UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

https://helda.helsinki.fi

Is Fashion Universal? : Towards a Sociology of Proto-Fashion

Inglis, David; Almila, Anna-Mari; Ho, Hang Kei

Jaworski, Jared A.

2021

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/339072

Inglis, D, Almila, A-M & Ho, H K 2021, Is Fashion Universal? Towards a Sociology of Proto-Fashion. in J A Jaworski (ed.), Advances in Sociology Research. vol. 34, Nova Science Publishers, New York, pp. 1-46.

Downloaded from Helda, University of Helsinki institutional repository. https://helda.helsinki.fi
This is an electronic reprint of the original article.
This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.
Please cite the original version.

IS FASHION UNIVERSAL? TOWARDS A SOCIOLOGY OF PROTO-FASHION

David Inglis*
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland
Anna-Mari Almila
London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London, London, UK
Hang Kei Ho
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

ABSTRACT

There is today a widely held view that prior attempts to define fashion, to locate its historical origins, and to discern its presence in different societies around the world, have been marred by limited Eurocentric visions. Some have claimed that 'fashion' is a socio-cultural universal, that may be found in any and every society throughout time and space, if only we look for it in such locations. But claims as to the presence of fashion in pre-modern societies may infer too much from limited data about specific phenomena, and they may not fully contextualise the specific phenomena within the wider social context, in the manner that a historical-sociological analysis would. Such data could, however, possibly point not to fully-fledged fashion systems, but to something more limited, namely an incipient, embryonic, limited set of proto-fashion phenomena, which perhaps may be institutionalised in a proto-fashion system. Using this analytical orientation, we analyse three pre-modern empires, the Roman, Byzantine and Aztec. We find evidence mostly not of 'fashion' per se in them, but we do find elements of proto-fashion. We use these three cases to identify the means by which a social order may involve proto-fashion phenomena, and possibly also a proto-fashion system, but not a full fashion system. We find that at least some pre-modern societies tend to have proto-fashion rather

* Corresponding Author: david.inglis@helsinki.fi

than fashion, but a pre-modern fashion system is not impossible, either by definition or empirically speaking.

Keywords: Fashion, proto-fashion, history, sociology, fashion studies, historical sociology, globalization, definitions

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary sociology of fashion, as well as the wider interdisciplinary field of fashion studies within which it is nested, both the nature and origins of 'fashion' – both in clothes (sartorial fashion), and in other bodily adornments – are highly contested. There is no substantive consensus as to what fashion 'is', or when and where it began, or where it is to be found in human history. How one defines fashion will very much influence where one may or may not find it, when one looks at the historical and anthropological record. Part of the challenge of defining fashion is that purely formal concerns blend into substantive ones, and conceptual matters are indissociable from historical ones. This is particularly so as regards whether fashion should be defined as purely a 'modern' phenomenon (and by implication, a primarily 'Western' phenomenon too), or in more chronologically open terms, as existing in pre-modern societies as well as modern ones.

There is today an increasingly widely held view that prior attempts to define fashion, to locate its historical origins, and to discern its presence in different societies around the world, have been marred by scholarly myopia. Previous endeavours to define and locate fashion historically and geographically have been criticised as being seriously limited by Eurocentric assumptions (Baizerman et al 1993). These have over-privileged the historical role of Europe, in the medieval and early modern periods, in the creation of fashion dynamics and systems, while under-playing the possibility that phenomena equally worthy of being called 'fashion' have existed outside of 'the West', both in the modern period (roughly definable as after 1500 CE) and before it too. Claims have been made as to the presence of discernibly fashion-like phenomena in, for example, early modern Japan and China, prior to any influences from the West. Some scholars claim to find evidential traces of 'fashion' many centuries, or even millennia, before conventional wisdom usually locates the birth of fashion in medieval and early modern Europe (Welters and Lillethun 2018).

Indeed, some have gone so far as to claim that 'fashion' is a universal phenomenon, that probably has existed since pre-history. Such claims are based on the view that fashion dynamics are rooted in a human impulse to differentiate and distinguish, involving both separation of oneself from the social group, and also the

setting-apart of one social group from another (Craik 2009). If such claims are true, then 'fashion' can, at least theoretically, be found across very many, and indeed perhaps all, human groups that have existed throughout time and space. This would be so even if there are many methodological challenges involved in identifying such dynamics and in proving the alleged universality of fashion (Finnane 2008). Such an endeavour would certainly falsify all claims that fashion is a set of phenomena that are essentially only 'Western' and 'modern' in nature.

The intertwined issues of defining fashion and locating its presence historically and geographically are much in need of further elaboration and clarification in contemporary sociology of fashion and fashion studies. This article proposes to contribute to that endeavour. It does so by suggesting the term *proto-fashion*, which exists in the space between the two definitional poles indicated above, namely fashion as a socio-cultural universal, and fashion as essentially Western and modern. Proto-fashion is said to exist in a specific social context when the available evidence points to some, but crucially not all, elements of what is conventionally taken to be a fully developed 'fashion system'.

This paper proposes that the overly broad and vague definitions of fashion which drive the universality of fashion thesis tend to be used in the following way. When some limited evidence of some specific phenomenon is read as indicating some sort of fashion-like dynamic, then the whole social group or society in question is claimed to possess and demonstrate 'fashion' (e.g. the claims of Welters and Lillethun (2018), as to alleged fashion dynamics in ancient history). But this is to infer too much from limited data about specific phenomena. It is also to avoid fully contextualising the specific phenomena within the wider social context, which may be more allowing, less allowing or not allowing at all of such putative fashion dynamics. Such data could, however, more plausibly be said to point not to 'fashion' as such, but to something more limited, namely an incipient, embryonic, limited set of proto-fashion phenomena. These perhaps may be institutionalised in a proto-fashion system, which has some but not all features of a fully-fledged fashion system.

Behind much of the current debates lies the political history of European imperialism and scholarly critiques of it today. Fashion was for a long time considered an indicator of civilizational status by the European colonisers of other parts of the world. If fashion was present, a society might be rated more highly on a putative scale of civilization than if it was not present (Niessen 2010). It is the awareness of this history that often motivates present-day readings of fashion as not only European in origin, but also to be findable around the globe in multiple geographical and historical contexts. However laudable such motivations may be, they should not be allowed to undermine analytical accuracy. Motivations to find

fashion ‘everywhere’ may blind us to the nuances of particular social contexts, where fashion may be present, partly present, or just not present at all, even if a superficial reading of limited evidence may point in the direction of fashion’s alleged presence.

We set out the argument of this paper as follows. We review the unfolding of definitions of fashion over time in the relevant scholarly literatures, pointing to how certain definitions posit certain claims and assumptions about the historical and geographical origins and presences of fashion. We consider the limitations and problems of these definitions. We then turn to setting out the notion of proto-fashion phenomena and systems, which allows us to look at specific historical contexts in a more nuanced way than some proponents of the universality of fashion thesis have done. Then we use the proto-fashion concept to examine at three pre-modern imperial social contexts, the Roman, Byzantine and Aztec empires. The point of such analysis is to discern whether ‘fashion’ as such, or proto-fashion phenomena, may be found in these pre-modern contexts, as well as considering if pre-modern proto-fashion or fashion existed in at least one pre-modern society in the Americas, as well as in some Eurasian societies. We are guided in this endeavour by the hints about fashion’s pre-modern presences offered by the historical sociologist Jack Goody.

The overall aim is to consider the presence, partial presence and absence of fashion and proto-fashion phenomena in a more rigorous, historical-sociological way than has hitherto been attempted within sociology of fashion and fashion studies. As we will see, we find strong evidence of pre-modern proto-fashion, but only limited evidence of anything that could be called pre-modern fashion as such. But the possibility of a fully-fledged fashion system in a pre-modern society should not be ruled out of court.

EARLIER UNDERSTANDINGS OF FASHION

Fashion has long been an object of the critical gaze of moralists. The properly social scientific study of fashion only really began in the mid-19th century, with early statements such as that offered by Herbert Spencer (1891[1854]). By the end of the 19th century, and on into the early years of the next century, fashion had become an unavoidable object of social scientific scrutiny, given its apparent centrality in the cities and towns of the West (Wilson 1985). Theorists varied as to whether fashion was seen to be exclusively a modern phenomenon, a purely Western phenomenon, or something more universal.

For Thorstein Veblen (1899), fashionable apparel was primarily a weapon of elites deployed in displays of conspicuous consumption, which were aimed at showing each other, as well as those below them in social pecking orders, their vaunted wealth and status. Georg Simmel (1954[1904]) discussed fashion as a social process which functions within social class hierarchies, but which is ultimately based on allegedly fundamental psychological dispositions. Two key characteristics of fashion for him are imitation and differentiation: fashion allows the person to be different from everyone else, but not totally different, as it also allows them to look like some others that they would wish to look like. A third crucial characteristic of fashion, namely change, is also based on a fundamental human psychological drive, namely the desire for difference. Fashion is bound up with the struggles between social classes, in that, at least in some societies, lower classes imitate the fashions of upper classes, who in turn seek to re-establish class distinction by taking up new fashions as the older ones move down the social hierarchy. Simmel is today sometimes said to have identified, if not *the* 'engine of fashion change', then at least one of fashion's central dynamic aspects (Kaiser 2012, 22).

