

Rapid #: -27236596

CROSS REF ID: **19822264140004921**

LENDER: **MAC (Macalester College) :: DeWitt Wallace Library**

BORROWER: **BMC (Bryn Mawr College) :: Canaday Library**

TYPE: Book Chapter

BOOK TITLE: The clothing of the Renaissance world : Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas : Cesare Vecellio's Habiti Antichi et Moderni /

USER BOOK TITLE: The clothing of the Renaissance world : Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas : Cesare Vecellio's Habiti Antichi et Moderni /

CHAPTER TITLE: Introduction: Vecellio and his World

BOOK AUTHOR: Vecellio, Cesare,

EDITION:

VOLUME:

PUBLISHER: Thames & Hudson,

YEAR: 2008.

PAGES:

ISBN: 9780500514269

LCCN:

OCLC #: 227016156

Processed by RapidX: 8/11/2026 9:51:27 AM

This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code)

Macalester College ILL



ILLiad TN: 406597

Borrower: RAPID:BMC

Lending String:

Patron:

Journal Title: The clothing of the Renaissance world, Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas : Cesare Vecellio's Habiti Antichi et Moderni , essay and translation by Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones

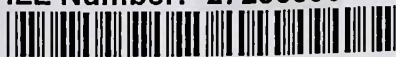
Volume: Issue:
Month/Year: 2008.**Pages:**

Article Author: Vecellio, Cesare,

Article Title: Introduction: Vecellio and his World

Imprint:

ILL Number: -27236596



Call #: GT509 .V42 2008

Location: MACA Stacks - Level 4

ODYSSEY ENABLED

Charge
Maxcost:

Shipping Address:
NEW: Canaday Library

Fax:
Ariel:
Email:

Cesare Vecellio's *Habiti Antichi et Moderni*

THE CLOTHING OF THE RENAISSANCE WORLD

EUROPE · ASIA · AFRICA · THE AMERICAS

MARGARET F. ROSENTHAL AND ANN ROSALIND JONES

with 540 illustrations, 77 in color

 **Thames & Hudson**

*We dedicate this book to our husbands, Peter Stallybrass and Robin Shakeshaft,
with love and many thanks for every kind of help*

pp. 2–3 Jost Amman, "Procession of the Doge in Venice," 1560
p. 4 Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Portrait of a Man (The Tailor)* (detail), c. 1570

On the jacket

FRONT: A selection of costumes from Cesare Vecellio's *Habiti antichi et moderni*.
BACK: (left) Sofonisba Anguissola, *The Duke of Parma* (detail), National Gallery
of Ireland, Dublin. Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York;
(center) Paolo Veronese, *Portrait of a Woman with a Dog* (detail), Museo
Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid;
(right) Bernardino Licinio, Ottaviano Grimani, *Procurator of San Marco* (detail),
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York.

© 2008 Thames & Hudson Ltd, London

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or
transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical,
including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and
retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

First published in 2008 in hardcover in the United States of America by
Thames & Hudson Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10110

thamesandhudsonusa.com

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 2008900996

ISBN 978-0-500-51426-9

Printed and bound in China by C&C Offset Printing Co. Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

VECELLIO AND HIS WORLD

Cesare Vecellio's two books on the clothing worn throughout the world have fascinated artists, costume designers, and historians since they came out in Venice at the end of the sixteenth century. The first sections of both *Degli abiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo* (*The Clothing, Ancient and Modern, of Various Parts of the World*, 1590) and *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo* (*The Clothing, Ancient and Modern, of the Whole World*, 1598) deal in breadth and rich detail with Italian clothing, beginning with ancient Rome and then focusing on the history and range of clothing worn in medieval and Renaissance Venice. More than this, however, both books are ambitious anthologies of dress all over the globe: in 1590, Europe, Asia and Africa, and in 1598, the Americas as well. The title pages of both books were designed to advertise this global coverage: they present a quartet of differently dressed allegorical female figures, each representing one of the four known continents—Europe and Asia at the top, America and Africa below.

As a writer, too, Vecellio calls attention to the breadth and variety of the styles of dress he shows in his woodcuts. In his titles and his preface he emphasizes the immense efforts he has put into gathering clothing from "the various nations of the world," including places so far away that it has been difficult to acquire trustworthy information about them.

Presenting 428 woodcuts in his first edition and 503 in the second, Vecellio offers more information about nearby and faraway costume and custom than any of the dozen costume books published before his. He promises that the labor and art he has devoted to collecting the images will delight readers curious about the diversity of dress and culture, from Italy to the farthest reaches of the known world.

OPPOSITE Map of Venice, engraved by Bernardo Salvioni and printed by Donato Rasciotti, 1597

BELOW Venetian possessions in the Adriatic and Aegean regions, c. 1580





The four-hundredth anniversary of Vecellio's death in 1601 was the occasion in Belluno, the central town of the region where he was born, for a series of conferences, research publications and exhibits of his work. This celebration coincided, by the wonderful magnanimity of Fortune (as he might say), with our first year of translating his 1590 costume book. We present his lengthy 1590 commentary in English for the first time here, in a translation much enriched by the decade of research that culminated in Belluno in 2001.

VECELLIO'S VENICE

Venice in the 1590s had lost some of its vast imperial power in the Mediterranean, but it was still a highly international city, receiving immigrants from its neighboring possessions

and merchants by ship from its former territories and from all over the world. Trading high-quality luxury goods such as textiles and glass with the rest of Europe and the Levant, receiving visitors including popes, kings and ambassadors, and inhabited not only by Italians but also by Germans, Spaniards, Greeks, Albanians, Slavs, Mamluks, Persians and Africans, the city also had great appeal for tourists attracted by the myth of its prosperity, its constitution and political stability, and the beauty of its women, both aristocrats and (more accessibly) courtesans.¹ At its spring fair, the Sensa, thousands of customers came to admire and buy from the displays of finely crafted goods produced by artisans from the city and all over the world. Vecellio enthusiastically describes this two-week festival, when a spectacular outdoor market was held in Piazza San Marco:

BELOW, LEFT Giacomo Franco, engraving, "Gentildonna con mercante" from *Habiti delle donne Venetiane intagliate in rame*, Venice, 1610

BELOW, CENTER Giacomo Franco, engraving, "Noblewoman with a small fan" from *Habiti delle donne Venetiane intagliate in rame*, Venice, 1610

BELOW, RIGHT Titian, *Young Woman with a Fan*, c. 1555 (possibly Titian's daughter Lavinia in her wedding dress)



LEFT Giacomo Franco,
fig. "Gentildonna con mercante"
Habiti delle donne Venetiane
in rame, Venice, 1610

CENTER Giacomo Franco,
fig. "Noblewoman with a small
n Habiti delle donne Venetiane
in rame, Venice, 1610

RIGHT Titian, *Young Woman*
in, c. 1555 (possibly Titian's
Lavinia in her wedding dress)



RIGHT Venetian bookbinding in leather
for the commission certificate of
Girolamo da Mula as Procurator,
Venice, 1572

FAR RIGHT Drinking glass,
Venice, c. 1590



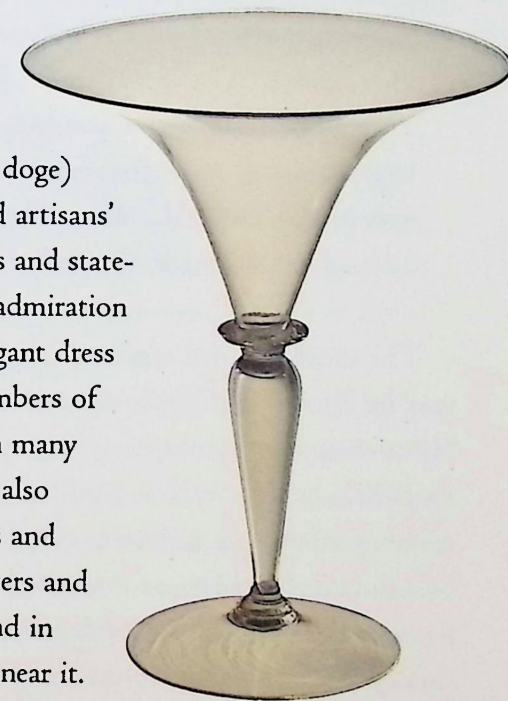
*an extremely rich display of the work of goldsmiths, jewelers
and everything else crafted in metal, with shops on both sides
of a wide street covered with awnings. Here for fifteen continuous
days more Venetian nobles and foreign lords assemble than at any
other time. (folio 152 in the original book)*

Venice was also a center of publishing and bookbinding:
453 printers, publishers, booksellers and book-binders worked
in the city over the course of the sixteenth century.² Visitors
could take away a range of goods, including a book like
Vecellio's that pictured and named the fabrics, lace, gloves,

colored and patterned glass, fans and other luxuries made
in this cosmopolitan city. By the middle of the sixteenth
century, the entrepreneurial networks of the city linked
together artists, craftsmen, merchants—and writers who
could publicize their wares.³

VECELLIO'S WORLD

Vecellio shared the civic pride of Venetians during the
Cinquecento. In the final phrase of his paean to Venice,
he expands conventional praise of the city as a moral and
political ideal by emphasizing its status as an international
depot of sumptuous goods: "a mirror of beauty, a model
of good customs, a fount of virtue, the home of good men,
a shelter for the industrious, and a warehouse for the whole world
of merchandise of all kinds" (38, emphasis ours). He arranges his
prints of Venice in an order that corresponds to the city's
social hierarchy, showing the uniforms of every state official
from the doge to the Senators down through professional
men, merchants and
shopkeepers to galley
slaves and porters; and,
for women, from the
dogaressa (the wife of the doge)
through noblewomen and artisans'
wives down to prostitutes and state-
supported orphans. His admiration
for the luxurious and elegant dress
of high officials and members of
the aristocracy appears in many
of his comments, but he also
praises the practical dress and
dependable work of porters and
housemaids in the city and in
the farming communities near it.



In his prints and text, he pays particular attention to the merchants of the city, whose expertise he specifies in several cases: for example, Paolo dello Struzzo, a skilled apothecary, and Bernardo Pilotto, the owner of a shop famous for luxurious cosmetics. What Vecellio adds here is striking: both men are also collectors of “paintings and many valuable objects” (116v)—not only businessmen but also connoisseurs, intellectuals, and potential subsidizers or buyers of his book. So, too, are the noblemen of the Veneto, the region around the city. Vecellio names and thanks several of them for help in his research. His pleasure in markets, whether in Venice or far away, even overcomes the rivalry with the Levant in his remark about demand from the Turkish sultan’s court for the brocades of the Venetian cloth-maker Bartolomeo Bontempele. Even greater enthusiasm colors his description of the textile market in Aleppo (now Halab, in northwest Syria), a city where, as in Venice, many exchange routes met.⁴ In his description, he revels in the crowds of buyers and sellers and in the quantity and variety of merchandise there, which, like the rich fabrics and trims made in Venice, embellish the local noblewomen with grandeur appropriate to their station:

The city of Aleppo, because it is very rich in merchandise, is also very rich because of the great numbers of people...who meet there from all over the world.... Many fabrics are brought here...very fine linen...the whitest lisaro [fine cottons]. (459v)

The most Venetian aspect of Vecellio’s costume book may be his praise of *homo economicus*—the international businessman. In a passage on Venetian merchants given special licenses to trade in Constantinople, he claims that the commercial instinct is innate and universal: “Because man is by nature inclined toward profit and commerce...he leaves his paternal dwelling behind...and...moves to faraway lands” (412v). Such international mercantile adventures had been as

central to the prosperity of the medieval Venetian patriciate as they were to Vecellio, a late sixteenth-century artist traveling between Italy and Germany. The entrepreneurial spirit he naturalizes in this passage sums up the composer of *Degli habiti antichi et moderni* and the ideology of the book itself. Both typify the practices and values of “La Serenissima” most vividly when they focus on costume, custom, buyers and regions beyond the confines of Venice.

