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“He knows them by their dress”: Dress and Otherness in Early Modern Spain

Abstract: *In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries people perceived themselves as members of particular ethnic groups and considered dress to be an important marker of, alternatively, similarity or otherness. Whereas the construction of self and other in literary texts and costume books has been widely discussed, relatively little is known about the relevance of “national” dress in social practice. Against this backdrop, this article discusses the extent to which people in early modern Spain and Spanish America were able to recognize foreigners and ethnoreligious others by the way they dressed. Focusing on two groups, moriscos (Muslims converted to Christianity) within the Spanish realms and foreign Protestants, it demonstrates how a person’s outward appearance could reveal, but also conceal, his or her origin. Dress served as an important marker of ethnic and religious difference, but it always remained an ambiguous signifier.*

In the sixteenth century, Western Europe saw an unprecedented interest in dress and fashion. Not by coincidence, this process went hand in hand with a new perception of the self and the individual’s place in society. Renaissance men and women showed who they were or who they aspired to be not least by the way they dressed.¹ The growing number of sumptuary laws issued by political authorities across Europe since the Late Middle Ages highlights the role of dress as an important marker of difference.² By regulating the outward appearance of their subjects, early modern rulers not only aimed at preventing people from wasting their money in luxury, but also tried to guarantee the legibility of the social universe. In the eyes of contemporaries, a person’s outward appearance

¹ Ulinka Rublack: *Dressing Up. Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe*. Oxford 2010; Anne Hollander: *Seeing Through Clothes*. Los Angeles 1993; Stephen Greenblatt: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago 1980; Neithard Bulst and Robert Jütte (eds.): *Zwischen Sein und Schein. Kleidung und Identität in der ständischen Gesellschaft*. Freiburg 1993.

² Giorgio Riello and Ulinka Rublack (eds.): *The Right to Dress. Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective, c. 1200–1800*. Cambridge 2019; Alan Hunt: *Governance of the Consuming Passions. A History of Sumptuary Law*. New York 1996; Catherine Kovesi Killerby: *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200–1500*. Oxford 2002; Neithard Bulst: Zum Problem städtischer und territorialer Kleider-, Aufwands- und Luxusgesetzgebung in Deutschland (13. bis Mitte 16. Jahrhundert), in: André Gouron and Albert Rigaudière (eds.): *Renaissance du pouvoir législatif et genèse de l’Etat*. Montpellier 1988, 29–57.

reflected his or her place within the social order. Therefore, members of the lower estates were strictly forbidden to wear garments reserved for the higher ranks.³ However, even in a society as obsessed by rank and hierarchy as that of pre-revolutionary Europe, social status was but one feature among others.⁴ Accordingly, many sumptuary laws contained special regulations for religious or ethnic minorities.⁵

Costume books, a new literary genre that became extremely popular at this time, also showed a world divided into perfectly distinguishable groups of people who dressed differently according to their social rank, occupational status, gender, religious affiliation, and – last but not least – ethnic origin and place of residence.⁶ In this manner, authors like Christoph Weiditz, Hans Weigel, Cesare Vecellio, and François Desprez presented to their readers a broad range of regional costumes from all over the world.⁷ However, the seemingly naturalistic depictions of men and women wearing their respective “national” dress could also deceive. Due to

3 Martin Dinges: Von der “Lesbarkeit der Welt” zum universalisierten Wandel durch individuelle Strategien. Die Soziale Funktion der Kleidung in der höfischen Gesellschaft, in: Bulst and Jütte, *Sein und Schein*, 90–112; Thomas Weller: “Von ihrer schändlichen und teuflischen Hoffart sich nicht abwenden lassen wollen . . .”. Kleider- und Aufwandsordnungen als Spiegel “guter Ordnung”, in: Irene Dingel and Armin Kohnle (eds.): *Gute Ordnung. Ordnungsmodelle und Ordnungsvorstellungen im Zeitalter der Reformation*. Leipzig 2014, 203–219.

4 For the importance of rank see: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger: Rang vor Gericht. Zur Verrechtlichung sozialer Rangkonflikte in der frühen Neuzeit, in: *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 28 (2001), 385–418; Marian Füssel and Thomas Weller (eds.): *Ordnung und Distinktion. Praktiken sozialer Repräsentation in der ständischen Gesellschaft*. Münster 2005; Marian Füssel: Die relationale Gesellschaft. Zur Konstitution ständischer Ordnung in der Frühen Neuzeit aus praxeologischer Perspektive, in: Dagmar Freist (ed.): *Diskurse – Körper – Artefakte. Historische Praxeologie in der Frühneuzeitforschung*. Bielefeld 2015, 115–137.

5 For the intersection of these differences, see Dror Wahrman: *The Making of the Modern Self. Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*. New Haven 2004.

6 Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 146–163; Ulrike Ilg: The Cultural Significance of Costume Books in Sixteenth-Century Europe, in: Catherine Richardson (ed.): *Clothing Culture 1350–1650*. Aldershot 2004, 29–48; Leslie Schick: The place of dress in pre-modern costumes albums, in: Suraiya Faruqi and Christopher K. Neumann (eds.): *Ottoman Costumes from Textile to Identity*. Istanbul 2004, 93–102; Odile Blanc: Ethnologie et merveille dans quelques livres de costumes français, in: Marie Viallon (ed.): *Paraître et se vêtir au XVI^e siècle*. Saint-Étienne 2008, 79–94.

7 Theodor Hampe (ed.): *Das Trachtenbuch des Christoph Weiditz von seinen Reisen nach Spanien (1529) und den Niederlanden (1531/32)*. Berlin 1927; Hans Weigel: *Habitus praecipuorum populorum [. . .]. Trachtenbuch, darin fast allerley und der fürnembsten Nationen [. . .] kleidungen [. . .] mit allem vleiß abgerissen*. Nürnberg 1577; Margaret F. Rosentahl and Ann Rosalind Jones (eds.): *Cesare Vecellio's Habiti Antichi et Moderni. The Clothing of the Renaissance World*. London 2008; François Desprez: *Receuil de la diversité des habits, qui sont de present en usage, tant en pays d'Europe, Asie, Affrique et Isles sauvages*. Paris 1562.

genre conventions, costume books were “more likely to affirm local, national, gender and rank-specific identities than cosmopolitanism and universal values”.⁸ In many cases the authors themselves pursued a “nationalistic” agenda and thus presented a biased or distorted view of other cultures.⁹ By doing so, they deliberately ignored an important aspect of contemporary fashion. At the same time as costume books were becoming popular, fashionable clothing items and materials started to circulate ever faster across cultural and political borders. The adoption of foreign styles and their mixture with autochthonous elements was quite frequent among European elites.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the popularity of this genre shows that sixteenth and seventeenth-century contemporaries perceived themselves as members of different ethnic groups and considered dress as an important marker of “national” differences.¹¹ Whereas the construction of self and other in humanist discourse in general and costume books in particular has been widely discussed, relatively little is known about the relevance of dress as a marker of “national” difference and belonging in social practice.

