

VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1300-1700

Edited by Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart,
Christine Göttler and Ulinka Rublack

Materialized Identities in Early Modern Culture,

1450-1750

Objects, Affects, Effects



Amsterdam
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Visual and Material Culture, 1300-1700

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Cover illustration: Details from Karel van Mander, *Before the Flood*, 1600. Oil on copper, 31.1 × 15.6 cm. Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. no. 2088. Image © Städel Museum, photo: U. Edelmann / Artothek; High felt hat with silk pile and ostrich feathers, of the kind sourced by Hans Fugger during the second half of the sixteenth century. H: 22.5 cm. Nuremberg, German National Museum. Image © Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg. Photo: M. Runge; Glass bowl, Murano, around 1500. D: 25.50 cm, H: 7.0 cm. London, British Museum, museum number: S.375. Image © The Trustees of the British Museum; Jean Jacques Boissard, *Gentil' donne venetiane/ Quando portano bruno et Vedoé*, costume book [Trachtenbuch] for Johann Jakob Fugger, 1559, fol. 63. Pen and ink drawing. Herzogin Anna Amalia Library, Cod. Oct. 193. Image © Klassik Stiftung Weimar, HAAB, Signatur: Oct 193. OpenAccess: "All rights reserved."

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8. Moral Materials: Veiling in Early Modern Protestant Cities. The Cases of Basel and Zurich

Susanna Burghartz

Abstract

Throughout the early modern period, veils remained a common garment for women all over Europe. This chapter deals with the economy of veil production, changing fashions of veil wearing, and political identity struggles surrounding the question of the church veil in the Swiss textile cities of Basel and Zurich. The site of a moral battleground, the church veil reveals, in particular, how much attentiveness certain Protestant cultures paid to material issues. Alongside a variety of other sources, analysis of an extant church veil at the Swiss National Museum allowed for the inclusion of hands-on methods from dress history, considerably sharpening our attention to embodied experiences and the emotional effects of dress codes and their regulation.

Keywords: veils; embodied methodology; Protestant material culture; fashion; Protestant dress politics

“*Sturz*, (the), calyptra, a highly starched and precious veil of delicate linen, which some forty years ago the women of Basel and Strasbourg used to conceal all but their eyes and noses.” The Basel theologian and philologist Johann Jacob Spreng, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, began the entry on church veils in the largest but never published German-speaking dictionary of his day with this description.¹ His

¹ Johann Jacob Spreng collected the material for his (unpublished) 95,000-entry dictionary between 1740 and 1768. See Heinrich Löffler, “J.J. Sprengs *Allgemeines deutsches Glossarium*”. Das Original, seine Geschichte und seine Edition,” *Sprachspiegel* 74, no. 3 (2018): 66–73, here 68.

negative view of this article of clothing was tantamount to a break with tradition, since church veils covering the head and face except for the eyes had been common in Basel for centuries:

Unmarried women wore this Gothic monstrosity down to their ruffs; wives, however, had a long strap of the same cloth hanging down (the back), and whenever they wished to speak, which naturally was quite often, they had to pull the stiff fabric away from their mouths like a shield. Fortunately, they were only compelled to wear this whilst in mourning or church.²

Hoods, veils, and barbettes are key components of European clothing and fashion history. Their specific history is characterized by an enormous continuity of basic traits with simultaneous changes of fashion surrounding the concrete details. Within this history, the occasionally charged relationships between economic practices and social interests, moral and gender politics, materiality, and corporeal affects and emotions were constantly being renegotiated. In the process, the veil became a screen upon which gender relations and status inequalities as well as relations of production or trade could be projected.³ It simultaneously served as a medium for handling conflicts of interest in the framework of sumptuary laws, body politics, and debates about luxury. Taking the examples of Basel and Zurich, I shall explore this history between 1500 and 1800.

Form and Material: Transparency around 1500

The burgher milieu of southern German and Swiss cities saw a change in female fashion around 1500, as transparent veils became part of popular headwear. They could be combined with a tight-fitting hood, known as a *Bündlein*, or with the traditional opaque veils familiar to us from numerous drawings of this period by Albrecht Dürer (Fig. 8.1). Dürer's elegant woman of Nuremberg wears a *Sturz* over her hood. This form of veil was marked by heavy and voluminous material and the artful pleating of the starched fabric. The fashionable veil that Dürer depicted about five years earlier in a drawing of two elegantly dressed women of Nuremberg and Venice is very different in material and form (Fig. 8.2).⁴ Here we see the ways in which light veils were used: while the sheer veil worn in combination with a close-fitting

² *Idioticon Rauracum oder Baseldeutsches Wörterbuch von 1768*. Johann Jakob Spreng, ed. Heinrich Löffler. Edition of manuscript AA I 3, Universitätsbibliothek Basel (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2014), 166.

³ Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 10.

⁴ Jutta Zander-Seidel, "Das erbar gepent. Zur ständischen Kleidung in Nürnberg im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," in *Waffen- und Kostümkunde* 27 (1985): 119–140, 125.



Figure 8.1: Albrecht Dürer, *A Woman of Nuremberg Dressed for Church*, 1500. Pen in black-grey ink and watercolour, 32 × 20.4 cm. Vienna, The Albertina Museum, inv. no. 3069. Image © The Albertina Museum, Vienna.

hood covers the forehead of the Nuremberger to the left, the transparent head veil worn by the young Venetian on the right falls to her shoulders like a cloak.

Another drawing of 1527 by Dürer shows how elaborate, complicated, and artful the pleating of the church veil must have been. A 1588 inventory describes it as “Three Old *Sturz*[-wearing] Women” and provides front, side, and back views of the pleated veil.⁵ A Nuremberg inventory of 1486 reveals the elaborate preparation needed to pleat the fabric successfully. It lists a small cupboard containing “a *Sturz* press with several *Sturzes*, and also soaps, sponges, starch [...] and other small items.”⁶ This suggests

5 Jutta Zander-Seidel, “Ständische Kleidung in der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Stadt,” in *Terminologie und Typologie mittelalterlicher Sachgüter: Das Beispiel Kleidung*, international round table, Krems an der Donau, 6 October 1986 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), 59–75, 63.

6 Zander-Seidel, “Das erbar gepent,” 121.



Figure 8.2: Albrecht Dürer, *Women of Nuremberg and Venice*, ca. 1495. Pen in dark-grey brown ink on paper, 24.5 × 15.9 cm. Frankfurt am Main, Graphische Sammlung Städelsches Kunstinstitut, inv. no. 696. Image © bpk / Städel Museum / Ursula Edelmann.

that the *Sturz* was specially washed with soap, starched, and then brought into shape using a press. In Nuremberg, the *Sturz* consisted of two components: a close-fitting, tied hood covered with an ample piece of pleated fabric. This form of headwear was reserved for women of the upper classes in Nuremberg, but was also obligatory until 1522.⁷ Thus in the early sixteenth century, the *Sturz* was at once compulsory and a social privilege for a clearly demarcated group in the city.⁸ However, from 1515 Nuremberg's patrician women fought against the obligatory *Sturz* and argued against the "hideous headdress" they had to wear to balls and apparently found obsolete and unfashionable.⁹ Shortly thereafter, in 1518, the women of Augsburg managed to free themselves from the obligatory *Sturz* against the will of the town council, with the help of Emperor Maximilian; thereby adopting the new aristocratic fashion: the *Bündlein*.¹⁰ Some ten years later, a Nuremberg pro-Reformation pamphlet of 1529 reinterpreted the *Bündlein* as a signal for the Reformation and sign of Protestant faith.

This background lends additional layers of meaning to two pictures featuring different forms of veiling created by Hans Holbein during the restless Reformation era in Basel. Like the women of Nuremberg, those in Basel also kept up with fashion, as Holbein's costume study of 1523 suggests (Fig. 8.3). It depicts a richly attired woman in a *Bündlein*, veil, and *Schwenkel*, a long strip of fabric that took up the pattern of the hood and paired voluminous material with an elegant sweep. In this way, the new veil fashion combined movement with translucency and volume.

In his famous Madonna, painted around 1526 for the Basel mayor Jakob Meyer zum Hasen, Holbein combined the old and new forms of veiling in the depiction of the donor's family (Fig. 8.4). Magdalena Bär, Meyer zum Hasen's late wife, wears the traditional church *Sturz* with a wimple: a folded white hood and a band covering the chin. After returning from London in 1528, Holbein repainted the image, now depicting Dorothea Kannengießler, the mayor's second wife, in a more fashionable form of hood with a sheer veil over her forehead and an *Umbschläglin* (head-cloth) that left her chin largely uncovered. The headwear of the two wives of the homo novus Jakob Meyer zum Hasen, the first guild member to be elected mayor of Basel, embody the social ambitions of a parvenu family who oriented themselves towards the aristocracy or urban patriciate. In the tense, and for Meyer zum Hasen, extremely difficult Reformation years, they may be read as an attempt to display both tradition and fashionability through headdress forms. In light of the Nuremberg pamphlet,

7 When the *Bündlein* replaced the *Sturz* as the new respectable church head covering, the council spoke explicitly of allowing "another headdress" "instead of the *Sturtz*, which is in keeping with propriety and creates quite a difference to other women." Zander-Seidel, "Ständische Kleidung," 64.

8 This is evident from cases from 1459 and 1482 as well as a general ban by the Nuremberg town council in 1514. Zander-Seidel, "Das erbar gepent," 119.

9 Ibid., 126.

10 Ibid., 126–127.



Figure 8.3: Hans Holbein the Younger, *A Woman of Basel Turned to the Right*, ca. 1523. Pen and brush in black ink, grey wash, 29.0 × 19.7 cm. Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, Amerbach-Kabinett 1662, Kunstmuseum Basel, inv. no. 1662.142. Image © Kunstmuseum Basel.

the repainting might be seen as an attempt to avoid making a clear political or confessional fashion statement.¹¹ As the examples from Basel and Nuremberg show, changing fashions and social upheaval could be closely intertwined.

Moreover, an examination of Dürer's and Holbein's depictions of veils reveals the breadth of veiling materials – and significance of the transparent veil in particular

11 Jutta Zander-Seidel, "Des Bürgermeisters neue Kleider," in *Hans Holbeins Madonna im Städel*, ed. Bodo Brinkmann, exh. cat. (Petersberg: M. Imhof, 2004), 55ff. See also Jochen Sander, "Die 'Darmstädter Madonna'. Entstehungsgeschichte von Holbeins Madonnenbild für Jakob Meyer zum Hasen," in *ibid.*, 33–43, here 39–40, esp. n. 13.



Figure 8.4: Hans Holbein the Younger. *Madonna des Bürgermeisters Jakob Meyer zum Hasen* ('Schutzmantelmadonna'), 1525/26 and 1528. Oil on limewood, 146.5 × 102 cm, detail: At left Magdalena Bär, late wife of Jakob Meyer zum Hasen, at right Dorothea Kannengiesser, second wife of Jakob Meyer zum Hasen and daughter Anna. Sammlung Würth, inv. no. 14910. Image © Sammlung Würth. Photo: Philipp Schönborn, München.