Simmel's (1954[1904]: 541) claim that 'tribal and classless societies' do not have any fashion dynamics can be criticised as possibly ethnocentric, and it is rooted in the broader chauvinistic and imperialist intellectual currents of the time. On the other hand, it does raise the question of how necessary the connection must be between fashion dynamics and the hierarchical organisation of social groups. Within these, most non-modern, non-Western, and non-elite dress was regarded by late 19th and early 20th century Western thinkers under the headings of unchanging 'custom' and 'tradition'. These categories assumed and emphasised the alleged differences between '"us" (civilized individuals) and "them" (pre-civilized groups)"' (Craik 2009, 19–20), with the latter defined as 'people without change/progress, taste/style, preferences/dislikes, and so on' (Welters and Lillethun 2018, 6; also Niessen 2003). Nonetheless, shorn of their unfortunate but non-essential period trappings, Simmel's key concepts are probably general enough to apply potentially to any social set-up, pre-modern or modern, exhibiting at least a certain level of complexity in terms of mode of social organisation and forms of social hierarchy.

An alternative, much less well-known, and possibly less Eurocentric contribution to analysing and defining fashion was put forward by the economist Caroline Foley. This was in an 1893 article that contains 'a cache of sharp-edged and deeply subversive insights. Foley, though only in her twenties, was well ahead of her male colleagues … in coming to terms with post-subsistence level market phenomena' (Fullbrook 1998, 709).

For Foley (1893, 460), fashion may be most simply defined as a 'more or less incessant tendency to change' in the realm of clothes and personal adornments. Already in the late 19th century, Foley subscribed to a more universalist understanding of fashion than contemporaries like Simmel and Veblen. She wrote that 'however the economic historian views the phenomenon of fashion, [s]he will find that … it is absent from no society or social epoch'. She quotes an earlier French author to the effect that 'every epoch has colours and contours which it prefers, forms which it affects, symbols which it venerates [and] … has ebullitions of sentiment, whims and fantasies to indulge in', with followers emulating leaders in this regard (Foley 1893, 463).

This universalist definition is used by Foley to criticise treatments of fashion which assume its essential (European) modernity by means of treating previous times and other places as 'rigid unities of relatively unchanging manners' (Foley 1893, 464), thereby caricaturing them and obscuring the fashion dynamics that can be found in at least some of them.

Echoing both Simmel and Veblen, although writing slightly before them, Foley argues that fashion is not only about changes in dress and adornment; it also concerns forms of social distinction, whereby a person or social group uses clothes and adornment in ways that distinguish themselves from other individuals and groups. When change and distinction run together and interpenetrate, then 'demand is likely to vary in the direction of contrast', with new styles being designed and deployed to differ explicitly from previously adopted ones. 'Changes in the substance and shape of clothing and adornment abound with illustrations of this tendency, but the law also holds good in every kind of taste, pursuit, and cult' (Foley 1893, 466).

Foley also deals with the issue of fashion operating within smaller or larger social circles. She notes that the '"flitting" from one mode to another of the influential few becomes impressive and prevailing when multiplied into the "sequaciousness" of the many', once the fashion process is industrialised and massified (Foley 1893, 461).

Foley does not restrict this extension of fashion dynamics, from small elite groups to ever wider social strata, to modern Europe alone, although this had clearly happened in Europe by her time. Instead, this process can be observed in multiple 'centres of civilisation', by which she probably has in mind China and Japan (for treatment of which see Belfanti 2008). It is 'the outcome of several special conditions, some positive, e.g. a high development of commercial and social intercourse between nations having relatively identical ideals of culture, together with advanced productive skill and practical arts; [and] some negative, e.g. the

absence of political and social barriers to the general adoption of the new modes' of dress and adornment (Foley 1893, 461).

In other words, for fashion to be operative among relatively large numbers of people in a specific society, a certain level of development of clothing production is required to be able to furnish sufficient amounts of garments at varied price points and quality levels, from highly expensive luxury items to basic, mass-market products. Also necessary is the absence of sumptuary and other laws and regulations, whereby authorities place a formal ban on some groups' wearing of certain sorts of garments.

According to Foley's logic, the modern version of fashion – which we could call the modern fashion system – does not differ *in principle* from pre-modern fashion. Both are about change and social distinction. They merely differ at the empirical level of how production, distribution and consumption are socially organised. 'Modern' fashion is characterised by massification and industrialisation of garment production, the absence of sumptuary laws restricting who can wear what, and forms of operation which are 'in keeping with the development of modern democracy'. In her broad evolutionary framework, clothing style 'seems at one time to have been imposed, and then suggested, from above, speaking socially. Now the sovereign people's tastes are besieged simultaneously and en bloc by shop windows, advertisement[s], [and] fashion papers' (Foley 1893, 472).

SOME LATER UNDERSTANDINGS OF FASHION

By the second half of the 20h century, the pendulum of defining fashion had moved towards more restrictive conceptions, which emphasised simultaneously the essentially Western and primarily modern nature of fashion. Mainstream scholarship regarded fashion as originating *only* in (late) medieval and early modern Europe, and in and at no other time and place.

In an influential account from the 1970s, the historian Fernand Braudel (1981) saw fashion as first appearing around 1350 CE, in Western Europe alone: 'One could say that fashion began here. For after this, ways of dressing became subject to change' (Braudel 1981, 317). This was presented by Braudel as being in stark contrast to the allegedly unchanging 'costume' of other parts of the world, which would only become subject to fashion dynamics when they were eventually brought into the orbit of Western fashion systems, either directly through colonialism, or through the mechanisms of 19th and 20th century Western-centred global fashion markets.

Following in Braudel's wake, Neil McKendrick (1982) argued that widespread poverty and social immobility hindered the advent of fashion outside Europe, whereas in Europe it was established with particular characteristics. The French sociologist Gilles Lipovetsky claimed that fashion proper only emerges in 'modern society':

> Once we resituate fashion with the vast life span of societies … it becomes an exceptional, highly problematic institution, a sociohistorical reality characteristic of the West and of modernity itself. From this standpoint, fashion is less a sign of class ambition than a way out of the world of tradition … the negation of the age-old power of the traditional past, the frenzied modern passion for novelty, the celebration of the social present. (1994[1987], 4)

Lipovetsky (1994[1987]) also claimed that fashion resulted from a combination of factors which came together only in Europe, including particular types of court society, specific ideals of aristocratic existence, particular forms of urbanization, and, from the Renaissance period onwards, an ideology of individualism, with the person 'recognized as having the right to make free choices' (Belfanti 2008, 421). Barnard (2007, 4) relatedly claimed that fashion is 'found in Western modernity' only. Fashion's emergence 'is a good test of whether that society is modern, or [W]estern', an argument accused of being circular by Moors (2009).

From the mid-1980s onwards, a lot of scholarly attention fixed on the connections between fashion and modernity. 'Modernity' (as opposed to earlier concepts like 'industrial society' or 'capitalist society') emerged as a central concept in social theory only in the late 1970s and gained traction in the 1980s (Inglis 2014). This was in part stimulated by wider intellectual innovations of the time, such as Marshall Berman's (1983) recasting of Marx's view of modernity as destroying all sense of social solidity, and the rediscovery of the writings of Simmel and Walter Benjamin on modernity (Frisby 1985). These various ideas were indebted to Baudelaire's understanding of modernity as culturally evanescent and ever-shifting (Wilson 1985; Lehmann 2000). In a time of heated debates as to the nature and significance of 'post-modernity', which some took to be the best way to understand the contemporary world, somewhat paradoxically the idea of modernity was very much put on the intellectual agenda too, less so in the earlier sociological register of bureaucratic, industrial society, and more so in the cultural-philosophical sense of a socio-cultural formation, albeit one seen to be driven by the volatile nature of capitalist accumulation (Harvey 1989).

Elizabeth Wilson (1985) was perhaps the first specialist scholar of clothing fashion in the English-speaking world seriously to engage with the emerging interdisciplinary concept of modernity. Wilson's mid-1980s account of the fashion/modernity nexus remains widely cited today. She considered the new economic order of mercantile capitalism and the growth of urbanization – which

scholarship of the time understood as having emerged in late medieval Europe – to have led to an emergence of fashionable dress that was 'qualitatively new and different' from previous forms of dress (Wilson 1985, 3).

Wilson's account stresses the importance of the capitalist economic order for the appearance and operation of fashion. She also highlights dynamism and unprecedented desire for change as being fashion's strikingly 'modern' characteristics. Fashion is also for her about individuality and self-identity, which become special kinds of problems in her understanding of modernity. Fashion speaks of a 'tension between the crowd and the individual' (1985, 11–12). Modern fashion is 'an aesthetic medium for the expression of ideas, desires and beliefs circulating in society', and cannot be reduced to economic forces and social hierarchies alone (1985, 9), as is allegedly done by earlier theorists like Veblen. The modern fashion system is therefore expressive of modernity, while also being created in and through it. Mass production of clothing in fashion cycles allows for a certain amount of democratization, while exploiting the workforce engaged in its making.

Capitalism and democracy as both cause and consequence of modern fashion are two major points in the wider narrative of the modern fashion system that emerged in the 1980s. Lipovetsky (1994[1987]) argued that a central aspect of a quintessentially modern fashion system is bureaucratization of production, distribution, and means of consumption. This occurred to European *haute couture* throughout the 19th century. Christopher Breward (1994) pursued similar kinds of ideas, arguing that the modernity of fashion is very much dependent on, and expressive of, certain elements of modern consumer-oriented capitalism, such as novel modes of advertising, new types of distribution systems like department stores and mail order businesses, and increasingly influential and widely circulated specialist fashion magazines, as well as mass-market journalism. These were in fact all themes already alluded to by the very prescient Caroline Foley in the late 19th century.