VECELLIO’S CAREER

Though he would come to embody the entrepreneurial activity of the city, Vecellio was not himself a native of Venice.⁵ He was born around 1521 in Cadore, a self-governing protectorate of Venice near the larger town of Belluno, then called the Cival di Belluno; he would later show the dress of noblewomen of Belluno in his costume book. His family, well known in the region, had included political and military

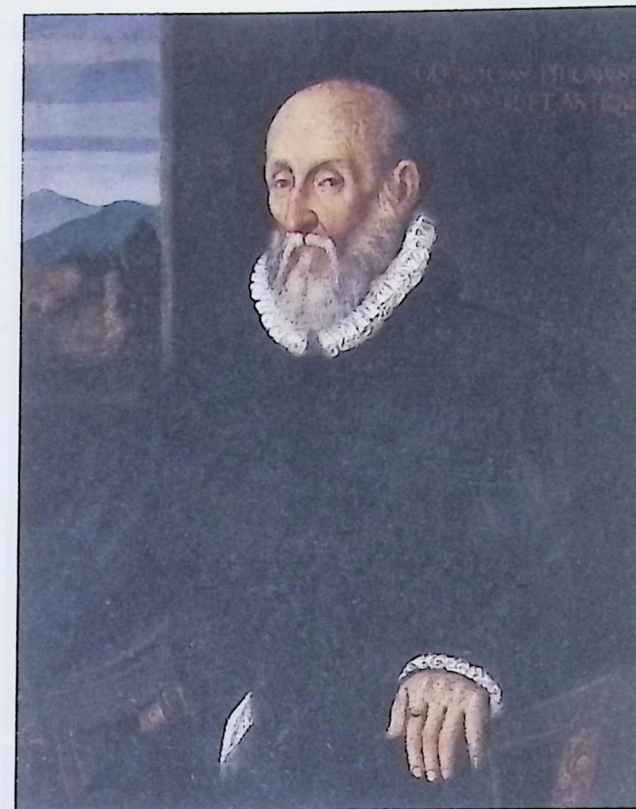




ABOVE, LEFT Cesare Vecellio,
Degnamerita, Countess of Porcia, 1575



ABOVE, CENTER Cesare Vecellio,
Giorgio Piloni, 1575



ABOVE, RIGHT Cesare Vecellio,
Odorico Piloni, after 1594

OPPOSITE, ABOVE Cesare Vecellio,
Madonna and Child in Glory, 1585

OPPOSITE, LEFT Cesare Vecellio,
Odorico Piloni, c. 1570

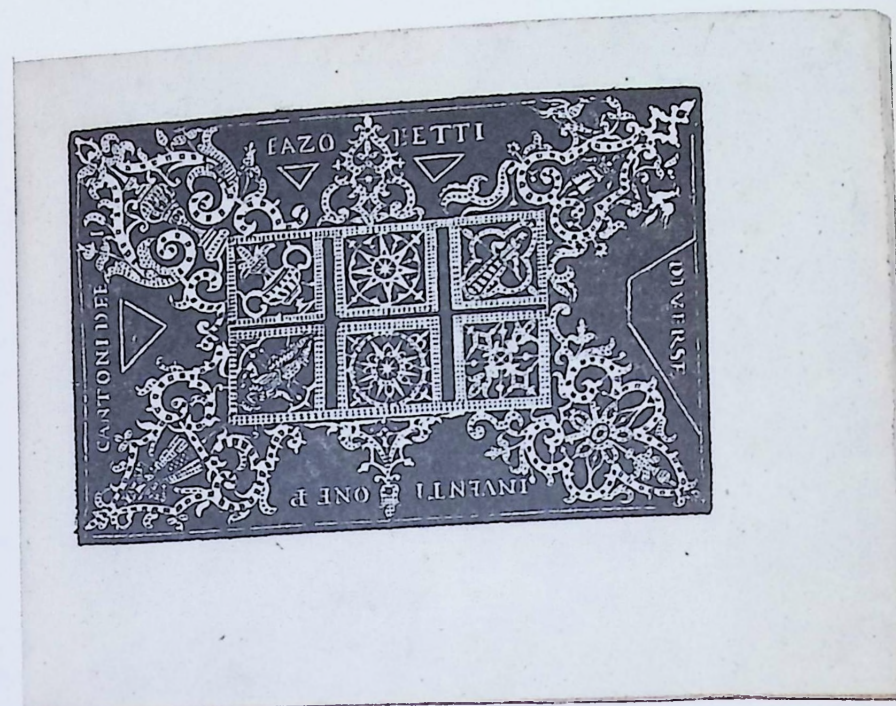
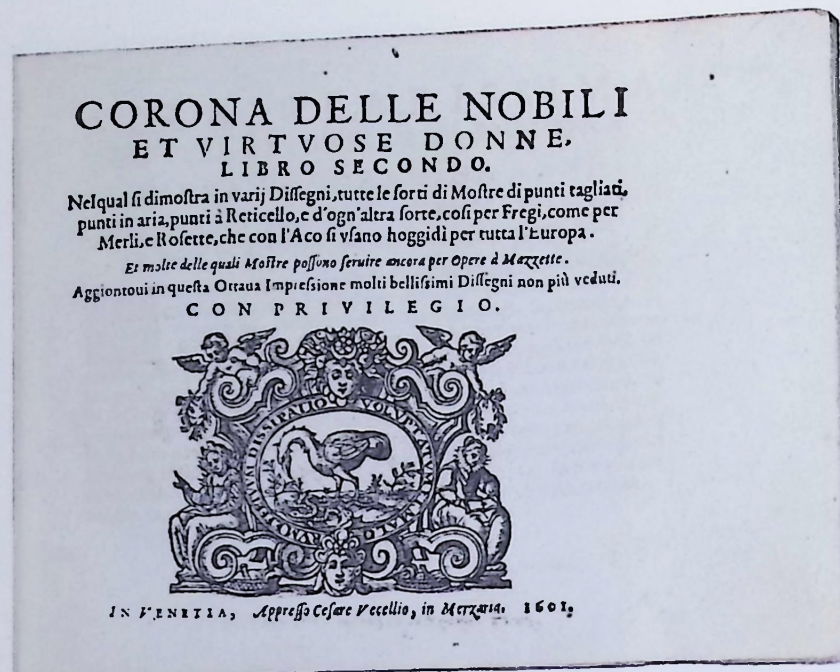
OPPOSITE, RIGHT Cesare Vecellio,
Laura, Countess of Terlagio and Lodrone,
c. 1570

men and several artists. He was a cousin once removed of Titian—Tiziano Vecellio—the most celebrated painter of the Vecellio clan. An earlier member of the family, Marco, was also a painter, as was Vecellio's brother Fabrizio.⁶

Cesare probably started painting as an apprentice to the older Francesco Vecellio, the brother of Titian, in Cadore, and then worked with Titian himself.⁷ It is certain that in 1548 and later he went with Titian on trips to Augsburg, accompanied by Orazio, Titian's favorite son, and by the Dutch painter Lambert Sustris. He probably worked in Titian's workshop, though no works signed by him during that time survive, and he is known to have lived in Titian's house in the Biri Grande, in the parish of San Canciano in Venice.

The first paintings known to be by Vecellio are portraits of the twin sons of his principal patron Odorico Piloni:

Paolo (painted in 1550) and Cesare (1552).⁸ He painted several portraits of Odorico throughout his life, including a pair of him and his wife Laura, Countess of Terlagio and Lodrone, and two of the patron as an old man. He also painted another of Odorico's sons, Giorgio, and his wife Degnamerita, Countess of Porcia. For the Piloni library, he painted the fore-edges of valuable books, which during this period were stored facing outward on their shelves. In the 1560s he restored paintings for churches in the Veneto, but he began to sign his work only after Titian's death in 1576. This work included paintings for churches in towns near Belluno—Cadore, Pieve, Capo di Ponte and Feltre—including altarpieces, ceilings, and a fresco representing the Four Evangelists. He also painted frescoes for private houses in the region, including a cycle of the four seasons for the Piloni household. His early work for Belluno included an



altar painting of Saint Sebastian for a chapel in the cathedral when it was rebuilt in 1557.⁹

His first recorded print, granted a ducal privilege in 1575, represented Christ's circumcision and adoration by angels and monarchs. A second print, a woodcut entitled *Il Collegio di Venezia*, recorded a visit by ambassadors to the Ducal Palace in Venice. A four-page pamphlet in Latin, predicting events to come in 1578, was issued from his printing house in the Frezzaria, a major commercial thoroughfare connecting Piazza San Marco to the Rialto, where he established contacts with merchants of textiles, luxury goods and prints, and worked until his death.¹⁰ In Germany throughout the 1590s, Vecellio carried out church-commissioned work begun by Titian's son and his own brother Fabrizio. It may have been during these trips over the Alps that he met the Nuremberg woodcut artist Christoph Chrieger, whom he identifies in *Degli habiti antichi et moderni* as the maker of the prints based on his own drawings.¹¹

In 1591, Vecellio published a four-book collection of lace patterns with the title *Corona delle nobili et virtuose donne*, two

books of which were dedicated to the Venetian noblewoman Viena Vendramin Nani. Lace was made by women in Venice but worn by both men and women, in beautiful patterns and at high cost, which helps to explain why this book was republished in 1596, expanded by a fifth section, and again in 1601 by Vecellio's Frezzaria printing house, under a copyright that he renewed every year.¹² The book continued to be reprinted after his death in 1601. Another reason for the success of this lace book, which belonged to a genre that had been popular in Venice since the 1530s,¹³ may have been its completeness: it combined 450 intricate illustrations with practical advice about lace-making, suggesting that Vecellio had accurately foreseen his audience: people interested in luxury textiles from many places. Captions in the book name patterns as coming from all over Europe, and from Turkey and Algeria. Vecellio offers patterns for specific purposes—making trim for handkerchiefs, for example—and he emphasizes the elegance of his patterns with names such as “Imperiali Cantoni di punto in aria, Mostra Bellissima et superba, per ogni lavoro” (“corners of needlework lace

ABOVE, LEFT Cesare Vecellio, woodcut, title page of *Corona delle nobili et virtuose donne*, Venice, 1592/1601

ABOVE, RIGHT Cesare Vecellio, woodcut, diagram of a design for handkerchief corners from *Corona delle nobili et virtuose donne*, Book 2

BELOW Paintings by Cesare Vecellio on the fore-edges of four books.



worthy of emperors, of a most beautiful and noble appearance suitable for any technique").¹⁴ This informative interplay of word and image would reappear later as the basis for his costume books.

REPRESENTATIONS OF CLOTHING IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

The popularity of Vecellio's lace book was related to the larger project of his books on clothing: he knew there was a demand for detailed representations of local and international costume. A clear parallel between the *Corona* and *Degli abiti* is that in both, visual detail is combined with detailed commentary. As a source of practical patterns, the *Corona* belonged to a range of texts offering models for clothing. Another kind was the tailor's sample book, in which detailed robes and gowns were drawn or painted

in watercolor. One such book, assembled by two tailors and entitled *Il libro del sarto* by later scholars, included court dress and costumes for masques from the 1540s to the 1570s.¹⁵ One of the tailors, Gian Giacomo, was employed at the court of Prince Renato Borromeo of Milan in the 1570s, and annotated many watercolors with the names, colors and quantities of fabrics he had used for these garments. Such books recorded ceremonial and festive costume and presented courtly attire in sufficient detail to allow followers of court fashion to order similar garments to be made for themselves.