– in southern German urban fashion around 1500. In the late Middle Ages, Italian painters like Sandro Botticelli, Piero della Francesca and Bonifacio Bembo had already depicted extremely sheer, delicate veils covering noblewomen's coifs.¹² The divided hennin, with its fine, gauzy veil draped over the cones, epitomized Burgundian court fashion. The veil's sheerness emphasized its preciousness and refinement. This fashionable trend also influenced depictions of the Virgin Mary's veil, as in Joos van Cleve's early sixteenth-century *Holy Family*, which shows Mary in a sheer wimple based on Italian models. At first sight, the opaque church coif compared against the sheerness of secular veil fashions depicted in Dürer and Holbein suggests that the non-transparent covering of head and hair was intended to guarantee the wearer's propriety, while transparent veils evoked luxury and erotic allure. The example of Mary's sheer veil, in contrast, shows unmistakably that transparency could also stand for purity and thus become a symbol of respectability.¹³ An examination of the visual veil discourse around 1500, with its profound interest in materials, thus uncovers a fundamental ambivalence between concealment and revelation. In the decades and centuries that followed, this tension led to discussions in various European societies about the proper form and meaning of head, and above all facial, veiling.¹⁴

Veil Economies: Production and Trade in Basel and Zurich

Pictorial sources, inventories, and sumptuary laws reveal the omnipresence of veils as female headwear throughout Europe around 1500. We know that by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a whole range of veil stuffs of varying density and weight, some of exceptional delicacy,¹⁵ were being woven in Bologna, the most important centre for veil production in Italy, from where they were exported as

12 Maria Guiseppina Muzzarelli, *A capo coperto. Storie di donne e di veli* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2016), passim; Maria Paola Zanoboni, "Pro trafegando in exercitio seu arte veletarum": Tipologia e produzione dei veli nella Milano del secondo Quattrocento," in *Il velo in area mediterranea, fra storia e simbolo*, ed. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, Maria Grazia Nico Ottaviano, and Gabriella Zarri (Bologna: il Mulino, 2014), 123–138.

13 Cf. examples since the fourteenth century in Muzzarelli, *A capo coperto*; for Italy, see Paul Hills, *Veiled Presence: Body and Drapery from Giotto to Titian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018).

14 For sixteenth-century Italy, see Eugenia Paulicelli, "From the Sacred to the Secular: The Gendered Geography of Veils in Italian Cinquecento Fashion," in *Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories*, ed. Bella Mirabella (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 40–58; for Spain, see Laura R. Bass and Amanda Wunder, "The Veiled Ladies of the Early Modern Spanish World: Seduction and Scandal in Seville, Madrid, and Lima," *Hispanic Review* 77, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 97–144.

15 Angela Orlandi, "Impalpabili e trasparenti: I veli Bolognesi nella documentazione Datiniana," in Muzzarelli, Ottaviano, and Zarri, *Il velo*, 307–324, 314–315 mentions gauze veils 85.5 cm wide and 377.6 cm long, weighing just 29 g.

far as Milan, Avignon, and Flanders.¹⁶ North of the Alps, in cities like Cologne, Basel, and Zurich, women were weaving veils, including for the export market. The economic potential of this trade became evident in Basel in 1443, when female, non-guild weavers successfully enforced their right to continue to produce cotton and linen *Tüchli* (veils), “which mainly belong on women’s heads,” in the face of opposition from the weavers’ guild masters. In order to guarantee quality in future, they were to appoint four experienced women as inspectors.¹⁷ Thus veil production remained wholly in female hands. In Zurich, too, women’s production of silk veils for export to Poland, Swabia, and “other lands” is mentioned as early as 1336.¹⁸ From the fifteenth century, women there were also weaving cotton cloth outside the guild system. A regulation of 1491 stated that female weavers with their own household in the city were permitted to weave “cotton and other [fibres] into veils and striped cloths, if they are used on the head,” unhindered by the weavers’ guild.¹⁹ Thus in Zurich, weaving cotton veils and headscarves was explicitly exempt from guild restrictions. Zurich weavers purchased high-quality cotton originating in the Mediterranean region, especially Cyprus,²⁰ from northern Italy.²¹ The veils from Basel and Zurich were presumably relatively simple textiles for everyday use, for which a superregional European market already existed in the late Middle Ages. This is also evident from the 1492 complaint of a Cologne citizen, Johann Rinck, who, reporting on his dealings with Zurich cloth merchants, explained that because of their inferior quality, he could no longer accept the veils and headscarves that he had formerly purchased from Zurich traders at the Frankfurt fair and sold on to Brabant and England.²²

Nevertheless, the commercialization of cottage industry was also successful in the long term and the simple veils produced by Zurich’s female weavers continued to find buyers beyond the region in subsequent decades. Thus, the Italian

16 Luca Molà, “I tessuti dimenticati: Consumo e produzione dei veli a Venezia nel Rinascimento,” in Muzzarelli, Ottaviano, and Zarri, *Il velo*, 155–171, 157; Orlandi, “Impalpabili e trasparenti,” 320–321.

17 Traugott Geering, *Handel und Industrie der Stadt Basel. Zunftwesen und Wirtschaftsgeschichte bis zum Ende des XVII. Jahrhunderts, aus den Archiven dargestellt* (Basel: Felix Schneider, 1886), 284–285.

18 Alfred Bürkli-Meyer, *Zürcherische Fabrikgesetzgebung vom Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts an bis zur schweizerischen Staatsumwälzung von 1798* (Zurich: Ulrich & Co., 1884), 2.

19 Quoted in Oscar Haegi, “Die Entwicklung der zürcher-oberländischen Baumwollindustrie” (PhD diss., Weinfelden, 1925), 6.

20 On the importance of Cypriot cotton for cotton purchases subsidized by the Zurich authorities, see Ulrich Pfister, *Die Zürcher Fabriques. Protoindustrielles Wachstum vom 16. zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Zurich: Chronos, 1992), 43–44.

21 In Emil Künzle, *Die zürcherische Baumwollindustrie von ihren Anfängen bis zur Einführung des Fabrikbetriebes* (Zurich: F. Rosenberger, 1906), 7.

22 Werner Schnyder, *Quellen zur Zürcher Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Zürich: Rascher, 1937), vol. 2, no. 1526, 899–900.

Protestant refugees of Locarno exported Zurich *Tüchli* to Bergamo, the main market for raw silk, where they served as a medium of exchange.²³ According to Ulrich Pfister, this female-dominated trade was an important seed of innovation for the emergence of protoindustrialization in Zurich from the late sixteenth century. In the course of this development, the female weavers at first became increasingly dependent on long-distance merchants, before the ruralization of the trade in the seventeenth century led to “a complete disappearance of independent urban producers.”²⁴ An ordinance dating to between 1662 and 1670²⁵ shows that the cloths, which could be used for headdresses and veiling, continued to be exported to Italy, South Tyrol, and as far as Vienna.²⁶ As had already been attempted for silk cloth since the late Middle Ages, these cotton textiles also underwent a market differentiation through the production of varying qualities and sizes for different destinations.²⁷ All of these products were nevertheless expected to maintain common standards of quality and to use good, fine cotton as a raw material.²⁸ The introduction of the spinning wheel led to a clear surge in growth in the 1660s to 1680s, which also occurred in the approximately simultaneous further differentiation of products and the introduction of pile weaving.²⁹ In the 1690s, conflicts arose between city and country dwellers because the latter, together with the Huguenots, who were finally expelled in 1699, continued to sell cotton cloth and *Löthligarn* (fine cotton thread) in the city despite prohibitions.³⁰

23 Pfister, *Fabriques*, 39–40.

24 Ulrich Pfister, “Städtisches Textilgewerbe. Protoindustrialisierung und Frauenarbeit in der frühneuzeitlichen Schweiz,” in *Frauen in der Stadt*, ed. Anne-Lise Head-König and Albert Tanner (Zurich: Chronos, 1993), 35–60, 56.

25 Cf. StaZH A 74.1 7_1620, “Die Tüchli Schleyer, Burath, Beütel, Sayen und Zwilchen fabriques, inn ihr alte güte wie derumb zubringen, und darinnen zuer halten, ist von hiessigen kauff- und handels- Deputierten zu eines jeden fabricanten nachricht folgende ordnung erkändt worden.” On the dating of this source to 1662–1670, see Pfister, *Fabriques*, 64, n. 86.

26 StaZH A 74.1 8_1620.

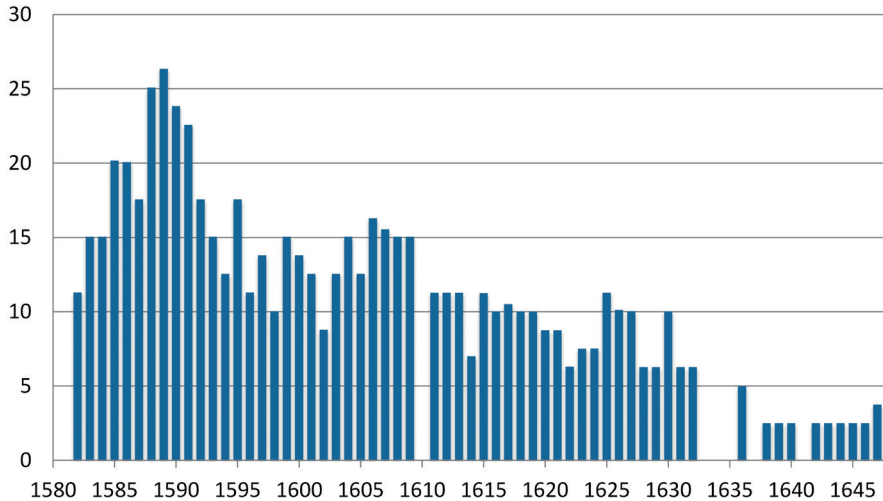
27 *Ibid.*, “Alte Ordnung der Schleyer oder deüchli fabrica nebenz merer erleüterung und verbesserung.”

Type / destination	Width	Length
“Veils known as cubit wide”	7/8 cubits (= 52.71 cm)	24 cubits (= 1,445.76 cm)
Italian veils	depending on quality	26 cubits (= 1,566.24 cm)
Stürze	depending on quality	30 cubits (= 1,807.20 cm)
“Austrian veils or Viennese”	7/16 cubits (= 26.35 cm)	40 cubits (= 2,409.60 cm)
“Tyrolean or German”	11/16 cubits (= 41.41 cm)	30 cubits (= 1,807.20 cm)

28 *Ibid.*

29 Pfister, *Fabriques*, 68.

30 Walter Bodmer, *Die Entwicklung der schweizerischen Textilwirtschaft im Rahmen der übrigen Industrien und Wirtschaftszweige* (Zürich: Verlag Berichthaus, 1960), 163.



