

Renaissance Dress, Cultures of Making and the Period Eye

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“In the visual properties of a work of art one can identify cultural visual skills.” Michael Baxandall¹

I

This article asks how we can accommodate the extraordinary importance of clothes to create culture and a visual public in Renaissance symbolic practices. Both everyday dress and imaging practices were humanly crafted complexes of form – and this now serves as definition of art. Many people in this period composed a careful three-dimensional image of themselves through dress, and at far greater expense than any pictorial image. No printed guide for tailoring existed until Juan de Alcega published his *Tailor’s Pattern Book* in 1589 in Spain. This, as much as the manuscripts which preceded or followed it, lacked detailed instructions and followed basic geometrical shapes. Every pattern taken from a person or a book to create an actual garment therefore differed. It resulted from a creative process of embodied cognition as the process of tailoring turned on an intuitive sense of bodily proportions and how dress shaped them. It was deeply sculptural and interlinked cognitive as much as somatic awareness of how clothes and accessories would come alive on the body of a wearer through their properties, such as weight or color, and through movement.²

¹ University Library Cambridge, *Baxandall Papers*, Typescript 2002 with an intended foreword for a new edition of Baxandall’s book on the German Limewood Sculptors, p.4. I wish to thank members of the “Materialized Identities-project”, and in particular Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkhardt, Christine Göttler and Stefan Hanss for discussing a previous draft of this article with me, as well as Jenny Tiramani for many conversations.

² I am grateful to Melanie Braun for discussing this subject with me at a workshop to re-create historical patterns, as well as to Hilary Davidson, who likewise re-constructs historical dress. Juan de Alcega, *The Tailor’s Pattern Book, 1589*, facsimile edition ed. by J.L. Nevinson, New York: Costume & Fashion Press, 1999; Katherine Barich, Marion McNealy, *Drei Schnittbücher: Three Austrian Master Tailor Books of the 16th Century*, Nadel & Faden Press 2015 – this is an edition of surviving manuscripts which focuses on gowns. For

It therefore comes as little surprise that Benvenuto Cellini explained that after making the “soul” (the core form for casting in bronze) of his Perseus he “clothed this with those earths he had prepared” (*io vestivo il mio Perseo di quelle terre che io avevo acconce*).³ This sense of tailoring as akin to sculpting and sculpting as resonant with dressing was embedded in a culture whose entire economy and everyday life were tightly interlinked with ever increasing spectrum of textiles. "More than anything", Paul Hills concludes for Venetian painters and their patrons, "it was the dress they wore and touched - their camouflage and sign of distinction - that (they) became cognitively attuned to color texture, to *colorite*."⁴ Fabrics inspired the multi-textured and polychrome effect of sculptural surfaces – Michael Baxandall describes these as “resonant with the marvellous gamut of Renaissance textile surface – satin, damask, camlet, velvet, silk, taffeta, tabby, brocade”.⁵

Renaissance dress can therefore be thought of in turn as a form of polychrome sculpting thick in sensorial and affective experience. This relates to an experience of materials as much as the shapes that were achieved. Many men spent part of the day to get laced into tight fitting hose (the leg garment) as well as doublets (the upper garment) and watched their waste-line. The sculpted cod-piece, a mock erect phallus, came in many different shapes and sizes and was frequently unfastened during the day. Many forms of work as well as sports and military activities were carried out in voluminous, pleated shirt-sleeves. Farthingales greatly extended women in space.⁶ John Donne’s Elegie to his Mistress would turn the prolonged act of

concepts of embodied cognition in relation to aesthetics see John Michael Krois, *Bildkörper und Körperschema*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2011.

³ Michael W. Cole, *Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002, 53.

⁴ Paul Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass, 1250-1550*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1999, p.185.

⁵ Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1980, p.42.

⁶ Many aspects of what I would term body sculpting through dress in the period are wonderfully illustrated in Denis Bruna ed., *Fashioning the Body: An Intimate History of the Silhouette*, New Haven: Yale University Press 2015, published for the BARD Graduate Centre.

undressing layer after layer of dress into an erotic act culminating in the fantasy that his hand might eventually reach her nude body as a “new-found-land” of America.⁷ The body, bodily memory and aspects of subjectivity thus were known and experienced in relation to matters of dress.⁸

Garments from this period therefore need to be seen as astonishing achievements in skill, imagination and dexterity in a creative response to the particular properties of a wide range of materials. From 1540 onwards, for instance, fine slashed shoes in paper-thin leather were made in ways which now can only be achieved through lazer-cutting techniques.⁹ These were expensive, specialised items. Large knitted woollen headwear, by contrast, became one of the most affordable fashion items for men and women. Their felting enabled interesting shapes if shrinkage was carefully calculated. Urban magistrates could be pro-active to stimulate such trades, as when Nuremberg’s councillors in September 1520 decided to “write to the Lords in Aachen”, to find out “in Cologne whether they can get someone to start the trade with silk and cap-making and make them hopeful of good profits”.¹⁰ Two years later, the Nuremberg artist Albrecht Dürer used a monumental woodcut to depict his friend Ulrich Varnbüler as life-like as possible with one of these attention fetching, tangibly three dimensional caps.¹¹ // Insert Pl.1. By permission of the National Gallery Washington // Dürer once designed his own shoes and keenly shopped for dress items. Shapes, textures and beautiful dyes fascinated him most. In March 1521, Dürer thus spent over three florins on five silk girdles in Antwerp, as well as more than five florins on precious silk cloth. He bought trims, several pairs of gloves for women, a large beret for the ageing humanist Willibald Pirckheimer, a partlet in deep red dye

⁷ Elegy XIX; This was memorably performed by Jenny Tiramani in the National Portrait Gallery on 25 October 2013.

⁸ For a general exploration see Herman Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body: Perspectives on Gesture in the Dutch Republic*, Zwolle: Waanders Publishers 2004.

⁹ Ulinka Rublack, ‘Matter in the Material Renaissance’, *Past & Present* (2013) 219 (1): 41-85.

¹⁰ Theodor Hampe, *Nürnberger ratsverlässe über Kunst und Künstler im Zeitalter der Spätgotik und Renaissance*, Vienna: Karl Graeser 1904, vol.1, 24.9.1520.

¹¹ Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Dürer*, London: Phaidon, 2012, p.345.

for another male friend, two purses for women, and a decorated scarlet beret for a three-year-old boy.¹² Dress and dress accessories as much as or even more so than painting were at the forefront of visual styles.

This passion for dress was part of a world in which the sensation of subtle crafting was increasingly valued alongside the awe inspired by the intrinsic value of traditional luxury materials. Many in this society could read monetary value off appearances – descriptions of royal, imperial or papal entries typically specified the magnificence of key figures through the fantastic wealth of their jewellery, silk garments or fabrics made from gold-or silver-thread. This viewing convention identified traditional treasure and corresponded to a medieval ideal of “luminescent splendour”, which was as central to sacred art as it was to embodiments of secular power. Gold mosaics, glass windows, bejewelled reliquaries and silk vestments were all part of a world which linked profuse, light-reflecting ornamentation to a sense that light induced spiritual illumination and symbolised God if it animated and continuously transformed surfaces.¹³ Courtly dress in just the same way tried to maximise light-reflecting properties of its fabrics. Writers emphatically dwelt on these gleaming appearances from the twelfth century onwards to describe that they were brighter than daylight and even shone at night.¹⁴ By the fifteenth century, the body of a Sforza prince was still described in these categories – as polished, splendid or lustrous and thus comparable to a “living sun”. This impression was the effect of unparalleled conspicuous consumption at the time, so much so that Galeazzo Maria Sforza owned sleeves which had over three thousand pearls and forty

¹² Hans Rupprich ed., *Dürer. Schriftlicher Nachlass*, vol.3, Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft 1969, p.167.

¹³ See Herbert L. Kessler’s crucial book *Seeing Medieval Art*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2011, here 175.