The focus on the fashion/modernity nexus probably helped to reinforce assumptions that fashion was essentially modern, and therefore also solely Western in origin too (Almila and Inglis 2017). However, one need not necessarily assume that fashion is essentially 'Western' and/or 'modern' in nature to be able to reflect on the specific characteristics of what can be defined as the *modern* fashion system. The latter can be understood in contradistinction to other sorts of fashion systems which may putatively have existed in pre-modern and non-Western contexts.

RETHINKING FASHION

By the end of the 20th century and the start of the 21st, the once widespread notion of fashion's exclusively Western nature and relatively recent (late medieval and/or early modern) nature was beginning to be criticised. Scholars pointed out that fashion phenomena could be found in pre-modern contexts, in both Europe and other parts of the world. Schneider (2006, 208), for example, argues that non-Western royal and aristocratic courtly cultures have demonstrated much the same phenomena – changing styles and elite leadership in clothing and adornment – as have European courts. Cannon (1998) made the same sort of point for small-scale, non-industrial societies, which may be found to have fashion dynamics if one looks carefully enough, and if one does not pre-define fashion as limited only to large-scale societies or modern ones. Although 'the processes of fashion comparison, emulation and differentiation are more noticeably apparent in the rapid changes that characterize systems of industrial production, the same processes are observable or at least inferable in most cultures' (Cannon 1998, 23).

These observations seem to demand a radical redefinition of what fashion is. As Carter (2003, xii–xiii) notes, 'too sharp an identification of fashion with modernity can lead to serious problems' of definition. Just to 'equate "fashion" with modernity leaves us with no means of naming those regimes of vestimentary change that existed before the arrival of full modernity'. Relatedly, Riello and Rublack (2019, 3) argue that contemporary thinking 'comprehensively revises the notion that', in pe-modern societies, 'clothing remained static and was considered to "make" people by according them a clear place in a social hierarchy'. The non-static and dynamic nature of (at least some) pre-modern clothing and adornment regimes is today very much part of an emerging scholarly movement.

Probably many scholars of fashion today would be prepared to admit that fashion in clothes and adornment, on a capacious definition of what it is and how it works, can be found in the following cases:

Medieval Europe, at times before the hitherto widely accepted date of the mid-14th century (Newton 1980, Piponnier and Mane 1997). This possibility had already been alluded to by Foley (1893, 464). Contributions here include Hollander (1978), Heller (2007), Rosenthal (2009), Tortora and Eubank (2010), and Tortora (2015).

Some of the large civilizations of east of Eurasia from the early modern period onwards. In a widely cited piece, Belfanti (2009) sets out a range of evidence from early modern China (Ko 1997, Finnane 2008), India (Chaudhuri 1990, Mohapatra 1992), and Japan (Dalby 1993, Slade 2009) as to the presence of fashion dynamics in those societies, in (what Western scholarship calls) early modern times, independent of Western fashion influences which would come into play later (also Francks 2015). His conclusion is that fashion was not 'a European invention, but it

only fully developed as a social institution in Europe, while in [early modern] India, China, and Japan it only evolved partially, without being able to obtain full social recognition' (Belfanti 2008, 419). In effect, early modern east Eurasian instances of fashion were more limited and delimited than the west European one of the same time-period. This was either because they involved elites only and not lower social strata, or because they were sequestered, being limited only to some groups and not others, and were on display only in some delimited spaces and locations, such as pleasure parks and city leisure districts.

More controversially, some have argued that fashion was clearly present not just in early modern China but in pre-modern China too, during the Chinese Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), especially in the so-called Golden Age of prosperity in the 8th century CE (Adshead 1997). Contemporary commetators indicated many foreign influences, including Turkish and eastern Iranian styles in make-up and in men's and women's dress (Schafer 1963). Tsui (2016) argues that the Chinese language of the time has clear expressions of notions of fashionability and being in and out fashion. Major (2005) indicates the presence of clear patterns of fashion leadership and imitation in Tang court culture. Technical developments in the 9th century CE in textile production underpinned relatively rapid changes in women's clothing (Chen 2017). Welters and Lillethun (2018, 131) cite the Tang period as a definite instance of pre-modern fashion. If the evidence cited above is all reliable, then this may well be a bona-fide pre-modern fashion system, in that it seems to have clear systemic properties. But these properties need to be defined, which is what we turn to doing below.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF FASHION?

We have seen that some recent writings on fashion have turned towards the idea that fashion is not restricted to particular times and places, namely the later medieval and modern West (Niessen 2003; Kaiser 2012). Some authors have gone further than observation of fashion in non-modern contexts, claiming that fashion may be a social and cultural universal, rooted in basic human dispositions towards creativity and the desire to create forms of change, social difference, and self-identity (Eicher 2001). Barnard (2014, 5) speaks for this trend when he argues that 'even the most "basic" "anthropological" or biological functions of keeping a body warm and dry cannot be immune to style, they must take some form or other … Variation … [is] at the heart of what fashion is and therefore we must say that fashion is always with us, and that it has always been with us'.

Perhaps the most influential proponent of a universalist definition of fashion in recent times has been Jennifer Craik (1994). In the mid-1990s she rejected the then widespread assumption in scholarship that fashion is unique to the modern West, the modern capitalist economy, and their 'pre-occupation with individualism, class, civilization, and consumerism'. For Craik (2009, 20), not only 'is it ethnocentric to insist that fashion in contemporary culture is fundamentally different from that of other societies, but it is elitist, shallow, and plainly wrong', based on the various forms of evidence scholarship today has created and has at its disposal.

Instead of any restrictive definition that equates fashion with Western modernity, Craik (2009, 19) argues that the 'fashion impulse' – defined as 'constantly changing clothing codes and stylistic registers' – occurs 'in non-Western and non-modern societies too'. Craik approvingly cites Heller (2004, 339) to the effect that fashion has a trans-cultural and trans-historical 'essence': this is 'the desire to make decisions about personal display for oneself, seeing them as a means of personal expression'.

Apparently drawing on Simmel's (1904) classic definition of fashion, Craik (2009, 48) further presents the 'fashion impulse' as involving the 'achievement of distinctiveness in dress through clothing codes and symbols that balance the impulse to belong to a group and the individual desire to stand out and assert the attributes of the self or persona'. This allegedly universal disposition is accompanied by 'the regulation of clothing codes and habits', which aims 'to internalize status and distinction through a combination of proscriptions and prescriptions' (Craik 2009, 48).

On this view, 'achieving distinctiveness in dress and decoration has been a universal process of the construction of social identity. Preindustrial, industrial, colonial, and modern societies have *all* engaged in a play between customary, fashionable, and assertive forms of clothing the body such that different clothing systems are dynamic, constantly changing, forming and reforming, and in competition with specific cultural allegiances' (Craik 2009, 24). So, for Craik 'other systems of fashion' beyond the modern Western one 'should be recognized and examined in their own terms'. In non-modern and non-Western contexts, 'clothing, dress, and ornamentation' may operate as 'complex system[s] of cultural communication that not only articulate … the collective identity of a culture but also [may] exhibit enormous individual variability, creativity, innovation, and experimentation' (Craik 2009, 19). Rather in the manner of Foley a hundred years earlier, Craik (2009, 21) is of the view that, while 'contemporary fashion is a distinctive system (hooked onto consumerism and globalization) … it is not fundamentally different from other fashion behaviours in other fashion systems', non-Western and pre-modern.

For some scholars, the aim is now to develop a very inclusive understanding of fashion that sees it as 'global and diverse in its development, occurrences, and dimensions' (Lillethun et al 2012, 77–78). In a major recent study, Welters and Lillethun (2018) attempt to identify empirical scenarios across time and space which exhibit the characteristics which Craik attributes to the 'fashion impulse'. These authors start from the premise that 'the impulse to decorate the body is a universal human behaviour'. They then gloss the fashion impulse concept as 'the desire to use the human body to express a host of changing meanings', claiming that such dispositions have been 'present in societies since time immemorial'. If there is evidence that the 'fashion impulse' seems to exist in a particular societal context, then we may say that there is a specific 'fashion system' in place (Welters and Lillethun 2018, 8–9, 7).

Fashion is defined as 'changing styles of dress and appearance that are adopted by a group of people at any given time and place' (Welters and Lillethun 2018, 16). They do not put 'a specific time limit on the duration of a particular style; thus, change is not restricted to clothing or other styles that pass out of fashion in less than 100 years. If that were the case, the common business suit could not be considered fashion because it has been in use since the mid-nineteenth century' (Welters and Lillethun 2018, 16). The rapidity of change 'in the shapes of clothes or the patterns on the fabrics, in hairstyles and colours, in cosmetic and body markings, or in permanent body modifications' is also left open. Fashion is also explicitly naturalised by these authors: 'the desire to embellish the human body – the fashion impulse – is the dominant reason for dress and … humans [naturally] seek novelty or change; thus, fashion is endemic to human nature' (Welters and Lillethun 2018, 29).

Equipped with their broad definition of fashion, Welters and Lillethun find traces of fashion dynamics across much of human history and in most parts of the world. Their empirical cases include late Mesolithic era Brittany (2018, 76), pre- and post-European conquest North, Central and South America (2018, 86), and most of Eurasia for the last three millennia, finding evidence of changing tastes in jewellery, cosmetics, and grooming, textile production and garment styles, with downwards movements from elites to wider social strata, with trade and other cross-cultural exchanges allowing for 'new ideas about dress and appearance spread across the Eastern Hemisphere' across a very long time period (2018, 121).