Graph 8.1: Income from fees for veil stalls in Basel 1582–1647 (Source: StaBS Finanz X 4.1)

Around 1700 the cottage weaving industry (*Tüchligewerbe*) shifted to the production of high-quality textiles, specifically *indiennes* and *mousselines*. *Löthligarn*, a thread spun wet by hand from high-quality cotton, was especially used for these fabrics. Now, though, the cotton was mainly acquired from the Caribbean.³¹ Zurich manufacturing regulations of 1717, moreover, offer the first mention of wages for the spinners and weavers of fine threads and fabrics being differentiated by quality.³²

In the textile cities of Basel and Zurich, as we have seen, veil fabrics were already an export product traded by long-distance and wholesale merchants in the late Middle Ages. Veils were also always sold on the local and regional markets. This is evident, for instance, from an analysis of the Basel market stall fees, the *Stellgelder*, from 1582 to 1648 (Graph 8.1). In the 1580s, there was a sharp rise in stalls selling veils: from nine in 1582 to twenty-one in 1589.³³ This increase went hand in hand with a revival of veiling from the 1580s.

Women were comparatively heavily involved in this local trade: between 1582 and 1647, they represented twenty-two of fifty-four stall holders. Some of them had been conducting business for eight, ten, twelve, or even fifteen years. Finally,

31 Pfister, *Fabriques*, 67–68.

32 Bürkli-Meyer, *Fabrikgesetzgebung*, 34–35: The cost of these cotton 7/8-cubit-wide and 40-cubit-long veils was 1 florin for those of simple quality (= 15 Batzen), 20 Batzen for medium, and 24 Batzen for high quality.

33 On the stall fees, see Davina Benkert, “Messbücher und Messrechnungen. Zur Geschichte der Basler Messen bis 1647,” in *Wiegen, Zählen, Registrieren. Handelsgeschichtliche Massenquellen und die Erforschung mitteleuropäischer Märkte (13.–18. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Peter Rauscher and Andrea Serles (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2015), 69–90. I thank Anna Reimann for researching the individual veil stands in the StaBS.

the presence of individual Zurich veil vendors in Basel between 1585 and 1632 is also remarkable, pointing to commonalities in the two cities' material culture and veiling practices.³⁴

Changing Fashions and the Heyday of Veils between 1580 and 1720

For centuries, hood, veil (*Tüchli*), and wimple (*Umwinderli*) were part of every woman's wardrobe. Despite this immense continuity, which defined church garb in particular, women's headwear was also subject to changing fashions. The simultaneous forces of continuity and change can make it hard to pinpoint shifting tastes; however, thanks to unusually rich sources for Basel – four lavishly illustrated albums of the Falkner family from 1574, 1598, 1690, and 1741 – we can follow corresponding changes in fashion over nearly two centuries (Fig. 8.5).³⁵ The quantity of vacillating trends seen in the albums elucidates the growing complaints from Swiss clerics about luxury consumption and their fight to retain the traditional church *Sturz*, about which we will hear more below.

The first album of 1574 depicts late-medieval Falkner women wearing the wimples and veils typical of the sixteenth century, thus following contemporary fashion. The barett cap, which also emerged in the sixteenth century, was shown as a head-covering for women for the first time in 1552.³⁶ It is noteworthy that none of the women in this album are represented with a veiled face. Basel, it seems, also went through what Jutta Zander-Seidel has called for Nuremberg the “twilight of the hood.”³⁷ By the second album of 1598, the great majority of wives are depicted up to the end of the volume having gained face veils and wimples, despite adopting all the headwear from the first album unaltered.³⁸

34 Concretely, we know of (Hans) Heinrich Bleuler, Stand Bären 1624–28, 1630–32, StaBS Finanz X 4.1. and StaZH A 74.1 14; (Hans) Cunradt Hürt/Hirt, Stand Bären 1630–32, StaBS Finanz X 4.1. StaZH A 74.1 14; Hans Kaspar Wiest/Wüst, Stand Safran 1585–89, 1593, StaBS Finanz X 4.1. and StaZH B VI 2666, B VI 322, B V 43; and of (Hans) Ulrich Ziegler, Stand Bären 1605, 1607–09, StaBS Finanz X 4.1. and StaZH A 26.4.

35 Anna Reimann, “Die Falkner gestalten. Vier Basler Familienbücher als dynamische Wissensspeicher in Bildern” (unpublished MA thesis, University of Basel, 2018).

36 *Der Falckner Stammbaum. Stammbuch der Familie Falkner. Angelegt von Niclaus Falkner*, Basel 1574, Historisches Museum Basel Inv. 1887.159; Ursula Falcknerin, fol. 16r.

37 Jutta Zander-Seidel, “Haubendämmerung’. Frauenkopfbedeckungen zwischen Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit,” in *Fashion and Clothing in Late Medieval Europe – Mode und Kleidung im Europa des späten Mittelalters*, ed. Regula Schorta and Rainer Christoph Schwinges (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2010), 37–43.

38 The first in this series was Justina Mieg, who married Sebastian Falkner in 1575. *Der Falckner zu Basel Stammbuch. Stammbuch der Familie Falckner. Angelegt von Daniel und Hans Heinrich Falkner*, Basel 1598, Historisches Museum Basel, Inv. 1984.279, 28.



Figure 8.5: *Falkner Stammbücher* (hereafter FS) I–IV, details: (from left, row one): 1. wife of Heinrich Falckner (fifteenth century), FS I, fol. 8r, added 1574 (attributed to Hans Hug Kluber); 2. Ursula Falcknerin (d. 1552), FS I, fol. 16r, added 1574 (attributed to Hans Hug Kluber); 3. Justina Mieg (m. 1575), FS II, fol. 18r, added 1598; 4. Susanna Brauin (m. 1601), FS II, fol. 27r, added ca. 1601; 5. Dorothea Ryff (m. 1635), FS II, fol. 35r, added ca. 1635; 6. Dorothea Ryff (m. 1635), FS III, p. 61, added ca. 1690; 7. Barbara Spätlin (m. 1635), FS III, p. 69, added ca. 1690; 8. Anna Catharina Königin (m. 1671, d. 1721), *Falkner Stammbuch III*, p. 87, added ca. 1690; (from left, row two): 9. Rachel Johann Anderösein (husband Hans Heinrich Falkner 1644–1709), FS III, p. 89, added ca. 1690; 10. Catharina Birrin (1680–1763), FS III, p. 99, added around 1696 (text) and around 1763 (picture); 11. Catharina Birrin (1680–1763), FS IV, p. 31, added 1741; 12. Anna Catharina Greissin (husband Hans Ulrich Falkner *1649), FS IV, p. 30, added 1741; 13. Anna Thierry (1713–1779), FS IV, p. 34, added 1741; 14. Sybilla Stöcklin (m. 1782), FS IV, p. 38, added ca. 1782; 15. Catarina Stöcklin (m. 1778, d. 1778), FS IV, p. 39, added around 1780. Image © *Falkner Stammbuch I*: Basel, Historisches Museum Basel, inv. no. 1887.159; *Falkner Stammbuch II*: Basel, Historisches Museum Basel, inv. no. 1984.279; *Falkner Stammbuch III*: Basel, Staatsarchiv Basel, PA 445a 2; *Falkner Stammbuch IV*: Basel, Historisches Museum Basel, inv. no. 1916.94.

The third Falkner album, compiled a century later, depicted the wives of the previous album virtually wholesale, only unveiling the face of the professor's daughter Dorothea Ryff, the last to have an illustrated entry in the second album.³⁹ A marked change in fashion then emerged a few entries later when, beginning with Barbara Spätlin, nine wives from the Falkner family who were married between 1635 and 1658 appear unveiled wearing the fashionable *Brawenkappe* (fur cap) and ruff (*Krös*). *Brawenkappen*, regulated along with other garments in Basel's extensive 1637 Reformation ordinance, had been newly depicted in Hans Heinrich Glaser's costume book of 1634 and were thus documented contemporaneously in the album. By 1671, the advent of the fashionable broad-brimmed black hat, worn

39 *Der Falckner zu Basel Stammbuch. Stammbuch der Familie Falkner. Angelegt von Daniel Falkner*, Basel 1690, StaBS PA 445a 2, 61.

over a white coif, is manifested in the entry pertaining to the bookseller's daughter Anna Catharina König. From this point on, accelerated changes in Basel fashion during the final third of the seventeenth century are marked with the beaded *coiffe a bec*, an elite headdress modelled by Rachel Johan Anderösein of Strasbourg on the very next page,⁴⁰ followed shortly thereafter by the simple headscarf of Ursula Britlen, which foreshadowed future forms of headwear like the *dormeuse* cap. Novel pointed hoods are the latest trend seen in the 1696 entry for Catharina Birrin, while the fourth Falkner album documented emerging eighteenth-century modes such as powdered hair in 1778 and the lace mob cap. Veils and wimples were definitely confined to the past.

The four Falkner family albums by no means offer individualized images of how various family members dressed; they rather document prevalent and popular costume, accounting for shifts in fashion over an extended period. The illustrations after 1587, for example, mark the revival of facial veiling outside of church-wear – a shift that coincided with the realignment of the church in Basel and its increasingly orthodox confessionalization politics. It also ran parallel to the growing social closure of the upper class, which in Basel led to oligarchical family rule. The albums suggest that this social segregation also manifested itself in the caste-conscious wearing of the *Sturz* and the (chin-covering) veil, which, from the early seventeenth century, could also be combined with fur-trimmed collars and sleeves. Accordingly, the return of the chin-cloth should not be read simply as a sign of a new, anti-fashion modesty; on the contrary, this form of veiling upheld the family's distinction.

Local Costume Books: Social Orientation and Tradition Building

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, interest in the social orienting function of dress was increasingly evident in the illustrations of manuscripts like the Falkner albums, in the costume figures of the *libri amicorum*, popular among (southern) German students, and above all in the local costume books that emerged from the late sixteenth century onward, notably in southern Germany, Alsace, and Switzerland.⁴¹ These costume books provided synopses of the socially differentiated clothing repertoire of a certain local society and swiftly became veritable archives of local and regional tradition building through dress. Costume images and costume books circulated extensively in Europe, offering opportunities for comparison

40 Falknerstambuch 1690, 89. Léone Prigent, "La perception de coiffes à becs au XVIIIe siècle," in *Quelques paillettes, un peu de soie. Coiffes d'Alsace du XVIIIe et du début du XIXe siècle*, ed. Anne Wolff et al. (Colmar: Musée d'Unterlinden, 2009), 20–32, 28.