¹⁴ Carolin Oster, *Die Farben höfischer Körper: Farbattributierung und höfische Identität in mittelhochdeutschen Artus- und Tristanromanen*, Berlin: De Gruyter 2012, 66.

rubies sewn into them. Even spurs and shoes could be adorned with gold and light-reflecting substances.¹⁵

The new valuation of craft, by contrast, implied a higher evaluation of how materials were transformed. Peter Martyr in 1521 thus praised the artistry of the people of Yucatan and Mexico by writing to his humanist friends: “I wonder not at all the gold and gemstones, but at the skill and workmanship which far exceeds the value of the materials. I am amazed.”¹⁶ More radical followers of this bourgeois aesthetics insisted that the intrinsic value of materials was irrelevant to judge art, or even a distraction. Erasmus lectured the young John More by 1523 that “a great artist is always himself, whether he is modelling a colossal statue or a six-inch statuette (...) whether he is engraving bronze and ordinary stone or precious stones and gold”. The humanist continued his lesson: an object of “*small value* or small size” allowed one to admire the maker’s skill even more.¹⁷

These contestations over the value of matter inspired a new crafts luxury which attracted bourgeois clientele and gave specialised artisans confidence as they worked together on commissions. In relation to fabrics it is important to point out that new evaluations of craft achievement often co-existed with the traditional esteem of bright colors and luminosity. Michael Pastoureau’s notions of a “triumph of black” supported by Protestant “chromoclasm”

¹⁵ Timothy McCall, ‘Brilliant Bodies: Material Culture and the Adornment of Men in North Italy’s Quattrocento Courts’, *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. 16, 1 (Fall 2013), 445-490.

¹⁶ Carina Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe: the Ottomans and Aztecs*, New York, Cambridge University Press 2011, 111: “Si quid unquam honoris humana ingenia in huiusmodi artibus sunt adepta, principatum iure merito ista consequentur. Aurum, gemmasque non admiror quidem, qua industria, quove studio superet opus materiam, stupeo.”

¹⁷ *The Correspondence of Erasmus, 1523 to 1524*, transl. R.A.B. Mynors, A. Dalzell, annotated J.M.Estes, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1992, 129, my emphasis. The Middle Ages had already evaluated small objects in devotional contexts, but they had not been of small value. A particularly interesting study of the material iconography of precious small objects is Simone Husemann, *Pretiosen persönlicher Andacht: Bild- und Materialsprache spätmittelalterlicher Reliquienkapseln (Agnus Dei) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Materials Perlmutter*, Weimar: VDG 1999.

do not adequately describe sixteenth century dress aesthetics.¹⁸ The Nuremberg patrician Magdalena Behaim, for instance, exclusively reported on the bright pink clothes worn by some men at a Lutheran wedding in 1591: “Paulus Scheuerl, Benedict and Hans Imhoff wore three beautiful completely new saflor-colored silk-satin breeches and doublets with golden trims; at the after-wedding event Anthony Tucher wore the same kind of breeches and doublet.” Then followed an astonishing sentence: “And so the old world has renewed.”¹⁹ Colors set off entire affective atmospheres.

The Behaim–Paumgartners of Nuremberg traded North Italian fabrics and hence were at the centre of a highly sensitized world of color appreciation in advanced cities. New dye tones must have created one of the foremost visual experiences in this period. The spectrum of dyes considerably widened throughout the sixteenth century, building on Asian and Mediterranean knowledge, new recipe collections and the greater diversity of available plants through New World trade, whose rinds, roots, berries, leaves or flowers formed the materials of vigorous experiments to create new medicines, pigments and dyes.²⁰ Colonial plants were increasingly acclimatised in botanical gardens and tested for their properties.²¹ Working creatively with organic vegetable, animal and mineral matter to make colors and fasten them on fabrics not least could deeply fascinate contemporaries because it promised to mimetically achieve vibrant natural colors in the world they knew and, decade by decade, knew much more off.

¹⁸ Michel Pastoureau, *Black: the History of a Color*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2009.

¹⁹ „Ist also die alte welt wider ney worn“, Georg Steinhausen ed., *Briefwechsel Balthasar Paumgartners des jüngerer mit seiner Gattin Magdalena, geb. Behaim (1582-1598)*, Stuttgart: Schriften des literarischen Vereins 1895, p.150.

²⁰ Aspects of this process are explored in Alexander Engel, *Farben der Globalisierung: Die Entstehung moderner Märkte der Farbstoffe 1500-1900*, Frankfurt-on-Main: Campus 1990; Judith H. Hofenk de Graaff et al eds., *The Colourful Past: The Origins, Chemistry and Identification of Natural Dyestuffs*, London: Archetype 2004; Jo Kirby et al eds., *Natural Colorants for Dyeing and Lake Pigments: Practical Recipes and their Historical Sources*, London: Archetype 2014; Emil Ernst Ploss, *Ein Buch von alten Farben: Technologie der Textilfarben im Mittelalter*, Heidelberg: Heinz Moos 1962.

²¹ On the long-term development see Agustí Nieto-Galan, ‚Between Craft Routines and Academic rules: Natural Dyestuffs and the „Art“ of Dyeing in the Eighteenth Century‘, in Ursula Klein, E.C. Spary ed., *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe: Between Market and Laboratory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2010, 321-353, here p.345.

They thereby participated in an enlivening process of making which replicated God's own art.²²

The importance given to such experiments registers most impressively in the confidence with which the Venetian Gioanventura Rosetti introduced the first specialised and astonishingly comprehensive printed manual of dyeing and leather tanning in 1548 to benefit “moderns” with hundreds of recipes.²³ Rosetti championed the dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of everyone against a culture of hidden secrets for the benefit of a few and was clearly inspired by evangelical ideas which at the time circulated in Venice:

You must know that this is a work of Charity that I bequeath for the public benefit, and which has been imprisoned for a great number of years in the tyrannical hands of those who kept it hidden and thus subject to Evangelical indignation, wherein it is written that nothing shall remain hidden that has once been revealed, nor concealed so that it is not evident. Wherein sweetest Readers I cajole you not to be subject to apostolic censure by dulling the virtue that the glorious GOD has wanted that men be endowed with, and for their comfort you can prosper and use it for the benefit of everyone.²⁴

Rosetti worked in the Venetian Arsenal – its ship-building complex – and yet he claimed to have collected and even paid for recipes from as far as Syria during a period of sixteen years, so that Venetian “coffee houses and workshops” would “expand with the growth of masters who will wish to exercise these arts”.²⁵ His book went through two further editions within just

²² The wider trajectory of such perceptions is explored in Karin Leonhard, *Bildfelder: Stilleben und Naturstücke des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Oldenbourg: Akademieverlag 2013; see also Twarin Baker, Sven Dupré, Sachiko Kusukawa, Karin Leonhard eds., *Early Modern Color Worlds*, Early Science and Medicine, (20/2015).

²³ *The Plictho of Gioanventura Rosetti*, ed. by S.M. Edstein, H.C. Borghetty (1548 edition), MIT Press 1969.

²⁴ *Plictho*, p.89.

²⁵ *Plictho*, p. 90.

twenty years, followed by another two editions by 1672, doubtlessly encouraging comparative testing and categorising, as well as commerce.

The *Plictho* was a leap in the dissemination of knowledge: a small number of short recipes for dyes had been incorporated in a Dutch and a German publication by 1532, and the latter limited itself to instruction of how to dye linen and yarn in brown, blue and red.²⁶ Rosetti was incomparably more comprehensive, because he distinguished not only between a large range of color but between different shades (“rusty red”, “to make green over azure”, “half scarlet” “faded blue”), supplied a great variety of recipes, such as eight recipes in sequence for a “very beautiful black”, included many types of matter to be dyed, ranging from fustian to silk and leather to feathers, and referenced particular traditions, such as Venetian expertise in dyeing scarlet or instructions on how “to dye in crimson color according to Master Raimondo of Florence.” Finally, Rosetti’s recipes were usually detailed by the standards of the time. This underscored his claim that quality dyeing was an “intricate” and indeed “ingenious art”. It was, he argued, “fit for acute intellects and requires as much diligence as any other (art) that can be mentioned”.²⁷

His recipe for dyeing berets in scarlet gives us a sense of the type of sophistication Dürer might have delighted in when he bought a beret in Antwerp, and of the advanced chemistry through the use of minerals involved in some recipes:

To dye berets in scarlet

First you take 4 ounces roche alum for each pound of berets, and make it boil two hours.

Then you will take the berets and wash them in running water. Wash them well and heat them well upon a table. Then you take fresh water and put it into the fire and make it be

²⁶ *Allerley Mackel und flecken auß Gewand ... zu bringen*, Meintz: Jordan 1532.