FASHION AND PROTO-FASHION

The problem with this broad-brush approach to such matters is that evidence of *any* sort of change in what people wore or adorned themselves with is taken as evidence of the presence of fashion. But in our view, change alone is not synonymous with fashion, and evidence of the former is not equivalent to evidence of the presence of the latter. The epistemological danger is one of misleadingly labelling as fashion what is only change. This is especially a problem if the change happens so slowly and over such long periods – say, hundreds of years – that it is really pushing the definition of fashion to breaking point to render such changes as examples of fashion.

Moreover, with forms of change that were not consciously understood as change by people at the time, it is also difficult to label these as fashion. We may wish to say that fashion involves some degree of conscious awareness by participants that what they are doing is picking up on a new sort of thing or rejecting an old sort of thing, precisely because they think it is now old-fashiond and thereby no longer fit for whatever purposes they would be picking it for (standing out from others, or keeping up with the look of the surrounding group, and so on).

More generally, the universality-of-fashion thesis can be criticised as being based on an unduly broad, if not vague, definition of what fashion 'is' – namely, the alleged human impulse to differentiate symbolically and materially the self from others. This equation of fashion with differentiation glosses over or ignores various factors that we might want to say must be included in the definition of fashion, especially its systemic elements (such as a system of constant supply of novel garments, materials, accessories, and so on). What is gained by a wide and capacious definition of fashion – namely, an open-minded orientation to finding fashion potentially anywhere and everywhere, both geographically and historically – is bought at the price of definitional vagueness. The danger is that phenomena that are not truly describable in fashion terms are in fact misleadingly labelled as fashion. Moreover, the open-minded outlook that fashion could exist *anywhere* can harden into an orthodoxy that it *must* have happened *everywhere*, even if the available evidence does not point in that direction. The laudable intention to prevent fashion from being seen as the invention and property of only some people (primarily modern Westerners) and not others, can lapse into the perverse possibility of imposing an understanding of fashion onto groups and social contexts which should not be labelled in such a manner (Entwistle 2015).

For if fashion is indeed primarily modern and Western, then placing the sartorial habits of non-modern and non-Western people under the umbrella term of fashion is itself a form of epistemological imperialism. The strange outcome of such matters is that it can be Eurocentric to define fashion in a narrow way as purely modern and Western, but it can also be Eurocentric to define fashion so widely that

it becomes an implicitly Eurocentric label placed upon non-Western and non-modern phenomena which should not be defined that way, but should instead somehow be understood in their own terms, whatever those may plausibly be argued to be. Calling everything to do with changes in clothing and adornment from every place and every time 'fashion', is both unnecessarily indiscriminate and also unhelpful for the purposes of clearly defining differences and similarities between different epochs, social groups, societal oders, and geographical locations.

It is therefore necessary to develop definitions and terminology which are more precise, and which, crucially, can allow us to say that some phenomena, or sets of phenomena, which pertain to changes in clothing and adornments, are either a) *not* describable as fashion at all, or b) have *some, but not all*, features of fashion.

We will refer to the latter case as *proto-fashion phenomena*. These may, or may not, be involved in some sort of *proto-fashion system*. The latter must be in place for the former to exist and persist over a certain amount of time.

Aspers and Godart (2013, 171) define fashion as 'an unplanned process of recurrent change against a backdrop of order in the public realm'. We will amend the end of the definition to read 'in the social realm(s)'. This is because we believe fashion need not necessarily exist in what a given society defines as its 'public' realm, but fashion still must happen in some sort of social world involving the interaction of some persons (Almila 2016; 2018). This also raises the issue of whether what we will call proto-fashion phenomena and systems, as well as fully-fledged fashion systems, must occur in 'official' ways: that is, openly in public, without fear of sanction by political, religious, or other authorities. The comprehensive review of medieval and early modern sumptuary laws around the world offered by Riello and Rublack (2019) shows that both proto-fashion phenomena and systems may occur in social contexts where sumptuary laws are in place, and paradoxically may sometimes even be unintentionally stimulated by those laws. Whether a fully-fledged fashion system can operate within a context characterised by sumptuary laws remains to be determined; we hypothesise that this is not the case, but that contention needs further empirical investigation.

Aspers's and Godart's definition suggests that fashion-related change is more than just change per se. It is a certain sort of change, which involves some continuities over time. This is because it has some ordered properties. Fashion is not the same as a fad, because a fad will not necessarily have any continuity: it can arise and then after a period of popularity die out, with no lasting form of significance. But if a given fad is replaced in some sort of orderly way by another fad, and that is in turn superseded by another, then we are talking about, at the least, *proto-fashion phenomena*, which are elements of a *proto-fashion process*.

For such a process to pertain over time, some sort of *institutionalisation* of it will be necessary. Kawamura (2005, 44) focuses on how a fashion system must be in place to transform clothing and other things into objects of fashion. We, however, focus here on the basic forms of such systems. The bare minimum of institutionalisation is a rudimentary *proto-fashion system*: that is, a proto-fashion process with some systemic features. This involves a division of labour and practice between fashion-related producers and distributors on the one hand, and consumers on the other, and also a division of labour within these broad groups themselves. Within the realms of production and distribution, the systemic elements include the kinds of actors involved, the types of organisations they are assembled within, and the tasks each type of actor and organisation typically do (Kawamura 2005).

Within the social realm of consumption, the systemic elements include actors who, intentionally or unintentionally, communicate fashion-related notions: that is, those who diffuse ideas both about what is fashionable and why other persons should be interested in such things. The systemic aspects also include actors who adopt a novel kind of clothing and adornments, and those who follow their leadership. Without some sort of recognised fashion leadership in a specific context, we believe that one cannot talk meaningfully of a fashion system. However, we can plausibly talk of proto-fashion phenomena that occur without institutionalised mechanisms of leadership. The movement from proto-fashion phenomena and processes to proto-fashion systems involves the multiplication, differentiation, and stabilization of different sorts of actors and their characteristic practices. This movement is not inevitable. It may or may not happen for a wide range of reasons, depending on the overall social context. We remain agnostic about the factors and mechanisms which may promote institutionalisation of proto-fashion phenomena into proto-fashion systems; these are likely so many and varied in terms of the historical record that it would require a large-scale study to list and categorise them all.

Most scholars would agree that any understanding of fashion is about cycles of change in styles of clothing and adornment (Sproles 1981). Two major questions then arise about chronology and consciousness. First, how short or how long, and how rapid or how slow, must such changes be to count at least as proto-fashion, rather than just as change involving more or less random mutations over time? Second, how conscious and willed must changes be, on the behalf of those who make the clothes and adornments, and those who wear them, for the changes to count at least as proto-fashion?

Proto-fashion phenomena need to involve some basic level of consciousness that clothing and adornment styles are changing over time. Proto-fashion systems involve consciousness by at least sme participants that that sort of change is not a

one-off, but it is in fact recurring. There is also a sense of the *continuous* nature of change, and this is understood, in at least a rudimentary way, as *systemic* change. At some level – either of actors' more practical or more reflective levels of consciousness – we can talk of a proto-fashion system when the people operating in and touched by it have some sort of grasp of the recurring, persistent, and therefore systemic and systematic, nature of that with which they are involved.

As to the speed and duration of fashion cycles, one has to navigate somewhere between two extremes: on the one side, pre-defining these in ways that are very narrow, and conversely not defining them at all. It is probably too arbitrary to choose a given duration as the maximum time-period for fashion cycles and waves, as do, for example, Tortora and Marcketti (2015, 104), who suggest that fashion in clothes and adornment exists when there are cycles that last less than a century. The problem with any attempt to delimit timescales runs the risk of leading to the exclusion of certain social contexts that otherwise might plausibly be counted as involving (proto-)fashion phenomena. Conversely, if no timescale at all is defined (as is advocated by Welters and Lillethun 2018), another risk is run: that *all* change in styles of clothes and adornments counts as fashion, even if a particular change happens over hundreds of years, or even millennia. Such a broad view of fashion risks pushing the concept to breaking point or even complete meaninglessness.

A middle path is to suggest that the maximum length is context-dependent, because it relies on collective memory practices in a given society. For a change to be understandable by actors as fashion-related change, then there has to be some understanding of 'before', 'now', and 'after' in terms of styles appearing and replacing others, and some form of motivation to adopt what is understood as a 'new' style, and to relinquish what is perceived to be an older one. Collective memory practices here would have to involve capacities to distinguish older and newer styles – involving thoughts like 'this is the kind of thing my grandmother wore', or 'the way that old statue is dressed is not how I would want to dress today' – and to embrace or reject the newer styles precisely because they are seen to be 'new' in some way or another.

Roach and Musa (1980) made a distinction between 'simple' and 'complex' fashion systems, with the implication that the latter are found in modern social contexts only. This implication makes too many assumptions as to the modernity of complexity. Instead, we prefer to distinguish between more elementary *proto-fashion* (encompassing phenomena, processes, and systems, the latter involving institutions, organisations, divisions of labour, and different sorts of actors), and more elaborate *fashion* per se, which by definition is systemic in nature. While we may expect proto-fashion to be identifiable in pre-modern social contexts, we leave open the possibility that fully-fledged fashion systems may potentially be found in

such contexts too, precisely because we do not equate complexity to modernity. Here we disagree with Kawamura (2005), who thinks that any sort of fashion system, less or more complex, is purely a phenomenon of modern social conditions.