Against this backdrop, this article discusses the extent to which people in early modern Spain and Spanish America were able to recognize foreigners and ethnoreligious others by the way they dressed. The Spanish monarchy is of particular interest for this question for various reasons. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the so-called Spanish dress served as a model for aristocratic and bourgeois elites across Europe.¹² However, early modern Spain was by no means a monolithic cultural entity. As a paradigmatic case of a composite monarchy, it encompassed different territories and ethnic groups under one dynasty.¹³ Among the Iberian subjects of the Catholic Kings were also large religious and ethnic minorities, who had been forced to convert to Christianity and to assimilate

⁸ Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 162.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 146–163.

¹⁰ The contributions to this issue provide many cases in point.

¹¹ For pre-modern concepts of nation and the rise of early modern nationalism, see Caspar Hirschi: *The Origins of Nationalism. An Alternative History from Ancient Rome to Early Modern Germany*. Cambridge 2012.

¹² José Luis Colomer and Amalia Descalzo (eds): *Spanish Fashion at the Courts of Early Modern Europe*, vol. 1. Madrid 2014; Milena Hajná: *Moda al servicio del poder. La vestimenta en la sociedad noble de la Europa Central en la Edad Moderna y las influencias de España*, in: Miguel Cabañas Bravo, Amelia López-Yarto Elizalde, and Wilfredo Rincón García (eds.): *Arte, poder y sociedad en la España de los siglos XV a XX*. Madrid 2008, 71–82.

¹³ Pedro Cardim et.al. (eds.): *Polycentric Monarchies. How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony*. Brighton 2012; Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio Alvaríño et al. (eds.): *La monarquía de las naciones. Patria, nación y naturaleza en la Monarquía de España*. Madrid 2004.

to the dominant Christian culture at the beginning of the early modern period.¹⁴ As I will show, dress regulations accompanied and fostered this process in a significant way. Apart from Jews and Muslims, who were perceived by many Spaniards as “foreigners” within – although they had been living on the Iberian Peninsula for centuries – early modern Spain was also confronted with increasing migration from other European territories.¹⁵ Commercial hubs like Seville, one of the most important centers of world trade in the sixteenth century, attracted thousands of foreigners. Many of these were Protestants or came from territories that were continuously at war with the Spanish Monarchy. By focusing on these two groups, ethnoreligious minorities within the Spanish realms and foreign migrants, I will analyze the extent to which dress served as a marker of otherness. As I will show, in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain and Spanish America a person’s outward appearance could reveal, but also conceal, his or her origin. Dress served as an important marker of ethnic and religious difference, but it was always an ambiguous signifier.

Foreigners Within: Dress Regulations and Ethnoreligious Minorities in Medieval and Early Modern Spain

As in other parts of Europe, Jews and Muslims living under Christian rule in the medieval Iberian kingdoms were subject to special dress regulations. The authorities not only obliged them to wear distinctive marks on their clothing to

¹⁴ Mark D. Meyerson and Edward D. English (eds.): *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain. Interaction and Cultural Change*. Notre Dame, IN 2000; Christian Windler: Religiöse Minderheiten im christlichen Spanien, in: Peer Schmidt (ed.): *Kleine Geschichte Spaniens*. Stuttgart 2002, 105–121; Patrick Leonard Harvey: *Muslims in Spain, 1500–1614*. Chicago, IL 2006; Mary Elizabeth Perry: *The Handless Maiden. Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain*. Princeton 2007; Antonio Domínguez Ortiz and Bernard Vincent: *Historia de los moriscos. Vida y tragedia de una minoría*. Madrid 1978; Jane S. Gerber: *The Jews of Spain. A History of the Sephardic Experience*. New York 1992; Elie Kedourie (ed.): *Spain and the Jews. The Sephardi Experience 1492 and After*. London 1992; Dolores J. Sloan: *The Sephardic Jews of Spain and Portugal. Survival of an Imperiled Culture in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries*. Jefferson, NC 2009; Julio Caro Baroja: *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*. Madrid 1978.

¹⁵ For the perception of Muslims, Jews, and their descendants as “others within”, see Antonio Feros: *Speaking of Spain. The Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World*. Cambridge, MS 2017, 76–108.

make them easily recognizable, but also prohibited them from wearing specific garments or materials that were considered signs of social distinction, such as gold, silver, and silk. Regardless of their economic situation, non-Christians were not allowed to dress better than Christian commoners did; thus, religious discrimination went hand in hand with social stigmatization.¹⁶ However, it seems that these regulations were scarcely obeyed, despite being constantly repeated and confirmed, and that cross-cultural influences between Christians, Muslims, and Jews were quite frequent during the Middle Ages. The famous historian Ibn Khaldun, whose family had abandoned Andalusia after the fall of Seville in 1248, criticized Andalusian Muslims for subjecting themselves to Christians by adopting their dress.¹⁷ In Nasrid Granada, Muslim authorities worried about the blurring of religious lines, since many Christians dressed like Muslims.¹⁸ In spite of the limited obedience to their dress regulations, it appears that medieval rulers, both Christian and Muslim, aimed at making religious difference visible through dress. These regulations took a different direction only after 1492, when the coexistence of the three monotheistic religions on the Iberian Peninsula came to a definite end.

