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Hannah Greig, Jane Hamlett, and Leonie Hannan, eds. *Gender and Material Culture in Britain since 1600*. Gender and History Series. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Pp. 176. $109.00 (cloth).
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Edited by Hannah Greig, Jane Hamlett, and Leonie Hannan, *Gender and Material Culture in Britain since 1600*, an entertaining and enlightening collection of essays, is designed to consider "what material culture tells us about gender in history and also what gender tells us about material culture" (2). Its primary audiences are undergraduate and postgraduate students who might be interested in the range of approaches and methods that can be brought to bear on these questions. Material culture is here defined "as objects or physical structures that had a particular use or meaning, or set of values attached to them"; as Greig, Hamlett, and Hannan are quick to point out, "the term 'culture' signifies that we are not simply interested in surviving objects … but rather their role in contemporary society both in creating meaning and in acting as a force for historical change in their own right" (5).

In keeping with these aims, their collection demonstrates a broad range of approaches, but it is possible to draw up a rudimentary typology that allows us to make some connections between them. Despite the disclaimer above, it is perhaps surprising that only the chapters by Karen Harvey and Vivienne Richmond take surviving objects as their primary entry point. Both authors work outwards to build a context for their objects: in the case of Harvey's artisanal pottery through iconographical analysis of their decoration; in that of Richmond's pair of prize-winning women's drawers, discovered in the Girls' Friendly Society archive at the Women's Library in London, by forensically tracking down their creators and using nominal record linkage to learn more about their lives. Richmond's essay in particular is a delight, its exposition of historical research as detective story a godsend to any tutor struggling to interest students in a "research skills" session on material culture.

Harvey's iconographical method initially reaps dividends when she places her Sheffield mugs and jugs, decorated with intriguing representations of the tools of the craftsman's trade, into the wider context of public declarations of artisanal identity and responses to the pressures of industrialization. However, the approach becomes more problematic once she attempts to explain the rather more feminine decoration of these manly pots with borders of foliage and flowers. In pursuit of an all-encompassing explanation of her objects, she is pressed to draw tenuous connections between these domestic objects and artistic representations of artisanal masculinity and nature in painting, when it would seem more obvious to ask what these kinds of jugs and cups were *usually* decorated with in their original mass-produced form, before they were customized for the rather niche market of Sheffield craftsmen? That fashion played as much a role as masculine self-representation on these items is further suggested by the Chinese imagery on two of them, which Harvey passes over with barely a glance. She omits to mention the fact that those who decorated pottery were usually women, probably with a limited repertoire of decoration at their disposal and limited time in which to execute it. We can therefore plausibly conclude that these items combined both feminine and masculine traits. They were part of a mass-production process that involved both men and women at different stages, their design and decoration influenced as much by fashion and domestic mores as the specific demands of individual customers, yet handmade production methods ensured they remained unique even before the personalizing touches that identified them with a particular owner and his manly trade.

In contrast to Harvey and Richmond, Helen Smith, Jessica Clark, and Stella Moss focus on the gendered materiality of particular spaces, respectively early modern guild halls, nineteenth-century barbers' shops, and twentieth-century pubs. Meanwhile, Susan Vincent and Leonie Hannan investigate the gendered materiality of the practices of shaving and letter writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. In chapter 7, Matt Houlbrook examines

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the cultural construction of the powder puff: an object so intimately bound up with transgressive sexuality in interwar Britain that its mere possession by a man could be produced in court as prima facie evidence of criminal intent.

While all of these authors keep materiality at the heart of their analysis, only Hannan's essay on letter writing foregrounds the actual material accoutrements to any great degree. The others, in their various ways, demonstrate the extent to which material culture suffuses what we commonly think of as "traditional" sources. Take for example Vincent's use of the diaries of Samuel Pepys to chart the meaning of shaving in early modern England; Moss's use of Mass Observation to help recreate the world of the interwar pub; and Smith's interrogation of the records of livery companies to uncover the hidden female contributions to what we might otherwise think of as being the solidly masculine topography of early modern guild halls. Finally, Houlbrook's case rests on the sturdy testimony of police and court records, alongside contemporary newspaper comment.

Interestingly, unlike Richmond, most of the contributors to this book seem never to have got even close to a curator's drawers. While this may be something of a shame, it does demonstrate that material culture has become an important, if not yet perhaps essential, part of the historian's general analytical toolkit. Undergraduate and postgraduate readers, as well as more experienced scholars connecting with the material world for the first time, will learn that material culture is not just about things, but also practices, spaces and identities: in other words, how and why things are used and encountered; how they shape our environments and our choices; and how they help to tell us (and others) who, or what, we are.

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STEVEN GUNN. *Henry VII's New Men and the Making of Tudor England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. 393. $100.00 (cloth).
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Steven Gunn has made a career out of studying the history of the early Tudors, and *Henry VII's New Men and the Making of Tudor England* is a worthy addition to his body of work. In this meticulously and exhaustively researched book, Gunn brings to life the intricate relationships the "new men" of Henry VII's reign who served their king and commonweal. These men developed networks of personal influence and wealth, both at the centers of power at court and in the shires where they created and provided new conduits for exercising royal power in the localities. The accession of Henry VII in 1485 was like the election of Donald Trump as US president in 2016 in that no one saw it coming. Both brought a businessman's eye to their respective offices; if Trump were at all a student of history, Henry VII would easily be his favorite English king for his imaginative if not coercive efforts to revive the fortunes of the English crown. Like Trump the businessman, Henry VII relied on litigation and a system of bonds and recognizances rather than shows of arms to pursue his fiscal goals. But Henry VII is but a shadowy presence in this book; the spotlight is squarely on the men who made these goals reality for him.

These new men, drawn from the ranks of the gentry and the municipal oligarchies, and frequently educated at the universities, were a standard feature in the rise of Renaissance monarchies in early modern Europe, but England, much more than France or the Iberian kingdoms experienced the sharpest rise in their prominence in royal government. The most famous were Sir Edward Poynings, sent to Ireland to pass the law that bears his name, and Richard Empson

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