Welters and Lillethun (2018) hypothesise that, on their very broad definition of fashion, the latter could theoretically be found anywhere in human history. They seem to assume fashion's presence everywhere, such that when existing evidence suggests 'the apparent stasis of dress forms', that is 'an inadequate basis to conclude fashion's absence' in that context (Welters and Lillethun 2018, 29). Thus, fashion can be assumed to be present unless proved otherwise. This shifts the burden of proof onto those who would want to say there were not fashion phenomena in any given situation. This goes against the standard protocol of scientific investigation that if you want to claim something exists, you first have to find adequate proof of its existence, and that would involve robust evidence interpreted in a defensible manner. The point of our definitions is to allow for sifting of evidence such that one gets way from a crude division between 'fashion is present' and 'fashion is not present' in any specific context. One can examine the historical record for a third and intermediate possibility, proto-fashion phenomena, which may, or may not, be institutionalised in proto-fashion systems. One can therefore say for a given context that there evidence points towards there indeed being some proto-fashion phenomena present, but there is not a full fashion system per se there, and perhaps there is not even a proto-fashion system either.

We keep an open mind as to where and when in human history one can find evidence of proto-fashion phenomena and systems, as well as fashion systems as such. We strongly suspect that proto-fashion phenomena are very widespread, in societies big and small across history and the planet. Proto-fashion systems and fashion systems will be less widespread, and probably appear in social orders above a certain level of complexity, although what that level is can only be ascertained through systematic empirical investigation.

The historical anthropologist Jack Goody gives us a hint in this regard. Welters and Lillethun (2018, 2) approvingly quote his claim that fashion could be traced 'probably everywhere' (Goody 2006, 265). They read this as anywhere in the planet throughout human history. But he seems to have had a much more restricted set of possibilities in mind. 'Fashion' – in the sense we mean proto-fashion systems and fashion systems – might be found in multiple societies of the same type, but perhaps not in any societies of some other societal types. The type Goody refers to as probably 'having fashion' are those which experienced the Bronze Age urban revolution. These 'share some important material similarities (and some differences) which set them apart' from other types of society (Pomeranz 2009, 32). Goody argues that a broadly similar societal type can be discerned across much of

Eurasia, much of North Africa, some parts of the Americas (the large-scale, complex civilizations of the Maya and Aztecs, for example), but not in sub-Saharan Africa, Australia, Oceania, and much of the rest of the Americas (Pomeranz 2009, 33).

Of course, any such formulation is debatable and perhaps controversial. But it does give us one way into understanding where we might expect to find evidence not only of proto-fashion phenomena – perhaps to be found very widely indeed – but also of proto-fashion and fashion systems too.

PRE-MODERN (PROTO-)FASHION?

In this section, we present three cases that we consider in terms of discerning proto-fashion phenomena and systems, and possibly fashion systems as such. All are taken from pre-modern times (that is, before circa 1500 CE). The reason is that we do not find it surprising that proto-fashion phenomena may be found around different parts of the world after that time, and the empirical existence of what we take to be proto-fashion has been well documented by others for the early modern period, at least across Eurasia, as we have seen above. A more meaningful investigation involves examining the degree to which we can find proto-fashion phenomena, and perhaps even fully developed fashion systems, in pre-modern contexts, because presumably that is both a more challenging, but also intellectually rewarding, task.

We have chosen three cases of pre-modern empires: the Roman, Byzantine and Aztec. All these fit within Goody's scheme of where he would have expected to find fashion dynamics. We choose the Roman example as we happen to have some expertise in that field of study anyway. We chose the Byzantine case to test and nuance Welters's and Lillethun's analysis of it, using much the same evidence as they do. And we have chosen the Aztec situation to take the analysis out of Eurasia, and to include a pre-modern context from the Americas, to be able to compare and contrast with the two western Eurasian cases.

The Roman World

In the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, the population of Rome was roughly one million people, packed into an area less than eight miles square. Large amounts of imported goods, more mundane and more luxurious, poured into the city, as well as throughout the empire. Rome had extensive trading links with India, Malaysia and even China, generally operated by Indian and Parthian middlemen (Robertson and

Inglis 2004). The Greek orator Aelius Aristides (1953, 896) was moved to present Rome as the one location in the world

> … where the commerce of all mankind has its common exchange and all the produce of the earth its common market. Whatever the seasons make grow and whatever countries and rivers and lakes and arts of Hellenes and non-Hellenes produce are brought from every land and sea, so that if one would look at all these things, he must needs behold them either by visiting the whole civilized world or by coming to this city. For whatever is grown and made among each people cannot fail to be here at all times and in abundance . . . the city appears a kind of giant emporium of the world.

A social order as large and complex as the Roman empire, centred on a densely packed cosmopolis, might be expected to have fashion phenomena. Certainly, moralists condemned what they viewed as unnecessary indulgence Culinary taste among the upper classes was characterised by Petronius (1996, 89) in this manner: 'Far-out and foreign win / What's out-of-bounds is in'. Seneca the Younger (1889, 334–335) castigated gourmets who demanded that rare delicacies be brought from all across the globe 'to tempt their fastidious palate: food, which their stomach, worn out with delicacies, can scarcely retain, is brought from the most distant ocean . . . they do not even deign to digest the banquets which they ransack the globe to obtain . . . they wander through all countries, cross the seas and excite at a great cost the hunger which they might allay at a small one'.

Although it would suit their argument as to the historical ubiquity of fashion, Welters and Lillethun (2018, 161) are not able to marshal much evidence in this regard, beyond pointing out 'the social importance of [women] following hair fashions with precision, even while Roman garments changed little' over long periods of time (Bartman 2001, Stephens 2008).

But their account actually underplays the evidence that would help bolster their overall argument. In terms of female hair dressing and men's facial hair styles, an important feature of fashion was present, albeit in a limited way: information about new styles was communicated throughout the imperial terrain by means of the pictures of emperors and empresses found on coins. Tortora (2015, 50) regards these as elementary fashion plates, indicating the current style in the metropole, and allowing and encouraging adoption in the empire's provinces and peripheries. Although Fejfer (2008) is sceptical about bold claims that any empress simply set fashion trends, still she argues that portraiture of this illustrious female figure 'made certain hairstyles more popular. Her hairstyles were copied all over the Empire and percolated down into society', which probably indicates some sort of (proto-)fashion process at work (Dolansky 2012, 283).

In another domain, Morris's (1963) account of naming practices suggests that alterations over time in the construction of Roman names – involving the number of names a person was likely to have, as well as the content of the names – did not

just involve changes over time, but these were in fact subject to (proto-)fashion processes of innovation and imitation, as well as involving adoption of words that seemed more distinguished.

Caroline Foley had already pointed to literary evidence, such as the 2nd century BCE playwright Plautus's 'enumeration of annual change in smart stuffs and colours', to discredit 'belief in the modernness of fashion' (Foley 1893, 464). Sebesta and Bonfante (1994, 66) argued that the diversity in textiles and dyed colours available in Rome shows that 'a fashion industry developed around Roman women'. Tortora (2015, 48) regards that variety of colours, and the fact that new ones were developed over time, as evidence of some sort of fashion dynamics, even if the basic form of dress was not subject to fashion-driven change.

Purple and silk were understood to be expressions of immodesty and extravagance, and moralists commented negatively upon them accordingly (Vout 1996, 215). The elder Seneca criticised his time as one in which 'luxury spreads from bad to worse, and the ambitions of women, competing with each other, bring madness to private households and harm to the state', while some decades later his son, Seneca the Younger, complained about 'women who wore earrings so large it was as though two or three family fortunes dangled from their lobes' (Dolansky 2012, 271). Juvenal described a lawyer who attended court in a light, almost transparent toga, a sartorial trend that would lead to the encouragement of effeminacy and cross-dressing (Dolansky 2012, 191).

Ancient Rome's relatively limited sumptuary laws targeted certain kinds of luxuriance in adornment, indicative of elite worries about both the breaching of gender codes on appropriate male and female dress, and also lower social groups over-stepping customary limits of appearance (Riello and Rublack 2019). Bans on certain kinds of appearance are not necessarily a sign of fashion's existence, but could be argued to be in this context.

Olson (2014, 183, 202) argues that there is ample literary evidence to suggest the existence of a social type in early imperial Rome, namely 'the dandy, or urban young man of fashion', a person 'whose sexuality may be ambiguous, whose defining features include a love of self-display, and who seeks to create social spectacle through his appearance'. Such a person was known at the time by two derogatory terms: *trossulus* and *comptulus*.

Such persons were liable to wearing loose and colourful clothing, long and/or curled hair, possibly shaved their legs and torsos, and perhaps wore perfume. All of these were striking and deviant departures from male adornment norms. Although in some ways conventionally signifying effeminacy and homosexuality, this type also seems to have been thought of at the time as dressing this way to attract female sexual attention, seducing women through their unusual look. The

non-usual nature of the appearance here perhaps might attest to some sort of fashion dynamics. Beyond sexual purposes, one of the main aims of this kind of dressing and behaviour may have been to call attention to itself. The author Martial describes a man in dressed in violet sauntering around the city 'trying to be seen by as many people as possible' (Dolansky 2014, 200). There is also evidence of sartorial differences and tensions between younger and older generations of men. Thus, one might be denounced as going against the customary wearing of short-sleeved tunics if one adopted a long-sleeved one, this denunciation possibly implying this was a fashionably youthful, and therefore somewhat dubious, thing to do (Dolansky 2014, 194).