Whereas in the medieval Iberian kingdoms the separation of religious minorities had been enforced, in early modern Spain rulers aimed at homogenizing their subjects in both religious and cultural aspects. In 1492 and 1502 respectively, the Catholic Kings obliged all remaining Jews and Muslims either to convert to Christianity or to leave the Spanish kingdoms. Both royal edicts were soon followed by ordinances on Jewish and Muslim customs and dress.¹⁹ It is a characteristic feature of sumptuary legislation in early modern Spain that

16 José Damián González Arce: *Apariencia y poder. La legislación suntuaria castellana en los siglos XIII y XIV*. Jaén 1998, 170–177; Maria Filomena Lopes de Barros: Body, Baths, and Cloth. Muslim and Christian Perceptions in Medieval Portugal, in: *Portuguese Studies* 21 (2005), 1–12; Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado: *De la convivencia a la exclusion. Imágenes legislativas de mudéjares y moriscos. Siglos XIII–XVII*. Madrid 2012. For Jewish dress in other parts of early modern Europe, see the contributions by Flora Cassen and Cornelia Aust to this issue.

17 Ibn Khaldun: *The Muqaddimah. An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N.J. Daewood, Princeton 1967, 322.

18 Manuela Marín: Signos visuales de la identidad andalusi, in: ead. (ed.): *Tejer y vestir. De la antigüedad al islam*. Madrid 2001, 137–180, here 143–152.

19 Raymond B. Waddington and Arthur H. Williamson (eds.): *The Expulsion of the Jews. 1492 and After*. New York 1994; Carrasco Manchado, *De la convivencia*, 223–240; Antonio Gallego y Burín and Alfonso Gamir Sandoval: *Los moriscos del reino de Granada segun el sínodo de Guadix de 1554*. Granada 1968; Rafael Benítez Sánchez-Blanco: Carlos V y los moriscos granadinos, in: Joaquín Pérez Villanueva and Bartolomé Escandell Bonet (eds.): *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*, vol 1. Madrid 1984, 474–487; David Coleman: *Creating Christian Granada. Society and Religious Culture in an Old-World Frontier City, 1492–1600*. Ithaca, NY 2003.

it was never limited to the restriction of luxurious garments according to rank and status but always intersected with laws regulating the sartorial practices of ethnoreligious minorities.²⁰ In order to guarantee the most complete assimilation, *conversos* (converted Jews) and *moriscos* (converted Muslims) were obliged not only to believe but also to live and dress like Christians. From the very beginning, however, this measure had a paradoxical effect: the increasing disappearance of visible differences fostered mistrust of New Christians, who were suspected of clandestinely clinging to their old faith and customs.²¹ Especially in case of the *moriscos*, who proved to be more resilient to forced assimilation, the prohibition of religious practice and cultural habits “reinforced each other and supported the equation of social deviance (Morisco customs) with religious deviance (heresy)”.²² However, although there still were significant differences in eating habits, ritual practice, religious holidays, and the like, as a result of continuous cross-cultural influence the difference between Muslim and Christian dressing styles was not as clear-cut as one might think, especially in those regions with large Muslim populations.²³ In the Kingdom of Granada, a territory that had been under Muslim rule for more than seven centuries and that was conquered by the Christians only in 1492, people seemed to dress in a very similar way regardless of their religion. Thus, when the new Christian rulers of Granada started to prohibit “Moorish dress”, it was not quite clear what that actually meant. In 1511, reconfirming previous legislation, Juana of

20 For Spanish sumptuary legislation in the early modern period see Amanda Wunder: Spanish Fashion and Sumptuary Legislation from the Thirteenth to the Eighteenth Century, in: Riello and Rublack, *Right to Dress*, 243–272; Ruth de la Puerta Escribano: Las leyes suntuarias y la restricción de lujo en el vestir, in: José Luis Colomer and Amalia Descalzo (eds): *Spanish Fashion at the Courts of Early Modern Europe*, vol. 1. Madrid 2014, 209–231; ead.: Reyes, moda y legislación jurídica en la España moderna, in: *Ars Longa* 9/10 (2000), 65–72; Saúl Martínez Bermejo: Beyond Luxury. Sumptuary Legislation in 17th-Century Castile, in: Gunther Lottes et. al. (eds.): *Making, Using and Resisting the Law in European History*. Pisa 2008, 93–108; Antonio Álvarez-Ossorio Alvaríño: Rango y apariencia. El decoro y la quiebra de la distinción en Castilla (ss. XVI–XVIII), in: *Revista de Historia Moderna* 17 (1998/99), 263–278; Antonio Pérez Martín: El derecho y el vestido en el antiguo regimen, in: *Anales de Derecho* 16 (1998), 261–289.

21 Philip Hersch, Angus MacKay, and Geraldine MacKendrick: The Semiology of Dress in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain, in: *Razo* 7 (1987), 95–110, esp. 106–110; David M. Gitlitz: *Secrecy and Deceit. The Religion of the Crypto-Jews*. Philadelphia 1996, 523–530.

22 Deborah Root: Speaking Christian. Orthodoxy and Difference in Sixteenth Century Spain, in: *Representations* 23 (1988), 119–132, quote on 126. Leonard Patrick Harvey: The Political, Social, and Cultural History of the Moriscos, in: Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Manuela Marín (eds.): *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*. Leiden 1992, 201–234.

23 See Javier Irigoyen-García: *Moors Dresses as Moors. Clothing, Social Distinction, and Ethnicity in Early Modern Iberia*. Toronto 2017.

Castile forbade the production of “Morisco clothing” (*ropa morisca*).²⁴ Since the Morisco tailors of Granada did not know precisely what kind of clothes they were forbidden to produce, they asked the city council for further instructions. The answer of the local authority is very telling: it was not able or willing to give a precise definition. The city council permitted the “aforementioned tailors” to produce “hoods for slashed tunics and four spans long for men, and doublets in the Castilian style and hose for men, and *ropones*, which they call *cotas*.” Furthermore they were allowed to fashion “all kind of men’s clothing except for *marlotas*” (Moorish tunics), but they were forbidden “to cut or make any kind of female clothing *a la morisca*.”²⁵ Even when the authorities prohibited specific garments like the *almalafa*, a large veil used by women to cover the head and the upper body, the prohibiting laws often addressed Morisco and Old Christian women alike.²⁶ [Figure 1]

In 1567 Philipp II issued a new decree on Moorish dress, in which he mandated

that none of the said newly converted in the aforementioned Kingdom of Granada nor their descendants can make or tailor veiled gowns (*almalafas*), Moorish tunics (*marlotas*), hose, or any other sort of clothing such as they used to wear during the time of the Moors, and that new dresses be made like those that the Old Christian women wear, that is, cloaks and tunics.²⁷

Although the monarch explicitly confirmed the regulations issued by his predecessors, the decree widely ignored the “complex cultural reality of Granada that had been acknowledged in the previous legislation”.²⁸ The alleged difference between Christian and Moorish clothing had never been that obvious,

²⁴ Gallego y Burin and Gamir Sandoval, *Los moriscos*, 174.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 175; Irigoyen-García, *Moors*, 103–104. The Spanish original reads: “Que los dichos sastres pueden hacer y cortar capuces de sayas de jirones de cuatro cuartas para hombres, y jubones a la castellana y calzas para hombres, y ropones, que ellos dicen cotas, y toda ropa de hombres, excepto marlotas; e que no corten ni hagan ropa alguna para mujeres a la morisca.”