41 Cf. Augsburg, Nuremberg, Strasbourg, Basel, Zurich, St Gallen.



Figure 8.6: Noble and burgher women wearing veils and chin-cloths, in Johan Carolus, *Evidens Designatio*, Strasbourg 1606, from left: plate 49: *Nobilis Foemina vestitu in Luctu*; plate 53: *Foemina Argentinenensis pulla veste induta*; plate 42: *Foemina mediocris conditionis ad sacra se conferens*. Image © Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, Halle, Saale, urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:3-7713.

that facilitated the emergence of a topography of regional differences. The general interest in local clothing styles corresponded to identity discourses that emphasized regional and social distinctions alike. Thus, the proto-ethnographic costume books could also imbue local dress with emotional resonance. Strasbourg, whose highly elaborated policing of sumptuary regulations introduced a strong degree of social differentiation quite early on, played an influential role in the Upper Rhine region.

The earliest surviving Strasbourg costume book, from 1606, shows heavily veiled women from the nobility, patriciate, and burgher class still wearing the *Sturz* as a sign of mourning (Fig. 8.6).⁴² In his preface, the author Johan Carolus explained among other things that it was important for caste differences in Strasbourg – where people were divided into six classes – to be readily visible through women’s clothing in particular. Hans Heinrich Glaser produced the first costume book for Basel in 1624. It differentiates only between common and genteel women, generally depicts single women with a pointed felt hat (the Basel hat), shows Basel’s married women attending church with veiled faces, and portrays a widow wearing the traditional *Tüchli* and long bands of fabric as a sign of mourning (Fig. 8.7). Ten years later, Glaser published a greatly expanded series of costumes. Amidst the Thirty Years’ War, it documented the emergence of a new fashion, the *Brawenkappen*, which eleven years later Wenceslaus Hollar already

42 Johan Carolus, *Evidens Designatio Receptissimarum Consuetudinum ornamenta quaedam & insignia continens Magistratui & Academiae Argentienensi à maioribus relicta* (Strasbourg, 1606), preface.



Figure 8.7, left: Hans Heinrich Glaser, A Woman Wearing Mourning Dress for her Husband. Etching. In Hans Heinrich Glaser, *'Habitus solennes hodie Basiliensibus ...'*, 10.4 × 6.1 cm, Basel, 1624. Historisches Museum Basel, inv. no. 1983.641.31. Image © Historisches Museum Basel; Figure 8.7, right: Hans Heinrich Glaser, Honourable Women Going Home Together. Etching. In Hans Heinrich Glaser, *Basler Kleidung aller hoh- und nidriger Standts-Personen*, Basel: Hans Heinrich Glaser, 1634, plate 40. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Falk 1464. Image © Universitätsbibliothek Basel.

included as typical of Basel in his European costume series. These heavy, fur-trimmed caps soon became popular among Basel's women and, as Glaser shows, were combined on the street and in church with the traditional *Tüchli* as a face veil. Once again, fashion consciousness and traditional items of clothing were not mutually exclusive.

In 1637, just three years after Glaser published his second costume book directed at the authorities, the Basel council enacted a new, highly detailed Reformation ordinance including nearly twenty pages of printed sumptuary regulations. They were intended to combat abuses, sins, vices, and frivolities of all kinds, which had allegedly become habitual. The authorities paid particular attention to the fight against luxury and pride, and the poverty and desire they believed resulted from them. Accordingly, they sharply condemned the influence of foreign fashions; old and young men must neither wear "long alla modo trousers" nor long hair or wigs.⁴³ In general, they were to adhere to the old Swiss, patriotic, and "German" manner of dress. Basel closely

43 Emidio Campi and Philipp Wälchli, eds., *Basler Kirchenordnungen 1528–1675* (Zurich: TVZ, 2012), 353–354.

Table 8.1: Probate inventory for Salome Gottfried–Hacker, 1670

Item	Total value
30 stürtz à 12sh 6 d	18 Pfd. 15 sh.
5 Schwenkel	10 Pfd.
4 handsome <i>Umbschlägle</i>	6 Pfd.
12 thin <i>umbschlägle</i>	3 Pfd.
12 thick <i>Umbschlägle</i>	3 Pfd.
30 <i>Hauptstükle</i>	3 Pfd.
5 <i>Kappentüchle</i>	15 sh.
12 pure <i>tüchlehauben</i>	6 Pfd.
12 less valuable [<i>tüchlehauben</i>]	1 Pfd. 10 sh.

followed the corresponding stipulations enacted by the Strasbourg council in 1628.⁴⁴ In Basel, too, men and women alike had to observe the detailed, socially differentiated prescriptions for various types of material as well as adornments and appliqués. Informal dress was permitted neither on the street nor in church. Wives had to appear at Sunday and Tuesday sermons in the traditional “*tüchli* and *schaube*” with covered heads and long (open) coats, and after taking Communion they had to wear their veils until evening.⁴⁵ Thus the authorities linked the marking of personal propriety and piousness with the staging of socially desirable orthodoxy in the church space and on Basel’s streets. Miniaturist Johann Sixt Ringle’s 1650 interior of the Basel Minster reveals the enforcement of compulsory veiling for women in church.⁴⁶ All married women covered their faces with traditional wimples, even while wearing fashionable *Brawenkappen*, which in 1637 were still explicitly condemned as “monstrous and abominable.” Half a generation later, these caps had apparently already established themselves as a widespread, acceptable form of headwear for church too.⁴⁷

Unlike in Nuremberg,⁴⁸ *Sturz* and *Tüchli* were still part of Basel female attire even into the 1660s, as estate inventories of the time show. According to an inventory

44 *Der Statt Straßburg Policeij Ordnung* (Strasbourg: Johann Carolo, 1628), 42–43.

45 *Basler Kirchenordnungen*, 357; Susanna Burghartz, “Die ‘durchgehende’ Reformation – Basler Mandate von 1529 bis 1780,” *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 116 (2016): 89–111.

46 Johann Sixt Ringle, “Innenansicht des Basler Münsters mit Blick gegen den Chor,” Basel 1650, HMB Inv. 1906.3238. Reproduced in Susanna Burghartz, “Covered Women? Veiling in Early Modern Europe,” *History Workshop Journal* 80, no. 1 (2015): 1–32.

47 Emanuel Grossmann, “Die Entwicklung der Basler Tracht im 17. Jahrhundert,” *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 38 (1940): 1–66, 33; Julie Heierli, “Basler Trachten um die Mitte des XVII. Jahrhunderts,” *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 14 (1910): 108–117.

48 Zander-Seidel rarely found *Stürze* listed in sixteenth-century upper-class inventories, and by the seventeenth century they are absent altogether. Jutta Zander-Seidel, *Textiler Hausrat. Kleider und Haustextilien in Nürnberg von 1500–1650* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1990), 116.

of 15 October 1660, Judith Bruckherin, for instance, left “3 *sturz*, 2 *umbschleglin*, 1 *maullümpflin* [mouth handkerchief] [...] an old *laidtbinde* [mourning band] [...], a *tüchlin hauben* [veil-hood] [...], two *kappenhauben* [cap-like hoods].”⁴⁹ And at her death in 1670, Salome Gottfried-Hacker, daughter and wife of apothecaries, left an extensive collection of head-coverings with their values listed (Table 8.1).⁵⁰ Here we see that the fabrics used for the *Sturz* were not especially valuable and that the value of the so-called *Schwenkel*, the long linen strip whose chief significance was a sign of mourning, cost twice as much as the *Sturz*.⁵¹ The inventory also reveals that the closet of an apothecary’s wife contained various qualities of wimples (*Umbschlägle*) with widely differing prices.

The Crisis of the Church Veil and Women’s Growing Resistance: 1665–1709

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the traditional *Sturz* went unchallenged as a church veil for upper-class women. The contemporaries Barbara Wentz-Meyer and Anna Magdalena de Beyer published a costume series showing a woman in such a church veil from the front and back, for example. And in 1707, the society painter and mayor’s son Johann Rudolf Huber, who enjoyed great success in Basel and Bern, depicted several women in the *Sturz*, to whom the fluttering *Schwenkel* lent a lively appearance (Fig. 8.8).⁵² In light of additional sources, however, these images in fact seem to be signs of crisis or nostalgic swan songs, since the decades between 1660 and 1720 witnessed an intense struggle over the church veil in Basel, which probably ended with the disappearance of the *Sturz* (and helps us understand the previously-cited ironic denigration in Spreng’s dictionary).

The first cracks in this established tradition became evident in a 1665 “Reformation Reminder.” For the first time, an age limit was established for wearing the *Sturz* and an explicit distinction was drawn between *Sturtz*, *Tüchlin*, and *Umbschläglin*. Women under forty who were not personally in mourning should wear the socially clearly connoted *Sturz* for funerals only, and the *Tüchli* and *Umbschlägli* for all

49 StABS Gerichtsarchiv K 19, Schultheissengericht der mehrern Stadt, Beschreibbüchlein 1660 May 18 to 1666 May 15, 15.10. 1660, fol. 11v, 12r.

50 StABS Privatarhive 255, Inventory and division of the estate of Johann Gottfried (1621–1675) and of Salome Gottfried Hacker (1633–1670), 1676 + 1670, Inventory of 12 September 1670, fol. 193r.

51 This was likely because the *Schwenkel* required substantial volumes of fabric, maintaining a long drape and generous width that was typically folded in on itself several times.

52 On Huber, see Manuel Kehrli, “sein Geist ist zu allem fähig.” *Der Maler, Sammler und Kunstkennner Johann Rudolf Huber 1668–1748* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2010).



Figure 8.8, left: Johann Rudolf Huber, *Basler Trachten von Anno 1700*, Nr. 13: *Woman Wearing the Sturz*, ca. 1700. Pencil and crayon on paper, 31.9 × 21.2 cm. Kunst Museum Winterthur, Graphische Sammlung, Geschenk von Johann Rudolf Schellenberg d.J., 1849; Photo: Susanna Burghartz; Figure 8.8, right: Anna Magdalena de Beyer after Barbara Wentz-Meyer, *Woman Dressed for Church Wearing Sturz and Tüchli*. Etching, 19.2 × 14.9 cm. In *Eigentliche Vorstellung Der Kleider Tracht Lob*, Basel: Anna Magdalena de Beyer, ca. 1700. Basel, Historisches Museum Basel, inv. no. 1987.701. Image © Historisches Museum Basel.

other services (including christenings and weddings).⁵³ For the first time, wearing the church veil was determined by age rather than status differences. The fact that younger women were admonished at the same time to “avoid all innovations altogether” suggests that these women’s growing interest in fashion, as also reflected in the Falkner’s third album of 1690, may have awakened the authorities’ sense of a need for new regulations. At the same time, the new regulation also tallied with the growing clerical critique of luxury, since the *Sturz* was both impractical and elaborate. For example, under the heading *Sturzmähl* (*Sturz starch*), Spreng’s dictionary refers to *Kraft- oder Steifmähl*.⁵⁴ He told his readers that the church veil

53 *Basler Kirchenordnungen*, 446.