The 1550s, however, saw the birth of a very different kind of costume book. These, like Vecellio's, focused on far-away places, on clothing intriguing for its strangeness rather than for the possibility of imitating it. Early modern maps, aimed at a similar audience, often included borders filled with figures dressed in clothing associated with the regions being shown.¹⁶ David Woodward's summary of the appeal and significance of the world maps collected with increasing

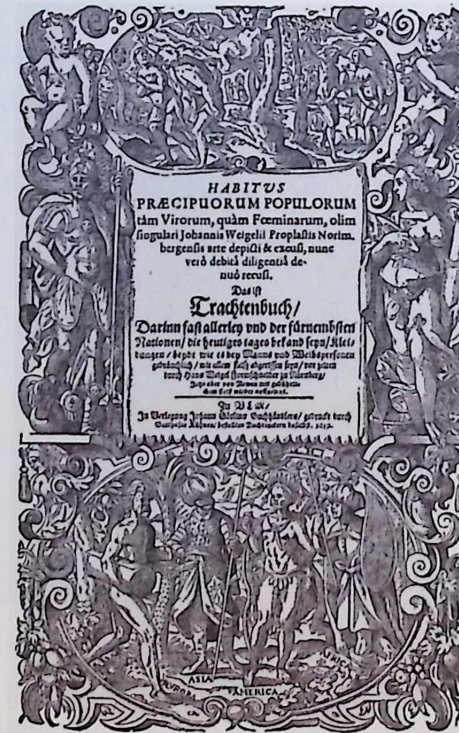
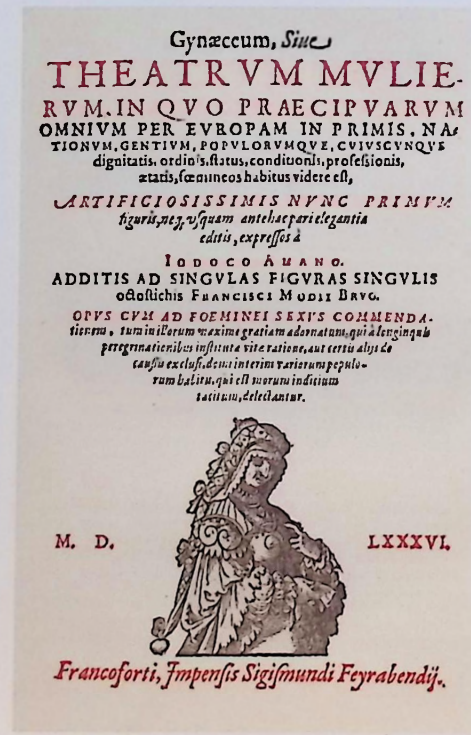
BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT

François Deserps [Desprez], woodcut, title page of *Recueil de la diversité des habits*, Richard Breton, 1562

Jost Amman, woodcut, title page of *Gyneceum, sive Theatrum Mulierum*, Frankfurt, 1586

Hans Weigel and Jost Amman, woodcut, title page of *Habitus praecipuorum populorum tam virorum, Ulm, 1639*

Giacomo Franco, engraving, title page of *Habiti delle donne Venetiane*, Venice, 1610



frequency by Venetians from the 1550s onward applies equally to the costume book as a genre:

As maps became more and more a part of everyday life, they played a subtle but important role in the shaping of ideas about the world. Beyond conveying knowledge factual or otherwise about strange places and events, they symbolized through a complex iconography some overarching themes: the magic of capturing the world as a [set of] ordered image[s], the replacement of the content of classical geography with a "modern" geography that incorporated "the new discoveries," and the secularization of the world image from the representation of spiritual to geometric space.¹⁷

Like maps, costume books appealed to curiosity about countries and continents far from France, Germany, northern Italy and Belgium, the places where these books were being published.¹⁸

Why should ethnographic curiosity have been channeled into books on clothing? In early modern Europe, clothing wasn't mainly an expression of personal style or an imitation of fast-changing fashion; rather, as in the Middle Ages, it marked the gender, age, marital status and rank of its wearers, and reflected their city or regional identity. Individuals weren't free to dress as they pleased. Sumptuary law, in Venice and in other cities, controlled the fabrics, colors, and cut of clothing in an attempt to limit inequality among citizens (although in Venice such laws were suspended on great state occasions in order to demonstrate the splendor of the Republic).¹⁹ Every public official dressed in a robe and hat that indicated his position, and a woman wore rich silk and satin or good wool or cheap linen in particular colors according to her family's wealth and social status. To dress was to be *invested* with a public identity according to a system of fixed codes. In a largely pre-literate society, people learned to read the value of textiles and the meaning of their cut as signs of profession, wealth, social status and geographical provenance. The newly

rich man dressed as well as he could, but doing so meant dressing as wealthy men in his city already dressed, not inventing some extravagant style of his own. Women's headgear clearly announced their marital and economic status: single girls went bareheaded indoors, brides usually wore their hair loose at their weddings, wives always covered their hair whether with simple linen caps or elaborate headdresses, and widows wore veils of cotton, linen or silk. Therefore, a traveler who recorded clothing was recording richly meaningful signs of shared cultural identity rather than the whims of personal taste.

At the same time, however, clothing was fascinating because of its variation from place to place. In an era when many people died where they had been born, styles of dress remained distinct; tradition governed the costume of city dwellers and peasants alike. Costume summed up local custom. Bronwen Wilson offers a useful definition of *habiti* (or *abiti*), the Italian word associated with traditional costume as custom:

Derived from the Latin habitus, or aspect, the word [h]abiti signified the ways in which apparel invested bodies with meaning through the quality of the fabric and the tradition and conventions attached to dress. The word is also defined as contegno, meaning attitude and behavior and thereby conveying those attitudes to which people are inclined habitually or innately. Abiti, then, identified those aspects of clothing that were aligned with place, and these were the ideals inscribed in costume prints: the social roles and characteristics that distinguished regional diversity across time.²⁰

Greater physical mobility was required of merchants, soldiers, and courtly ambassadors, but they still wore a style of clothing that announced their regional origin and their professions. As Vecellio recognizes, political changes affecting the elite—for example, the takeover of the court of Naples by the Spanish—did lead to the adoption of new styles.

OPPOSITE Jean-Jacques Boissard, engraving, *Habitus variarum orbis gentium*, Cologne, 1581, plate 39

Virgo Macedonica



Nobilis femina Alexandrina



Femina Macedonica



*Fille de Macedoine
Jünglefraw auß Macedonia*

*Dame Alexandrine
Edele fraw zu Alexandria*

39

*Femme de Macedoine
Fraw auß Macedonia*



But for most classes the difficulty and expense of traveling gave regional costumes, as presented in printed costume books, a startling novelty. The anthropologist Daniel Defert points out two ways in which costume books appealed to readers: first, they provided pleasant armchair travel (cheaper and less arduous than actual voyages); and second, in printed form, they appealed to the same interests as the elaborate "cabinets of curiosities" assembled by prosperous collectors. Both the title pages and the prints in costume books, presented singly or in groups, promised wide coverage and exotic details.²¹

Such curiosity was also the motive for an earlier, more portable, collection focused on clothing: the illustrated manuscript book or *album amicorum*, assembled by students from Germany or other northern countries as they traveled farther south during their studies.²² In cities such as Padua and Venice they selected particular drawings and watercolors of local costume from the ranges available in printers' and stationers' shops, as well as directly from artists, and had them bound into books as souvenirs of their youthful travels. Each city and its people were summed up by brightly colored, conventionalized images of the clothing worn by their

RIGHT Watercolor and gouache, "Sposa Venetiana in Gondola," 1575-7, from an *album amicorum*, Egerton ms. 1191, fol. 63



OPPOSITE, LEFT Watercolor and gouache, "Il Rettore in Padova," 1575-7, from an *album amicorum*, Egerton ms. 1191, fol. 72

OPPOSITE, RIGHT Watercolor and gouache, "Una Gentildonna Veneziana," 1575, from ms. 451 "Mores Italiae," fol. 49

officials and citizens. The watercolorists who produced the paintings are rarely named in the albums, but the watercolors can be dated since the students who collected them had their friends add their signatures on them, often with a date.²³ Such books were easy to carry, and they were organized, like costume books, into a hierarchical grid beginning with monarchs and nobles and descending to workmen and paupers. Sometimes the images collected in the albums also included individual prints from previously published costume books. Unlike costume books, however, these collections were personalized, assembled according to the preferences of the individual collector, and they became part of the private holdings of the elite families to which the students returned in the north.

Printed costume books claimed a more systematic and broader coverage. They consisted of woodcuts or engravings of single or grouped figures, with short captions, usually in several languages. The costume books that preceded and followed Vecellio's provided visual information and identifying captions, but they normally included no commentary and they usually focused on present-day clothing, as some representative titles show:²⁴

Recueil de la diversité des habits qui sont de present en usage dans les pays d'Europe, Asie, Affrique et Isles sauvages (Collection of the Variety of Costume Presently Worn in the Countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Wild Islands), Paris, 1562

Omnium fere gentium nostrae aetatis habitus (The Clothing of almost All the Peoples of Our Age), Venice, 1563

Omnium fere gentium nostrae aetatis nationum habitus et effigies (The Clothing and Images of Almost All the Peoples and Nations of Our Time), Antwerp, 1572

DEGLI HABITI ANTICHI ET MODERNI

In contrast to previous costume-book makers, who had focused on present-day dress, Vecellio wrote a history of costume. He begins with the Old Testament, moves on to ancient, medieval and modern Rome, and then records shifts in Venetian fashion from the Middle Ages to the present, especially from the 1550s to 1590. He follows each woodcut in his book with a page or more of commentary, in which he typically explains the geography, agriculture, diet and customs (especially marriage ceremonies) of the countries he covers; he always describes in detail the clothing represented in each woodcut. Jean de Glen's costume book, printed in Liège in 1601, is largely an abridged, reordered imitation of Vecellio's book. Its title spells out the historical depth, cultural comprehensiveness, and geographical breadth that Vecellio aimed at: *Des Habits, moeurs, cérémonies, façons de faire anciennes & modernes du monde* (*The Clothing, Customs, Ceremonies and Forms of Behavior, Ancient and Modern, of the World*). These claims are fully lived up to in Vecellio's work, by far the largest, most diverse, and richest in commentary of all the costume books printed up to 1590.

Vecellio's history of costume starts with Genesis. In his twelve-page "Discorso sopra gli habiti antichi et moderni, origine, mutatione et varietà di quelli" (Discourse on Ancient and Modern Clothing: Their Origin, Transformation, and Variety), he works out a synthesis of Old Testament, Christian and classical narratives, starting with Adam and Eve in Paradise and continuing through the ancient Babylonians, Phrygians and Persians until he arrives in the West, whose center he considers to be ancient and modern Rome. Book I, *Degli habitus, costumi et usanze di tutta l'Europa*, begins with ten figures from ancient Rome, including a patrician, a consul, six soldiers and a noblewoman. Vecellio then moves forward in time by including two prints of women from medieval Rome and ten figures of women from modern Rome and its countryside.

The next section is a "Breve descrizione della Città di Venetia," opening with a "Prima Perspettiva della Piazza di San Marco" (the first of four perspective views of Venice) and leading to 119 prints of men's and women's costume from medieval, early sixteenth-century and modern Venice. The prints and commentaries are ordered from the highest social status to the lowest—the doge, his officials, and the noblemen down through porters, galley slaves and beggars; and, in the case of women, from the doge's wife through noblewomen to housemaids and produce sellers in the city's markets. In all, the clothing of Venice and the Veneto takes up the first third of Book I.

The ambitious scope of the rest of the book is evident in its divisions and subdivisions. Seventy-one prints cover the rest of Italy, from west to east and north to south, organized by region, city and era: medieval and later Lombardy (Parma, Ferrara, Mantua), Piedmont (Bologna, Ancona, Turin, Genoa), and the Venetian territories (Verona, Brescia, Vicenza, Padua and the smaller towns of the Veneto). The last thirty-six woodcuts of Italian costume present clothing worn in Tuscany (Florence, Siena and Perugia), Naples, Romagna, and the islands of the south, ending with Sicily.

Book I then moves to France, opening with a discussion of its terrain, products and history and presenting fourteen prints. Spain is given eleven prints, Germany twenty-nine. Forty-four prints of northern dress conclude the first section of Book I, including Livonia (north of present-day Lithuania and south of Estonia), Silesia, Sweden, Bohemia, Switzerland, Prussia, the Low Countries, Hungary and Croatia, Schiavonia (Dalmatia), Slovenia, Poland, Muscovy, Brabant, England and Gothland. The final section of Book I moves east toward Asia. It contains thirty-three prints of clothing worn in Turkey, eleven of the dress worn by Greeks throughout Europe and Asia Minor, and six of costume from Macedonia, Thessaly and the islands of Crete, Mytilene, and Rhodes.