²⁶ Gallego y Burin and Gamir Sandoval, *Los moriscos*, 179; Irigoyen-García, *Moors*, 105; Coleman, *Creating Christian Granada*, 63; Harvey, *Muslims in Spain*, 72, 212.

²⁷ *Pregmaticas y provisiones de S. M. el Rey don Philippe nuestro señor, sobre la lengua y vestidos, y otras cosas que an de hazer los naturales deste Reyno de Granada*. Granada 1567, fol. 2r–v. Quoted in: Irigoyen-García, *Moors*, 110, 226. The Spanish original reads: “ningunos de los dichos nueuamente conuertidos del dicho reyno de Granada, ni descendientes dellos, no puedan hazer ni cortar de nueuo almalafas ni marlotas, ni otras calças ni vestidos, de las que usauan y trayan en tiempo de moros, y que los vestidos que de nuevo hizieren sean conforme a los que traen las christianas viejas, conuiene a saber, mantos y sayas.”

²⁸ Irigoyen-García, *Moors*, 110.

Figure 1: Morisco Woman wearing an *amalafo*, in: Christoph Weiditz: *Trachtenbuch*, c. 1530–1540. Courtesy ©Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, Hs 22474, fol. 97.

neither “during the time of the Moors” nor after 1492. Although dressing styles changed after the fall of Granada, these changes affected not only the former Muslim community but also Old Christians. According to Francisco Núñez Muley, a Morisco nobleman from Granada, by the middle of the sixteenth century the outward appearance of Moriscos was almost indistinguishable from that of Old Christians. In a memorandum addressed to the Royal Audiencia of Granada, in which he protested against the new dress regulations, he claimed that the Morisco men (and to some extent women) of Granada had been dressing in the “Castilian manner” since the 1520s.²⁹

Even though this might have been an exaggeration, and probably was not true for the rural regions of Granada, Núñez Muley’s memorandum demonstrates that the authorities’ efforts to regulate the sartorial practices of the Moriscos followed a paradoxical logic: the more similar the latter became to

²⁹ Francisco Núñez Muley: *A Memorandum for the President of the Royal Audiencia and Chancery Court of the City and Kingdom of Granada*. Transl. by Vincent Barletta. Chicago 2007; Irigoyen-García, Moors, 115; Harvey, *Muslims of Spain*, 213; Louis Cardaillac: *Le vêtement des morisques*, in: Haïm Vidal Septhi (ed.): *Signes et marques du convers. Espagne, XVe–XVIIe siècles*. Aix-en-Provence 1993, 15–30.

Old Christians, the more legislation perceived and treated them as an essentially distinct group. In practice, however, “the Moorishness of the Moriscos” often “existed only in the eye of the beholder”, independent of the clothes they were actually wearing.³⁰ Thus it was not the textile object itself, but its wearer and the specific context in which he or she wore a specific garment that made the latter a marker of religious or ethnic difference. For the same reason, supposedly Moorish clothing could generate different meanings if it was worn by non-Moriscos. While authorities obliged the Moriscos to dress in a “Castilian manner” and prohibited the production of “Moorish” clothing by Morisco tailors, garments *a la morisca* remained fashionable among the Old Christian nobility in many parts of the Iberian Peninsula. Although these garments were no longer part of Castilian noblemen’s everyday clothing, as they had been in the Middle Ages, aristocrats still wore them on certain occasions. In the so-called game of canes (*juego de cañas*), a popular equestrian game that was performed at urban and courtly feasts in all parts of the Iberian Peninsula, the participants used to dress as Moors. Their attire consisted of leather boots (*borceguíes*), the Moorish tunic (*marlota*), a hooded cape (*capellar*) and a turban.³¹ [Figure 2] Regardless of the royal decree of 1567 that prohibited the production of any

Figure 2: Participant in the Game of Canes, in: Anonymous, *Códice de trajes*, between 1500 and 1599. Courtesy Biblioteca Nacional de España, RES/ 285, fol. 1r.

³⁰ Irigoyen-García, *Moors*, 19, 101.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8–11, 27–56.

kind of Moorish clothing in the Kingdom of Granada, even the king himself continued dressing *a la morisca* when he participated in the game of canes together with other noblemen.³² On these occasions, the same textile objects that were perceived as markers of ethnicity and condemned as signs of religious and social deviance, when used by Moriscos, served as status symbols for the Old Christian nobility, since only noblemen were allowed to participate in the game of canes. As the example of Moorish clothing shows, “dress as a marker of ethnic identity can also deceive”, since it “generates social meanings [...] that go beyond its mere materiality”.³³ In the following, I will discuss whether this also holds true for other ethnic and religious groups and their specific dressing habits.

Suspicious Strangers: Foreign Heretics and Enemies of the Crown

Many strangers who came from outside the Spanish Monarchy were regarded with the same suspicion as Moriscos, who were increasingly treated as foreigners on their own soil and who were finally expelled from the territories of the Spanish Monarchy in 1609.³⁴ In the sixteenth century, the influx of gold, silver, and other colonial products from Spain’s American possessions attracted traders from many European countries.³⁵ However, not all of these traders were welcome

32 Teófilo Ruiz: *A King Travels. Festive Traditions in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain*. Princeton 2012, 215.