54 Johann Jacob Spreng, *Allgemeines Deutsches Glossarium*, vol. X.14. (note) 1–485 Squies-syxh, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, mscr. Sign NL 71.X (Zettel), transcribed by Heinrich Löffler. I thank Heinrich Löffler for bringing this to my attention: “Sturzmähl, Kraft. oder Steifmähl. (Laur. Fr.) Hat den Namen von den

was shaped using special starch flour. It is from Krünitz' *Oekonomische Encyclopädie* that we learn that such starch flour was made from *Ammelmehl*.⁵⁵ Requiring a several-day production process, this wheat or spelt flour was used to stiffen laundry and fine linens and was apparently effective enough to create the board-like effect Spreng mentions.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the new age-specific stipulations on the wearing of the *Sturz* do not seem to have been successful; at any rate, they were no longer mentioned in 1674.⁵⁷

That this conflict was also about critiques of elaborate, upper-class dress is evident at the beginning of the greatest political unrest in ancien régime Basel.⁵⁸ In November 1690, bereaved women were forbidden to wear the relatively costly and “perniciously profligate” *Schwenkel*; only the turned down veil (*nidergelitze Sturtz*) was permitted.⁵⁹ As the uprising continued, the clergy submitted a memorandum of central concerns. At first, they criticized the common practice of gift-giving and corruption, immediately following with, in the second item, the issue of the *Sturz* as obligatory church dress for married women of quality.⁶⁰ At first glance, it may seem surprising that it was mentioned in the same breath as grave accusations of corruption, the sale of offices, and electoral fraud – the central issues behind the unrest. Interestingly enough, just a few weeks after the upheaval was put down, the importance of dress to the clergy became clear. In late 1691 they complained about their meagre salaries, which did not allow them to dress properly. In a lengthy supplication citing the difficult times and the need to reform the administration of secularized church properties, the pastors insisted that their salaries be increased not least so they could dress appropriately. Only then, they continued, would it be possible not to be judged as misfits by others.⁶¹ Clearly, sumptuary regulations, including questions of church dress, were of serious importance for the clergy. Their struggle against luxury was implicitly designed to help themselves and their wives to dress properly according to the class they belonged to – the burghers – even in times of growing wealth and rising consumption among the better-off. The very

ehmaligen Stürzen oder steifen Schleiern und Hüllen der Weiber, welche man insonderheit darmit zu stärken pflegte.”

55 “Ammelmehl,” in J. G. Krünitz, ed., *Oekonomische Encyklopädie*, vol. 87 (Berlin, 1802), 424.

56 Despite assertions in the literature, there is no indication that a wire frame was used to give the *Sturz* its form. For Nuremberg, cf. Zander-Seidel, *Textiler Hausrat*, 116, which rejects this assumption.

57 StaBS Bf 1 A 6-23, Mandate of 4 November 1674.

58 For a brief overview of the events and the significance of the 1691 unrest for gender history, see Susanna Burghartz, “Frauen – Politik – Weiberregiment. Schlagworte zur Bewältigung der politischen Krise von 1691 in Basel,” in Head-König and Tanner, *Frauen in der Stadt*, 113–134.

59 StaBS Bf 1 A 6-56, Mandate of 19 November 1690.

60 StaBS Politisches W 2.2., Bedencken der Herren Geistlichen.

61 StaBS Kirchen F3, “Geistlichkeit. Besoldung, Pensionierung, Gnadenzeit. 1530–1574–1806,” read on 11.11.1691.

next year, in 1692, the production of new *Schauben* (traditional coats for church) was prohibited. Now, “female persons should gradually abandon them as a useless and very costly costume.” At the same time, however, Basel’s women were again admonished to appear at early weekday sermons and evening prayers in decorous dress, wearing a *Sturz* or *Tüchli*.⁶² There was no more mention of banning the *Sturz*. This by no means ended the conflict, though, and the struggle between traditionalists, opponents of luxury, and followers of fashion continued.

We know from Bern that resistance to the traditional church veil arose there in the 1670s and 1680s. In December 1678, the Bern *Reformationskammer* “noted that women mostly wore caps in church rather than *tüchli*, and therefore instructed those in charge of fire safety to visit every house and ensure mothers and daughters who were to go to church on Sundays or Christmas and take Communion should not wear caps but the customary ‘veil’.”⁶³ And in 1688, people complained that the pastor of Reichenbach was demanding that old women come to his sermons wearing the *Tüchli* and had to keep it on for the whole day, which was deemed unbearable.⁶⁴ This was the first mention of the great discomfort of wearing veils all day.

In Basel, too, in the first half of the eighteenth century, wealthy women no longer accepted without complaint what Spreng called the “stiff stuff.” While from 1704 they could loosen their veils as they wished in order to receive Communion more easily,⁶⁵ this concession did not prevent the numerous violations of compulsory veiling in church in subsequent years. In October 1705, the tribunal of *Reformationsherren* heard the cases of seven women from Kleinbasel who had dared to attend church unveiled.⁶⁶ Walter Merian’s wife argued that her health prevented her from wearing a veil; “they could do whatever they wanted to her, but she simply could not wear the *sturz*.” Others claimed ignorance of the regulation or cited economic reasons, declaring themselves too poor to produce a *Sturz*. Wholly in keeping with previous policy, the Basel guardians of morals differentiated their verdicts according to social criteria. They were lenient towards poor women who violated compulsory

62 StaBS Bf 1 A 6-61, Mandate of 29 March 1692, repeated on 3 April 1695 and 13 February 1697.

63 André Holenstein, “Regulating Sumptuousness: Changing Configurations of Morals, Politics and Economies in Swiss Cities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective, c. 1200–1800*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Ulinka Rublack (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 129.

64 Adolf Fluri, “Kleidermandate und Trachtenbilder in gegenseitiger Beleuchtung,” *Blätter für Bernische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 23 (1927): 278.

65 Quoted in Grossmann, “Entwicklung,” 19–20.

66 This body of overseers of morals consisted of the *Oberstzunftmeister* and three representatives of the Little and four of the Great Council. For more detail, see Sonia Calvi, “Zur inspection und handhabung der angestellten reformation: Die Basler Reformationsherren im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert,” *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 118 (2018): 249–279.

veiling and did not insist that they wear the *Sturz*. The socially better positioned Merian, however, was punished for her loose talk.⁶⁷

Four years later, resistance erupted anew. In September 1709, fifteen wives had to explain themselves for not wearing the *Sturz*. Acting as spokeswoman for the malcontents in court, Ulrich Passavant's wife stated that she could not wear the *Sturz*, "an expensive and very uncomfortable outfit," adding critically, that it promoted neither "the honour of God nor the public." She preferred to avoid church rather than wear it.⁶⁸ While this represents a fundamental opposition to wearing the traditional church veil, two of the husbands present in court promised to ensure that their wives fulfilled their duty in future. The *Reformationsherren* admonished all participants to obey the mandate or submit a petition if they "could not wear the *Sturz*."⁶⁹ Just a month later, the authorities enacted a new Reformation mandate against all abominations, excessive splendour, and fashionable foolishness and again explicitly prescribed the *Sturz* for the wives of "men of rank."⁷⁰ But this did not break the women's resistance. On 27 November 1709, the *Reformationsherren* were compelled to hear the cases of twenty-eight women who had violated compulsory veiling. Notary Hofmann, who represented his wife in court, cited medical reasons and the judgement of doctors, who had stated that his wife could not wear the *Sturz* because of a chest condition. If she wore it, she could disturb her neighbours in church by coughing and might contract additional ailments. The *Reformationsherren* did not accept Hofmann's request for a dispensation for health reasons and instead fined him 12 *Batzen*. They also refused to accept ignorance as an excuse. The excuse that the miller Oswald Ritter offered for his wife shows how highly charged the conflict had become: she had always worn the *Sturz* until recently, when she believed it had fallen out of fashion. Resistance was already widespread, and many women seem to have shared the hope of ridding themselves of the burdensome obligation to wear the outmoded, uncomfortable *Sturz*. Thus, the wife of council member Stehelin had her maid state in court that she would only wear the *Sturz* if others did as well. The *Reformationsherren* continued to cling doggedly to tradition. Accordingly, even Jacob Mechel's heavily pregnant wife was fined 6 *Batzen*. Other wives of town councillors and master artisans cited the "well-known affect" – breathing troubles or indisposition – as an argument in court, thus referring to physical ailments they attributed to the church veil's restrictive form and rigidity. Both clearly elicited reluctance and complaints in Basel as they had in Bern from the late seventeenth century. Presumably, the form and quality of

67 All quotations from StaBS, Protokolle E 13,1, Reformation 18 November 1674 to 17 January 1714, entry of 7.10.1705.

68 Quoted in Grossmann, "Entwicklung," 24.

69 StaBS, Protokolle E 13,1, entry of 13 September 1709; see also Grossmann, "Entwicklung," 24.

70 StaBS Bf 1 A 7-19, Reformationsmandat 12. Oktober 1709, A3.

the starched material had scarcely changed since the fifteenth century. What had changed were women's feelings and body awareness. Thus, the heavy traditional coats and stiff veils for church were increasingly considered old-fashioned and uncomfortable. While poorer women managed to lower the fines by stating that they were "common folk" who could not afford the costly *Sturz*,⁷¹ the desire of Basel's better-off women to dress more comfortably and fashionably for church were treated with increasing severity by Basel's guardians of morals.

The efforts of the clerics and *Reformationsherren* to maintain the traditional church veil coincided with the socio-political unrest of the years around 1691, when the clergy was engaged in a protracted power struggle for influence over Basel politics and an intense campaign against the sale of office, electoral fraud, and corruption. These years also saw the beginning of the great protoindustrial transformation that led to heightened social conflict, the gradual emergence of new, luxury-oriented consumption, and not least to constitutional changes with lasting effects on the patronage system and the professional bureaucracy. At the end of this period of transformation, according to foreign travellers, Basel's women still dressed "uniformly and according to a long-outmoded design."⁷² If we are to believe the assessment of the Enlightenment philosopher and garden theorist Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld, who in 1776 described the costume of Basel's women as "hideous," the authorities' persistent struggle against foreign fashion and the "mania for innovation" actually enjoyed some success. In 1780, the town council nevertheless still felt compelled to enact a new Reformation ordinance harshly criticizing foreign dress and the introduction of new costumes as "one of the greatest evils." And with regard to church veils, circumstances in Basel had apparently changed fundamentally. There had been no more convictions for failing to wear a veil for some time, and the relevant mandates no longer mention the *Sturz*. Instead, veils had clearly become fashion items, alongside plumes for hats and hoop petticoats – an item the authorities forbade women to wear to church on pain of a 20-pound fine.⁷³

71 StaBS, Protokolle E 13,1, entries for 27 November 1709.

72 Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld, *Briefe die Schweiz betreffend* (Leipzig, 1776), 244.