The title of Book II, *Degli habiti, costumi et usanze dell'Asia, et dell'Africa* (*The Clothing, Customs and Ways of Life of Asia and Africa*), promises a more explicit ethnographic focus: social conventions and rituals will be described. Vecellio admits in his opening "Discorso" that this book is more conjectural than Book I, based on second-hand reports rather than the evidence of his own eyes or dependable testimony. Book II is considerably shorter than Book I, consisting of fifty-nine prints in all, but its geographical range is vast. The countries typified by costume include eastern and southern regions of Asia Minor (Caramania, Armenia, Georgia, Persia, Syria), then India, East Asia (China and Japan) and the region of Ethiopia considered to lie in Asia. Finally, Vecellio turns to Africa, from the old Mamluk Empire in Cairo to North Africa (Barbary, Tunisia, Morocco) and then to sub-Saharan Africa and the island regions of Zanzibar and the Canaries.

In 1598, the second edition—*Habiti...di tutto il mondo* (*Clothing...of the Whole World*)—included twenty prints of the clothing of the New World, which we have added at the end of the 1590 images. In addition to correcting some mislabeled prints from the first edition, Vecellio divided the book into twelve shorter books, each defined by a national identity; he added eight prints of rulers, beginning with the pope and ending with the King of Persia. He also included additional prints of merchants in Italy and other European countries, added figures from each of the European countries he described in the 1590 volume (particularly from the north) and put in fifteen new figures from Persia, the Far East and Arabia. The twelfth of these books contains New World costume, as he promised in 1590: its title is "The Clothing of America." Another major difference in the 1598 book is that the Italian commentary from 1590 is cut to fit on only half a page, so that a Latin translation could be printed on the lower half of each page. Though the dedication and letter to the reader remain the same, this edition also omits Vecellio's opening "Discorso" on the history of clothing.

So for readers interested in Vecellio's commentary, the 1590 book is more useful. The section on the New World in the 1598 edition, however, ties Vecellio to the enormous interest in exploration and colonization shared by early modern Europeans in every region.

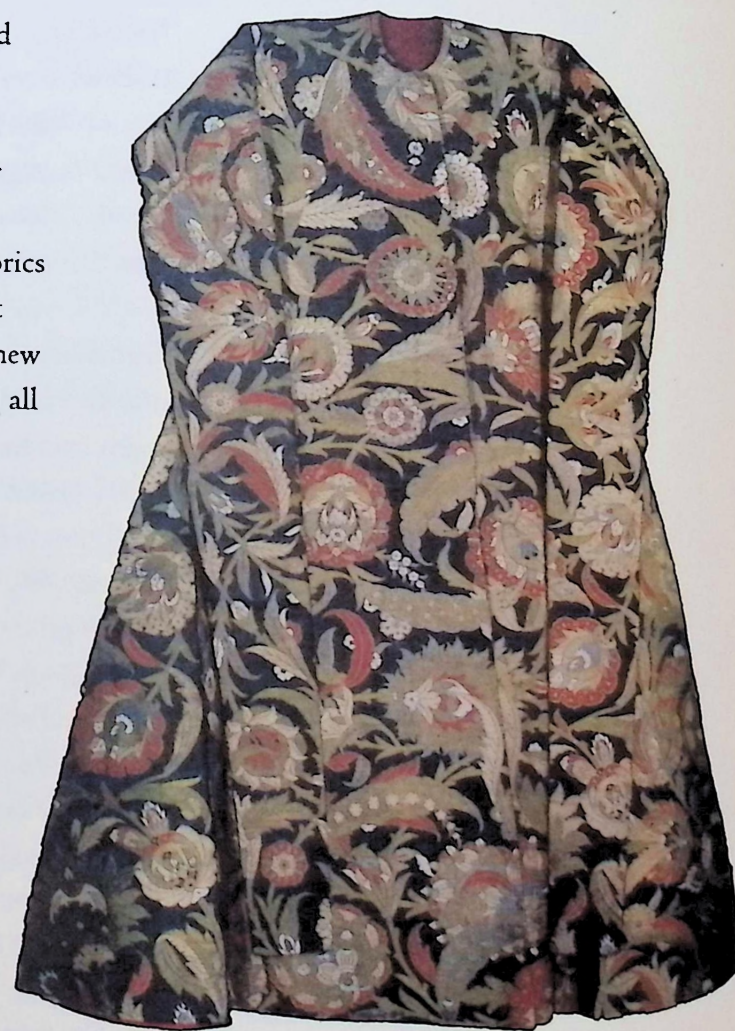
In contrast to the brief captions typical of costume books preceding Vecellio's, he adds comments full of precise terminology relating to textiles and trim.²⁵ His vocabulary materializes the global history of cloth condensed into the fabrics worn by Cinquecento Venetians. A light silk, *ormesino*, was named after Hormuz, an island in the Persian Gulf where the fabric had been made for centuries before its production was taken up by the Venetian *ormesini*—for whom a Fondamenta in Canaregio is still named. *Tabino* or *tabi*, a rich, heavy silk often given a watered or moiré finish, was originally made in al-Attabiya, a district of Baghdad. The *sbernia*, a loose cape, probably took its name from the *burnous*, an Arab mantle. And *damasco*, damask, a figured silk, echoes the name of the city where it was first made, Damascus in southwest Syria. Venice had been importing the splendid textiles of the East for a long time before Venetian cloth makers began exporting their own *damaschino*, a textile patterned in arabesques of golden or silk flowers, sent especially to Constantinople.²⁶

Textile terms also came from closer by, from the cities and nations of Europe. *Rascia*, a twill of silk or wool, originally came from Raskia, a city in Serbia. *Cambrai* or *cambrada*, a kind of very fine white linen, came from the Flemish city of Cambrai; another fine linen, *renso*, echoed the name of its city of origin, Reims. *Scotto*, a rough wool tweed, took its name from Scotland, the country from which the best kinds came. And *ferrandina*, the term for a light fabric of mixed silk and wool, records the region in which it was first made: *Fiandra*, that is, Flanders. The textile economies of northern and eastern Europe made their way both into the shops where Venetians bought cloth and into the language they spoke.

Venice also put new words into circulation, especially the names of the rich silk velvets that textile masters produced in the city using new technologies. *Velluto soprariccio*, or pile on pile velvet, was woven around circular and elliptical rings that gave it a pile of different heights, hence a dense, three-dimensional surface with a chiaroscuro effect; *velluto allucciato* sparkled with the tiny gold or silver loops woven into it; *velluto ad opera* had designs of contrasting color or gold worked across its surface. Another Venetian specialty was *brocadello*, a silk and linen textile in which the silk threads stood out in lustrous relief above the stiffer linen warp. Most of all, Vecellio sings the praises of the multicolored brocades designed by Bartolomeo Bontempele and sold at his shop, La Calice (The Chalice), which, as mentioned earlier, received orders from as far away as Constantinople. Venice gained distinction from the rich array of foreign fabrics its citizens wore, but Vecellio also insists that these citizens themselves produced dazzling new textiles, able to compete with cloth produced all over the world.²⁷

What was new in Vecellio's book? In his dedicatory compliment to Count Montalbano he nimbly ties the Count's family's virtues to the qualities he wants to associate with his own volume: antiquity, variety and wealth. Each of these qualities does in fact set Vecellio's book apart from earlier costume books. While his predecessors in the genre presented figures mainly from the present, he presents costume from the ancient and medieval West as well as the two centuries preceding his. This long timeframe provides

BELOW Damask kaftan, Turkey, c. 1530



RIGHT Gown of *velluto soprariccio*.
Detail from Vincenzo Catena,
Doge Andrea Gritti, after 1523



him with a wide range of styles, a variety far greater than that found in costume books recording only what was worn in the present. He proudly presents "ancient" styles recoverable only by the first-hand observation he describes himself carrying out. And he explains each of his figures in rich detail from head to foot, including information about social customs as well as the cut, fabric, and trim of their clothing and minute description of coiffures, headdresses, and accessories.

VECELLIO'S SOURCES: THE VISUAL ARTS

Vecellio speaks only briefly of his own travel beyond Venice to the Veneto and to Germany. Instead, he emphasizes the geographical and cultural centrality of Venice as a city to which visitors come from all over the world; most of his sources have been actual living people. In addition to direct observation, he presents himself as an investigator of visual remains of various kinds, an archaeologist of dress. He is careful to explain his research into local historical costume, citing Latin and Italian historians but emphasizing his own success in discovering direct physical evidence.

Vecellio was in his seventies by the time the 1590 book reached print. This and his comments on his sources suggest that the images took years to assemble. He drew upon a wide range of visual materials. He tells his reader that he studied wall paintings in Padua for early costume (82) and he thanks certain gentlemen of the Veneto for showing him old frescoes and portraits in their private houses (77). As sources for early Venetian dress, he names painters including Luigi Vivarino (76), Vittore Scarpa (Carpaccio) (84v), and Giovanni Bellini (91). He also made use of architectural decorations and sculpture: for example, the capitals on columns at the Ducal Palace and funeral monuments from churches in Venice and on islands in its lagoon. And he drew upon mosaic figures from San Marco, inside and outside the cathedral.

Vecellio also makes a point of his collaboration with contemporary artists. As contributions to the book, he mentions a drawing by the miniaturist Giovan Maria Bodovino (26); he credits Erasmo Falte, a bookseller of Parma, for sending him a drawing by a local painter that he used for the print of a duchess of Parma (186v); he thanks Christoforo de Maganza, a Piedmontese artist, for an image he used for the print of a married woman of Turin (203v). He says that Antonio Zappello, a Genoese artist, sent him the drawing on which he based his print of the dress of a

modern Genoese noblewoman (207v); and Francesco Curia, a Neapolitan artist, sent him sketches on which he modeled his present-day women of Naples (253).²⁸ He invokes a network of intellectuals and artists spanning all of Italy, not only to guarantee the accuracy of the book but also to demonstrate the wealth of his professional connections.

Another visual source for Vecellio was earlier costume books. He used many of his predecessors, including François Desprez, Pietro Bertelli, Jost Amman and Bartolomeo Grassi. He also used engravings published by the Frankfurt printer Theodor de Bry in the early 1590s, based on watercolors and sketches by artists who had accompanied explorers to the New World.

SOURCES FOR VECELLIO'S COMMENTARY

Among the various sources for his descriptions of costume and custom Vecellio mentions conversations with travelers from Venice and other places.²⁹ From the young Angelico Fortunio, for example, he got a report on Poznań, the Polish city in which Fortunio had just spent three years (352). He also recalls hearing about a dazzling cargo of Chinese goods, including paintings and bedsteads, brought back to Lisbon by the Portuguese captain Ribora Alguazil (475v). It may well be that scrolls in Alguazil's shipment provided Vecellio with his figure of the Chinese noblewoman, which he says he took from "paintings from that land" (473v). Eyewitness accounts obviously meant a lot to Vecellio, judging from his apology at the beginning of Book II for the second-hand information he has had to use when writing about Asia and Africa.

He demonstrates his training as a humanist by explaining that he has based his history of costume on a range of Roman historians, including Plutarch, Suetonius, and Aulus Gellius; he refers, in addition, to medieval and early



LEFT Detail of a manuscript map of Africa by Guillaume Le Testu, showing Tunisia and Algeria, *Cosmographie universelle selon les navigateurs, tant anciens que modernes*, Paris, 1556

Renaissance writers such as Macrobius and Flavio Biondo. (The Piloni library contained most of these books.) He also says he has used official reports, such as the account of the Bellunese Zaccaria Pagan, who accompanied the Venetian ambassador Domenico Trevisan on his trip to the Mamluk court at Cairo in 1512 (478v). He cites the Venetian Francesco Sansovino several times in his section on Venice, particularly Sansovino's history of the costume of the doges in his *Venetia*

città nobilissima of 1581, and he echoes Sansovino in his interpretation of early Venetian costume as a sign of its citizens' sober republican character.