²⁷ *Plictho*, p.91.

sizzling hot. Then you take a small cauldron of strong water with bran and fresh water. You will take the berets and let them be fortified in said water and then take the grain and put it in and make it blossom. Then throw in the berets and turn them over often. Then cool them so that they be finished to your liking. Then you will take a bucket of fresh water in a cauldron. Make it sizzle and then you take the bran, that is two small handfuls, and then two other handfuls of dry bran and throw them into the said water. Then you take one quarto of sal niter, and one quarto of arsenic for each pound of berets, that is, one quarter of an ounce and dissolve in a little vessel with the sizzling water. Then you take half a bucket of water and make it sizzle, and then take 4 ounces of burnt alum of lees, and put it into the said water. As it raises the boil pull it away. Take two dippers of said water and put it in the first. As the said water begins to boil, take the said arsenic and sal niter and throw it into the said water and mix well. Then take your berets, and turn them over and over inside with a stick and often make them cool.²⁸

German manuscripts and books in which we find recipes are called “little books of art” (*Kunstbüchlein*) or “books of trying things out” (*Probierbüchlein*). They point to widely distributed practices of making which engulfed craft specialists as well as lay-men and -women during this period in a sense of renewal or renovation in relation to quotidian concerns of how to foster well-being and how to dress. These concerns, moreover, could be experienced as connected, as when particular colors were worn or painted to stimulate well being or protect oneself from bad humours. The Augsburg merchant Hans Fugger in 1569 thus went to great effort to source a particular “subtle” tone “burning with color” from a widow near Landshut to decorate his dance hall and enliven people in civilised ways.²⁹ Black, conversely, was worn at the same time by a young Fugger employee to protect himself from

²⁸ *Plictho*, p.109. Amy Butler Greenfield’s *A Perfect Red: Empire, Espionage, and the Quest for the Color of Desire* focuses on cochineal, New York: HarperCollins 2005.

²⁹ *The Correspondence of Hans Fugger, 1566-1594*, ed. by Christl Karnehm, Munich 2003, vol.1, 22.3.1569, to Hans Jörg von Preysing in Landshut as his intermediary.

emotional turmoil in relation to his family.³⁰ Colors were seen to affect body and soul, so that their re-creation in specific tones in turn enlarged the range of emotional possibilities, in short: how to exist or to extend oneself in the world. They were, as Spike Bucklow argues, not necessarily ephemeral, fashionable commodities to further commerce but could be valued for intrinsic properties.³¹

All this implies that we need to re-orient our research agenda to include clothing and colors as signal media of symbolic communication, as integral to emotional experiences and innovative crafting in the sixteenth century to fully understand visual appreciation and skills. Yet material historians grapple with the dilemma that most early modern dress is lost, has changed color and, if preserved and displayed in museums, is presented static, with very low and uniform lighting. I argue that historical reconstruction can therefore aid an endeavour to understand the complexity as much as sensuous vibrancy of early modern dress. In this article, the reconstruction of a particular garment serves to explore how Matthäus Schwarz, head accountant of the Fugger merchant firm and one of this period's foremost creators of fashion, used dress as politicised visual act. Schwarz's use of complex dress-items to generate visual interest underlines that aesthetics in this period was not just the realm of the genius artist, but informed by that far more inclusive culture created by a larger group of urban citizens bound together in networks of material knowledge, who made decisions about how to express themselves through their attire, gestures and comportment and as customers drove on craft innovation. The article focuses on dress Schwarz commissioned to make an impression at the Augsburg Imperial Diet in 1530. This was one of Germany's most precarious political summits during a period of religious divides.

³⁰ Fugger; Ulinka Rublack, Maria Hayward eds., *The First Book of Fashion: The Books of Clothes of Matthäus and Veit Konrad Schwarz of Augsburg*, London: Bloomsbury 2015, p.352, 1557.

³¹ Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets in the Middle Ages*, London: Marion Boyars Publishers 2009, 22-23.

II

Matthäus Schwarz was born in the South-German Imperial city of Augsburg in 1497. In 1520, aged 23, he began compiling 137 water-color images of himself dressed retrospectively from when he was a baby to when he considered himself an old man. He called this project his “*Little Book of Clothes*” and it presents an unparalleled historical record of early modern fashion.³² Schwarz was a local wine-merchant’s son, and aged sixteen he travelled to Venice to learn the art of accounting. He lived in the Foundation of the Germans at the Rialto Bridge in which the Fuggers rented lodgings for their agents, and reported that he learnt book-keeping rather leisurely on a gondola in the lagoon. Just as Dürer had used his Venetian trips to buy jewels, dress and feathers, so Matthäus Schwarz would have been fascinated by the global “wordly goods” and the cultures of making which enriched this Renaissance city. Venice excelled in the production of red scarlet dyes and was the first European city with shopkeepers who specialised in selling coloring materials - aptly named *vendicolori*. These drew on imports from the mining and metal processing areas of the German lands, especially azurite and green copper, and made possible tremendous variety in coloring agents, to provide a "nexus for communication among all types of artisans who used colors, fostering technological innovation".³³ It is easy to imagine that discerning customers interested in dress would have been fascinated by their wares.

After his return to Augsburg, Schwarz’s life became linked to his service to the Fugger merchants. This family had risen from the modest fortunes of an immigrant weaver in Augsburg to unprecedented wealth and power through their loyalty to the Habsburgs and to Catholicism. Jacob Fugger the Rich is the only other adult person who features in the entire

³² Rublack/Hayward, *The First Book of Fashion*

³³ Jo Kirby, Susan Nash, Joanna Cannon eds., *Trade in Artists’ Materials: Markets and Commerce in Europe to 1700*, London: Archetype 2010, p.249.

Book of Fashion – in 1516, as he dictates to Matthäus Schwarz who has just been entrusted with the accounting for the firm, aged nineteen. From now on, Schwarz's aesthetic judgement, commercial acumen as well as diplomatic skills would be trained by procuring what he called "subtle merchandise" (*subtille kaufmannschaft*) for the Fugger firm, ranging from silks, damasks, velvets, "gold and silver cloth" from Venice, precious stones and spices to dye-stuff or rhubarb for medicinal purposes.³⁴ The Fugger's involvement in mining was at the heart of their success, and Schwarz himself sat not just in the company's writing chamber but rode to the mining Tyrolian town of Schwaz on business, and thus would have been intimately familiar with particular fine pigments processed there.³⁵

Most of the images in the *Book of Clothes* date from a period of twenty years, when Schwarz was single and collaborated with Narziss Renner, a slightly younger illuminist. Schwarz invested in his promotion, social activities, sports and flirtation. Many of his outfits show how male dress was not only a tool of power-dressing to secure professional achievement and privilege, but also expressed emotional sensibilities.³⁶ One of his tight-fitting outfits aged twenty-seven, for instance, shows him in green with a heart-shaped bag in red, a red coral bracelet, and a bright scarlet bonnet.³⁷ Green was a difficult dye to achieve and fasten. The entire outfit constituted Matthäus Schwarz as young aesthete in search of love as he was about to reach full manly maturity.³⁸ // Insert Pl.2 By permission of the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Brunswick //

³⁴ Ekkehard Westermann / Markus A. Denzel eds, *Das Kaufmannsnotizbuch des Matthäus Schwarz aus Augsburg von 1548*, Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag 2011, 50-1, for Schwarz's own notes see 302-4.

³⁵ Ursula Haller, "Administrator of Painting": The Purchase and Distribution Book of Wolf Pronner (1586-1590) as a Source for the History of Painting Materials', in Kirby et al eds., *Trade*, 325-335.

³⁶ On this see Lyndal Roper, 'Tokens of affection: the meanings of love in sixteenth-century Germany', in: Dagmar Eichberger, Charles Zika eds., *Dürer and his Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998, p.155.

³⁷ *First Book*, p.280.

³⁸ Michel Pastoureau, *Green: The History of a Color*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 21014, esp. pp.75-7.

Yet, despite his sartorial efforts and widening connections it would remain impossible for Matthäus Schwarz to marry a local patrician. A principal reason for this must have been the fact that his grand-father had been elected as first Augsburg mayor by the crafts and then was executed for corruption. It is all the more significant that an undoubted success during Schwarz's life-time as accountant was to be granted his own coat-of-arms by the Habsburgs in mid-life and to manage the event which eventually must have led to this honour for his family: the Imperial Diet of Augsburg in 1530, when he was aged thirty-three. Germany at this time was part of the Holy Roman Empire, which was not a monarchy headed by a king. Instead, seven prince electors from the German lands chose an Emperor. Diets were summits which allowed princes and other political leaders to come together and discuss their concerns. Recent research stresses that rituals during these events "bound all of the participants to the reciprocal relations that were symbolically staged before the entire public" and could bring about what they represented. Ritual, comportment and other aspects of symbolic communication hence constituted politics. During the Reformation movements, its grammar and vocabulary became deeply contested.³⁹ Schwarz's dress at the Diet can thus be analysed as visual act within a chromatic politics during the age of the Reformation for which symbolic communication was key.