33 Irigoyen-García, Moors, 16.

34 Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (eds.): *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain. A Mediterranean Diaspora*. Leiden 2014. For the presence of foreigners on the Iberian Peninsula and their perception, see the still ground-breaking study by Antonio Domínguez Ortiz: *Los extranjeros en la vida española*, in: *Estudios de historia social de España* 4:2 (1960), 293–426, more recently Bernardo José García García and Óscar Recio Morales (eds.): *Las corporaciones de nación en la monarquía hispánica. Identidad, patronazgo y redes de sociabilidad*. Madrid 2014; Óscar Recio Morales and Thomas Glesener (eds.): *Los extranjeros y la nación en España y la América española*. Madrid 2012; David González Cruz (ed.): *Extranjeros y enemigos en Iberoamérica. La visión del otro*. Madrid 2011; id.: *Pueblos indígenas y extranjeros en la Monarquía Hispánica. La imagen del otro en tiempos de guerra*. Madrid 2010; María Begoña Villar García and Pilar Pezzi Cristóbal (eds.): *Los extranjeros en la España moderna*. Málaga 2003; Tamar Herzog: *Defining Nations. Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America*. New Haven 2003.

35 See among others Juan José Iglesias Rodríguez and José Jaime García Bernal (eds.): *Andalucía en el mundo atlántico moderno. Agentes y escenarios*. Madrid 2016; Ana Crespo

on the Iberian Peninsula. Since many of the foreigners were Protestants, the Catholic clergy and the notorious Spanish Inquisition soon became alarmed. In the 1560s, the Spanish Inquisition started to visit all incoming ships in search of heretical books and writings. On some occasions, whole crews were arrested and burned at the stake. By the end of the sixteenth century, however, tempers had cooled down and Spanish authorities started tacitly to tolerate the presence of foreign Protestants in Seville, Cádiz, and other trading port cities, and to some extent even in America.³⁶

Religious denomination, however, was just one side of the coin. The other was the question of ethnic origin and “national” belonging. While the Spanish Monarchy was at war with England, France, and the Northern Provinces of the Netherlands, traders from these countries were officially banned from Spanish territories and not allowed to enter Spanish ports. One might wonder, though, how Spanish authorities were able to distinguish enemies from friends, that is, English, French, and Dutchmen from Irishmen, Germans, or the inhabitants of the Southern Netherlands, who also spoke French and Dutch but remained loyal to the Spanish Crown after the outbreak of the Dutch rebellion. Personal documents and passports hardly existed or were still at an embryonic stage and thus easy to falsify or manipulate.³⁷ Linguistic differences played an important part in making distinctions, but they were anything but clear-cut.³⁸ Apart from language,

Solana (ed.): *Comunidades transnacionales. Colonias de mercaderes extranjeros en el Mundo Atlántico (1500–1830)*. Madrid 2010; Eberhard Crailsheim: *The Spanish Connection. French and Flemish Merchant Networks in Seville (1570–1650)*. Cologne 2016; Hermann Kellenbenz (ed.): *Fremde Kaufleute auf der Iberischen Halbinsel*. Cologne 1970.

36 Thomas Weller: Trading Goods – Trading Faith? Religious Conflict and Commercial Interests in Early Modern Spain, in: Isabel Karreman, Inga Mai Groote, and Cornel Zwiwerlein (eds.): *Forgetting Faith? Negotiating Confessional Conflict in Early Modern Europe*. Berlin 2012, 221–239; Pauline Croft: Englishmen and the Spanish Inquisition, 1558–1625, in: *The English Historical Review* 87 (1972), 249–268; Werner Thomas: *La represión del protestantismo en España, 1517–1648*. Leuven 2001; id.: *Los protestantes y la Inquisición en España en tiempos de Reforma y Contrarreforma*. Leuven 2001; Joël Graf: *Die Inquisition und ausländische Protestanten in Spanisch-Amerika (1560–1770)*. Rechtspraktiken und Rechtsräume. Köln 2017.

37 Valentin Groebner: *Who are you? Identification, deception, and surveillance in early modern Europe*. Brooklyn, NY 2007; id.: Describing the Person, Reading the Signs in Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe. Identity Papers, Vested Figures, and the Limits of Identification 1400–1600, in: Jane Caplan and John Torpey (eds.): *Documenting Individual Identity. The Development of State Practices in the Modern World*. Princeton, NJ 2001, 15–27.

38 Iñaki López Martín: Embargo and Protectionist Policies in Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth-Century Hispano-Dutch Relations in the Western Mediterranean, in: *Mediterranean Studies* 7 (1998), S. 191–219; id.: Los unos y los otros: comercio, guerra e identidad. Flamencos y holandeses en la Monarquía Hispánica (ca. 1560–1609), in: Carmen Sanz Ayán and Bernardo

however, there was a second important marker of difference that is frequently mentioned in contemporary sources and often in combination with language.

At the beginning of the year 1587, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, future commander-in-chief of the Great Armada that would set course for England one year later, arrested dozens of vessels presumed to be Dutch in the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Seville's outer harbor where the duke had his residence.³⁹ In order to find out where the ships' crews came from, the ducal authorities first spoke to members of the local Flemish and German community, the so-called *nación flamenca y alemana* of Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Most of the members of this community were also merchants who had lived in Sanlúcar for many years. These witnesses denounced the vast majority of the foreign ships and crews as "rebels". 38-year-old Cornieles Adrián was sure that most of the foreign ships and crews were Dutch. According to the interrogation records, he recognized them by their "language and dress" (*traje y habla*), since he had seen the crewmembers and spoke to them on several occasions in town.⁴⁰ In the same fashion Lorenzo Aponte, Juan Hanze, Bernardo Lorenzo, and Andres Juanes explicitly mentioned "language and dress" (*el vestido y lenguaje de las gentes, sus lenguas y trajes, su lengua y vestidos*) as unmistakable markers that revealed the Dutch origin of the foreign sailors and merchants.⁴¹

Unfortunately, none of these witnesses mentioned specific garments or details of the clothing that made them sure that the crews came from the rebellious parts of the Netherlands.⁴² Nevertheless, there is evidence of some specific pieces of clothing or accessories which were regarded as markers of "foreignness" in Spain and Spanish America. In 1590 the shipmaster and surgeon Nicolás Alés from the city of Lille (now French but at the time part of the Spanish Netherlands) was captured as a pirate on the coast of Yucatán (Mexico). Apart from accusing him of piracy, the Spanish authorities assumed that Alés was Protestant. Sebastián

José García García (eds.): *Banca, crédito y capital. La monarquía hispánica y los antiguos Países Bajos (1505–1700)*. Madrid 2006, 425–457.