Once past his large section on Venice, however, Vecellio rarely names written sources, and once outside Europe he hardly ever does. One exception is Ludovico Varthema (Barthema), the Bolognese author of an account of his travels to India, whom the Venetian Senate paid to report to them in 1508.³⁰ Vecellio repeats Varthema's story about being asked to sleep with an East Indian bride before her husband did, according to local custom, and he names Varthema for the first time when he retells his story of the East Indian sultan who ate poison every day so as to be able to kill his enemies by spitting at them (465v). He uses old sources such as Ptolemy's *Geographica* for his map of Africa but also, in a highly selective way, the *Description of Africa* written by Leo Africanus (Hasan ben Mohammed al-Wazzan al-Zaiyati) and published in Giovanni Battista Ramusio's first volume of accounts of voyages in 1550. Possibly because he had seen images of clothing worn by the inhabitants of Barbary, Tunis and Marrakesh, he focuses on Leo's description of these cities.³¹ But he omits most of Leo's historical and genealogical details, concentrating rather on the customs of the present.

He quotes Leo respectfully on Barbary noblemen's erudition and interest in the humanities and the Tunisians' respect for learned and religious men (487), but he is also interested in bizarre or shocking details: the display of the bloodied sheet after the marriage night in Marrakesh (486), or the use of hashish in Tunis (487). This selectivity suggests that his way of working was to begin with an image—in the case of Africa, probably a figure taken from previous costume books—and then to assemble a text to explain it, rather than the other way around.

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

Vecellio's own printing house seems to have been big enough to produce his book on lace. However, the many woodcuts and long commentaries of the 1590 and 1598 books would have made them very expensive to print, which probably explains why Vecellio handed them over to two large-scale publishers. Damian Zenaro produced the 1590 volume, setting his device, a crowned salamander, on its title page. The Sessa family (Giovanni Battista and Giovanni Bernardo at the time) printed the 1598 book; their device, a cat with a mouse in its

BELOW, LEFT Detail of Damian Zenaro's emblem, from the title page of *Degli habiti antichi et moderni*, 1590

BELOW, CENTER Detail of the Sessa brothers' emblem, from the title page of *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo*, 1598

BELOW, RIGHT Detail of the Sessa brothers' cat with a kitten, from the last page of *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo*, 1598





LEFT Cesare Vecellio and Christoforo Guerra [Christoph Chrieger], woodcut, *Battaglia di Lepanto e delle Curzolari*, 1572

mouth, appears on the title page, and a cat with a kitten appears on the final page. These men were powerful members of the booksellers' guild, as the minutes from the *arte's* meetings from the 1570s through the 1590s show.³² And the Sessas' publication of the book in Roman typeface and Latin, still an international language, suggests their confidence that it would be bought by readers all over Europe. They gave the 1598 book a larger print run than the 1590 volume, judging from the higher number of copies in rare book libraries today, but this seems to have caused them to work in haste. The 1598 book mixes type sizes in order to fill out pages; the woodcut borders of the prints are often

imprecisely registered, leaving gaps at the corners; and the same print is used for merchants of Rome, Florence and Naples and, in the section on Venice, relabeled as "Mercanti d'Italia moderni."

Degli habiti arose from a kind of collaboration between Italian and German artists that had a long history. Albrecht Dürer's travels to Italy in the 1510s began a tradition of artistic exchanges between the two countries. German patrons such as the Fuggers employed Italian artists, and many German engravers and woodcut printers settled in Venice.³³ Titian traveled to Augsburg twice, to join the court of the Emperor Charles V, in 1548 and 1550—through this



ABOVE Ambroise Firmin Didot, wood engraving, title page of *Costumes anciens et modernes. Habiti antichi et moderni... di Cesare Vecellio*, Paris, 1859–60

connection he obtained many later portrait commissions.³⁴ Vecellio's scornful description of the disorderly, violent German Coachman ("Carattiero Thedesco", 338), though the image is based on earlier costume books, suggests that his own travels in Germany were less than blissful. In the 1590 book Vecellio writes about his collaboration with the printmaker Christoph Chrieger (translating the German *Krieg*, meaning war, into the Italian *Guerra*). Together they produced a print of the Battle of Lepanto, drawn in 1572, a year after the battle, and published in 1591. Chrieger (the usual spelling) may also have provided woodcut portraits for the second edition of Vasari's *The Lives of the Artists* (1568).³⁵

Vecellio spells out the work routine he shared with Chrieger in his comment on the print of a noblewoman of Bologna: "I saw this attire in Venice, and then it was drawn and incised by Christoforo Guerra, a German from Nuremberg and a most excellent maker of woodcuts" (200). In the north, Chrieger, as the cutter of a durable woodblock, would have been paid more by the publisher than Vecellio, who provided an ephemeral and more quickly made drawing.³⁶ But Zenaro must have paid Vecellio a good deal, too, for his role as researcher and writer of *Degli habiti*. The Vecellio/Chrieger collaboration was evidently long-lasting and amicable. Vecellio included a written and illustrated memorial to Chrieger in *Degli habiti*: in his "Third View of the Piazza of San Marco" he explains that the image is incomplete because Chrieger, "my friend, and an excellent printmaker of our time" (155), died before they could add the recently completed stretch of new apartments for the Procurators to the image. Fittingly, this print of the Piazza represents a funeral procession—though that of a doge rather than of an artist.

More hands than Vecellio's and Chrieger's contributed to the book. The seven woodcut borders repeated throughout both books probably belonged to the Zenaro printing house; their intricate strap-work and witty grotesques, typical of the

Sansovino frame, also recall Fontainebleau designs.³⁷ Chrieger most likely made the woodcut for the title page of the 1590 edition, with its four female allegories of the continents, but his death around 1590 raises the possibility that another printmaker cut the block for the title page of the 1598 book, with its differently clothed and positioned figures. Some of the new figures late in the European section of the 1598 volume, more clumsily outlined and with longer bodily proportions, also suggest the work of another printmaker.

VECELLIO'S READERS

Vecellio's letter "To the Reader" reveals a good deal about his intentions for the book. One of the audiences he intends to "entertain and please" is that of people interested in his profession—the visual arts. This remark is a good guide to the prints themselves. They are not models for tailors but images meant to be useful to painters.³⁸ This is why he explains so specifically the textures and quantities of fabrics and the colors worn by different ranks and genders, gives detailed descriptions of accessories and hair styles, shows figures in a variety of postures (front views, but also profile and back views), represents various gestures appropriate to his figures, and even describes items not shown in the prints: undergarments, breeches covered by a cape, doublets covered by long robes, and colored shoes hidden by floor-length hems.

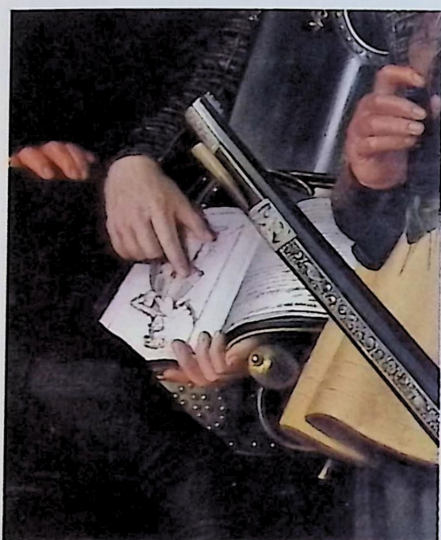
Later, revised editions of Vecellio's 1590 book provide further evidence for its relevance to artists. The shortening of the commentary in 1598 emphasizes the images over the text. The third edition, published by Giovanni Giacomo Hertz in Venice in 1664, makes a fictional claim that Titian contributed to the book and that Vecellio was his brother; its long title elaborates on the book's usefulness to artists of various kinds: *Habiti antichi ovvero raccolta di figure delineate dal gran Titiano e da Cesare Vecellio suo fratello, diligentemente*

intagliate, conforme alle Nationi del Mondo. Libro utilissimo a pittori, disegnatori, scultori, architetti et ad ogni curioso, e peregrino ingegno (*Clothing of the Past, or a collection of images outlined by the great Titian and by Cesare Vecellio, his brother, carefully incised, according to the nations of the world. A book extremely useful to painters, designers, sculptors, architects and to every curious and wide-ranging mind*). When the 1598 book was remade in Paris in 1859–60, under the title *Costumes anciens et modernes. Habiti antichi et moderni di Cesare Vecellio*, its French publisher, Ambroise Firmin Didot, wrote an essay focusing on the technical superiority of the newly made prints—wood engravings—in comparison to woodcuts. The modern edition published by Dover Press (New York, 1977) omits the commentary. It offers only the images from the 1598 book, on the assumption that costume designers and other visually oriented users will need only the pictures, not the words.

The books were indeed owned and used by artists. Inigo Jones, collaborating with Ben Jonson on masques for the English court in the early 1600s, probably used Vecellio's print of the "Gentildonna di Caramania" (Noblewoman of Modern Caramania, 436) for the character played by Lady Anne Clifford in *Berenice*, and Vecellio's "Hebrea in Soria" (Jewish Woman in Syria, 464) for a female captive in *Albion's Triumph*.³⁹ Vecellio's figure of a Mexican soldier appears in costume drawings for Italian pageants; it seems that Leonardo da Vinci used early sources similar to Vecellio's for his sketch of a Mexican in a feathered headdress.⁴⁰ And one extant copy of the 1590 book was owned by the English Pre-Raphaelite painter John Martineau (1789–1854).

Portraits from the period soon after Vecellio's books show that the international distribution planned by his publishers did indeed materialize. In 1605 the Spanish court painter Juan Pantoja de la Cruz painted Margaret of Austria, wife of Philip III of Spain, standing with her right hand on an open book. The frame and single-figure format of the page at which this book is opened resemble those in Vecellio's





ABOVE Detail showing a costume book, from Werner Jacobszn, *Members of the Company of Captain Albert Coenraetsz and Lieutenant Pieter Evertsz*, 1625

ABOVE, RIGHT Werner Jacobszn, *Members of the Company of Captain Albert Coenraetsz and Lieutenant Pieter Evertsz*, 1625



costume books exactly. And in Holland in 1625, the Dutch painter Werner Jacobszn, in a group portrait of the members of the military defense team of Albert Coenraetsz, included a gentleman holding a book in which he points to a print of a single male figure dressed in a *berretta à tozzo* and wide breeches, and holding a staff—as the members of the order did to have their portraits painted. The format of the print is like the one Vecellio uses, although no print of his resembles this one exactly; the image may come from a collection of military figures, a genre related to the costume book. But in both cases, the artist uses this type of book to mark the identity of his sitter.

VECELLIO AS A VENETIAN AUTHOR

Vecellio's treatment of Venetian and global costume and custom suggests that he was also writing for his own city's merchants and their wives, informing them about modern clothing throughout the world. But he also invokes ancient Venetian values to remind them of proper gendered behavior. This backward focus was ideologically motivated. Vecellio produced his retrospective catalogue of Venetian costume not to encourage his readers to recognize the otherness of the past but to recommend traditional dress as a continuing model for behavior in the present for the men and especially the women of his city. Looking at the capital of a column at

OPPOSITE Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, *Margaret of Austria*, 1605

the Ducal Palace, he interprets a pair of medieval lovers as an exemplary couple: "Habito Antico di Giovane Nobile Ornato per Fare l'Amore" (Early Clothing of a Young Nobleman Dressed to Go Courting, 55) and the matching maiden, "Donzella Innamorata" (Maiden of Early Times, in Love, 56). Assigning the man an active gesture with expressive hands, to which he contrasts the sculpted maiden's modest gesture of surprise or self-defense, Vecellio uses pose and costume alike to materialize the model behavior of this couple.

Such interpretation takes the costume print far beyond reportage. Vecellio presents costume as an indicator of character, in which an old style of dress reveals a virtuous way of being. In his commentary, he interprets a man's gown with the long, full *dogalina* sleeve as a sign of dignity and political wisdom: "This dress is very sober and Senatorial" (54). In modern times too, he writes, clothing makes material civic virtue: the young noblemen of present-day Venice wear bright colors and delicate silks, but in the street they hide them under their cloaks: "They wear all these colors in as concealed a way as possible, according to the modesty appropriate to this Republic" (108v). He also takes the simplicity of early noblemen's clothing, resembling boys' clothing in modern Venice, as evidence that they were sexually innocent. He claims that they maintained their chastity until the age of thirty, for "the clothing they wore permits no other conclusion" (65v)—surely a conclusion more hopeful than plausible. Vecellio's interpretations of *habiti antichi* are prescriptive, those of a moralist as much as a historian of dress.