In the ancient Roman context, we can say that there was a proto-fashion system in place. There was sufficient supply of materials available for proto-fashion phenomena to operate. There was a division of labour between proto-fashion leaders and followers to some extent, insofar as we know about some younger men who may have developed an avant-garde role. This is bound up with conflicts as to modes of dress and toilette between older and younger generations, and between more liberal and more conservative attitudes to bodily comportment. To the extent that circulating images of emperors and empresses could stimulate (proto-)fashion in looks, then that satisfies a condition of the existence of a proto-fashion system, namely sufficient diffusion of fashion information around the population in question, in this case over very long distances throughout the imperial territory. There was also some (semi-)conscious awareness not only of change in clothing and adornment, but of the cyclical nature of that change. The system, however, seems not to have been institutionalised enough to count as a fully-fledged fashion system.

The Byzantine World

The upper classes of the successor of the eastern part of the Roman world, namely the Byzantine empire, dressed in rich and elaborate fabrics (Connor 2004, Dawson 2006). According to Ball (2005, 3) (in our terms, a fully developed) 'fashion system … in which clothing was designed, created, and consumed based on the desires and tastes' existed in the Byzantine empire, 'alongside and intertwined with a traditional, prescribed dress code'.

While Byzantine dress 'necessarily followed long-established traditions', especially at the royal court, nonetheless individuals 'when left to their own devices were extremely interested in creating, borrowing, and wearing fashionable dress', according to Ball (2005, 1). The Byzantine upper classes 'not only dressed to express rank and wealth, but also dressed out of desire', a key feature of a fashion system according to Ball (2005, 7).

The evidence Ball adduces as to the existence of a full fashion system in the Byzantine empire is as follows. Fashionable change was slow due to limited technological means, and due to the dispersed nature of the components of garment production – for example, fabric dyers were concentrated in Greece, linen came from Egypt, and silk was made in both. But such change did nonetheless happen, albeit slowly and sometimes over centuries (Ball 2005, 3, 9).

Fashions did not originate in the imperial capital and diffuse outwards to the provinces. Instead, items of clothing and adornment would be taken up by elites in the provinces, often in imitation of non-Byzantine others also living at the empire's peripheries or just across its borders, such as Normans in Sicily, Georgians, Armenians, and varied Islamic population. It was 'wealth combined with access to a pan-Mediterranean culture, and not a purely Byzantine Greek one, [which] provided the greatest breeding ground for a fashion system' at this time (Ball 2005, 118).

For example, turbans, adopted by Byzantines in the Eastern parts of the empire in emulation of their Islamic neighbours, became fashionable in Constantinople (Ball 2005, 2). The empire's peripheries, such as the province of Cappadocia, can therefore be construed as providing 'multiple fashion centres' which gave Byzantines in the empire's core 'a wide range of selection in garments and fabrics' (2005, 7–8). The wealthy in the peripheries also could buy textiles and clothing from international fairs and merchants engaged in long-distance trade (Ball 2005, 75–76).

Ball argues against claims that in this world 'clothes were not designed with changes in cuts, ornament, and fabric necessary to constitute the design of different fashions for the market … [and] that essentially all medieval clothing was cut the same (billowing tunics of different lengths) with variance in fabric based [only] on wealth (wool for the poor, silk far the rich)'. Instead, she finds in the provinces that 'well-dressed men and women wore wide caftans and turbans. Caftans and long tunics are as different as dress slacks, and jeans, although the cuts are similar'. There were also short-sleeved caftans and women's dresses with defined waists. She claims that 'this variety points to the existence of designers of some sort' (Ball 2005, 119).

Welters and Lillethun (2018) approvingly cite Ball's study as evidence of pre-modern fashion. In our view, the Byzantine case certainly is illustrative of a proto-fashion system, and arguably could be a fully-fledged fashion system. There is a quite sophisticated division of labour, because different clothing-related production activities were spread around various parts of the empire, but more importantly, so too were innovative practices of consumption and imitation. The imitation processes at the peripheries of the imperial territory were less about lower groups'

imitations of higher groups, and more about provincial higher groups' imitations of 'exotic' non-Greek/Byzantine others. This is arguably about adopting styles not primarily for prestige purposes, but for the sake of gaining novelty and displaying newness in adornment. Such trends eventually arrived in Constantinople, and changed, slowly but surely, metropolitan dress styles. There is also some evidence of design intentions by producers as to creating new styles. Overall, there is evidence of systematicity in fashion phenomena, even if by modern standards the systemic nature of fashion was both patchy and slow. So, there was certainly a proto-fashion system, and perhaps even what we would want to define as a fashion system as such.

The Aztec World

The Aztec empire emerged in the early 15th century CE through the development of a politico-military alliance between three city-states in the Basin of Mexico: Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan. The empire's territory stretched from the Pacific to the Gulf coasts. Its complex internal social structure was both highly hierarchical, centred on a hereditary aristocracy's domination of hereditary commoners, and was also subject to fragmentation, involving ethnic, political, class, and religious factions and schisms. Thus an 'almost constant undercurrent of competition permeated Aztec life at all levels, from the supernatural to the everyday', concerning ownership of territory, power, prestige, and luxury goods (Berdan 2010, 59).

Waging war and exacting tribute from surrounding states, the aristocracy was afforded rich and extravagant lifestyles (Berdan 2010, 60–61). Luxury goods included vestment items and adornments such as elaborately decorated cotton, feathers, jaguar pelts, and jadeite, turquoise, and gold. Early Spanish observers recorded that the grandeur of the Aztec emperor's court rivalled or even surpassed European equivalents, and they were struck by the lavish, colourful and ornate finery that the nobles wore (Anawalt 1990, 291).

The veritable sartorial chasm between male hereditary aristocrats and commoners is well captured in this way:

> Envision a ruler, who might appear decked in an exquisitely decorated cotton cloak and loincloth, fine stones of turquoise or jadeite in his ears, nose and lower lip, golden bands about his arms and legs, fine sandals decorated with jaguar skins, and a turquoise diadem or cluster of quetzal feathers atop his royal head. In bold contrast, the local commoner would be dressed in no more than a roughly made loincloth (typically of maguey fibres rather than cotton), and perhaps a simple unadorned cape. The visual social gulf was striking, although the Aztecs and their neighbours were quite accustomed to these obvious and intended overt messages (Berdan 2010, 66).

More accessibility to luxury items that could be worn was afforded to the elite the more the empire expanded and was successful in war with its neighbours. The urban centre of the empire, Tenochtitlan, may have had as many as 250,000 inhabitants at its height, making it comparable to large imperial cities like ancient Rome (Berdan 2010, 63).

In such a society, where upper class clothing was very ornate (Orr and Looper 2014), one might expect to find at least proto-fashion dynamics. 'If a culture was as sophisticated as that of the Aztecs' – and, we would add, prone to dynamism through reasons of constant external and internal conflict – then 'it follows that its sartorial expressions would display elements of a fashion system', reason Welters and Lillethun (2018, 86).

Evidence of an Aztec fashion system for Welters and Lillethun includes alterations in fabric patterns and structures, even if basic garment styles remained much the same over time. As in the Mayan empire, the existence of sumptuary laws in Aztec society, which forbade commoners to wear most of the accoutrements associated with the aristocratic lifestyle regime (Anawalt 1980, 35), 'suggests the desire of non-elites, such as the artisan and merchant classes as well as victorious warriors, to wear prestige styles; emulation of the class above an individual's station is a basic feature of the trickle-down theory of fashion'. Moreover, 'traveling merchants introduced new materials, which elites must have adapted for their garments and accessories' (Welters and Lillethun 2018, 89).

All these claims are true, but the framing of them as testifying to a full-blown fashion system lacks both nuance and sufficient contextualisation within the social structure of the Aztec world. In the first place, luxury goods of apparel and adornment flowed primarily into the imperial treasury and were under aristocratic control; they did not usually come into the orbit of commoners, except by unofficial means.

Although all classes wore the same sorts of relatively simple garments constructed from hand-woven materials, the specific social status of a person was identified by the type of cloth fibre, the specific type of cut, and the amount of decoration – more elaborate for the aristocracy, less elaborate the further down the social hierarchy a person's group was (Anawalt 1980, 38). At the official level, the sumptuary laws dictated that each group in the hierarchy had to wear certain kinds of clothes and no others. Anawalt (1980, 37) summarises the laws thus: commoners could only wear garments made of maguey, yucca or palm fibre; cotton clothing was restricted to the hereditary aristocracy; the type of decoration and colour, and the level of elaboration of feather adornments on aristocratic clothing were specified; who could wear which types of design of sandals, cloaks and ornaments was highly regulated. 'What emerges', Anawalt (1980, 37) concludes, is a picture

of the elite's vision of how society should be, namely 'a sharply stratified Aztec society in which the appropriate apparel for each class, even for each individual, was precisely assigned by law'.

But the picture is complicated by various factors. First, even within the official rules, there was some scope for movement. A certain amount of social mobility was available to male commoners through service and success in warfare, and that could bring the possibility of higher status within (but not outside) his class, with the possibly of finer ornamentation of the person thereby being allowed as a marker of higher social position. The same applied to the nobility – the right to wear more elaborate gear came with officially recognised success in war (Anawalt 1980, 34).

Second, as in other complex societies, what is supposed to happen according to sumptuary laws, and what actually transpired on the ground, may be rather different. It may be that the historical record we have access to overstates the presence of the sumptuary laws at the time of the height of the empire, as they may have been survivals from earlier, more stringent times which had survived in the statute books, but whose power to regulate behaviour at later times was at best imperfect (Anawalt 1980, 43).