39 Thomas Weller: Fronteras fluidas. Los Países Bajos, la Hansa y el embargo general de 1586–1587, in: *e-Spania* 24 (2016). URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/25760> (30 Jan. 2019); Luis Salas Almela: Poder señorial, comercio y guerra. Sanlúcar de Barrameda y la política de embargos de la Monarquía Hispánica, 1585–1641, in: *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 33 (2008), 35–59.

40 Archivo General de la Fundación Casa de Medina Sidonia [AGFCMS], leg. 979, Declaration by Cornieles Adrián, Sanlúcar, 15, January 1587.

41 Ibid., Declarations by Lorenzo Aponte and Iuan Hance, Sanlúcar, 14, January 1587, Declarations by Andres Juanes and Bernardo Lorenzo, Sanlúcar, 15, January 1587.

42 For Spanish sailors' dress see Pablo E. Pérez-Mallaína: *Spain's Men of the Sea. Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century*. Baltimore 1998, 145–152.

Herrera, a resident of the city of Mérida, declared that he had seen Alés in his town “wearing earrings and having his ears perforated and that this was clearly a sign of Protestantism (*señal de luteranos*)”. Herrera knew this because he had seen Protestants in England wearing the same kind of earrings. Being confronted with this testimony, Alés replied that he wore only one earring, as Catholic and Protestant soldiers in France did, regardless of their denomination, and that there was “no religious symbolism” in it (*no había señal ni cosa de religion*).⁴³ In the same fashion, Leonardo Salina, a cleric from Cozumel in Yucatán, suspected the crew of a French vessel to be Protestant because some of the sailors wore earrings in the same manner as some pirates whose detention the cleric had witnessed some years earlier in Puerto Rico. In 1590, a monk named Francisco Zapata, resident of the city of Trinidad de Guatemala, on the Pacific coast, told Inquisitors about a journey through the Netherlands he had undertaken 15 years earlier. On this voyage, he had noticed a special fashion in hats that Dutch Protestants “used as a symbol”. According to Zapata the Dutch Protestants “used to cut the brims of their hats and fix together the hats’ ends with buckles and buttons” (*tomaron por seña cortar las alas de los sombreros y las puntas prenderlas con hebillas y botones*). When he became aware that the same fashion had spread to the General Captaincy of Guatemala, the worried monk alerted the Inquisition to the menace of a Protestant infiltration of this province.⁴⁴

As these examples show, the sixteenth-century inhabitants of Spanish America obviously associated specific styles of dress with foreign origin and Protestant belief. As to the earrings, these suspicions were not far-fetched. Men’s earrings were indeed popular among English pirates and sailors but also among aristocrats and courtiers. Sir Walter Raleigh had himself portrayed wearing a pair of pearls in his left ear in 1588. Robert Carr, first Earl of Somerset, also shows off with a precious earring on a seventeenth-century painting. The famous Chandos Portrait of 1610 shows a male person, presumably William Shakespeare, wearing a golden earring. [Figures 3, 4, and 5] Although one of the captured pirates argued that French soldiers also used earrings, among Spaniards, apparently, they were rather uncommon. In Renaissance Italy, earrings served as a distinguishing sign for Jewish women. Contemporary paintings also show male “heathens” and religious

⁴³ Archivo General de la Nación [AGN], México, Inquisición, Proceedings against Nicolás de Alés, 1590, quoted in: Eleonora Poggio: *Foráneos y arraigados. Migración, inclusión y exclusión social de néerlandeses y alemanes en Nueva España, 1560–1650*, PhD thesis, Universidad Pablo de Olavide. Sevilla 2015, 93.

⁴⁴ AGN, Inquisición, Denunciation by Francisco Zapata concerning Protestant dress, quoted in Poggio, *Foráneos y arraigados*, 94.

Figure 3: Unknown English artist: *Sir Walter Raleigh (Raleigh)*, oil on panel, 1588. Courtesy ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

Figure 4: *Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset*, after John Hoskins, oil on panel, after 1630, based on a work of c. 1625–1630. Courtesy ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

Figure 5: *William Shakespeare*, associated with John Taylor, oil on canvas, feigned oval, c. 1600–1610, Courtesy ©National Portrait Gallery, London.

others wearing earrings.⁴⁵ However, even in the sixteenth century fashions changed rapidly, and often spread from one country to another. This seems to be the case with the “Protestant” headgear, which Francisco Zapata had first observed in the Netherlands and later in New Spain. It is hard to believe that the people who wore these hats in a remote city on New Spain’s Pacific coast really were Dutch Protestants.

From Foreigners to Spaniards: Dress and Cultural Assimilation

So far, I have discussed the case of foreigners who visited Spain only for a short time, mostly merchants and sailors who came for business and returned to their

⁴⁵ Diane Owen Hughes: Distinguishing Signs. Ear-Rings, Jews, and Franciscan Regulation in the Italian Renaissance City, in: *Past & Present* 112 (1986), 3–59, 20; Penny Howell Jolly: Marked Difference. Earrings and ‘The Other’ in Fifteenth-Century Flemish Art, in: Désirée G. Koslin and Janet E. Snyder (eds.): *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress. Objects, Texts, Images*. New York 2002, 195–207.

home countries after reloading their ships with new merchandise. What happened with those foreigners who decided to stay longer or to settle permanently in Spanish territories? Did they adapt their way of living – and clothing – to Spanish habits? Historians have answered this question in quite different ways. Hipólito Sancho de Soprani, one of the first Spanish historians to study the presence of foreigners in the bay of Cádiz, came to the conclusion that the Flemings who settled there never became integrated into local society but rather formed a separate community. Their "isolation and lack of intermingling with the Spanish element" was a result of their supposed "ostentatious character" that did not work well with the "natural dignity of the Spaniards". According to Sancho de Soprani, sumptuousness in private life and clothing was a "characteristic of the Flemish race".⁴⁶ Sancho de Soprani wrote his article in 1960, during the Franco regime, which might explain some of his ideas on the supposed cultural differences between Spaniards and Flemings. In the very same year, however, Antonio Domínguez Ortiz drew a completely different picture of the foreign merchants in Spain and their relation to Spanish society. According to Domínguez Ortiz, most of them assimilated quite rapidly to Spanish culture, including its flaws:

