Book Review

Amanda Wunder, *Spanish Fashion in the Age of Velázquez. A Tailor at the Court of Philip IV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024). 272 pp., 203 col. Illus. Hbk £45.00. ISBN 97803002465

Spanish royal fashions in the seventeenth century were notoriously ceremonious and idiosyncratic, as evidenced by the portraits of one of Spain's most celebrated painters, Velázquez. Yet little was known about the artisans behind such attires. Similarly, dress historians had prioritized earlier periods. Wunder draws on readers' likely familiarity with the art of Velázquez to factor in court artisan communities in seventeenth-century Spanish fashions. The term 'fashion' is purposefully used because Wunder reflects on the actors and contexts involved in creating novelties that characterized the four decades at the core of her investigation, including the shift from the inverted funnel farthingale verdugado to the horizontally shaped guardandainfante. The case study that frames Wunder's study is Matteo Aguado (Fuenlabrada, 1605–Madrid, 1672). Aguado rose from being one of the many tailors who congregated around the court of Madrid to work for four decades in the service of the two consecutive wives of King Philip IV (1605–1665): Isabel of Bourbon (1602–1644) and Mariana of Austria (1634–1696). Admittedly, Wunder does not denote any specific methodological approach beyond using Janet Arnold's work on Elizabeth I's tailor as an example. However, it is possible to deduce a microhistorical perspective from Wunder's craft: a meticulous cross-examination of vast archival, literary, material and visual records reconstructs Aguado's world. A rigorous interplay of scales allows Wunder to traverse a tailor's world alongside broader topics, such as diplomatic affairs or seventeenth-century consumption patterns, among royals, courtiers, royal servants and artisans like Aguado.

The book follows Aguado's career through seven chronologically structured chapters, branching off into thematic explorations: Aguado's responses to each of the Queens' bodies, tastes and the semiotics of royal outfits, interspersed with the trickling down of fashions or

the tailor's socio-economic status, household, professional stages and everyday life. Wunder's evaluation of the speed of work in the tailor's workshop significantly alters our understanding of seventeenth century royal garments and explains why most clothing has not survived. Aguado's dozen journeymen often created entire formal garments over a day and night. A visually annotated chronology of women's dresses and patterns, alongside a glossary of Spanish terms, facilitates an understanding of the shifting styles and compounded under/garments analysed in the book. Unlike many other

glossaries, Wunder's is primarily based on the archival records of craftspeople and textile merchants, making it particularly useful for those historians working with such type of sources. Interestingly, Wunder notes deviations in dress terminology, even between Aguado's records and contemporary literary sources. These remarks are perhaps made too swiftly, given their significance well beyond the particular case of seventeenth-century Spain: dress and textile historians should heed the context and producer of a given source before extrapolating the use and meaning of any specific term. This lavishly illustrated book successfully mobilizes art, social and cultural histories to foreground the role of tailors and court artisans in the Spanish court fashion system during the overlooked seventeenth century. By juxtaposing Mateo Aguado's work with Velázquez's, the author further argues against lingering prejudices surrounding dress history and scholarly disciplinary divisions. The reader will allow me to conclude this book review by disclosing a secret: Wunder's exquisite ability to narrate academic research flawlessly made medream of Aguado's workshop and the court of Philip IV.

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