Vecellio also represents early women as exemplifying values he wants to promote in contemporary Venice, setting up a model of modest wealth and energetic domesticity. A striking example is his image and commentary on a fifteenth-century noblewoman: "Donne Antiche per Casa" (Noblewoman of Early Venice at Home, 58). A modern viewer of this print is likely to notice the elaborate headdress and the rich brocade



ABOVE, LEFT AND RIGHT Filippo Calendario, sculpted marble capitals, a young man and a young woman courting, Ducal Palace, Venice, c. 1340

of the puffed upper sleeves and the underskirt. But Vecellio's description translates this rich costume into evidence of feminine virtue. He explains that women of this era rejected the *dogalina* and wore narrow sleeves instead, with a light veil thrown back over their shoulders, a combination that facilitated good wifely behavior in the style of ancient Rome:

And so, fit and quick to attend to their household duties with the greatest diligence and to care for their children and husbands, they strove to avoid idleness, following the example of the Roman Lucretia, a true model of chastity, whose fame is eternal because of...the love she bore for her husband Collatinus, equal to any woman of antiquity in the purity of her soul. (58)

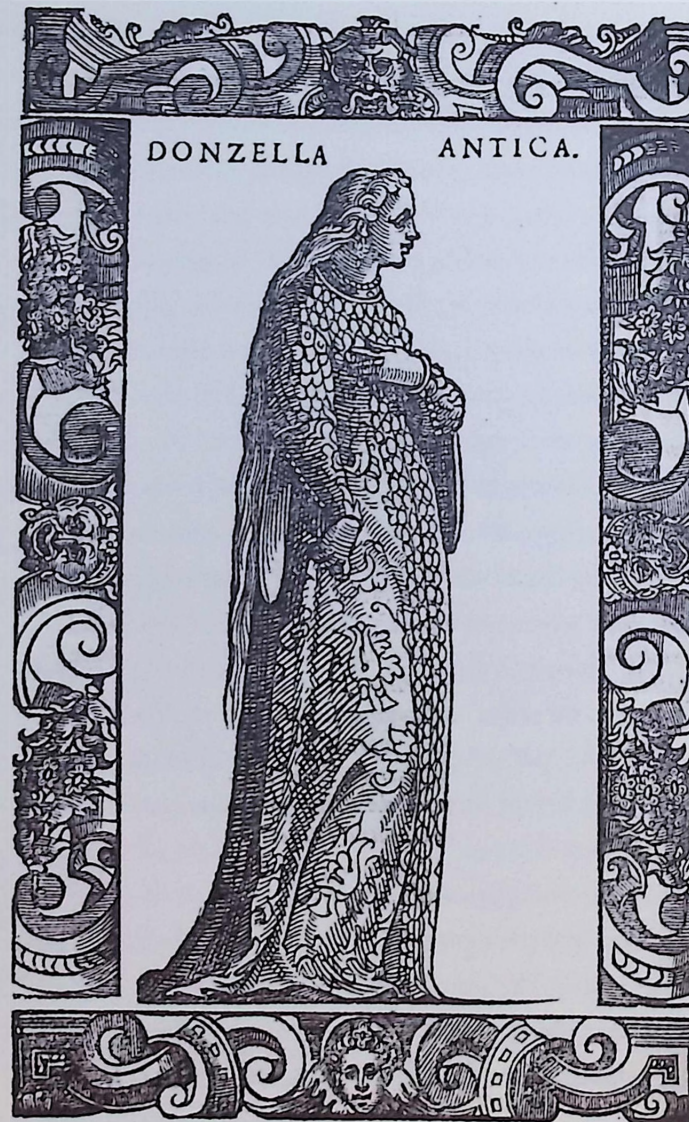
Here Vecellio fits women out according to ancient texts—the Roman historian Livy's account of Lucretia's rape and subsequent suicide.⁴¹

Similarly, in his section on contemporary Venetian dress he defines an unmarried woman as exemplary because of her enveloping costume and her restrained pose: "Donzelle, et Fanciulle di Venetia" (Maidens and Girls of Venice, 124). The darkly inked, heavily incised vertical lines representing

the black veil obscure the girl's face entirely, and Vecellio assures us that such a veil prevents a girl from being seen. This is precisely his point: an unmarried noblewoman isn't supposed to be seen. In contrast, the later copy of this image, the wood engraving published by Firmin Didot in Paris in 1859–60, transformed Vecellio's original by representing the girl in a white veil. Her face can be clearly seen (and to our eyes she looks distinctly coquettish).⁴² This modernization contradicts Vecellio's insistence that the virtue of such a girl corresponds to the invisibility provided by her costume:

The greatest...modesty characterizes the...tradition of bringing up noble girls in Venice, for they are so well guarded...in their fathers' houses that very often not even their closest relatives see them until they marry.... [When] they are fully grown, they dress entirely in black, with a fazzoletto called a cappa of very delicate silk, very full and ample, thick and stoccato [crimped]...which covers their face, so they are unseen but can see others. But girls of the nobility and high ranks go out rarely, only on principal festivals and holy days. (124v)

RIGHT AND FAR RIGHT
Cesare Vecellio, "Donzella Antica"
and "Giovane Antico"



The *donzella's* gloved hands, firmly held handkerchief, and gesture of touching her necklace with her hand all correspond to Vecellio's model of contained, modest femininity—though her schematically drawn cleavage and fashionable pinked gloves complicate the image.

Vecellio's image of the Venetian widow is free of any such ambiguity ("Delle Vedove," 134). He informs his readers that widows who wish to remarry can acceptably signal their intent by wearing simple jewelry and letting some of their hair show. But the woodcut erases this possibility: it represents a woman whose body is turned away from us, with her hair entirely covered by a dark veil and a prayer book in her dark-gloved hand. According to Vecellio, this sober costume signals chaste custom:

With the death of their husbands widows in Venice embrace the death of all vanity and bodily ornament. For in addition to wearing black they cover their hair, fasten a very thick veil over their breast...and go through the streets sadly and with lowered heads. (133v)

Interestingly, though, Vecellio names this woman as a member of the Contarini clan, identifying her in a way that contradicts his implication that the modest dress and deportment of Venetian widows preserve their anonymity.

Vecellio also uses the past to warn women against contemporary fashion. In his print of "Habiti Venetiani antichi di cento anni" (Venetian Clothing of Former Times, 93), the upward-swooping headdress and repeated horizontal trim on the skirt and sleeves suggest a lively extravagance. But the high-waisted cut of the gown is what Vecellio admires:

This style...is still more comfortable than our present-day long bodices, which, while they may give a slimmer silhouette, cause discomfort. And I recall...that these new bodices reached such an extreme that the Magistrato

sopra le Pompe⁴³ had to intervene, for such bodices were being worn long and broad beyond all measure, and with iron stays set into them to hold in the waist more tightly. Warnings were issued that this was the cause of many injuries to pregnant women, and so it was prohibited by law.... (93)

We might ask how Vecellio knew that this bodice was so uncomfortable. But comfort is not the central issue for him; rather, he wants to argue that the natural maternal role of women calls for a more "natural" cut of costume. The long, flat bodice threatens not only sartorial moderation but also the safety of Venice's future progeny.

Yet Vecellio's civic loyalty also leads him to contradict this elevation of plain women's dress as a model of modesty. Typifying the tension in Venice between praise for traditional sobriety in dress and the entrepreneurial invention of new products and fashions, he emphasizes that the glory of the city depends on the public magnificence of its citizens' clothing.⁴⁴ The long bodice that he denounces in contrast to the gowns of a century earlier is clearly visible in a print he uses to illustrate how lavishly Venetian noblewomen dress on state occasions, when they are not only allowed but encouraged to dazzle visitors with the splendor of their costume and jewels: "Nobile ornata" (Noblewomen at Public Festivals, 131). In his commentary on this image, Vecellio tells us about the visit of Prince Henri of Valois to Venice in 1574, when the women of the city were paraded before him as exemplars of sumptuous wealth and the newest fashion.⁴⁵ In the meeting room of the Great Council a hundred pairs of *gentildonne*, dressed in white satin and covered in pearls, gold and jewels, passed by the prince. On an occasion like this, Vecellio explains, the Republic suspended all sumptuary laws in order to impress foreign visitors. He reports an estimate that each woman in this procession was wearing a gown and jewelry worth 50,000



ABOVE Cesare Vecellio, woodcut, "Donzelle, et Fanciulle di Venetia," 1590

BELOW Ambroise Firmin Didot, wood engraving, *Costumes anciens et modernes*, 1859–60, plate 101



scudi (131v). Patrician women, however often they were praised for remaining indoors and invisible, were also expected to perform in public on state occasions, as metonyms of their prosperous Republic. Like Shakespeare's company in London, the King's Men, who were given livery of red cloth to march in during public occasions, Venetian gentlewomen were summoned to participate in a living frieze assembled to glorify Venice.

Henri's visit was an exceptional event. But Vecellio suggests that women were allowed—expected, even—to display the Republic's splendor annually at the Sensa festival. He describes the Venetian bride during this festival as the pinnacle of the wealth, sartorial elegance, and allure of the city: "Spouse in Sensa" (Brides at Ascension Time, 128). The woodcut of the bride hardly does justice to the prose poem describing her:

If ever there is a time that the brides of Venice make an effort to look beautiful and to appear richly dressed, it is during the fifteen days of the Sensa holiday.... Then [they] set about inventing...the greatest luxury and elegance they can, because they will be seen not only by their fellow citizens but also by the many foreigners of all ages and sexes who come...to see that splendid display of merchandise. During these days the brides show off the richness of their largest pearls...with which they ornament their ears, hair, necks and breasts. Shining with gold and gems...they stroll through the Sensa [wearing] overgarments of white satin.... The rest of their overgarment...is made of lightweight black silk...with a train.... And from their hair hangs a black veil of very beautiful transparent silk. (129)

This veil, in contrast to the kind worn by girls of the nobility, allows its wearer to be seen and admired. Vecellio's print and comment reveal again the tension between Venetian pride in contemporary fashion and respect for plain, traditional virtue.

A pair of prints from the end of Vecellio's section on Venice further illustrates these conflicting ideologies.

As an example of virtuous traditionalism, Vecellio presents the female market gardeners of Chioggia, who come to sell fruit and vegetables in the city: "Hortolane" (Market Gardeners, 151). Their clothes, like their goods, seem to arise naturally from the town's unchanging, fertile terrain. Vecellio praises the land itself, suggested by the flowers at the gardener's feet: "Surrounding the ancient city of Chioggia...are several villages or towns rich in beautiful orchards and vineyards... expertly cultivated, so that in every season they provide everything needed for food" (151). He describes the young gardener admiringly: she wears her hair in "modest little curls" and covers her breast completely with a veil; she wears inexpensive colors suited to her rank—"negro, o turchino" (black or turquoise)—and flat shoes. In their habit and their habits, Vecellio suggests, such women display an instinctive generosity related to the land from which they come: "dressed in this way, with some lovely gift of fruit, they appear before their friends and masters." The straw basket in the print is more than a decorative accessory: it signifies regular seasonal work by people who know their station, and the availability to Venice of all good things. Such images point to an unchanging country-city economy that exists outside history.

But at the same time, Vecellio celebrates Venetian merchants' newly designed textiles and their appeal in international markets. Describing his sumptuously dressed "Donne per Casa" (Women at Home, 139), he praises the silk brocades designed by the Venetian merchant Bartolomeo Bontempele and adds that the noblewomen of Venice wear these brocades because they are attracted by Bontempele's new pink, blue and green dyes. But in an attempt to resolve a potential contradiction, Vecellio also claims that the wearing of these luxurious fabrics by high-ranking women is a sign of wifely virtue: they dress as richly as they do to keep their husbands' "conjugal love" (139v). That is, he defines patrician women not as consumers of Venetian merchandise

to attract the public gaze of visitors but as embodiments of a virtuous at-home style meant to keep the eyes of husbands from straying.