III

The outlines of the Diet are quickly sketched. In February 1530, Charles V. was crowned as Holy Roman Emperor by pope Clement VII in Bologna. As the snow on the Alps began to

³⁹ Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers alten Kleider: Verfassungsgeschichte und Symbolsprache des Alten Reichs*, Munich: Beck, 2008, p.20, now translated by T. Dunlap as *The Emperor's Old Clothes: Constitutional History and the Symbolic Language of the Holy Roman Empire*, Oxford: Berghahn 2015.

melt later in spring, Charles returned to Germany, leaving some of his troops behind to destroy the Florentine republic and re-install the Medici. Charles had only been once in Germany, at the very beginning of his position as Emperor, at the momentous Diet of Worms in 1521. He spoke no German, but French and some Latin.

Since 1521, religious heresy had uncontrollably spread. Martin Luther, the German reformer, remained under the Imperial ban, but built up his bastion in Saxon Wittenberg. For Charles and his advisors Germany was a land in which too many had passionately fallen into unbelieving “error”. The “only means against it”, would be that he himself would be present. It was clear to Charles’s mind that he himself remained “their sovereign, rightful and natural overlord and protector of all Christianity”. He asserted his divinely bestowed superior authority as sacred head of the Empire together with the pope.⁴⁰

The most important measure was to ensure control of the public space. Augsburg was a volatile city, and now it turned into the pop-up centre of German political and courtly life. Foreign traders arrived, as the usual prohibitions against them were discarded and they occupied designated stalls on the market. Sumptuary laws were lifted. An Imperial Diet was a commercial event, which in 1566 was estimated to add 10-15 000 people to the usual number of ca. 30,000 citizens.⁴¹ Emperor Maximilian II in 1572 issued an ordinance specifying which artisans were allowed to follow his travels and be exempt from local customs and taxes. It included six makers of trims and feathers as well as seventeen tailors. Tradesmen offered luxury wares such as purses, gloves, stockings and mirrors.⁴²

⁴⁰ Karl Brandi, *Kaiser Karl V. Werden und Schicksal einer Persönlichkeit und eines Weltreichs*, vol.2, Munich: Bruckmann, 1967, p. 260; Stollberg-Rilinger, *Des Kaisers*, pp. 93, 95.

⁴¹ Aulinger, *Rosemarie Aulinger, Das Bild des Reichstages im 16. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen, VR, 1980, pp.189; 175.

⁴² Harriet Rudolph, *Das Reich als Ereignis: Formen und Funktionen der Herrschaftsinszenierung bei Kaisereinzügen (1558-1618)*, Cologne: Böhlau 2011, 75, Fn.171.

In 1530, such excitement about shopping for luxuries mixed with fears about militancy, so much so that the town magistrate hired 400 mercenaries on its own, but then had to accept 1,000 men under Charles's command.⁴³ Chronicles report a wide-spread mood among the common folk that nobody "wanted the Emperor".⁴⁴ "Augsburg belongs to the Emperor", some were told by his violent fouriers in return, who exploded any door which was not opened to them.⁴⁵ The magistrate itself ordered to secure gates and public squares with chains, and reinforced guards during day and night in the following months.⁴⁶

Charles arrived in June, almost two months later than expected. German princes had spent weeks of entertaining themselves in the city with increasing impatience. There was more Protestant preaching, accompanied by several religious provocations and disturbances. Excrement was thrown at coats-of-arms which marked the living quarters of high ranking guests. The Protestants had noted reports of Charles's coronation in Bologna with hostility about its pompousness, which seemed as much of a mere demonstration of power as Catholic ceremonies were silly concoctions in the guise of "child's play" or a "puppet-show" to create a whole false world which had nothing to do with real faith. Lazarus Spengler, Nuremberg's Lutheran city-scribe, noted: "Our people at the imperial court inform us that his Imperial majesty ... has been crowned by the pope ... with almost inappropriate pomp (*unmessiger kostlikait*)", while the Protestant prince Philipp of Hesse received news that "everything was a ridiculous thing with the crowning ceremonies between the Emperor and pope".⁴⁷ Luther opened his printed address to the clergy who had gathered in Augsburg for the Imperial Diet by pointing out that, even if he were allowed to be present, he should be of no use as he

⁴³ *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert, vol.23, Die Chronik von Clemens Sender von den ältesten Zeiten der Stadt bis zum Jahr 1536*, ed. by Friedrich Roth, (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1894), p. 253.

⁴⁴ For this and the following see Stollberg-Rillinger, *Des Kaisers*, 101-36.

⁴⁵ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Kaiser Karl V.*, vol. 8.1, ed. Wolfgang Steglich, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1970, p. 599.

⁴⁶ Friedrich Roth, *Augsburger Reformationgeschichte*, 4 vols., Munich: T. Ackermann, 1911, vol.3, p. 330.

⁴⁷ *Reichstagsakten*, p.592; p.599.

“really did not care about all the splendour and dealings”.⁴⁸ ?? Insert Pl.3 here. By permission of the National Gallery Washington //

IV

Charles V entered Augsburg on a particularly hot day in an unusually warm year. According to the order of entry Charles had first issued, he as Emperor would ride under the new, splendid cloth of gold canopy embroidered with the Imperial Eagle. Ferdinand would be on his right and Campeggio, the papal legate, on his left. The canopy was a sacred textile which conferred majesty, constituted a symbolic order and communicated through its sensuous appeal through its extraordinary luminosity. Such canopies were always used in the most significant church feasts, for instance to carry the host in Corpus Christi processions. The prince electors therefore made clear that this order was unacceptable. In the end, the electors of Mainz and Cologne rode in advance of Charles below the cloth of gold. Ferdinand and the papal legate were at either side but not beneath the canopy – Campeggio uncomfortably on a donkey to demonstrate humility. Color, ceremonial, performances hence were politics which mattered rather than a cultural sphere apart from “real politics”. What the empire itself was needed to be staked out by symbolic means.⁴⁹

The pressing question remained who could be convinced to customarily greet the entry. Augsburg’s intensely nervous and internally divided magistrate sent out men to knock at every house and ask citizens to take part in the ritual procession which led out of the city to the bridge over the river Lech. Clemens Sender, a Catholic chronicler, noted that about thousand artisans, “mercenary-like folk cobbled together from all guilds” attended, alongside

⁴⁸ Martin Luther, *Vermahnung an die geistlichen versamlet auff dem Reichstag zu Augsburg, Anno 1530*, Wittenberg: H. Lufft, 1530, p. 2: „doch nichts nutze da sein kundte/ als an dem / inn solcher pracht und gescheffte nichts gelegen sein würde“.

⁴⁹ Stolberg-Rillinger, *Des Kaisers*, p.15.

the clan of the Fugger merchant company with thirty-two “splendid” men as well as the town’s most honourable families. Sender continued. “As long as Augsburg has existed, there has never been so much foreign folk from so many nations”. Among the two-hundred foreign princes and potentates were Africans and Arabs alongside high-ranking noblemen from Hungary to Alsace “in all sorts of dress” – a visual and aural splendour with trumpets and drums which seemed to almost “echoed across the globe”.⁵⁰

The Emperor himself immediately showed that he wished to restore Catholic ceremonies and force everyone to partake in them. Protestant preachers soon had to leave the town, service were stopped, mass once more celebrated everywhere and instantly after his arrival, on the 16th of June, the feast of Corpus Christi was enchanted in its ceremonial solemnity as a feast for those representing the Empire. Only that there now was a sudden lack in participation. The Protestant princes did not attend. None of the guilds attended or carried candles, as they were meant to. Merely one-hundred male and female citizens were present.⁵¹

In this politics of presence and spectacle, non-attendance remained the most vocal point of resistance against the Emperor’s symbolic directorship, which always presumed a unity of secular and spiritual governance. Every citizen was forced to attend the oath of loyalty on the 27th of June. A censorship commission prevented any printing of evangelical matter. Street violence remained routine, despite draconian measures by the Spanish. During the first ten weeks a total of 164 people were executed, among them a total of forty local men and women. The magistrate was paralyzed by the question of whether it feared the reaction of the Emperor more than that of the common man.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert, vol.23, Die Chronik von Clemens Sender von den ältesten Zeiten der Stadt bis zum Jahr 1536*, ed. by Friedrich Roth , Leipzig: Hirzel, 1894, p. 262.

