatregoers leaving a theatre after a play, its subject is the discomforts of the crowd which includes a shouting night-watch with a flaming torch and a pick-pocket stealing a man’s handkerchief out of his pocket. Two popular pastimes of the well-off classes, board games...
and theatre, serve as motifs to illustrate the unruly and violent sides of the normally well-mannered social life. In all three images, slender, well-dressed men are subjected to harshness and made fun of – one is being robbed, another one is choked by a dice-cup, and a third one falls on the floor. These scenes, where fashionable men are targets of satire, and treated as a type that represents polite social life, are recurrent in the collection of Holterman, and characteristic of the period’s caricatures.

The receipt attests that it was Holterman’s nephew, Martin von Wähendorff (1789–1861) who purchased these prints and brought them back to his uncle who was a collector in Sweden. Holterman himself systematically collected the caricatures in specific albums. This is demonstrated by the bills from a man called Link in Stockholm, who in 1822 charged 16 Riksdaler for books and the sheets and for mounting caricatures into three volumes. Holterman’s last will and testament state his wish that his collections should be kept together as an entity within the family, even if
the estate were to be sold. The caricatures are thus mentioned together with the collections of books and magnificent volumes, paintings and engravings that he requested to be treated with special attention, which further confirms that Holterman attached great importance to these prints. The volumes were bequeathed to the National Library in 1863, after the death of Holterman's nephew. It may be concluded that the collection of caricatures was an interest that Holterman shared with relatives, who in turn, considered it significant enough to pass it on to a public institution.

**Fashionable men as caricature**

The English production of satire during the Georgian era (c. 1760–1820) has been the focus of a large number of important academic studies from the 1960s and onwards. Not much is, however, known of the circulation of these images outside of the English borders. Holterman's collection in Sweden, with images by Mary and Matthew Darly, Thomas Rowlandson, George Cruikshank, James Gillray and many others, suggests that there were other interested audiences in Europe – even if the English readership was probably the most important one.
The political motifs make up for the largest number of plates in the Swedish proprietor's albums. Caricatures on domestic conflicts in England or their quarrels with France are abundant. One of the volumes is even devoted to the nationalist figure-head John Bull. These topics were not as internal and specialised as to deter European men of the world, such as Holtermann, from purchasing them. The social caricatures of the period are closely connected to the current events within the realms of changing fashions, new habits, morals and attitudes. The comical and even grotesque aspects of fashionable men and women, bath-houses, barber shops and social entertainment are ridiculed in many of the images in the rich collection of Holtermann. As these images circulated among a geographically widespread group of admirers, they however not only reflected social satire, they were also part of spreading a scornful attitude towards the world of fashion and those who indulged in it.

The fashionable man is among the most repeated motifs of fashion caricatures. A French image, presumably from the late 1790s, shows a man in a graceful pose wearing an enormous muff made of feathers. With a bicorne hat, a long jacket, and a rapier at his side, breeches,
striped stockings and buckled shoes, the man's dress is not extremely elaborate for the period. The joke is rather that he is so thin that the wind risks sweeping him away if it blows too strong into the handy accessory; "Ah Dieu le Vent m’emporte" [Oh God the Wind is taking me] is written underneath (see Fig. 16.7). The subtle comment not only clarifies the visual drama of the image, but can also be read as a reference to the idea that fashion is a travesty of nature, and that nature eventually takes its revenge.\(^{18}\) In the case of this motif, it seems the joke is not only that certain items of dress are perceived to ridicule nature, but also that a type of masculinity, which allowed for elaborate dress and fashionable appearance, challenged 'the natural'.

In Holterman's collection, most images are of English or French origin, but the motif of the vacillating man actually appears here in a Nordic version. The composition and the motif are, more or less, identical to the French print, but the mocking phrase has been changed into a multilingual explanation of the figure in Swedish, Danish and English: "Sprethök/Spradebassen/A Spark" (see Fig.
16.8). There are two more images of a similar type in the collection: “Werfware/Hververen/The Recruiter” (see Fig. 16.9) and “Målare/Maleren/The Painter” (see Fig. 16.10). The three of them are probably part of a series of images. The Danish curator Frederik C.
Krohn has, according to his inventory of Danish prints, identified a series of six images with explanations in Danish and French: “Den Glade/Le Rejoui”, “Apotekeren/L’Apothecaire”, “Hververen/Le Recruteur”, “Maleren/le Paintre”, “Sangeren/le Chanteur”, “Spradebassen/le Petit-Maître”. This series is, according to Krohn, probably copies after French originals as they are signed by Arlaud and printed by the Danish publisher Clemens Kobbere.