VECELLIO AND WOMEN BEYOND THE LAGOON

Vecellio constructs a different notion of the virtuous woman when he transfers his attention from Venice to cities of the north. In a reversal of the enclosure "*per casa*" through which he models good Venetian women, he praises the public engagement and business acumen of northern women merchants in a series of prints and comments in which his business ethic overrules his loyalty to the habit of sequestering noblewomen at home. The geographical distance of such merchants presents no threat to Venetian order, and their skills resemble those of Vecellio himself, a publisher and artist working for urban rather than courtly patrons. He focuses approvingly on how skillfully foreign women sell their goods and train their daughters to be equally sharp buyers and sellers. A woman merchant from contemporary Genoa is shown with a narrow bag for utensils hanging from her waist: "*Habito moderno di Nobile Genovese*" (Modern Clothing of a Genoese Noblewoman, 208). This noblewoman is also a businesswoman who combines the charm of the ideal court lady with a sisterly chasteness of speech:

These are the most affable and pleasant-spoken women of all Italy.... They go about buying and selling without any loss of reputation because women who buy and sell at the greatest profit are very highly esteemed; so they are shrewd and sharp-witted.... They...almost always wear a purse hanging from their belt, and a thing [emphasis ours] embroidered all over with gold...that is used to hold sewing needles or other objects. (207)

In this final reference to sewing needles, Vecellio seems to be trying to assimilate these Genoese merchant women with Venetian women doing needlework in their houses—the kind illustrated in his *Corona delle nobili et virtuose donne*. In fact, Genoese women probably used these reticules to carry account books and small weights and measures, not sewing implements, which they would have kept and used at home.

Vecellio is similarly impressed by the merchant women of Silesia (then a part of present-day eastern Germany and Austria). His print of the "*Donna di Mediocre Conditione in Slesia*" (A Woman of Middle Rank, 324) includes three details signifying her mercantile skill: her purse, her keys, and a wide belt from which she hangs them. He comments: "The women of middling rank in Silesia are very expert in business, so they go throughout the city buying and selling what they need" (324). For this northern region, he accepts a method of raising girls strikingly different from Venetian custom: "They usually take their daughters with them, dressed as they are, whom they teach from an early age to buy and sell, so that they become skillful and experienced in business".

Jeannine Guérin Dalle Mese sees a wishful vision here of what high-ranking Venetian women ought to be allowed to do: maneuver in public without being criticized for risking their chastity.⁴⁶ It is equally likely that Vecellio, writing as a merchant himself, sees these women vendors as more useful to their local economies than the patrician women of his own city. Indeed, he admires businesswomen whenever he comments on them, whether of Antwerp or Bohemia (361, 334). He also writes approvingly about the women of England, who work harder at the market and in their shops than do their husbands (370). While respectfully recording the Venetian nobility's strict internment of its daughters, as an entrepreneur Vecellio also admires the public activity of the wives and daughters of the international merchant class.

Vt Matronæ Dasamonquepeu liberos gestant. X



Noppido DALEMPEPEPEFC, quatuor aut quinque miliaribus a ROANOAC
distant, matronæ eadem ratione qua ROANOACENSES amittuntur & pungiuntur, co-
rollas tamen capiti non imponunt, nec crura punctiunculis picta habent. Adiram habent
liberos gestant, & a nostra plane diuersam nam nostra brachiis ante pectus li-
beros sustinent, ille vero prehensa pueri dextra manu, in tergo gerunt, crura illius sinistram
sinistro brachio amplectentes, ratione satis mira & peregrina, ut ex pictura videre licet.

RIGHT Theodor de Bry, *Les Grands voyages*, Frankfurt, 1590, vol. I.
An engraving of a Virginian woman carrying her child, based on a watercolor by John White in Thomas Harriot's *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia*, London, 1588, plate 10

FAR RIGHT Cesare Vecellio, woodcut, "Habito delle Donne dell'Isola Virginia," 1598



In 1598, Vecellio's presentation of New World women suggests a different assumption. For his prints of women of the Americas, he used contemporary texts illustrating New World expeditions. One source was De Bry's Latin commentary and engravings (*Les Grands voyages*, Frankfurt, 1590), based on Thomas Harriot's English account of Virginia (*A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia*, London, 1588), which included John White's watercolours from 1585. De Bry added rich details of flora and fauna to his version, setting his figures in a frame of human use of natural surroundings.

In contrast, Vecellio removes his New World women from any inhabited landscape, isolating them from the natural and social world shown in his sources, and setting his description of cultures into the text—which in the 1598 edition is very brief. This format puts New World women and their dress into an ahistorical realm that contrasts with the detailed chronology of costume he constructs for both sexes in Europe and, to a lesser extent, for New World men.⁴⁸ In general, Vecellio admires the cultures of the New World. But as a genre, his costume book, by centering a single figure in a small print, diminishes the social contexts verbally and

visually supplied by earlier explorers and artists. He acknowledges the history of Spanish occupation by calling attention to the mixed clothing of New World men—the Spanish mirror held by a young man of Mexico (472), the Cuzco nobleman's Spanish shirt (488v). But European gender attitudes and visual conventions combine to cut his American women off from their social relationships and the locally varying kinds of work they do.

Vecellio's print of a woman of Virginia carrying her child on her back typically reworks De Bry's engraving and text. De Bry, expanding on White's watercolor, gives the viewer a back and front view of this mother and surrounds her with

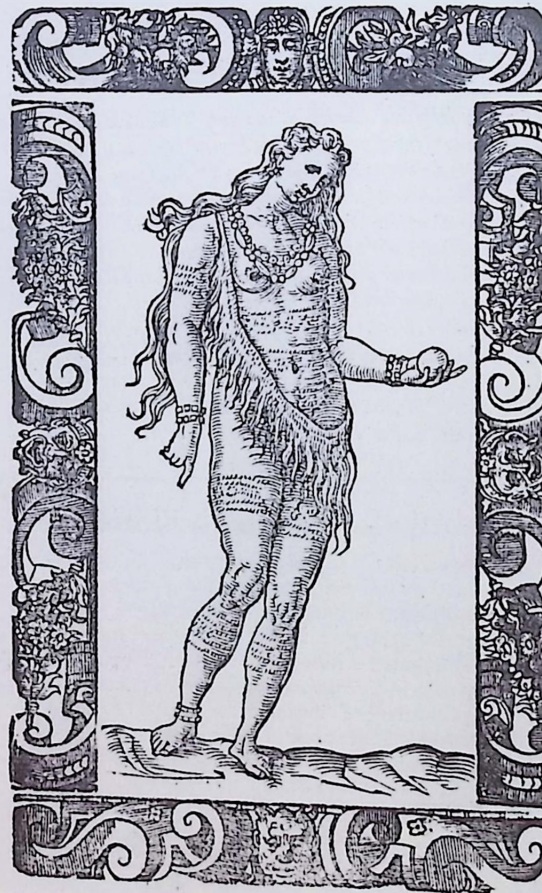
a landscape.⁴⁹ This presentation turns the Virginian mother into an ethnographic exemplum, but the Frankfurt printer also makes her engage the observer directly, gazing toward us on the left and looking back at her child on the right. Vecellio, in contrast, gives us a single image—"Habito delle Donne dell'Isola Virginia" (Clothing of the Women of Virginia Island, 503v)—in which the mother gazes off to the left in profile, not at the viewer or at her child. He also puts less emphasis on this novel way of carrying a child in his commentary than does Harriot. Harriot stresses the action by describing it as "quite contrarie to ours," and De Bry's title also emphasizes the mother's behavior with her child. Vecellio

Regis & Reginae prodeambulatione recreandi XXXIX.
animi gratia.



PRODIT interdum Rex sub vestri am deambulatum in proximam silvam solus cum prima sua conjuge, sellus cervina pelle tam eleganter parata, & varijs coloribus picta, ut nihil elegantius depictum conspici queat. Bini adolescentes latera ejus claudentes, stibella ad ventulum faciendum gestant, tertius globulum aureum & argenteum & cingulo propendentibus ornatus, post sequisit, pellem ne terram & terras sustinent. Regina & ejus praedictaeque ornatae sunt ex humeris propendente vel eas cingentibus musci quodam genere in nonnullis arboribus nascente, tenuibus staminibus invicem coherentibus castenulorum modo praedito, viridum in caeruleum tendentium coloris, adeo venustius, ut sericea stamina videantur. Luculum praebent stibellum hoc musco ornata arbor: nam ex summis nonnumquam ramis etiam praedia arborum ad terram usque demittunt. In recreationem aliquando profectus cum aliquot comitibus in silvas habitationi Regis Saturniorum vicinas ipsum cum Regina ita compleri reperi.

Potius monenda lellor, omnes ipsos Regulos, eorumque uxores, corporum eorum puncturam quibusdam varijs picturas imitantibus ornare (ut ex sequentibus iconibus videre licet) sic ut interdum in agitudine septem vel octo dierum incidunt: puncta tamen loca, herba quadam fricant, quae in illarum addit indelibilem. Ornatus etiam & magnificientia gratia, digitorum in manibus & pedibus ungues crescere sinunt, quorum latera scabentes cuncta aliqua, acutissimos reddunt: oris etiam circumferentiam cartula colore pingere soliti.



FAR LEFT Theodor de Bry, *Indorum Floridam provinciam inhabitantium eicones*, Frankfurt, 1591, engraving of a king and queen of Florida, based on a 1565 drawing by Jacques le Moyne de Morgues

LEFT Cesare Vecellio, woodcut, "Habito della Regina," 1598

describes the gesture more briefly—though positively—as “fine”: “un bel modo di portar i loro fanciulli” (a fine way of carrying their children).

Dalle Mese takes this adjective as proof of Vecellio’s admiring rather than exploitative view of the people of the New World.⁵⁰ But we would add that De Bry’s engraving frames the mother’s role as a significant particularity of her culture (rather than a natural fact) in a way that Vecellio’s woodcut cannot do. De Bry, in addition to representing two aspects of this child-carrying technique, places both figures in a landscape, including a river on which men row long boats, situating the Virginian mother in a larger Roanoke culture. Like De Bry, Sulstazio Gratiliano, the Siennese humanist who translated Vecellio’s text into Latin, clearly appreciated the ingenuity of this method of carrying a child; he describes it with the adverb “aptissimè”—that is, very capably, neatly, efficiently. By contrast, in his brief comment Vecellio focuses on the woman’s clothing rather than her behavior, and his remark that she wears “only an animal skin” deculturates her further. The comment and image attribute a wild roughness to her loincloth, in contrast to the neat fringe that White depicts in his watercolor and De Bry repeats in his engraving. We are a long way from Vecellio’s admiring account of the culture of the Silesian mother who educates her daughter to barter and keep accounts.

The format of the 1598 book similarly isolates Vecellio’s “Queen of Florida” from her culture: the marriage ritual and process of tattooing narrated by the French traveler Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, who accompanied the Huguenot captain René de Laudonnière to Florida in 1565 and then sold his paintings to De Bry in 1587.⁵¹ Le Moyne tells his readers that after he watched the elaborate ceremonies uniting the chief Saturiba and his new wife, he saw them walking with their attendants in a forest—the site of the bush whose leaves they used to tattoo their bodies with an indelible blue (113). In De Bry’s crowded engraving, we see the queen offering a

small branch of this plant (indigo?) to her husband, while her attendants gather it in a basket.⁵² In Vecellio’s print “Habito della Regina” (Clothing of the Queen, 498), however, the queen stands alone, a semi-nude with downcast eyes, offering not indigo to her husband but a round fruit to the viewer. Like De Bry’s queen, Vecellio’s is fashioned in *contrapposto*, but now, removed from her context, she seems only to be looking at the fruit in her hand. Is this Eve’s apple? Perhaps so. In his comment, Vecellio mistranslates Le Moyne’s commentary (in Latin in the De Bry volume). Interpreting De Bry’s text through the lens of Genesis and probably also through European views of the New World as a paradise on earth, Vecellio interprets the dye leaves as fig leaves, with which, he says, the Floridians conceal their genitals (as Adam and Eve did after the Fall). He writes that the Virginians, too, cover their shoulders and genitals with the leaves of trees: “Coprono le spalle e le vergogne con foglie di arbori.”

