



Universität  
Basel

## Research Project

### Dissertation Jakob: Noble Finery Makes the Ladies. Fashion, Sumptuary Laws and Everyday Practice in Basle, Zurich and Lucerne 1640-1790

#### Project funded by own resources

**Project title** Dissertation Jakob: Noble Finery Makes the Ladies. Fashion, Sumptuary Laws and Everyday Practice in Basle, Zurich and Lucerne 1640-1790

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#### Organisation / Research unit

Departement Geschichte / Geschichte der frühen Neuzeit (Opitz-Belakhal)

**Project Website** [https://bgsh.geschichte.unibas.ch/projekte/projekt-detail/?L=712&tx\\_bgshprojectsext\\_projects%5Bprojectsext\\_projects%5Bcontroller%5D=Project&cHash=ee58668b29d19c7a54b0c2fddb4add57](https://bgsh.geschichte.unibas.ch/projekte/projekt-detail/?L=712&tx_bgshprojectsext_projects%5Bprojectsext_projects%5Bcontroller%5D=Project&cHash=ee58668b29d19c7a54b0c2fddb4add57)

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The dissertation in social history examines Early Modern Fashion of elite women of the Old Swiss Confederacy in Zurich, Basle and Lucerne from 1640 to 1790 in word, image and realia. Fashion in Early Modern time was an important instrument for social representation; when luxury-obsession and decadence were ever present. The womens noble finery is analyzed on the Old Swiss Confederacy that did not have a monarchy and fashion center unlike other countries such as France.

Fashion was conducted to specific directions by its political and religious system as well as by the societies expectations. The official statutes were to control the different categories of fashion within the sumptuary laws (*Mandate* or *Verordnungen*) made by the council of the city. The municipal authorities of Zurich, Basel and Lucerne were seeking to protect their populations from vicious acts by using their sumptuary laws. The passion for beauty and luxury in the form of noble finery was restricted to protect their people of encumbrance, profligacy (*Verschwendung*) and a life without virtue.

The dissertation analyzes sumptuary laws, portraits, engravings, pattern books costumes, shoes and accessories such as handbags and pocket watches. Some research questions are: Which fashion elements were used in which social space to support either group-identity, class representation or self-expression? How was elite women's fashion restricted by sumptuary laws and in which way is it reflected on the sources? Do the sources display fashion compromises? Was fashion for elite women in Protestant Zurich less exquisite then in Protestant Basel or Catholic Lucerne? Despite foreign fashion, international trade and local sumptuary laws, to what extent could local fashion develop and what do the sources say reveal about fashion change along the research time-line?

#### Financed by

Other funds

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