From their social environment, infused with aristocratic values, they [the foreign merchants] adopted forms of ostentation and luxury in clothing and household which formed the counterpart to the mercantile spirit that predominated at that time in other latitudes of the European continent, as Max Weber's penetrating analyses have shown.⁴⁷

As evidence to prove his thesis, Domínguez Ortiz quotes an inventory dating from the year 1684. The owner of the goods, Enrique Lepín from Hamburg, had lived for many years in Seville and married a "Spanish" woman. Although his wife, Susana Antonia de León, was born and raised in Seville, she was the daughter of another immigrant from Hamburg.⁴⁸ Among Lepín's possessions

⁴⁶ "Y aún podría agregarse otro factor que explique el aislamiento de los germánicos [sic!] y su falta de compenetración con el elemento español: su carácter ostentoso que les hacía poco soportables a la natural dignidad española [...]. La fastuosidad en la vida privada es una de las características de la raza flamenca.", Hipólito Sancho de Soprani: *Las naciones extranjeras en Cádiz durante el siglo XVII*, in: *Estudios de Historia Social de España* 4:2 (1960), 753–877, here 764.

⁴⁷ "Podemos decir que se españolizaron también en los defectos, tomando de aquel medio ambiente saturado de caballeresco espíritu de ostentación los hábitos de lujo en vestidos, casa y menaje que eran el polo opuesto de aquel otro espíritu mercantil parsimonioso y utilitario que por las mismas fechas triunfaba en otras latitudes de Europa, según han puesto de manifiesto los penetrantes análisis de Max Weber.", Domínguez Ortiz, *Los extranjeros*, 323.

⁴⁸ For Lepín's family relations see José Manuel Díaz Blanco: *Un mercader alemán en Andaluca. Enrique Lepn entre Sevilla y Cdiz (siglos XVII–XVIII)*, in: Juan Jos Iglesias

were two coaches valued at 2,000 ducats. As measured by the amount of trade goods, which was projected at 30,000 ducats, Domínguez Ortiz sees in the two carriages clear evidence of a genuinely Spanish aspiration to demonstrate one's status. Nonetheless, one may rightfully wonder whether the sometimes ruinous investment in such forms of symbolic capital was confined to Spanish society alone. If we consider the extensive number of sumptuary laws in the Holy Roman Empire, for example, the interpretation of Domínguez Ortiz does not seem very convincing. Instead, it seems that the need for ostentatious luxury and social distinction was a general characteristic of *Ancien Régime* society, regardless of the region in which one lived.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, the inventory of 1684 does not list Lepín's garments. However, Lepín drew up a second one in 1706, three years before he died, which is much more detailed and also contains information about the merchant's wardrobe.⁵⁰ Already in 1684, Lepín was a well-respected member of Seville's commercial elite; towards the end of his life, he was among the wealthiest merchants of the city. As his inventory shows, he was very well integrated into Spanish society, also in religious terms. Although Lepín's family was Protestant, he lived as a Catholic and was member of various religious brotherhoods. His inventory lists hundreds of Catholic devotional objects, such as rosaries, depictions and statues of various saints and the Virgin Mary, as well as altar cloths and even chasubles, which was nothing exceptional for Seville's upper-class households.⁵¹ Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that Lepín's wardrobe did not differ much from that of other wealthy merchants.⁵² Among his clothes we find cassocks, doublets and trousers made of black silk and taffeta, as well as several black capes, which form part of the typical Spanish dress.⁵³

Rodríguez, Manuel F. Fernández Chaves, and Rafel M. Pérez Rodríguez (eds.): *Comercio y cultura en la Edad Moderna. Comunicaciones de la XIII reunión científica de la Fundación Española de Historia Moderna*. Sevilla 2015, 283–298.

⁴⁹ Thomas Weller: *Madre de todos los vicios? Müßiggang und ostentativer Konsum im Spanien des Siglo de Oro und im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation*, in: Martin Baxmeyer, Michaela Peters, and Ursel Schaub (eds.): *El sabio y el ocio. Zu Gelehrsamkeit und Muße in der spanischen Literatur und Kultur des Siglo de Oro. Festschrift für Christoph Strosetzki zum 60. Geburtstag*. Tübingen 2009, 203–216.

⁵⁰ Archivo Histórico Provincial de Sevilla [AHPS], Protocolos notariales [PNS], leg. 3778, fol. 1000ff. [folio numbers illegible on the following sheets].

⁵¹ Francisco Núñez Roldán: *La vida cotidiana en la Sevilla del Siglo de Oro*. Madrid 2004, 217–220.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 51–70.

⁵³ Carmen Bernis: *La moda en la España de Felipe II a través del retrato de corte*, in: Santiago Saavedra (ed.): *Alonso Sánchez Coello y el retrato en la corte de Felipe II*. Madrid 1990, 65–111; Amalia Descalzo: *Spanish Male Costume in the Habsburg Period*, in: Colomer and Descalzo,

However, it appears that Lepín did not always dress entirely in black, since he also owned a “red woollen coat with plush lining” (*un sobretodo de carro de oro con foro de felpa, encarnado*), a white waistcoat with golden flowers, silver-colored doublets and two “light brown capes” (*capas de color de canela*).⁵⁴ In the second half of the seventeenth century, however, due to French influences, colorful garments had increasingly replaced the traditional black dress *a la española*, even at the royal court in Madrid.⁵⁵ Thus, in this aspect, Enrique Lepín’s wardrobe reflected only a general tendency that definitely had nothing to do with his foreign origin or cultural background.