73 StaBS Bf 1 A 14-35, Reformationsordnung of 24.7.1780, 13.

Zurich's Discursive Matériel Battles and the Regulation of Church Dress

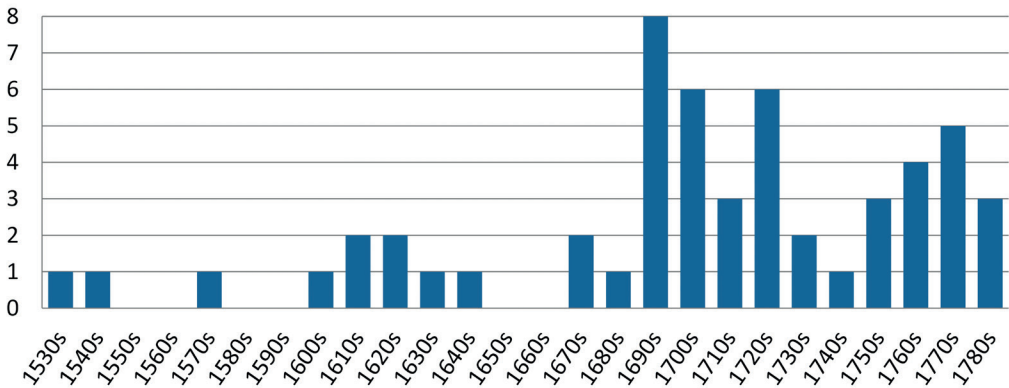
Like Basel, Zurich underwent an intense period of transformation in the textile sector around 1700.⁷⁴ During these years, the struggle over new consumption habits and clothing practices in the city was, with the aid of dress and luxury regulations, a veritable matériel battle. Numerous mandates exhaustively addressed and regulated the fabrics, form/cut, appliqués, and situations of use of textiles and articles of clothing. This very detailed discourse on dress, luxury, fashion, and morals peaked between 1690 and 1730. When the Huguenot Anne-Marguerite de Petit (married du Noyer), passed through Zurich in 1686 after the lifting of the Edict of Nantes, she was appalled by what local burgher women wore to church:

But the attire of the ladies of Zurich is terrible: It consists of a large, loose, pleated black covering, like the robes of Benedictine monks, with long sleeves hanging down the sides: they cross their arms inside their great sleeves. On their heads they wear a cloth that falls to their eyes and a large heavy linen above, and on their chins they wear another pleated cloth like a hand towel, which covers them to the upper lip, such that one sees only the tips of their noses. They go to church and return in groups, two-by-two, their eyes lowered; if when one sees them walking thus one might think they were a procession of black monks; and afterwards they lock themselves in at home.⁷⁵

In Zurich, the attempt to uphold old-fashioned morals against fashionable innovations had become almost counterproductive, for in the Huguenot's account, the procession of black-cloaked ladies was unfortunately reminiscent of processions of Catholic monks. The Frenchwoman's ironically critical observations came at a time when well-funded Huguenots with European trade networks were entering textile production in Zurich. They participated in the silk industry and the production of woollen and silk stockings and, much to the dismay of the city's merchants, purchased cottons from rural producers for export. This seems to have offered so much potential for conflict that Zurich expelled the Huguenots in 1699. And in Zurich, too, a remarkable tension arose between constancy and change, repetition and innovation, dense regulation and moral frugality. Driven by moral traditionalism, worries about exploding materiality plagued the clergy and with them the secular authorities (Graph 8.2).

⁷⁴ Pfister, *Fabriques*, 68–69.

⁷⁵ Madame du Noyer, *Memoires de Madame du N***, écrits par elle-même, vol. 1 (Cologne, 1710), 254.



Graph 8.2: Number of mandates with clothing regulations for the city and canton of Zurich per decade, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

Note: Data on which the graph is based come from a database of all surviving sixteenth- to eighteenth-century mandates in Zurich, which Sandra Reisinger from the Staatsarchiv Zurich was kind enough to provide for me.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the mandates were already complaining that overweening pride was taking over and had reached women's fashion. In particular, the mandates continued, this "suspicious" consumption was evident in clothing and home furnishings.⁷⁶ A 1628 ordinance expressed for the first time particular requirements for a godly way of life among pastors' wives and children and explicitly demanded that their clothing avoid anything that might "cause a nuisance." This particularly applied to large, pleated collars, the fashionable *Hinderfür*⁷⁷ – a voluminous, bulging cap for women featuring two closely connected rows of fringed woollen bands – and anything else that might be considered prideful and which could disrupt their husband's or father's teaching.⁷⁸ The material differentiation of clothing regulations reached an initial high point in the Great Mandate of 1636. This law arose during the Thirty Years' War in the context of an advanced, superregional discourse on the Reformation and sin, marked by orthodox intensification and exaggeration.⁷⁹ Undesirable fashions and luxurious practices in matters of dress

76 StaZH B III 171 fol. 225 (Mandate 1609).

77 Jenny Schneider, "Hut ab vor soviel Kopfbedeckungen!: 200 Jahre Frauenhüte und -hauben in der Schweiz," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 38, no. 4 (1981): 305–312, esp. 307–308. In n. 3, Schneider gives the weight of various fur caps in the Swiss National Museum's collection as 332–345 g, and for *Hinderfürs* as 660–965 g.

78 Emidio Campi and Philipp Wälchli, eds., *Zürcher Kirchenordnungen 1520–1675*, vol. 1 (Zurich: TVZ, 2011), Nr. 238 (3.5.1628), 680–681.

79 Burghartz, "durchgehende' Reformation," 94–101; see also Andrea Iseli, "Krisenbewältigung im 17. Jahrhundert. Die Rolle der guten Policey," in *Die Krise in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Rudolf Schlögl et al. *Historische Semantik* 26 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 147–167.

were listed separately for men and women. The law forbade, for example, long, tight, “foreign” breeches that tied under the knee, overly large and pleated ruffs known as *Kröße*, gold and silver embroideries on men’s gloves, and *Hinderfürs* for women embroidered with gold and silver or otherwise richly trimmed and adorned with ribbons.⁸⁰ This discursive matériel battle peaked in the 1690s, when the Zurich council published a new mandate nearly every year.

By 1680, passages from the printed elucidation of the Great Mandate of 1636 had turned into an anti-fashion mandate, attacking “pride in dress” as a “despicable pawn of sin” and the “pride of wretched Satan,” which would ruin the citizenry and the entire country.⁸¹ Fashionable clothing details were now exhaustively criticized. For the first time, the text spoke of “large, indecorous *tächlenen*” (literally, little roofs), a peculiarity of the Zurich church hood. Daughters and wives were admonished to avoid

[...] any wearing of multiple collars in the churches/ around their necks with bands behind and in front/ the vexatious large corners on their *tüchli*/ with large indecorous *tächlenen* on them/ all wearing of ribbons on their heads in the city/ as well as long ribbons around their necks/ the new manner of black velvet [eye] brows in the churches [...] on pain of a 5-pound fine.⁸²

As if this were not enough, they also imposed fines for fur trim on caps, velvet shoes in church, or (prayer) books with costly silver and gold fastenings. Additional detailed prohibitions applied to students, candidates for ecclesiastical office, and other clerics and their wives and daughters.⁸³ As stated in the mandates themselves, the various prescriptions and prohibitions aimed to “curtail superfluity and splendour” and above all to ensure that the people of Zurich “enter the Lord’s house in respectable clothing.”⁸⁴ The vehemently worded general critique of fashion is interesting here, but so are the prohibitions on neckerchiefs of ribbons and silk directed especially at housemaids, since these textiles were not imported but belonged to the range of products that had recently begun to be manufactured in Zurich.⁸⁵

The traditionalists’ struggle intensified over the next fifty years, leading to new, obsessively detailed mandates. Traditionally oriented church dress still had a part to play here. The extremely extensive sumptuary law of 1691 contains lengthy

80 StaZH III AAb 1.3, Mandate 1636, F 3.

81 StaZH III AAb 1.5, Mandate 1680, 10.

82 Ibid., 12.

83 Ibid., 13–14.

84 Ibid.

85 Pfister, *Fabriques*, 63–65.



Figure 8.9, left: Anna Waser, *Portrait of Regula Escher-Werdmüller, Wife of Mayor Heinrich Escher*, 1690. Oil on canvas, 25.7 × 22 cm. Zurich, Zentralbibliothek Zurich, inv. no. 378. Image © Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Graphische Sammlung und Fotoarchiv; Figure 8.9, right: Anonymous, *Portrait of Catharina Hirzel-Orelli*, about 1660–1670. Oil on canvas, 91.5 × 75.5 cm. Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum, IN-7170. Image © Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum.

stipulations about women’s veils. “The large, vexatious corners on the *tüchli* / and the large, indecorous *tächlein* on top” were forbidden. The *Tüchli-Auffsetzeren*, women who were responsible for the special handling of church veils, were to be admonished to modesty, and the proper wearing of *Tüchli* and *Tächli* should be dictated to them with the aid of a pattern if necessary (Fig. 8.9).⁸⁶

Again, traditionally firmly established material discourses were elaborated and expanded with new intensity. For the first time, exceptions were permitted for health reasons. Henceforth, the presiding judge of the *Reformationsherren* could release “young and old women and matrons” from the obligation to attend church in a *Huseggen* (coat) if they could not wear the heavy, body-concealing coats because of weakness or other serious causes.⁸⁷ The same mandate strictly forbade the adornment of these church coats with braided cords or roses and flowers.⁸⁸ In

86 StaZH III AAb 1.5, Mandate 1691, 17–18.

87 Ibid., 10. From 1697 the “councillors of the Reformation” were collectively authorized to do so, StaZH III AAb 1.6, Mandate of 1697, 11.

88 StaZH III AAb 1.5, Mandate of 1691, 12.

1699 the passage on the large “indecorous *tächlein*” was expanded with the remark that the length of the veils should be limited to between one cubit (59.3 cm) and a maximum of five *Vierling* (74 cm).⁸⁹ The renewed increase in detail is also evident in other stipulations such as that concerning hoods, which now explicitly could only be adorned at the back with a simple black bow. Wearing the heavy church coat was declared compulsory for the last time in 1701, with coloured clothing forbidden under the *Huseggen*.⁹⁰ When the ordinance was reprinted the next year there was a clear change: Zurich’s women could now elect not to wear the *Huseggen* but were still obliged to wear the *Tüchli*. Also banned were the “coloured hood roses, including the black ones attached to iron wires and higher than three inches” as well as “embroidered chin-bands.”⁹¹ All of these regulations were attached to 10-pound fines, while wives and daughters who took Communion in town or the country wearing coloured sleeves faced a 100-pound fine.⁹² Elsewhere, too, the prescriptions and prohibitions became more elaborate. The authorities carefully noted all attempts at innovation, development, and variation and sought to stop them in their tracks. Clergy and laity were consequently admonished to report violations of any kind to the Reformation court. As much as the mandates sought to banish fashion and uphold tradition, all of these prescriptions also indicate the Zurich population’s interest in a growing diversity of dress styles and trends. The continuous stream of constantly expanded and adapted sumptuary regulations reveals very clearly that the authorities of the textile export city of Zurich failed in the medium term to prevent innovations in fashion.⁹³ At the same time, the sumptuary laws published around 1700 reveal that for traditionalists, what women wore to church represented the ultimate *pièce de résistance*.