Third, a more directly efficacious social institution than the sumptuary laws was warfare, waged partly out of standard reasons of conquest, booty and tribute, but also for cosmological imperatives: the order of the universe would crumble if there was not a steady supply of human sacrifices, and these were obtained by capturing prisoners in the regular wars with surrounding polities. At all ranks, an individual male's military success, and therefore the ability to be upgraded in terms of dress, was measured in how many live captives he had taken in battle. The highly institutionalised nature of warfare created a sort of military-aesthetic market 'in which prestigious items such as lip plugs, arm bands, shields, weapons, insignia, loincloths and cloaks could be obtained' (Anawalt 1980, 39–40). Most revered of all was a special *tilmatli*, a kind of cloak. As the status of a warrior could be recognized, in the battlefield and outside it, by the particular cloak he was entitled to wear, this effectively turned 'the *tilmatli* into the most highly visible and supremely sought after status garment in Aztec society' (Anawalt 1980, 40).

The authorities banned sales of all such items in the marketplaces, because they were meant to be gifts of the emperor alone, and therefore outside of ordinary commercial relations. But the marketplaces, open to all classes, were actually often involved in the sale of such items. In the marketplace of Tlatelolco, the twin city of Tenochtitlan, every five days up to 50,000 market people attended to look at and buy goods, including items that were formally banned, such as gold, jewels, fabrics, and ready-made garments of all types, including of patterns that theoretically were restricted to particular classes. Even the *tilmatli* seem to have been available to buy

in a designated area of the marketplace. Although State officials were present as overseers in the marketplaces, they seemed not to interfere in who was buying what (Anawalt 1980, 41). Such a situation probably allowed instances where 'lower classes were not too inhibited to devise ways of imitating the dress of their betters', although the level and amount of imitation would be very much shaped by the amount of economic capital a lower-class buyer would have at their disposal (Anawalt 1980, 42).

It is also worth mentioning that great riches could be accumulated by two distinct class groups, both of which were involved in clothing and adornment matters. These were the long-distance merchants, called *pochteca*, and artisans of luxury goods. The one group supplied the aristocratic need for luxury materials, the other supplied elite demand for finished garments and jewellery. The aristocrats operated within the kind of conspicuous consumption system indicated by Veblen (1899), where power and prestige were won through competitive feasting and ostentatious gift-giving, both to rivals, clients, and supplicants. The number of participants in this system increased dramatically generation by generation, because of leading noblemen having multiple wives and therefore large numbers of offspring who would be brought into the highly formalised, competitive social relations. This created ever greater demand for luxury items that could be put to use within such relation. This in turn created great fortunes for merchants especially, such that the wealth of some probably outstripped that of more minor aristocrats. But in a society based around apparently strict socio-cultural hierarchies, the nobles forbade any signs of public ostentation by the nouveau riche. The newly enriched merchants seem to have obeyed this stricture, going around dressed in the most humble and dowdy manners, at least while they were inside Aztec territory. But within the hidden confines of their guilds and houses, they probably engaged in the same kind of competitive largesse among their peers as the aristocrats engaged in with theirs (Berdan 2010, 79).

In the terms we have developed in this article, the Aztec empire had a relatively well-developed production and supply side for fashionable dressing. It is the consumption side that is much more attenuated. Sumptuary laws were avoided to some extent but not completely. Lower classes may have been able, to some extent, to imitate the aristocracy and highly ranked warriors. But there is no evidence that this had the components necessary to create a proto-fashion system.

On the one side, lower class people imitated their social superiors in dress and adornment, but not to be 'in fashion', for there was no fashion to be in. Instead, imitation was driven by desires to look more prestigious than one actually was, or how the sumptuary laws dictated one should be. On the other side, the aristocracy tried to regulate, again to some extent, what the lower orders could wear, but when

the lower orders imitated them, there was no movement in the direction of the elite reaching out for new styles to replace those that had been debased by the commoners. Instead, the aristocracy seem to have continued dressing in the ways they had done before. They may have demanded more and more quantities of material to display on their persons, but the styles of the material did not change over time, let alone in the form of a fashion cycle. Thus, ever greater imports of luxury goods and ever more elaborate production, to meet the demands of increasing inter-elite conspicuous consumption competition, neither produced nor was the result of a proto-fashion system.

Thus we can say that Aztecs had some, rather limited, proto-fashion phenomena in their social order, in that there was some imitation of the high by the low, but this did not involve and did not engender a proto-fashion system. Instead, there was conspicuous consumption and imitation of the higher by the lower, but these existed without any sort of proto-fashion or fashion system. This illustrates a wider point: that evidence of the former factors ds not necessarily indicate the presence of the latter factors, however tempting it may be to some, who wish to find fashion everywhere, to read matters in that way.

CONCLUSION

This paper has taken issues with the currently fashionable idea that fashion is a socio-cultural universal. By taking a sceptical stance towards such matters, it has sought to instigate an analytical historical-sociological apparatus which can investigate the presence of fashion in particular social contexts in a more nuanced way than has generally been the case hitherto. This analytical apparatus is driven by the notion of proto-fashion, which helps one to evaluate the degree of presence of fashion phenomena in any given social context. Investigation is carried out in such a way that the analyst avoids claiming too much on the basis of limited evidence, and also such that evidence of fashion-like phenomena are related to two crucial matters. These are: issues of degrees of systematicity, and the extent to which the wider social set-up facilitates fashion-like dynamics and systematic institutionalisations of them.

Our investigation of three pre-modern contexts reveals certain things about those contexts in themselves, while the findings also allow us to make some wider, if still tentative, claims. First, the Roman empire had a proto-fashion system, which was fairly well developed on the consumption side (e.g. communication of fashion ideas, leadership, competition), but the production side was much less so, lacking systematicity, for production and imports were not geared towards fashionable

consumption, but only primarily to display of luxury. Second, the Byzantine empire had a fairly highly developed production situation, based on a geographically quite extensive division of labour, and new styles adopted in peripheries eventually could have a fashion-like presence in the metropole, a slow process to be sure, but out of all the cases we have examined, it points to the most fully developed situation that might possibly be characterised as a fashion system as such, and not only a proto-fashion system. Third, the Aztec empire had high-level, sophisticated luxury production and importation processes. Yet they did not have on the consumption side systemic fashion dynamics (e.g. elites did not create or demand new styles when lower orders, formally banned from copying their attire, did so). There was a lot of sartorial and adornment material available, because of its use inter-lite conspicuous consumption and for the purposes of marking social rank, but it was not deployed in a fashion systemic manner, and not even in a proto-fashion systemic way. At most, the Aztec context displays some limited proto-fashion phenomena, but these were not organised systemically.

Looking at all three cases in tandem allow us to make some wider points. 1) In the Romana and Byzantine cases, where we discern proto-fashion systems, it seems that the consumption side was more important for the development of such systems than was the production side. 2) No system, whether a fashion system per se or a proto-fashion one, can emerge via production processes alone. The Aztec instance shows that the presence in society of large amounts of luxury materials, including within the reach of at least some non-elite people, alone cannot generate such a system. Systematicity requires many other factors to be in place too. 3) There are various ways in which in a society can have not only proto-fashion phenomena but also a proto-fashion system. The Roman case shows that phenomena on the consumption side can become systemic in character, even when the production side is not oriented explicitly to that system. But there will also be other ways in which proto-fashion dynamics can become systemic in nature, as future research may reveal when studying other societies. 4) For a fully-fledged fashion system to emerge, both consumption and production sides must operate according to some specific and explicit fashion logics and imperatives, and they must work in synchronisation with each other, at least to some extent. What that extent may be remains to be researched.

All these contentions must be fleshed out by further empirical investigations, which we suggest should be informed by the presentation of the notion of proto-fashion which was presented in this paper. Only rigorous, in-depth, comparative work can further indicate the presence or non-presence of proto-fashion and fashion, as well as their specific forms of institutionalisation into systems, in specific historical contexts, especially but not only pre-modern ones. Nonetheless,

this paper has demonstrated that when one might not plausibly claim to have found 'fashion' at some place and at some time, there is perhaps the possibility of making a more modest and careful assertion that something like proto-fashion is indeed present, whether in the form of a system or just in terms of certain phenomena. We suggest that pre-modern societies, at least of certain types, tend to exhibit proto-fashion, rather than fashion as such. But a fully-fledged fashion system in a pre-modern society is not impossible, either by definition or empirically speaking. More research is now needed to see if that possibility can be verified, encompassing examination both of the Tang Dynasty case noted above, and of other plausible loactions around the world.

REFERENCES

Adshead, S.A.M. 1997. *Material culture in Europe and China, 1400–1800*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Almila, A. 2016. "Cultural Sociology of Fashion: On the Sartorial, Symbolic and Social." In *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Sociology*, edited by D. Inglis, and A. Almila, 510–26. London: Sage.

Almila, A. 2018. *Veiling in Fashion: Space and the Hijab in Minority Communities*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Almila, A., and D. Inglis. 2017. "What is 'Fashion' Really? The Promise of an Ecumenical Analytic for Fashion Studies and Beyond in a Globalized World." In *Epistemology and Transformation of Knowledge in Global Age*, edited by Z. Delić, 63–84. London and Rijeka: Intech**.**

Anawalt, P.R. 1980. "Costume and Control: Aztec Sumptuary Laws." *Archaeology* 33(1):33–43.

Anawalt, P.R. 1990. "The Emperors' Cloak: Aztec Pomp, Toltec Circumstances." *American Antiquity* 55(2):291–307.

Aristides, A. 1953. "Roman Oration' in James H. Oliver 'The Ruling Power: a study of the Roman Empire in the second century after Christ through the Roman oration of Aelius Aristides." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* New Series 43(Part I):873–999.

Aspers, P., and F. Godart. 2013. "Sociology of Fashion: Order and Change." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39:171–92.