⁵¹ Roth, *Augsburger*, p.337.

⁵² Roth, *Augsburger*, p.339; 343, 345, 346, 348.

At the Diet itself, Charles attempted to avoid any open aggression with Protestants – the directive was to calmly reject their demands and negotiate. A chair with cloth of gold ritually constituted his space of distinction. Gold, jewels and pearls distinguished his ceremonial vestments as he enfeoffed the electors with their privileges. The Catholic chronicler Clemens Sender followed exactly the aesthetics of reading for treasure and the very costliness of precious materials when he reports that all this was “done in the most precious manner, as has never been witness before, one has estimated that the crown and imperial dress is worth more than three times thousand florins”.⁵³

The most important remained to secure Ferdinand’s election as king. To prepare Ferdinand’s exceptional position, Charles used their presence in Augsburg to first enfeoff his brother ceremonially archduke of Austria on the 5th of September. This crucially included Ferdinand’s right to alter the status of anyone in the German lands, to ennoble citizens such as Matthäus Schwarz and grant coats-of-arms. As before the election in 1519, the Fuggers provided the credit which the Habsburgs passed on to German prince electors in sealed linen sacks filled with hard coin. Now the Habsburgs needed the Fuggers’ support for Ferdinand election as king. By the end of 1530, Ferdinand himself incurred debts amounting to nearly one million florins at the Fugger, a quarter of which was covered by their rights to income from Charles’s feudal rents in the Kingdom of Naples, collected in cash on mules from towns and villages in Calabria.⁵⁴

⁵³ Aulinger, *Reichstag*, p. 299, “*auff das allerkostlichst, dergleichen nie gesehen ist worden. man hat diese krone geschetzt mit samt den anderen kaiserlichen klaidern me dan trei mal hundert tausendt gulden werdt zu sein.*“

⁵⁴ *Kaufmannsnotizbuch*, this included transferring an annual pension of 12,000 ducats to the widowed sister of Charles and Ferdinand, Mary of Hungary, see 81-83, 376-7; on relationship between Fugger and Ferdinand see also Mark Häberlein, *Die Fugger: Geschichte einer Augsburger Familie (1367-1650)*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006, pp. 82-87.

The ceremony in September took place in nearby Wellenburg, which was in the possession of the powerful cardinal Matthäus Lang. It was once more staged to be exceptionally splendid and showy – not least through the appearance of the court giant and gnome together on a camel. It used the wider entourage with great effect to demonstrate the international reach of Charles’s power. Ferdinand was dressed in a scarlet red arch-ducal mantel with ermine and matching bonnet.⁵⁵ Here was the glory of a dynamic world empire, which hunts, tournaments and other entertainments had likewise demonstrated during the past months and for which Charles had brought 200 Spanish hunting dogs.⁵⁶

The Protestant princes left Augsburg before the Diet’s decisions were read out in November, so as to avoid having to accept a “rotten peace” and consent to disputed articles. Augsburg itself refused to accept the Diet’s decisions and chose to compensate the Emperor with payments.⁵⁷ Even as Charles left – attired in the same dress as he had come – he ordered a man to be executed in front of the town-hall for “rumouring”.⁵⁸

V

“Presence meant acceptance”, we can therefore sum up the logic of these politics with Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, for: “whoever took part in a public, symbolic-ritual act demonstrated his accord and showed that he would keep to the expectations connected to it (the event) in future”.⁵⁹ It was an order in which bodily appearance mattered in addition to carefully calculated ritual in an age of increasing complexity and decreasing consent.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Aulinger, *Reichstag*, p.344, fn.9.

⁵⁶ Roth, *Augsburger*, p.338, Sender, *Chroniken*, p.267.

⁵⁷ Heinrich Lutz, *Conrad Peutinger: Beiträge zu einer politischen Biographie*, Augsburg: Brigg 1967, 315.

⁵⁸ Roth, *Augsburger*, p.350.

⁵⁹ Stolberg-Rillinger, *Des Kaisers*, p.11.

⁶⁰ Stolberg-Rillinger, *Des Kaisers*, p.15.

Everyone's presence among even the citizenry in turn mattered, in particular if they visually expressed their consent. This is exactly what Matthäus Schwarz chose to do and how we must understand the politics of his ensemble. Schwarz's outfit underlined the closeness of yellow to the brilliance of gold and the sun, which would be particularly captured through the reflection of light on the Italian patterned damask he used for the doublet, endorsing a mood of joyous splendour, and to assert his alliance to Ferdinand and the Catholic cause. He explicitly recorded that he had his clothes made to "please Ferdinand". // Insert Pl.4 By permission of the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum Brunswick //

The choice of colors worn at summits up to the 1540s was not usually influenced by heraldry. Nor was it determined by sumptuary legislation, which did not regulate dyes. Rather, color was a political sign which showed that one possessed the same *Mut*, courage and will. Wearing the same color signalled unity, belonging and power, and in order to create an impression princes coordinated in advance which color they would appear in, and handed out fabrics.⁶¹

Color displays therefore suffused political events. It was deemed important to avoid "childish or carnival-colors", whereas one or two colors appeared valiant and signalled "constancy". The Protestant Saxon princes were pro-active in coordinating their politics of color in advance of Imperial summits and nearly five per cent of expenses at their court were on dress.⁶² In March 1526, John the Steady of Saxony thus wrote to duke Heinrich of Mecklenburg to let him know that he and Philipp of Hesse had agreed on a color to wear at an Imperial Diet and requested Heinrich to follow them. He soon sent a pattern of the dress in brown for orientation, as well as the customary Lutheran device "God's word in eternity" all three would

⁶¹ Stephan Selzer, *Blau: Ökonomie einer Farbe im spätmittelalterlichen Reich*, Hiersemann, Stuttgart 2010, pp.152-3.

⁶² Selzer, *Blau*, p.124.

have embroidered on the sleeves of their entourage. Yet the Ravensburg trade company in 1507 had been unable to sell brown velvet from Milan as it was „too dark and has no gay (*fröhliche*) color“. ⁶³ To achieve a more defiant, joyful look the Ernestines told their court and nobility before the 1530 Imperial Diet to get dressed in “liver-color“, which was light red, or red-brown. Philipp of Hesse once more agreed to adopt this color, and the device. ⁶⁴

A particular problem was not to appear in the color sported by key Catholic parties, especially as it was the bulky Lutheran John of Saxony’s duty to carry the Imperial Sword in front of the Emperor at the entry. At Imperial gatherings, it was clear that black was associated with the Spanish, and otherwise at this point still associated with mourning for courts. ⁶⁵ White was impractical, and green too much linked to the notion of hope to be ideal to mark a strong stance at this summit. Red was a popular color, emphasizing vigour and a celebratory festiveness, which made it popular for elite weddings. ⁶⁶ The Catholic Bavarians had adopted a strong red frequently as court dress and continuously since 1527 – it was thus to be expected that they would wear it again at the Imperial Diet in 1530. ⁶⁷ The Fugger family and their group of 132 servants on horseback adopted a moderate ash-color for their entry, while the Augsburg merchants and civic servants (*Stadtdiener*) were dressed in liver-color, but prominently carried different colors on their sleeves.

Within this chromatic culture, light red for the key Protestant princes was an informed choice which signalled spiritedness, but avoided signalling unity with Catholics, and also avoided yellow as the most splendid color in effect apart from deep red. In 1530, the high Spanish nobility appeared in their customary black or golden velvet gowns, which exuded sumptuous

⁶³ Selzer, *Blau*, p.215.

⁶⁴ Selzer, *Blau*, 153-4, 165, with a table listing the court colors of Saxony, Hesse and Bavaria between 1477 and 1551, 158-161.

⁶⁵ Selzer, *Blau*, p.169.

⁶⁶ Selzer, *Blau*, pp.167-8.