Clothing in Court: The Zurich *Reformationskammer* in the Eighteenth Century

The transcripts of Zurich’s Reformation court, which from 1627 was responsible for sanctioning infringements of the sumptuary laws, alongside brawls and violations

89 StaZH III AAb 1.6, Mandate of 23.11.1699, 12.

90 StaZH III AAb 1.7, Mandate of 1701, 10–11.

91 *Ibid.*, Mandate of 24.11.1702, 12–13.

92 *Ibid.*, 13–15.

93 To what extent the authorities of the textile centre of Zurich actually wanted this remains an open question. A comparison with Basel in any case suggests that the authorities were not a completely coherent actor, and that conflicts of interest between various groups (e.g. textile merchants, manufacturers, artisans, and clerics) certainly may have played a role.

of Sunday observance, survive for the period from November 1709.⁹⁴ Infringements of the sumptuary laws play a significant role in the early volumes, in particular (Graph 8.3).

The authorities conducted a veritable battle against fashionable conduct before the Reformation court and did not hesitate to penalize local notables, officials, and their wives and daughters.⁹⁵ Around 1700 they were particularly anxious to combat the growing influence of French fashion, as the lament of 12 August 1710 – “French – everywhere” – made especially clear.⁹⁶ On 6 November of the same year, ten daughters and wives were fined for wearing a *Schöpli* or bodice. Women in particular, but occasionally men as well, were regularly convicted of violating numerous sumptuary laws. Women were punished with particular frequency for wearing cuffs or sleeves in church, excessively large bunches of ribbons on so-called *Bodenkappen*, gold chains, and the abovementioned bodices. In contrast, the Reformation court rarely treated the “vexatious large corners” atop their *Tüchli* or the excessively large *Tächli* on their hoods repeatedly cited in the mandates. This did not stop the pastor of the Zurich orphanage, Johann Jacob Ulrich, from lambasting the vices of lust, pride, and profligacy in his forty-four-page penitential sermon of 1720, in which *Tüchli* received especial complaint. He criticized rich and poor alike, since he foresaw an imminent danger that senseless ambitions and status consumption would ultimately be the ruin of all. The daughters of tanners, weavers, cobblers, and tailors, Ulrich noted, were as splendidly dressed as those of the most distinguished gentlemen: “You cannot tell the people apart anymore.” His comparison between the inhabitants of Zurich and those of Sodom and Gomorrah was accordingly drastic: the latter could never compete with Zurich splendour. He believed this was especially evident in the church veils:

Had the elegant wives of Sodom/ worn *tächlein-tüchlein*/ to distinguish themselves from others/ I greatly doubt/ that they would have been as common in their city as they are in ours. After all, this costume so common among us is no sign of our humility/ but rather of a stinking, foolish pride.⁹⁷

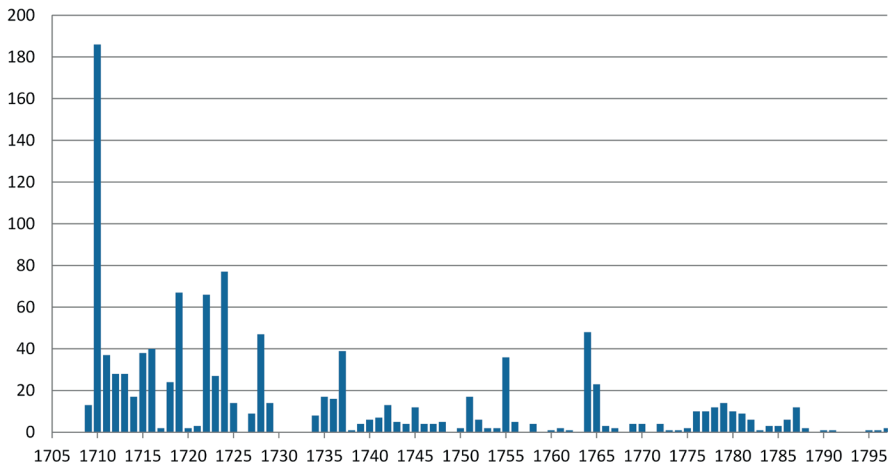
He firmly rejected the objection that outward appearances were not worth the bother. It was only in the 1740s that “church habit” increasingly became an issue before the Reformation court. There were open refusals, but also petitions asking not to have to wear the uncomfortable church costume for health reasons, backed

94 There are records for only two months of 1709; therefore, the figures are not comparable with those of other years and are not included in the graph.

95 Cf. similar observations for Bern in Holenstein, “Regulating Sumptuousness,” 126–127.

96 StaZH BIII 173, 50. See also Schneider, “Hut ab,” 309.

97 Johann Jacob Ulrich, *Auserlesene Predigten*, ed. Hans Conrad Wirz, Part 1 (Zurich, 1733), 73–116, 103.



Graph 8.3: Offences of clothing and pride before the Zurich Reformation Chamber, 1709–1797

Note: While no transcripts survive for the years 1730–1733, in 1749, 1757, 1759, 1768, 1771, 1789 and 1792–1794 no cases involving haughtiness or violations of the sumptuary laws came before the Zurich *Reformationsherren*.

up by doctors' letters. In June 1744 the wife of guild master Waser, having "humbly presented her bodily frailty," received permission, for the first time, to attend weekly sermons without the *Tüchli*, although the merciful judges would have preferred her to appear in the veil prescribed for female citizens.⁹⁸ Finally, in September 1750, at the request of the "honourable *stillstand*" (oversight committee) of the congregation of the Great Minster, the morals court was to continue to keenly monitor the "retention of the *tächli*."⁹⁹

Quantitative analysis of the Reformation court transcripts plainly shows that despite the detailed clothing regulations in the mandates, Zurich, too, did not experience a steady stream of convictions for violations of sumptuary laws. Instead we repeatedly encounter campaigns by the *Reformationsherren* targeting particular clothing items, practices, and fashions, such as the large piles of ribbons on hoods, men's walking sticks, or the wearing of coloured ribbons at weddings. Violations of the clothing mandates were also pursued by the responsible body with widely varying intensity. Weeks, months, or even years in which the court scarcely heard one case were repeatedly followed by sessions in which the authorities responded with explicit morality campaigns against new fashion trends and specific clothing practices and accessories. Overall, however, instances dropped sharply from the late 1730s.

⁹⁸ StaZH B III 181, 5 for 4.6.1744 (the pagination in this volume is repeated every year, see also the following note).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4 for 8.9.1750.

New Transparency? Enlightenment Thinkers Oppose the Veil

From the 1720s, women's headwear and veils became topics of discussion beyond the mandates as well. As we have seen, the Zurich pastor Johann Jacob Ulrich harshly condemned the vices he associated with prideful dress in a 1720 penitential sermon comparing Zurich's citizens with those of Sodom and Gomorrah. The very next year, in 1721, Zurich's best-known Enlightenment thinker, Johann Jakob Bodmer, presented a morally ironizing image of a Zurich citizen in wig and ruff together with two townswomen, one wearing a *Tüchli-Tüchli*, the other a high beribboned hood or *fontange*, on the frontispiece to his weekly *Discourse der Mahler*.¹⁰⁰

Twenty-five years later, in the forty-fifth issue of his magazine *Der Mahler der Sitten*, Bodmer again turned to questions of pride and appropriate dress for women. This time, in 1746, he offered observations on taste, dress, and "the undertakings of the female sex," criticized the overly elaborate headdresses of Zurich's women, and distanced himself, ironically, from these enormous constructions. Following a satirical analysis of the "rough costume of beards,"¹⁰¹ men's high wigs, and the gigantic *fontanges* worn by women, the *Mahler der Sitten* (Painter of Manners) tackled the "excessively large wrapping of the head" more generally,¹⁰² a practice which he hoped to render unpopular among womenfolk. Falling back on arguments used since antiquity, he asked them to consider "that the natural beauties of the head are obscured thereby." Under the motto *In facie legitur homo* (one can read a man's character from his face), he explained that the visage was a bright mirror "which uncovers the state and positions of the heart," thereby showing "all the inward movements of the spirit, joy, sadness, love, shame, anger, jealousy." All this, he believed was "squandered and destroyed by the contraptions, which lend the head a different and alien shape and symmetry."¹⁰³ Bodmer took up an argument here that has been marshalled repeatedly in the history of veiling: True virtue has nothing to hide; its purity is evident in a face openly displayed. Similar arguments had already been used by humanists like Juan Luís Vives in sixteenth-century Spain.¹⁰⁴

How relevant the church veil remained at this time is evident from the detailed description of Zurich church customs by the Zurich publisher and engraver David Herrliberger, which he published in 1750 as an appendix to his German edition of Picart's *Cérémonies religieuses* (Fig. 8.10).

100 *Die Discourse der Mahlern, Erster Theil* (Zürich, 1721).

101 Johann Jakob Bodmer, *Der Mahler der Sitten* (Zurich, 1746), chap. 45, 518.

102 For this and the following quotations, see *ibid.*, 529–530.

103 *Ibid.*, 530.

104 See Bass and Wunder, "The Veiled Ladies" for Spain.



Figure 8.10: David Herrliberger, Communion in the Zurich Fraumünster. Engraving. In David Herrliberger, *Kurze Beschreibung der Gottesdienstlichen Gebräuche, Wie solche in der Reformirten Kirchen der Stadt und Landschaft Zürich begangen werden*, Zurich: Daniel Eckenstein, 1751, plate VII/2. Zurich, Zentralbibliothek Zurich, shelf no. Res 11, 10.3931/e-rara-18198. Image © Zentralbibliothek Zurich.

The church costume of noble or other gentlewomen consists of a tall, conical fine white headdress known as a *tächli-tüchlein*: At funerals, however, the noblewomen can be distinguished from the others by a so-called *schwängel* or long strip of the same cloth.

Herrliberger accordingly depicted various occasions during which the genteel ladies of Zurich wore the *Tächli-Tüchli* described here: christenings, sympathy visits, funeral processions, and funeral services, but also at Communion.

With their striking, uniform shape and stiff but sheer material, which followed wearer's movements, the head veils turned women into a uniform body that could nonetheless still be differentiated according to rank. Herrliberger continued his description of the church veil by pointing to other versions that tended to be more cumbersome, specifically mentioning the *Tüchlein* worn by burgher women, which did not come to a point but were broader on top. When judging this church costume, which he deemed old-fashioned, he refers to the *Mahler der Sitten*.

Both costumes are worn only to church nowadays. They are old-fashioned and verdicts about them can be read with pleasure in the Zurich *Sitten-Mahlern*. Yet they have assumed a far more attractive form and look at least as good as the headscarves and dress worn in Protestant ceremonies by certain Lutheran women in Germany; notably since the excessively low and shapelessly wide *tüchlein* formerly worn in Zurich have disappeared, along with the monstrous overcoats (*hüsacken*) pleated like pulpit gowns with long sleeves reaching to the ground.