Considering the similarities in motif and subtitles, it may be supposed that the trilingual prints in the Holterman collection are issued by a Copenhagen printer, even though they do not carry any signatures at all. The print sheets seem to be part of an alternative version of the above-described series. In any case, the linguistic adaptations of these sets of images suggest the existence of keen audiences for satirical prints in the Nordic countries. The print-makers actively catered to these...
audiences and we can consider the translation of titles as an important tool in making the printed caricatures even more attractive to local collectors and consumers. The various different versions of the motif exhibit the lively transnational circulation of images in Northern Europe in the late 18th century.

A comparison of the French and Nordic images of the man with the muff indicates that some details that distinguish them from each other may be discerned. In the Nordic version, the jacket is coloured in blue and the breeches are red, which is the inverted colour-scheme, compared to the French image at hand. The muff is carefully coloured in various shades of brown, which makes it look like it is made of fur. The grey colour in the French version rather gives the impression that it is made out of feathers. This might be interpreted as a visual adaptation to the local weather conditions in the Nordic countries. However, looking at polite fashion plates from *Gallerie des Modes,*
the most influential of all fashion publications of the late 18th century, it is suggested that the grey-coloured fur muff was part of the cold season attire for men in Europe in the years around 1780 (see Fig. 16.11). The caricature “Ah Dieu le Vent m’emporte” is dated to c. 1790, which would mean that it visually quotes plates from the French fashion press with an eye looking backwards, at a just bygone period. This kind of visual reference thus allows the image to caricature the role that beauty and clothing played for an out-dated ideal for men. At the same time, the role of printed plates in the fashion culture of the preceding era is also ridiculed.

The motif presents “The Man of Fashion” as a category of an undesirable type of masculinity, and the tri-lingual titles of the Nordic version furthermore enabled the viewer to direct a categorical look at this figure.
Through the success of the French “feminine press”, fashion became increasingly associated with femininity in the late 18th century. Men's interest in fashion was simultaneously being deemed foppish and effeminate both by people critical of fashion and those favourable to the industry. The fashionable man was undeniably transgressing the idea of a stable...
two-sex gender difference that was slowly being culturally established in Europe during the course of the 18th century. For example, extraordinary and exaggerated dress and manners were part of the Macaroni persona in England during this period. They performed a different notion of masculine identity in terms of gender, sexuality and class. Fashion historian Peter McNeil argues that stable notions of national identity were also challenged by the figure of the Macaroni. The Nordic print-sheet certainly supports this claim; the translated titles suggest that this male persona existed regardless of, or even in active disregard of, national borders. These prints established the Macaroni, the Sprättbök, the Petit Maître, the Spradebassen and the Spark as local versions of one and the same type of man. Their effeminate representation seems to stress the idea that a fashionable man was essentially a cosmopolitan international type, foreign to domestic tradition.

In any case, the discussion on desired masculinities did itself have a certain tradition in Scandinavia. The Royal Theatre in Stockholm mounted a play in 1737 called Svenska Sprättbök (The Swedish Spark), written by the diplomat and politician Carl Gyllenborg. It deals with the influences of French language and manners in Stockholm court circles. The title page of the theatre manuscript includes a satirical image of a dressed-up man surrounded by nice objects, for example an ornate table with a tea set and cake-dish, as well as a mirror and utensils, possibly from a necessaire. The image is a mix of pictorial conventions from portraits, satires and trade cards that concur to represent a man caught up in the heterogeneous patterns of fashionable consumption.

Gyllenborg stated that he was inspired by a French play by Louis de Boissy: Le Français à Londres (1727), but the discussion on issues of male fashionability, nationality and class had existed for some time in Scandinavia. The Danish/Norwegian author and playwright Ludvig Holberg published Jean de France eller Hans Frandsen, a play with a similar theme in 1723. Then swänska Argus, the most influential weekly paper in Sweden in the 1730s, published and authored by Olof von Dalin also discussed the appearance of “Sprättbök” in Sweden. Most of the texts in this publication are, however, translated from the English magazines The Tatler and The Spectator. Thus, even though the Swedish term was coined in the 1720s, translated from the English, it is difficult to say if a living Swedish Sprättbök ever walked the streets of Stockholm. In any case, they surely were influential as a cultural notion that points to the period’s flow of ideas from France and England to the Scandinavian countries. A “sprättbök” was conceived of as a Swedish man that was so attracted to French manners, language, and fashion that he abandoned and even disdained his national background. The term thus refers primarily to a critical discourse on French cultural influence, and to on-going negotiations about what it would mean to be Swedish in the early 18th century in terms of language, manners and cultural identity.