The question remains, however, whether Lepín and his German and Flemish compatriots changed their style of dress after moving to Spain. According to a royal decree of 1563, foreigners were allowed to use their foreign clothes up to six months after their arrival to Spain, even if their garments contravened Spanish sumptuary laws. Only after that period were they obliged to keep to the royal decree, with the exception of those foreigners who wanted to visit the royal court, who had to obey to Spanish dress regulations from the moment of their arrival.⁵⁶ In fact, before foreign diplomats had their audience at the royal court, the envoys and their entourage usually had to be fitted out with new clothes *a la española*.⁵⁷ For that purpose, each member of a Hanseatic embassy to Madrid in 1607 charged 1,600 Reichstaler to the Hanseatic Diet (a sum four times as high as the annual salary of the Hanseatic Syndic Johannes Domann, who headed the legation to Madrid).⁵⁸ Nevertheless, not only courtiers but also merchants who settled at the big trading places soon took over Spanish dressing habits. According to the Belgian historian Eddy Stols,

the Flemings who lived in Seville rapidly adapted to the habits of Spanish society and to the city’s general atmosphere. Being so different because of their physiognomy, with red

Spanish Fashion, vol.1, 15–31; José Luis Colomer: Black and the Royal Image, in: *ibid.*, 77–112; Rafael García Serrano (ed.): *La moda española en el Siglo de Oro*. Toledo 2015.

54 AHPS, PNS, leg. 3778, fol. 1000ff.

55 Carmen Bernis: El “vestido francés” en la corte de Felipe IV, in: *Archivo Español de Arte* 55 (1982), 201–208. See also the contribution by Gabriel Guarino to this issue.

56 *Premática de los vestidos y trajes, la qual mandó el rey nuestro señor se publicasse el año de mill y quinientos y sesenta y tres*. Madrid 1590, fol. 5. See Puerta, Sumptuary Legislation, 213–214.

57 Milena Hajna: El final del viaje. Audiencias de los embajadores delante del rey de España en los siglos XVI y XVII, in: Josef Opatrný (ed.): *Las relaciones checo-españolas. Viajeros y testimonios*. Prague 2009, 15–25, here 21.

58 Wilhelm Pauli: Aus den Aufzeichnungen des Lübecker Bürgermeisters Henrich Brokes, in: *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 1 (1860), 79–92, 173–183, 281–347, here 308.

cheeks and blond beards and rather tall in stature, they soon changed their colored dress for the sober black *a la española*.⁵⁹

However, the Spanish fashion with its predilection for black soon spread to other parts of Europe. In 1529, the Augsburg patrician Matthäus Schwarz had himself portrayed dressed entirely in black and wearing a Spanish cape.⁶⁰ [Figure 6] In the Low Countries black clothing also became extremely popular in the sixteenth century. Apparently not even the Dutch rebellion provoked any change in dressing habits, although some authors argue that “black in the United Provinces” was “different in character from the power-black of the Spanish Empire”.⁶¹ Bearing this in mind, Stols’s assertion that Flemish merchants changed their colored clothing for the sober Spanish black is rather surprising. It is hard to believe that they really started to wear black clothes only after coming to Spain. Anyway, what might have changed was how these clothes were perceived. When a Dutch or a Flemish merchant dressed in black in his home country, this usually was not a political statement. It did not say anything about his feelings towards the Spanish Monarchy. Whether he was loyal to the Spanish crown or sympathizing with the Dutch rebels, the “Spanish” black remained first and foremost a marker of social prestige.⁶² When the same merchant travelled to Spain, however, the very same clothes could generate different meanings.⁶³

Conclusion

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain dress was a multi-layered and always ambiguous marker of difference. Many Spaniards judged foreigners and supposed ethnoreligious minorities by their dress, and sometimes denounced

⁵⁹ “Rápidamente se adaptaban los flamencos sevillanos a las costumbres de la sociedad española y el ambiente general de la ciudad. Tan diferentes por su fisonomía de mejillas rojas y barbas rubias y por su estatura alta, pronto dejaban sus trajes coloridos para adoptar el sobrio vestido negro a la española.” Eddy Stols: *La colonia flamenca de Sevilla y el comercio de los Países Bajos Españoles en la primera mitad del siglo XVII*, in: *Anuario de historia económica y social* 2 (1969), 363–361, here 367.

⁶⁰ Ulinka Rublack and Maria Hayward (eds.): *The First Book of Fashion. The Book of Clothes of Matthäus and Veit Konrad Schwarz of Augsburg*. London 2015, 299.

⁶¹ John Harvey: *Men in Black*. London 1995, 89.

⁶² Colomer, *Black*, 95.

⁶³ For the symbology of black in general and its manifold meanings see: Michel Pastoureau: *Black. The History of a Color*. Princeton, NJ 2009, and the contribution by Maria Hayward to this issue.

Figure 6: Matthäus Schwarz wearing a Spanish cape, in: Matthäus Schwarz of Augsburg: *Trachtenbuch*, 1520–1560 [18th century copy]. Courtesy Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek – Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, Hannover, Ms XVII, 988, fol. 94.

them to the authorities, thinking them to be enemies of the Crown or suspicious elements that threatened public order or the purity of Catholic faith. However, vestimentary signifiers were often ambiguous. For that reason, it is hard to believe that the Flemish merchants of Sanlúcar de Barrameda were able to tell whether a foreigner was from the Northern or Southern part of the Netherlands, only by looking at his garments. More likely, as in the case of the Moriscos, their otherness existed only in the eye of the beholder. As the examples discussed in this article show, it was never the textile object alone but its wearer and the social context in which he or she wore a specific garment that made the latter a marker of ethnic or religious difference.

However, we should not forget that dress was only one factor among others by which to identify and classify strangers. Even though the Flemish merchants of Seville dressed like Spaniards, as Eddy Stols asserts, their red cheeks, blond beards and tall stature – in Stols’s words – still revealed their foreign origin. In contrast to those physical characteristics, which were difficult to change, it was easy to change one’s dress, even though this could prove very costly. If migrants adopted the dressing style of their new environment, they probably did so for good reasons. We should bear in mind that during the Dutch rebellion anybody who spoke Dutch was liable to be suspected of making common cause with the rebellious provinces. Most of the German merchants came from Protestant cities and lived as Catholics in Spain. Thus, in times of war and religious persecution, neither Flemish nor Dutch nor German immigrants were very eager to attract public attention. They tried rather to show themselves as loyal subjects of the Spanish Crown and as true Catholics. The same holds true for the Moriscos, who also had to face suspicion and hatred. In this regard also, “the act of dressing became a much more important ‘signifying practice’ for many in this period.”⁶⁴ Dress was not only a mirror of individual taste and a medium of Renaissance self-fashioning; for certain individuals and under certain circumstances it could turn into something even more important – a question of survival.

⁶⁴ Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 25.