According to Herrliberger, the Zurich church costume had thus become more modern and moderate in recent years. The “head-contraption” worn by Zurich women continued to differ from church veils in other towns, although no longer need fear comparison with them; it was far less extravagant than previously, “when lofty piles of ribbons etc. were worn.”¹⁰⁵

The *Tächli-Tüchli*: An Embodied Object of Research

The materiality and affective properties of such church veils were fortunately made accessible for embodied research thanks to the preservation in Zurich’s Swiss National Museum of a church costume with a *Tächli-Tüchli* dating to the first half of the eighteenth century. The outfit, referred to as a *Gottenkleid* (godmother’s gown), consists of a richly pleated skirt of wool crepe, a thick black woollen bodice with fishbone stays, separate sleeves and detachable hip cushions, pleated linen cuffs, a fine linen shoulder cloth, a white cotton hood, and a semi-transparent cotton veil with a long strap used as a *Tächli-Tüchli* for church, and a pair of black velvet buckle shoes. As a complete ensemble, it offers a rare insight into the materiality of burgher women’s church costumes in an eighteenth-century Reformed Swiss city (Fig. 8.11).¹⁰⁶

The hood and veil are made from fine woven materials and, in their unstarched state, are semi-transparent, light, and flexible. The veil is a delicate, cotton mousseline fabric with a thread-count of 30 × 30 z-twist threads per centimetre.¹⁰⁷ The weaving of fine mousseline from wet spun *Löthligarn* was introduced in Zurich around 1700, producing fine, semi-transparent cotton cloth. Various portraits of the period show that at the end of the seventeenth century, Zurich’s women embraced semi-sheer fabrics for various fashionable head-coverings. The *Tächli-Tüchli* from the Swiss

105 David Herrliberger, *Heilige Ceremonien, Gottesdienstliche Kirchen=Uebungen und Gewohnheiten der heutigen Reformirten Kirchen der Stadt und Landschaft Zürich* (Zurich, 1750/51), 41–42.

106 Unfortunately, we know little thus far about these items’ provenance.

107 Many thanks to Ms Elke Müräu, head of conservation at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich, for this information and her kind support in studying the object. I would also like to thank the curator of textiles, Ms Andrea Franzen, who also greatly assisted the investigation on site.



Figure 8.11: Veil and bodice from the *Gottenkleid* of the Edlibach Family, 1600–1700. Zurich, Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum, inv. no. DEP-1008.7 + DEP-1008.1. Image © Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum.

National Museum confirms that this was also the case for church veils. With a drape of 76 cm, the veil corresponds almost exactly to the maximum length of *fünfVierling* (74 cm) that the Great Mandate of 1699 set for the *Tächli*.¹⁰⁸ Gathered into rough pleats at one end, with a 6-cm-wide and 82-cm-long, folded chin-band attached, the veil could achieve a rounded, conical shape and structure reminiscent of contemporary depictions of the *Tächli-Tüchli* by Andreas Pfeffel from around 1750 (Fig. 8.12).

After close material analysis, and with the technical expertise of dress and textile specialist Hilary Davidson, a contemporary reinterpretation of the *Tächli-Tüchli* was composed using the finest cotton textile presently available to replicate the veil's weight, density, and plasticity. The reconstruction exercise sought a greater understanding of the sheer and lightweight veil's seemingly antithetical crisp, precise lines and stiff composition as *Tächli-Tüchli* were recorded to have maintained. The soft fabric's malleability needed to be counteracted and fixed with starch. Sealing the gaps in a textile's weave, starching affects transparency. Starches often produced a cloudy or milky mixture, more suitable for linen shirts for instance; however, it was possible for contemporaries to accomplish greater translucency using ingredients like gum arabic and isinglass (a transparent, gelatinous substance taken from certain fish).¹⁰⁹ We used a modern spray starch that correspondingly

¹⁰⁸ See n. 98.

¹⁰⁹ As is documented in English household recipe books such as Hannah Wooley's *The Compleat Servant-Maid* [...] (London: T. Passinger, 1677), 65–66; and Anne Barker, *The Complete Servant Maid: or, Young Woman's Best Companion* [...] (London: J. Cooke, 1770), 23–24.



Figure 8.12: Johann Andreas Pfeffel, Noblewoman in her church-wear (left), and Burgher woman in her church-wear (right). Engraving. In Johann Andreas Pfeffel, *Schweizerisches Trachten-Cabinet*, Augsburg, ca. 1750, plates 8 and 10. Schweizerische Nationalbibliothek Bern. Image © <https://www.e-helvetica.nb.admin.ch/search?urn=nbdig-26228>.

permitted translucency, but which is weaker in its stabilizing power than period starches. Heat-set with an iron, the cotton textile was transformed into a crisp, papery material that could be moulded, folded, and pinned into an upright shape.

The period's unusually favourable sources supported the embodied methodology undertaken through this exercise.¹¹⁰ The requirement for specialist *Tüchli-Auffsetzern*, for instance, women recorded to have passed between houses on Sunday mornings to prepare ladies' church veils before service,¹¹¹ was further highlighted in that a deft hand was needed to manipulate the pliable textile into its composition without creasing or unstiffening its fragile condition.

110 Hilary Davidson, "The Embodied Turn: Making and Remaking Dress as an Academic Practice," *Fashion Theory* 23, no. 3 (2019): 329–362.

111 Julie Heierli, "Das 'Tächli-Tüchli', die Kirchenhaube der Zürcherinnen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert," *Anzeiger für schweizerische Altertumskunde NF* 13 (1911): 190–197, here 192.

The reconstruction exercise also emphasized how important the choice of this particular fabric was for the veil's look. While the height of the *Tächli* and the tightly tied chin-band doubly restricted the wearer's freedom of movement, the extremely fine and light appearance of the semi-transparent fabric, even when starched, united an attractive and sumptuous luminosity with the material's capacity to respond to wearers' movements – a unique, dual effect that was made clear through the reconstruction effort. Unseen in the contemporary copperplate engravings, the play of opacity and transparency achieved by the interplay between form and fabric emerged as a striking feature. This effect is more apparent in contemporary oil paintings. Moreover, the effects of this specific form of veiling on the wearer's bodily and especially head posture was palpable, with the model reporting sensing the need for gentle, redacted, and controlled movement. We should not underestimate the effect of the uniform veiling of Zurich gentlewomen assembled as a congregation within the church space. The veils presumably achieved a specific and encompassing group effect upheld by the simultaneity of movement, and rigid but luminous form, splendidly suited to creating distinction through exclusivity. The experiment also highlighted how elaborate the styling of *Tächli-Tüchli* must have been, going some way to explain the occupation of the dedicated *Tüchli*-setters who helped other women prepare for church. If Zurich church veiling had merely been about covering women's heads for modesty's sake, therefore, then other, more solid textiles and practical forms of veiling would have been far more convenient.

Conclusion

The conscious choice to use mousseline fabric for church veils in eighteenth-century Zurich ultimately once again brings into play the material's specific semi-transparent character. In his lexicon article on the *Sturz*, the theologian Spreng, cited at the beginning of this chapter, observed the apparent contradiction of its shield-like stiffness. And in another entry on the veil (*Schleier*) he also notes: "*Schlejer*, a type of {woollen} textile much produced in France and Switzerland. Also known in French as *voile* because of its thinness."¹¹² According to him, "veil" was a term that referred at once to an article of clothing used to cover the head and face, and to an especially thin fabric. In his entry Spreng associated this quality above all with the function of this fabric; indeed, countless images show quite clearly how, by the Renaissance, the combination of different opaque and transparent fabrics with their varying appearances were used and prized for covering the head and face. That this

¹¹² Johann Jacob Spreng, *Allgemeines Deutsches Glossarium*, Band X.11. (Zettel) 1 – 425 s–schlÿg, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, mscr. Sign NL 71.X (Zettel), transcribed by Heinrich Löffler.

continued to be the case after the demise of the *Sturz* and *Tächli-Tüchli* is clear not only from the Basel regulation of 1780, which explicitly prohibited the wearing of fashionable veils in church. The sustained appreciation of veils and veiling fabrics is also evident in the extensive entry under the headword *Schleier* in volume 145 of Krünitz's 1827 *Oekonomische Encyclopädie*. The entry states, among other things, "it now belongs once again to the headdress of the other sex. In the middle and even at the end of the past century it was worn only in deepest mourning in black." Silesia, Bohemia, Saxony, Swabia, Westphalia, and Switzerland are mentioned as important regions of production. Special mention is given to *Putz- und Schleierflor* (crepe trappings and veils), and a gauze veil made of silk or silk mixed with cotton or nettle yarn produced in Bologna and Zurich as "black mourning crepe and white voile (*crespo nero, velo bianco*)."¹¹³ But even in Krünitz, in the age of early industrialization, the veil had not lost its capacity to evoke affects. Thus the lexicon explains under the headword *Schleier*, (*Frauenzimmer*) (Veil (women's)):

The veil, if pinned up and folded well, and if the other clothing worn with it is tasteful and carefully chosen, lends the woman much grace, especially if she has a fresh, blooming complexion that shines through the sheer fabric. The various manners of wearing a veil, for example hanging down the back, from the side etc., heighten the elegance of the entire ensemble.¹¹⁴

Looking at the early modern practices between 1450 and 1800, it becomes clear that throughout the whole period veils were present as semi-transparent textiles and as more or less opaque headwear. Their ambiguous ability to simultaneously cover and make visible made veils attractive, widely used, and, at certain times, highly controversial, both as garments and as fabrics. Moreover, veils were among the most traditional garments for women, nevertheless offering considerable opportunities for change and fashion through little details. They thus made a specific contribution to social positioning and the formation of women's individual identities. In addition, the production and sale of veils outside guild structures opened up a specific economic space for women in the Protestant cities of Basel and Zurich, which lasted well into the seventeenth century. Around 1700 then, the church veil became the battleground of the clergy and its moral politics in the luxury debates of an emerging consumer society. And finally, by the eighteenth century, Enlightenment thinkers declared the face veil to be a decidedly outdated, traditional form that only served to conceal the face – a clearly legible expression of natural purity.

¹¹³ J. G. Krünitz, ed., *Oekonomische Encyclopädie*, vol. 145 (Berlin, 1827), 386.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 387.

As specifically female headwear, the various forms of veils worn during this period had affective, physical effects on their wearers, for example through their weight, their (starched) stiffness, their ability to mark or impede movement, or their different degrees of translucency. In the first decades of the eighteenth century, women's perception and bodily experience of the material qualities of traditional (church) veils changed markedly. Accordingly, the history of these veils clearly shows the level to which their material aspects affected women's emotional and sensory worlds, their economic spheres of action, and their social positioning. And it reveals at the same time the extent to which the perception and experience of materials and materiality can be historically and culturally coded. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the long run the fierce struggle over the (church) veil meant that women compelled to conceal were led to reveal.

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