⁶⁷ Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Munich, *Hofkleiderbuch*, Cgm 1951, Nr.182.

elegance of a traditional, restrained kind. Charles himself wore a “golden” riding-coat and his body-guards wore yellow coats, which carried his Plus Ultra device.⁶⁸ Ferdinand’s pageants likewise wore yellow velvet gowns, while the Bavarian court had been handed out dress in yellow and light red.⁶⁹

VI

Schwarz had long cultivated a special connection with Ferdinand, as he and five of his brothers had been part of the Augsburg delegation to greet the Habsburg entourage outside the city in May 1521 after the Diet of Worms, which placed Luther under the Imperial ban. Both young men were only six years apart in age – in 1521 Ferdinand was aged eighteen and Schwarz twenty-four. Schwarz was splendidly attired in long red and white ostrich feathers, the heraldic colors of the house of Austria. Jakob Fugger the Rich hosted Ferdinand and agreed their first substantial loans. Schwarz would have been part of negotiations, and indeed by June he moved on to Austrian Linz to be part of Ferdinand’s wedding festivities with Anna of Hungary – queen Mary of Hungary’s sister-in-law. Hungary was an area crucial for the Fugger’s mining interests.⁷⁰ // Insert Plates 5, 6, 7,8. With permission of the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Brunswick //

In Linz, Schwarz wore bright yellow hose – the leg garment – for the first time, and this might well have been prescribed as appropriate dress for the wider party. He had a simple bright yellow hose with a trunk hose made in 1524, and next an elaborate bright yellow hose for a business trip to the Tyrolian mining town of Hall. A spectacular archery outfit followed when he resumed the sport aged 31. In this case he proudly described the color of the outfit as

⁶⁸ The complete passage in Aulinger, *Reichstag*, p.337.

⁶⁹ Selzer, *Blau*, p.162.

⁷⁰ Hans Kellenbenz, *Die Fugger in Spanien und Portugal bis 1560*, 2 vols., Munich: Vögel 1990, vol.1, p. 66.

“golden” and the effect of the silk-satin doublet as resembling “gold thrown with dice in the sun”, *gold in der sunnen gewirfelt*, to describe its depth and luminous sensory splendour.

The June 1530 garments for the Imperial Diet of Augsburg would be the last of these bright yellow outfits Schwarz would ever commission, and as his help in financing Ferdinand’s power through his position as head accountant of the Fugger firm was most needed. Anton Fugger in these summer months was ready to enter into a contract over upper-Hungarian salines and mining with Ferdinand’s enemy Johan Zapolya. Zapolya rivalled Ferdinand as king of Hungary, and told Anton Fugger in July that negotiations were possible once they ended their financial support for Ferdinand and thus undermined his position in Hungary. Even though Fugger decided against further pursuing these options, he knew that the door remained open and that his contacts to Zapolya strengthened his position with the Habsburg in relation to the rival merchants firms, above all the Welser, and in relation to his demands that previous credits should be repaid.⁷¹

Yet by September 1530 – and presumably not least through their head-accountant’s advice – the Fuggers’ support for Ferdinand had been secured. A whole package ranging from funds for the election as king to personal loans and support against the Turks was agreed, which alongside older debts surpassed one million Rhenish florins.⁷² Charles V’s largest ever contract of mortgaged debts with the Fugger followed on the 15th October 1530. In return, Anton Fugger strengthened his role as territorial lord and fantasized about his possible future as a duke, following the model of the newly empowered Florentine Casa Medici.⁷³ At the same time, the Fuggers attempted to secure their presence in South-America and the Pacific

⁷¹ Götz, Freiherr von Pöllnitz, *Anton Fugger*, 3 vols, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958-86) vol.1, pp. 197–199; for background see Géza Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary and the Habsburg Monarchy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York: Columbia University Press 2009, 37-41.

⁷² Pöllnitz, *Fugger*, pp.206-7.

⁷³ Pöllnitz, *Fugger*, pp.207-9.

straight after Ferdinand's election in 1531. The Council of India agreed that the Fuggers should launch three voyages, each with 500 armoured men on three to four caravels. In return, three generations of the Fuggers would gain key economic, administrative and military positions in conquered territories. This was an age in which a new merchant class conducted global politics through the power of trade.⁷⁴

VII

Our only evidence for Schwarz's outfit is a small water-color image with its own imperfections (see P.4). The inscription records that the hose was made of leather, the doublet of "red-brown-scarlet" silk satin and "yellow and gold yellow damask". This means that different surface textures came together through the leather, satin and Italian patterned damask, and needed to work together in color harmony, but also generated visual interest by reflecting light in different ways. Schwarz also wore a high-necked linen shirt with wide sleeves. As accessories we see silk garters, a purse, a sword, two belts worn across each other, a necklace and a flat bonnet, as well as the short haircut the Habsburgs had just begun to favour. Because no gown could be worn in the heat of summer, the whole outfit and Schwarz's body were on view all the time. In order to perfectly achieve this delicate, well-shaped look Schwarz had also recently slimmed down – this emphasized his youth, fine judgement, moderation and enabled elegant movement to radiate honour and splendour expected in court.

In 2012, I commissioned an interpretation of this garment from the acclaimed director of the London School of Historical Dress, Jenny Tiramani, and a team of experts on Renaissance leather garments and caps. This collaborative process immediately underlined that to create

⁷⁴ These plans were not realised due to a lack of resources, Pöllnitz, *Fugger*, pp.225-7.

such an outfit was a notable achievement in aesthetic production. For a customer like Schwarz it involved coordinating a team of craft experts in different workshop for a period of months. It would draw on conversations with makers as well as knowledge about color recipes recorded in *Kunstbüchlein*, which were published especially in the mining towns as well as in Augsburg as centre of book printing. Schwarz regularly visited the Fugger mining towns and corresponded with factors, some of whom were friends and most of whom likewise shared his fascination with dress. It was common for male friendship groups at the time to attend weddings similarly dressed. This made making a further subject of conversation as it involved identifying a color for everyone to wear, unless the fabric was supplied, as well as a material, a shape and the construction. It is easy to imagine that such exchanges in the Fugger circle thrived on discussing possibilities to access particular quantities of global dyestuffs to produce especially brilliant colors. Matthäus Schwarz in fact thought of the fabric given to those attending Anton Fugger's wedding as a sensational highpoint of happiness in his life. Its bright red contrasted with the black he wore to attend Fugger's wedding in the image which concluded his Book of Clothes, aged 63.⁷⁵

This once more alludes to the fact that he and his contemporaries could regard colors as related to intrinsic qualities and powers. Strong reds were seen as carriers of life and heat, while a strong yellow was linked to gold as metal which had been given its power by the influence of the sun. Its warmth vivified, signalled persistence and united heaven and earth in the noblest way. It was refined and incorruptible. Mining treatises spelt out such cosmologies and hierarchies which placed lead with its unrefined mercury content at the bottom.⁷⁶ Such ideas were integral to an “underlying framework for artisanal practices” which saw the influence of heavens over humans and earth interconnected and the “workings of the human

⁷⁵Rublack/Hayward, *First Book of Fashion*, p.182.

⁷⁶Pamela H. Smith, ‘Making as Knowing: Craft as Natural Philosophy’, in: Pamela H. Smith, Amy R. W. Meyers, Harold Cook eds., *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 2014, 22-25.

body and its humors” as model for all natural processes. Art in turn was viewed as the “human practice of making visible the hidden powers in nature”. Minerals and humans were tempered by the movements of heaven, and humours in turn could be tempered with specific diets, such as eating butter to counteract metal vapours or warm food to ward off cold miasma.⁷⁷ A focus on color suggests that it was similarly seen to temper or protect oneself from humours – such as melancholy – or constitute specific emotional qualities, such as defiance, loyalty and cheerfulness, which radiated out to others.⁷⁸

This further explains why matter and its manipulation fascinated contemporaries to such an extent and why they inquired into the behaviour of natural materials, ranging from bark, flowers, berries and mordants to the type of water to be used (such as “fresh water from a well” or “flowing water”) and their interrelation with particular fabrics or leather. As Pamela Smith argues, we therefore might think of a final object as the

residue of an enormous number of cultural exchanges among individuals and of their belief systems, organized practices, networks, and accumulated knowledge. Objects inscribe the memory of previous generations’ innovations and cognitions, and their making requires very significant expertise. This expertise is itself the result of a “culture” that has multiple layers – of socialization within a craft, a network of workshops, patterns of consumption and production. Techniques of making tell us about knowing.⁷⁹

Such knowledge began with the sourcing materials. Leather needed to be procured from tanners with access to high quality deer skin, without ticks which left holes, in order to leave a long intact piece to work with. After scraping off the hair the hide was treated with different

⁷⁷ Smith, ‘Making as Knowing’, 25-27.

⁷⁸ Spike Bucklow, *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages*, London: Marion Boyars 2009.

⁷⁹ Smith, ‘Making as Knowing’, p.20.

chemical substances as it was alum tawed white and made extremely smooth.⁸⁰ It would then be dyed.