Baizerman, S., J.B. Eicher, and C. Cerny. 1993. "Eurocentrism in the Study of Ethnic Dress." *Dress* 20:19–32.

Ball, J.L. 2005. *Byzantine Dress: Representations of Secular Dress in Eighth-to-Twelfth-Century Painting*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barnard, M., ed. 2007. *Fashion Theory: A Reader*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Barnard, M. 2014. *Fashion Theory: An Introduction*. Abingdon: Routledge.
Bartman, E. 2001. "Hair and the Artifice of Roman Female Adornment." *American Journal of Archaeology* 105(1):1–25.
Belfanti, C.M. 2008. "Was Fashion a European Invention?." *Journal of Global History* 3(3):419–43.
Benn, C.D. 2005. *China's Golden Age: Everyday Life in the Tang Dynasty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Berdan, F.F. 2010. "Levels and Strategies of Competition in the Aztec Empire." In *Competition in the Ancient World*, edited by N. Fisher, and H. van Wees. Swansea: Classical Press of Wales.
Berman, M. 1983. *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*. London: Verso.
Braudel, F. 1981. *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century, Vol. 1. The Structures of Everyday Life*. New York: Harper and Row.
Breward, C. 1994. *The Culture of Fashion.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Cannon, A. 1998. "Cultural and Historical Contexts of Fashion." In *Consuming Fashion: Adorning the Transnational Body*, edited by A. Brydon, and S. Niessen, 23–38, Oxford: Berg.
Carter, M. 2003. *Fashion Classics from Carlyle to Barthes*. Oxford: Berg.
Chaudhuri, K.N. 1990. *Asia before Europe: economy and civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the rise of Islam to 1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Chen, B. 2017. "Material Girls: Silk and Self-Fashioning in Tang China (618–907)." *Fashion Theory* 21(1):5–33.
Cho, K. 2012. *The Search for the Beautiful Woman: A Cultural History of Japanese and Chine*se *Beauty*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
Connor, C.L. 2004. *Women of Byzantium*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Craik, J. 1994. *The Face of Fashion.* New York: Routledge.
Craik, J. 2009. *Fashion: The Key Concepts*. Oxford: Berg.
Dalby, L.C. 1993. *Kimono: Fashioning Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Dawson, T. 2006. "Propriety, Practicality and Pleasure: The Parameters of Women's Dress in Byzantium A.D. 1000–1200." In *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience 800–1200*, edited by L. Garland, 41–76. Aldershot and Hampshire: Ashgate.
Eicher, J.B. 2001. "The Fashion of Dress." In *Fashion*, edited by C. Newman, 17–23. Washington DC: National Geographic Society.

Entwistle, J. 2015. *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress & Modern Social Theory*. 2nd ed. London: Polity.
Fejfer, J. 2008. *Roman Portraits in Context*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
Finnane, A. 2008. *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, Modernity, Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Foley, C.A. 1893. "Fashion." *Economic Journal* 3(11):458–74.
Francks, P. 2015. "Was Fashion a European Invention?: The Kimono and Economic Development in Japan." *Fashion Theory* 19(3):331–61.
Frisby, D. 1985. *Fragments of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity.
Fullbrook, E. 1998. "Caroline Foley and the Theory of Intersubjective Demand." *Journal of Economic Issues* 32(3):709–31.
Garland, L. 1999. *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204*. London: Routledge.
Goody, J. 2006. *The Theft of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Harvey, D. 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Hoboken: Wiley.
Heller, S.G. 2007. *Fashion in Medieval France*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer.
Hollander, A. 1978. *Seeing Through Clothes*. New York: Viking Press.
Inglis, D. 2014. "What is Worth Defending in Sociology Today? Presentism, Historical Vision and the Uses of Sociology." *Cultural Sociology* 8(1):99–118.
Kaiser, S.B. 2012. *Fashion and Cultural Studies*. London: Bloomsbury.
Kawamura, Y. 2005. *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*. Oxford: Berg.
Ko, D. 1997. "Bondage in Time: Footbinding and Fashion Theory." *Fashion Theory* 1(1):3–27.
Lehmann, U. 2000. *Tigersprung: Fashion in Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Lillethun, A., L. Welters, and J.B. Eicher. 2012. "(Re)Defining Fashion." *Dress* 38:77–99.
Lipovetsky, G. 1994[1987]. *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, translated by C. Porter. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Major, J.S. 2005. "China: History of Dress." In *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion*, Vol. 1, edited by V. Steele, 260–66. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
McKendrick, N. 1982. "The commercialization of fashion." In *The birth of a consumer society: the commercialization of eighteenth-century England*, edited by N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, 36–41. London: Europa Publications.
Mohapatra, R.P. 1992. *Fashion styles of ancient India: dress and costumes*. New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation.

Moors A. 2009. "'Islamic fashion' in Europe: Religious conviction, aesthetic style and creative consumption." *Encounters* 1: 175–201.

Morris, J. 1963. "Changing Fashions in Roman Nomenclature in the Early Empire." *Listy filologické / Folia philologica* 86(1):34–46.

Newton, S.M. 1980. *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince: A Study of the Years 1340–1365*. Woodbridge and Suffolk: Boydell.

Niessen, S. 2003. "Re-Orienting Fashion Theory." In *Re-Orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress*, edited by S. Niessen, A. M. Leshkowich, and C. Jones, 243–66. Oxford: Berg.

Niessen S. 2010. "Interpreting 'civilization' through dress." In *Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, Vol. 8: West Europe, edited by L. Skov, 39–44. Oxford: Berg.

Niessen, S. 2016. "Afterword: Fashion's Fallacy." In *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity through Fashion*, edited by M. A. Jansen and J. Craik, 209–17. London: Bloomsbury.

Olson, K. 2002. "Matrona and Whore: Clothing of Women in Roman Antiquity." *Fashion Theory* 6(4):399–400.

Olson, K. 2014. "Masculinity, Appearance, and Sexuality: Dandies in Roman Antiquity." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 23(2):182–205.

Orr, H., and M. Looper, eds. 2014. *Wearing Culture: Dress and Regalia in Early Mesoamerica and Central America*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.

Paulicelli, E. 2014. *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy: From Sprezzatura to Satire*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Petronius. 1996. *Satyrica* eds. and trans. R. Bracht Branham, and D. Kinney. London: Everyman/J. M. Dent.

Piponnier, F., and P. Mane. 1997. *Dress in the Middle Ages*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Pomeranz, K. 2009. "Putting Modernity in its Place(s) Reflections on Jack Goody's *The Theft of History*." *Theory, Culture & Society* 26(7–8):32–51.

Riello, G., and P. McNeil, eds. 2010. *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

Riello, G., and U. Rublack, eds. 2019. *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Roach, M.E., and K.E. Musa. 1980. *New perspectives on the history of western dress*. New York: Nutriguides.

Robertson, R., and D. Inglis. 2004. "The Global *Animus*: In the Tracks of World-Consciousness." *Globalizations* 1(1):38–49.

Rosenthal, M.F. 2009. "Cultures of Clothing in Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39(3):459–81.

Schafer, E.H. 1963. *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand.* Berkeley CA : University of California Press.
Schneider, J. 2006. "Cloth and Clothing." in *Handbook of Material Culture*, edited by C. Tilley, W. Keane, S. Kuchler, M. Rowlands, and P. Spyer, 203–20, London: Sage.
Sebesta, J.L., and L. Bonfante. 1994. *The World of Roman Costume*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
Seneca. 1889. "Consolatio Ad Helvia/Addressed to His Mother Helvia: Of Consolation." In *L. Annaeus Seneca: Minor Dialogues*, trans. A. Stewart. London: George Bell.
Simmel, G. 1954[1904]. "Fashion." *American Journal of Sociology* 62(6):541–58.
Slade, T. 2009. *Japanese Fashion: A Cultural History*. Oxford: Berg.
Spencer, H. 1891[1854]. "Manners and fashion." In *Spencer: Essays*, 1–51. London: Williams and Norgate.
Sproles, G.B. 1981. "Analyzing Fashion Life Cycles—Principles and Perspectives." *Journal of Marketing* 45(4):116–24.
Stephens, J. 2008. "Ancient Roman Hairdressing: (On) Hairpins and Needles." *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 21:1110–32.
Tortora, P.G. 2010. "History and Development of Fashion." In *The Berg Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion*, Vol. 10, edited by J.B. Eicher and P.G. Tortora, 159–70. Oxford: Berg.
Tortora, P.G. 2015. *Dress, Fashion and Technology from Prehistory to the Present*. London: Bloomsbury.
Tortora, P.G., and K. Eubank. 2010. *Survey of Historic Costume*. New York: Fairchild Publications.
Tortora, P.G., and S.B. Marcketti. 2015. *Survey of Historic Costume*, 6th ed. London: Bloomsbury.
Tsui, C. 2016. "'Fashion' in the Chinese Context: An Academic Approach." in *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition and Modernity through Fashion*, edited by M.A. Jansen and J. Craik, 51–70. London: Bloomsbury.
Veblen, T. 1899. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions*. New York: Macmillan.
Vout, C. 1996. "The Myth of the Toga: Understanding the History of Roman Dress." *Greece & Rome* 43(2):204–20.
Waugh, C. 1999. "'Well-Cut Through the Body': Fitted Clothing in Twelfth-Century Europe." *Dress* 26:3–16.
Welters, L., and A. Lillethun. 2018. *Fashion History: A Global View*. London: Bloomsbury.
Wilson, E. 1985. *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*. London: Virago.