It has been observed by Swedish historian Jonas Liliequist that the fashionable man was conceived of as an un-manly and less virile
type of man and was subsequently used in the public debate in Sweden as a rhetorical counterpart to male virtue. In the course of the 18th century, the positive attitudes towards men’s expressions of emotion and sentiment through refined speech and manners changed in favor of a new type of male respectability that relied on the disdain of the frivolous as well as the display of strength and control of both body and soul. Liliequist argues that the early modern conceptions of unmanliness in Sweden are related to a lack of physical and mental strength, in contrast to southern Europe where these ideas are more associated with an insufficiently potent and penetrative sexuality. Considering the caricatured Sprätthök-male in the light of these theories, it may be suggested that this man would be disqualified from both Northern and Southern manliness. Neither athlete, nor seducer, the mocked fashionable man nevertheless attracted a European audience, from France to Scandinavia, acting in the role of a counter-type.

Conclusion
Towards the end of the 18th century, fashionability was increasingly coded in terms of national and gender identity in Europe. Print culture bears traces of the changing masculine ideals, which is manifested in the versatility of the motif of the fashionable man who appeared in various guises throughout the Continent. Collecting satirical prints can certainly also be considered a practice that was part of the type of masculinity that Niclas Holterman seems to have aimed at, looking at his portrait, influenced by English romanticist aesthetics, and judging from the archives that reveal how he organized a comfortable life for himself. Holterman’s collection of European caricatures attests that the audience for visual satire of social and political affairs extended beyond the domestic groups of readers. This perspective opens up a field of studies on the transnational communication of caricatures – how did the English artists, printers and publishers conceive of their overseas audiences?

Even though the local production in Sweden was small in scale, European print sheets, not least caricatures, contributed to Nordic print culture through imports. The social ideas and criticisms that are present in the images were at the same time exported along with the material images. It is, however, important to see that the migration of the images did change their meaning in various ways. The Swedish and Danish titles of the print “Ah Dieu, le vent m’emporte” suggest that the integration of prints into Nordic cultural contexts was not a passive reception but rather a knowing act of adaptation to local conditions and traditions. Matching the image of a slender man in tight-fitting dress with the word Sprätthök brings the domestic Swedish satire (of English origin) that mocked men who adhered to fashionable foreign trends, together with a Continental critique of supposedly French aristocratic ideals. Together with the Danish and English titles, the words and the image merged into an eclectic caricature that spoke of both the local Swedish and global European debates concurrently. The print sheet’s additive kind of visual language where every element seems to be a copy of a copy of a copy, without an original, manifests traces of the transnational migrations that characterized early modern print culture in Europe.

Notes
1 Donald (2002) as well as Rasche and Wolter, eds. (2003) are exhibition catalogues whose focus is primarily on caricatures from England, France and Germany. Porterfield and Contogouris, eds. (2011) and Kaenel and Reichardt, eds. (2007) are volumes that strive to spread and broaden the geographical address of research within the area of caricatures and fashion plates in European print culture.
3 Cederlöf, ed. (1997); Frykenstedt (1972), 105–137; Frykenstedt (1974); Hökby, Cederlöf and Olausson, eds. (1990); Laurin (1907–08), 103–108.
4 Fehr, ed. (1822), Linné (1930) 109–125, Laurin (1907–08), 108.
7 Söderpalm, ed. (2000).
8 Hulmark (1915), 98.
9 The National Archives, Stockholm: The Hedensö archive, Nr 115–120.
10 The National Archives, Stockholm: The Hedensö archive, Nr 115, Nr 120.
11 The National Archives, Stockholm: The Hedensö archive, Nr 119.
13 The National Archives, Stockholm: The Hedensö archive, Nr 119.
14 The National Archives, Stockholm: The Hedensö archive, Nr 114.
15 Carlander (1889), Vol.I, 342. Please note that Car-
lander incorrectly calls Holterman “Nils” instead of Niclas, and declares that his mansion was called “Torsby” instead of Forsby.

16 Donald (1996); George (1967); Wood (1994).
19 Krohn (1962), 152.
20 See for example the image drawn by Le Clerc: “Redingotte en Bakmann ou à coqueluchon” in Gallerie des Modes et Costumes Français. 20e, Cahier des Costumes Français, 14e Suite d’Habilllèmes à la mode en 1779 (1779) Paris.
26 von Dalin (1732–1734).
28 Karlsson (2007), 60–79.
29 Liliequist (2004), 34–51.
30 Liliequist (1999), 73–94.

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