// Insert Pl. 9,10.11, 12

Photographs: Ulinka Rublack) //

For the reconstruction this presented us with the first challenge: how to replicate the golden yellow color so important to not only the look but its emotional and social effect at the time. The yellow was felt to be an energizing stimulant of emotion, and this vibrant effect was further heightened through the combination with red in the lining and fabric which was pulled out. In the reconstruction process, the dyeing on leather with natural substances went wrong the first time, just as Schwarz and his craftsmen would test and experiment. It was just not quite vibrant enough. At the time, such faded hues of yellow could have negative associations of weakness and coldness, which is why they were used to stigmatise Jews. Persian berries finally achieved a golden yellow through several applications, while Kurkuma particular types of onion and gorse (*Ginster*) would have provided further contemporary alternatives.⁸¹ Based on research into Eastern recipes, Rosetti's *Plictho* advised:

To make skins yellow

You will take skins that are dressed by the leaf. For each skin take one and a quarter ounces of curcuma that is pestled and two ounces of roche alum. Set to cook in two half mezzette of clear water and make it boil so much that it drops by one third. After having done this, spread out your skins and give them of this color, one hand. Set it to cool and then to dry. When it is dried, give it one more hand and do this until it gets the color you like. Having done this, give it the soap, the pole, the button of glass, and you will have a fine color.

⁸⁰ The best introduction to historical leather products and techniques is John W. Waterer, *Leather Craftsmanship*, London: G. Bell and Sons 1968. In our case such high quality leather could only be sourced from Montana.

⁸¹ Susanne B. Hohmann ed., *Das Prunkkleid des Kurfürsten Moritz von Sachsen (1521-1553) in der Dresdner Rüstkammer: Dokumentation – Restaurierung – Konservierung*, Bern: Abegg Stiftung 2008, pp.50-52.

To dye a skin that will seem of gold.

Measure litharge of gold two ounces, oil of walnuts three ounces and incorporate them well and see that the litharge is well pulverized. Make it boil so much that it drops a third, and with those two parts smear the skins on the side where the hair is, and set in the sun to dry. If the oil were too little add some more, as when incorporating you will see, and the more while you are doing the work.”⁸²

The difficulty of this process and Rossetti’s appeal to create a color one “liked” underline that successful dyes invited visual interest and admiration, embedded know-how and a commitment to aesthetic perfection in such a display. Other sixteenth-century color recipes drew on berries picked at a specific time of the year (“the later the better”) to achieve richness, clarity and beauty as well as setting out how crucial it was to patiently repeat the dyeing process. Recipes can still be replicated today.⁸³

All this suggests that the challenge to dye the leather of the hose in exactly the same tone of yellow as the doublet panes would have been recognised at the time. Yet the reconstruction also revealed that the leg garment was not as laborious to make as might have been assumed. The slits in the leather were made swiftly and required no hemming, as leather does not fray or tear if pinking tools are correctly applied. Schwarz’s garment can be compared to an extant German princely contemporary outfit in yellow, which belonged to duke Moritz of Saxony. This would have been far more demanding and time-consuming to make, as it consisted of an over-hose with different panes made in velvet, bound in silk strips and lines.⁸⁴

⁸² *The Plictho*, p.175.

⁸³ Renate Woudhuysen-Keller, *Das Farbbüchlein Codex 431 aus dem Kloster Engelberg*, 2 vols., vol.1, Bern: Abegg-Stiftung 2012 footnotes several experiments to replicate recipes.

⁸⁴ Hohmann ed., *Das Prunkkleid*; for the following analysis see Jenny Tiranian’s discussion of the reconstruction in Rublack/Hayward eds., *First Book of Fashion*, ‘Reconstructing a Schwarz Outfit’, 374-396.

Schwarz nonetheless chose to pair his relatively cheap leg garment with a complicated doublet. This imitated royal dress in its construction, as the well known *Louvre* portrait of Francis I by Jean Clouet in 1535 demonstrates. The reconstruction revealed that Schwarz's doublet would have consisted of forty-eight separate panes in contrasting colors of yellow and red. Each had four layers, so that seamstresses and a tailor had to handle a total of 192 pieces of fabric. These panes had to be sewn into an extended bulbous shape at the front. In the reconstruction this proved challenging, as the metal aglets which intricately connected the panes made this difficult to achieve. Metal pulled the panes down in ways which made it impossible to arrange the shirt in the way Renaissance people found desirable. Such unintended effects would have been similarly integral to contemporary crafts experience in manipulating materials and furthered intuition for working with them for different clientele. Embroidery with metal-threads, for example, added firmness and weight to the fabric applied, and would have been worn by princes. Yet it hardly ever featured in Schwarz's fashions, because it implied highly labour intensive, aristocratic, over-sumptuous luxury.

// Insert Pl.11, 12. Photograph Ulinka Rublack//

Like the doublet, the plate bonnet with its large brim turned out to have required further stiffening through cotton, linen or animal hair to perfectly stay in shape. It was tightly knit with fine merino wool yarn on very thin needles to achieve a high stitch count and density of fabric. Then it was dyed and fulled through repeated immersion in hot, soapy water and repeated beating with a mallet as well as kneading and rolling.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ The experienced capper Rachel Frost reports: "The chance to knit such a particularly large cap with such fine yarn on thin needles was an unusual opportunity to recreate the cap to the appropriate high level of craftsmanship not usually practical within most projects. This high stitch count and density of fabric produced a far closer representation of the type of cap we were aiming to portray and was notably different from the more usual chunkier reconstructions. Even with the tight knitting and heavy fulling, I concluded that a cap with such a

Crafts practise in fashion in this sense particularly strengthened investigative rather than codified knowledge through developing techniques to achieve new effects. At certain points, accumulated experience nonetheless needed to resolve into firmer judgement and cognition – for instance in the process of hammering the holes with “split second determination” into the leather hose with complete precision to connect the leg garment with the upper garment.⁸⁶ No re-making was possible in regard to these holes, and these were exciting moments when expertise was tested and craftsmanship needed to be guided by confident cognition. //Insert Pl.13 Photograph: Ulinka Rublack//

Re-construction on the one hand offers, as Smith says, “a new kind of attention to objects and a new way to see things we would not have noticed on an object”. It trains visual acuity when one looks at dress, as one is able to better registers the intelligence of the hand which has gone into the crafting of an object. This in turn makes one understand the deep investment past people could already develop to drive technological ingenuity forwards with perfection. Part of the excitement was that experiments emotionally involved customers in their failure or successes, in improvisation and trained intuition in regard to materials which in itself was pleasurable. Materials offered sensual rewards through their softness and as they held a person in a posture that was both upright and delicate. Such dress was made to measure with methods for alterations in mind if it was meant to last. This craftsmanship with foresight made it durable and clever. Through many fittings, still customary in made-to-measure tailoring today, it transmitted confidence on to a client – who would know that he would please a

large brim would require further stiffening, which itself raised new questions which will require further study” – email communication.

⁸⁶ See Pamela H. Smith, ‘What is a Secret? Secrets and Craft Knowledge in Early Modern Europe’, in Elaine Leong, Alisha Rankin eds., *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science, 1500-1800*, Farnham: Ashgate 2011, 65.

discerning audience. At the same time such dress also imposed its own temporality and insecurities through its demand to keep a precise weight and pristine look.

Schwarz's impression, in sum, constituted an emotional effect of enlivened gayness – *fröhlichkeit* – and steadfastness in precisely the colors Ferdinand seems to have favoured most for celebratory occasions at court. Such an outfit therefore was about a profound practise of visual accomplishment that drew attention to how it was made. Yet it did so also by fitting in and not using too much of overly costly materials. Schwarz signalled restraint from being overly sumptuous by avoiding velvet, or a doublet with long, wide sleeves, any gold, silver, silk embroidery or pearls to decorate the collar, which even peasants needed to be asked to refrain from in the Imperial sumptuary legislation agreed by the 1530 Augsburg Diet.⁸⁷ Above all, this remarkable accountant showed that he knew his place as he proclaimed his loyalty to the Catholic Habsburgs through dress and lobbied for favours which would ultimately grant his ennoblement. // Insert Plates 14,15//

IX

Through such sophisticated experiments and shapes, Schwarz's outfit endorsed the values of good craftsmanship and created a satisfying visual experience along the lines identified by Baxandall as "period eye". As Baxandall showed, there existed almost no written aesthetic theory in Renaissance Germany, which in turn meant that style remained empirically grounded in culture, and of necessity heterogeneous rather than rigorously systematic.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Matthias Weber ed., *Die Reichspolizeiordnungen von 1530, 1548 und 1577*, Frankfurt-on-Main: Klostermann, 2002, pp.141-2. Otherwise its chief intent was to limit expense on velvet and silks, especially red shiny silk-satin of the kind Schwarz used merely in panes for his doublet.