Vecellio’s print of a Virginia woman carrying a gourd similarly effaces her cultural situation. In his commentary, Harriot, motivated by the desire to convince Elizabeth I of the economic value of Virginia and the docility of its people, enumerated a range of cultural practices in addition to the physical bounty that he represented as there for the taking. He identifies this woman as the wife of a Pomeiooc chieftain, and he links her, through her smile and pointing finger, to her daughter at play. Focusing again on cultural practices, Harriot writes that such gourds are usually “full of some pleasant drink” and that these women use their necklaces of copper or bone beads “to give support to one of their arms.” He also comments on the daughter’s toys: she holds a doll supplied by the English explorers, with which, he says, the Florida children were “highly delighted”. But Vecellio omits the ethnographic details of White’s painting and of Harriot’s prose, which locate both figures in a history not only of indigenous culture but also of new international exchange. Vecellio, rather, shows a timeless single woman, looking

downward with an averted gaze: "Habito delle matrone, donzelle" (Clothing of Married Women and Girls, 501). Rather than commenting on this married woman's gesture of resting her arm on her necklace, he describes a gesture unrelated to the print, quoting a comment from Harriot about how Pomeiooc unmarried girls "place their hands on their chest to hide their breasts." Vecellio's modest Pomeiooc Eve (or Venus) registers European discomfort with adult female nudity—or, rather, the convention of translating it visually into classical poses and implicit references to the Christian myth of innocence and fall.

Vecellio's book, then, embodies the mentality of a forward-looking Venetian artist and businessman at the end of the sixteenth century. In many ways, Venetian cultural assumptions and the loyalties and aspirations of Vecellio's entrepreneurial artist-publisher class shape his images and judgments of his own city and of other people. His long section on Venice affirms the traditional values shared by its citizens and, simultaneously, celebrates the new goods they make, consume, and export. His pride in Venetian textiles coexists with wholehearted admiration for the sumptuous cottons and silks worn in Turkey, sold in Middle Eastern market cities and made in the New World. As a result, the book is a rich historical record of dress in Venice, Europe, the rest of the Old World, and the Americas—and of the mentality of Cesare Vecellio himself.

VECELLIO'S LANGUAGE

Vecellio usually writes in standard Italian, but he also uses Venetian dialect, especially in his history of the clothing of Venice. One example is the *dogalina* sleeve, derived from *ducale* (in Venetian dialect *dogale*), meaning suitable for a doge—that is, rich and splendid. Vecellio explains that such long, full sleeves gave their name to an overgarment of various styles,

and he cites his source for this early version as a painting in the monastery of San Domenico (62). He adds that medieval women began to imitate this style and later he offers an image of a bride of former times dressed in an overgown with similar wide sleeves, also worn turned back onto the shoulders (94v).

Vecellio uses Venetian dialect again to name another early style of sleeve, worn with a short overgown: *maniche a comeo* in the print (*a cometo* in the text, 64). These are long sleeves that hang down deeply below the elbow: *il gomito*, Tuscan for elbow, had become *comio* or *comeo* in Venice by the fifteenth century. Vecellio is most explicit about the fact that he's using a Venetian word when he describes the hats worn by merchants and shopkeepers in Venice: "Et questi portano le berrette alte, che essi chiamano à tozzo" (They wear a cap they call a *beretta à tozzo*, 116). A *tozzo* was a light, small boat; near Padua, the word also meant a small, plump man.⁵³ The hat, arched at its high top, as young men wore it, was given a full, rounded shape by its pleats or gathers. Its flat crown (*a tagliere*), in the form in which older men usually wore it, gave it the shape of a platter (in Florentine Italian of the time, *una taglia*). Vecellio reports that the young women of Venice, too, have particular words for their garments and accessories. The long sashes of silk net that they tie around their waists they call *poste* (126). Young girls wear a sheer white veil they call a *fazzuolo*, but young noblewomen wear a stiff, crimped veil of black silk, which they call a *cappa*. This is the style of veil that the print illustrates, completely concealing the girl's face. He celebrates his city by retelling its history and describing its architecture, and also in the texture of his prose by using words unique to Venetian sartorial vocabulary. He never employs dialect for comic or satiric purposes, but to affirm the longstanding particularity of his culture.

Vecellio sometimes domesticates foreign fashions by comparing them to styles familiar in Venice or in Italy at large. For example, he explains the fur cloak of "La



ABOVE, LEFT Detail of a girl's doll from Theodor de Bry, "A cheiff Ladye of Pomeiooc"

ABOVE, CENTER Theodor de Bry, *Les Grands voyages*, I, "A cheiff Ladye of Pomeiooc"

ABOVE, RIGHT Cesare Vecellio, woodcut, "Habito delle matrone e donzelle," 1598

Nobilis Matrona Pomeioocensis. VIII



CIRCITER viginti ab ea insula miliaribus, proxime lacum PACIFFE, aliud est oppidum POMEOOC nuncupatum, mari vicinum. Eius oppidi nobiliorum matronarum amictus paululus ab illarum quae in ROANOAC viuunt, vestitu differi: nam capillos in nodum implexos gerunt, ut virgines iam dictae, eodemque modo sunt punctae, torque tamen crassiorum unionum aut arearum sphaularum, osciculorumve perpoliorum quinquies aut sexies collum cingunt, in eo alterum brachium imponentes, altera manu cucurbitam suau quodam liquore plenam gerentes. Aliius reliquis & sub pectore pelles duplicatas cingunt, quae anteriore parte ad genua usque fere propendunt, posteriore parte propemodum nuda. Pone sequuntur plerumque illarum fusiola septennes aut octennes, coriaceo cingulo cinctae, quod a tergo propendens sub natibus inter crura reducitur, & supra umbilicum adstringitur, interposito ad pudenda tegenda arborum musco. exalto autem decennio, pellibus cinguntur ut reliquae. Pupis & tintinnabulis ex Anglia delatis, maxime delectantur.

matrona di Svetia" (Married Woman of Sweden, 330)—whose costume is, in fact, quite unlike any worn in southern Italy—via a familiarizing comparison: "These married women wear an overgarment of squirrel fur, in the same style as a Roman woman does, according to Italian custom." His English widow (370), likewise, is a very strange, bleak figure, but he makes her seem less strange by comparing her twisted hood with its hanging stole to the "cappuccio" of Jesuit friars. Yet Vecellio does not always see through a European lens, and is capable of appreciating the international variety of dress in an objective way. One instance is the admiring



simile he uses to describe wealthy traders from Caramania, in Asia Minor, whose brightly colored clothes contrast with those worn by the black-clad gentlemen of his own city. He writes, "those who come to Venice dress for the most part in very fine wool or in scarlet, which makes one think that when they wear them in their own piazzas, they must seem like meadows full of various beautiful and lovely flowers" (438).

Such open-mindedness is especially evident in his treatment of the Ottoman court at Constantinople, in which he carefully uses the words the Turks themselves apply



to their clothing. Of the Sultan himself, he writes, "It is impossible to say or imagine how very rich and more than beautiful the clothing of this Great Lord is. As far as color is concerned, he appears now in one, now in another...he wears...a *dulimano*" (376v)—that is, a dolmen, a loose-cut

formal overgown whose sleeves are cut of the same piece of fabric as the robe. Similarly, when he describes the Aga, whose title he gives in Turkish before translating it as "the General of the Janissaries," he labels his turban a *dulipante*, using an Italianized form of *tulipant*, the Turkish word for the

ABOVE A feather headdress from Peru, 15th or 16th century

Persian turban (*dolband*). Describing the Peceqs—footmen to the sultan, who were mostly Persians—Vecellio is respectfully precise: he cites the titles they give themselves in their own language, *Peich* and *Pieudur* (385v). He also cites their words for the garments they wear: the *Sinf* (a high, silver and gold hat) and the *Chochiach*, a striped silk scarf tied around their waists, to which they attach a *Bechiach*—a dagger. By recording Persian and Turkish words in his representation of these officials, Vecellio textualizes his respect for their rich costume and for the languages spoken in their culture.

His attitude toward a New World figure, the Nobleman of Cuzco, is similarly respectful. For one thing, he acknowledges that the name Europeans give this man's land is their invention, not his: "this country that *we* call America" (489, emphasis ours). He downplays the strangeness of the nobleman's costume at first by comparing his cotton or woolen cloak to a *lenzuolo*, that is, a large piece of cloth that Italians used as a mantle. But then he gives the Indian word for this mantle, *hacola*, recording the linguistic specificity of the Cuzco people. Further, he calls attention to a strange hybrid detail: the ruffled shirt collar showing above the nobleman's mantle. Such men, he says, delight in wearing shirts given to them by the Spanish. Rather than presenting this man as a noble savage, fixing him in an unchanging past and present, Vecellio shows that he occupies a changing culture, one being transformed by contact with Europeans. In a later print of a Mexican page carrying a mirror, another import from Europe, and in his comment that many Mexicans have converted to Christianity (493), Vecellio seems to judge these Indians of "New Spain" from an unquestioningly ethnocentric perspective. Yet in the last line of his description of the Cuzcan nobleman, he focuses on the social hierarchy not of Spain but of Peru: this costume is reserved for the elite of the tribe, signifying their exclusive right to wear two feathers attached to the front of a "beautifully colored headband."

And in Vecellio's opening "Discourse" on the evolution of costume, at the end of his list of the materials from which clothing has been made, he places the glorious feather clothing of the New World:

extremely beautiful, well-woven garments, divided into sections of feathers of different birds, skillfully and artfully made, in such a variety of well-matched colors that for this reason and for their rarity, they can be considered the most delicate and sumptuous clothing to be found anywhere. And these are worn by the Indians of America and in other places very far from our country. (4v)

This is the conclusion not of an ethnocentric European but of an enthusiastic man of the world.

VECELLIO AND THE COSTUME BOOK: CONCLUSION

In *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, Ann Jones and Peter Stallybrass argue that early modern clothing not only signaled social identity but also produced it. Through processes of formal investiture, daily dressing, and textile memory systems, people became what they wore. Costume books, as both of Vecellio's suggest, contributed to this process on a global level, using costume to affirm custom.

However, by the 1590s the regional and temporal continuity assumed by costume books as a genre corresponded less and less to the facts of international European economies, transnational commerce, and New World exploration. As Vecellio admits in his "Letter to the Reader":

...clothing as a subject allows no absolute certainty, for styles of dress are constantly changing, according to the whim and caprice of their wearers. Add to this, if you will, that many regions of the

world now are too far away for us to have news of them, although they are nonetheless being discovered. We hardly know the names of many places discovered within our and our fathers' memories, let alone their costumes and customs; and dress shares the changeability to which all worldly things are, and always have been, subject.

Vecellio registers all of these changes. At the same time that he glorifies Venetian traditions of dress, he acknowledges the loss of identity among Neapolitans, who now dress like their Spanish conquerors; he laments the loss of sartorial distinctiveness by Swiss girls, who now dress like German ones. Yet he admires the beauty of American feather cloaks recently imported to Europe. Similarly, after the pages in which he presents medieval dress as a model for the present, he advertises a Venetian textile firm and links its owner to new textile processes and to new fashions. He puts on view the newest of the new, in Venice and in the wider world.

In fact, the costume book as a genre aimed for a geographical range and pictorial diversity that were bound to challenge narrowly local assumptions. Vecellio, investigating European cultures beyond Venice and its territories, confronts a broader range of social possibilities for men and women of his class than those he knows as typically Venetian. But the very notion of the "typically Venetian" is problematic in a book that records sweeping historical and mercantile change and, in Europe and the New World, the rapid process of cultural hybridization. Vecellio's book was shaped and transformed by the border-crossing exchanges that remade both costume and custom in early modern Europe.