⁸⁸ Allan Langdale, *Art History and Intellectual history: Michael Baxandall's work between 1963 and 1985*, DPhil dissertation University of California, Santa Barbara 1995; Adrian Rifkin ed, *About Michael Baxandall*, Oxford: Blackwell 1999, esp. Malcolm Baker, 'Limewood, Chiromancy and Narratives of Making. Writing about the Materials and Processes of Sculpture', 36-68, on the centrality of his alertness to materiality in sculpture.

Baxandall's analysis of the aesthetic vocabulary in contracts showed that at around 1500 key values of good craftsmanship and a satisfying visual experience demanded by patrician patrons were the "well-shaped, elegantly decorated in ornamentation, pleasantly contrived, fine, subtle in physical delicacy and refinement, skilful". This was contrasted to the *grob*, rough, associated with peasant crudity.⁸⁹ An Augsburg *Ars Memorativa* in 1490 therefore illustrated the subtle with an image of patient needlework for commercial purposes – so that patrons of this process by implication endorsed craft skills embedded in embroidery as part of a wider view of the world and social hierarchies. Baxandall's work on calligraphy in turn showed that this society's "visual interest" expressed itself in relation to patterns into the 1530s through a differentiated vocabulary about the "folded, plaited, circle-like, chain-like, inverted" which describe "connection and disconnectedness (*geteilt, geschied, kettenweis*) or underlying form (*spiegelweiss, verkert, versetzt*), or the total effect (*verwirrt*)". Added to this in writing as much as in music would then be the *bravoura* flourish to distinguish a composition as a whole – in florid sculpture this would usually be achieved through flourishes of drapery. The feeling of these patterns was captured by the following adjectives: free, graceful, delicate, sweet, mild, simple, strong, gay, fresh and severe (*frey, fein, überzart, süss, sanft, bloss, stark, frölich, frisch, streng*). Particular combinations of these preferences for patterning then served to express a particular creative mood in the art-work to establish character or feeling.⁹⁰

It is easy to apply the relevance of such terms of pattern, form and feeling to dress. It was often constructed through different panes on doublets and hose, which might be slashed, wound and embroidered with particular motifs, while sleeves on gowns were constructed and connected in a wide variety of ways, and linen shirts were skilfully pleated. Following

⁸⁹ Baxandall, *Limewood*, p.145.

⁹⁰ Baxandall, *Limewood*, p.152.

Baxandall, we can therefore learn the particular use of these shapes alongside color as a further register in emotional languages – such as the gay and the fresh. They gained new resonance as languages of loyalty or dissimulation in relation to the religious troubles which divided Augsburg citizens as well as in the Habsburg’s quest to renew the power of their dynasty.

X

This was a society intimately involved with how things were made and what they were made from. There was tremendous innovation in techniques, materials and aesthetic appreciation. Historians thus need to look not only at finished things, but follow the stories of matter and making to understand the achievement and effect of a broad range of artefacts which changed visual dispositions and emotional lives in the material Renaissance. Researching, handling or remaking specific objects enables us to engage with them as sensory objects, as potentially novel and striking visual acts as well as in relation to particular agents and concrete usages, rather than by type and as collective cultural representations. To one leading writer on the history of dress German male dress appears extreme, bizarre, opulent, exaggerated and capacious, a “strange beauty”. Yet our primary work as historian remains to find Renaissance sources which tell us about how dress was given meaning to in that society and materiality shaped it in turn. For, as the anthropologist Daniel Miller writes: “the continual process by which meaning is given to things is the same process by which meaning is given to lives”.⁹¹ Dress was a key aesthetic concern in the Renaissance which has ever since remained a fundamental driver of commerce, cultural expression and exchange across the world.⁹²

⁹¹ Daniel Miller, ‘Consumption’, in Christopher Tilley ed., *Handbook of Material Culture*, London: Sage 2013, p. 417, and: “Material forms remain as one of the key media through which people conduct their constant struggles over identity and confront the contradictions and ambiguities that face them in their daily lives.”

⁹² This is Aileen Ribeiro: “German styles were famed for their bizarre quality; the dominant aesthetics for men was dissonance in dress.”, and further comments on pp.662, in ‘Dress in the Early Modern Period, c.1500-1780’,

What I have tried to show is how dress impacted on political strategies to claim a particular relationship to those who had power by symbolic means. I have further demonstrated how three aesthetic languages articulated themselves during a key political event: the language of costly treasure for the highest elites, the Protestant language of critique, and the language of a loyal Catholic bourgeois like Matthäus Schwarz in the continued idiom of Renaissance civility through an endorsement of commerce, craft and connoisseurship at the highest level of a measured bourgeois splendour.

Knowledge about the precise make and historical context of dress across society can train our acuity to decode these meanings of dress as ingenious visual acts and aesthetic as well as emotional arguments in a particular milieu. It can be informed by collaboration with experts to reconstruct historical dress, which integrates an understanding of making and performance into scholarly practises and suggests new historical questions. My historical contextualisation of the politics and deeper emotional meanings of color in this period was initially prompted by Tiramani's question at the beginning of the reconstruction process: "So what yellow did Schwarz wear?" As the garment was made and I attended an extended fitting, the vibrant yellows achieved by natural dyes and their mimesis of gold spurred me on to focus my research on color and its uses in symbolic communication, which has so far received insufficient attention by historians of this period.

This approach hence suggests an epistemology which argues that we can enrich our understanding of the effect of past object world by experiencing their sensory, tactile qualities and unique properties. It resists, as the anthropologist Tim Ingold, historian Pamela H. Smith and philosopher Jane Bennett eloquently argue, the idea that we can understand the meanings

in: David Jenkins ed., *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003.

of an object exclusively in terms of its social construction. Such an approach widens our understanding of what it means to be a historian of the visual by engaging with the materiality of what becomes a thing. Research therefore in part becomes a creative exchange among different practitioners.⁹³ This research process can entail getting in touch with matter in an involved way – by registering the suppleness of alumed skin or the effects of a dye in relation to light-reflecting fabrics such as satin and damask – as constitutive of experience and in collaborative processes which involve sensory perception rather than exclusively analytical activity trained in the mind. It therefore prompts us to ask that challenging question: what does it mean to know something – what does it mean to know a portrait, its functions and meaning and to think about what the experience of viewing it in its own period might have focused on? Which disciplinary traditions have taught us to establish knowledge in particular ways? How can we enrich knowledge making processes, while maintaining rigorous historical contextualisation through archival evidence? I suggest that in looking at portraits, for instance, we move away from trying to establish what someone is wearing to merely identify it. We need to ask instead how an item of dress would have been made as animal, vegetable and mineral matter transformed into human artifice in a process akin to polychrome sculpting. It is crucial to explore what this aesthetic experience might have entailed, and whether the person depicted was likely to draw attention to particular accomplishments displayed through an object's make in a specific historical setting and response to particular social, religious and political sensibilities with their cultures of discernment.⁹⁴ This moves us closer to understanding the period significance of dressing as ubiquitous and often surprisingly complex visual act, performed in daily life. These were interrelated with material iconologies,

⁹³ Llewellyn Negrin, 'Fashion as Embodied Art Form', in Estelle Barrett, Barbara Bolt, *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a New Materialism through Arts*, London: Tauris 2013, 141-154; Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, London: Sage 2009.

⁹⁴ Cultures of discernment are explored in Christine Göttler's and Sven Dupré's forthcoming book *Hidden Artifices*, and I am grateful to Christine Göttler for sending me the introduction.

in which individual pigments – such as red and yellow – or types of matters – such as gold – could afford meanings which were activated by particular actors in specific settings.⁹⁵ For historians of the visual, in other words, dress in its shapes, qualities and colors must become central to fully comprehend the period eye.

⁹⁵ This concept of affordances is central to Ann-Sophie Lehman's publications, see, for instance, ead., 'The Matter of the Medium. Some tools for an Art Theoretical Interpretation of Materials', in C. Anderson, A. Dunlop, P.H. Smith eds., *The Matter of Art: Materials, Technologies, Meaning 1200-1700*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 2015.