

No historian can overlook the sinews of war, and Gunn's chapter on finances reveals that the Henrician state was "remarkably successful" (74) in raising revenue, though the methods of direct taxation weighed heavily on the population. Similarly, England may never have "turned Germany" in Henry's day, but border and coastal communities could suffer significant losses in raids, with cattle, goods, and prisoners often taken by Scots, French, and Spanish marauders. Yet, war also paid well, with many profiting, including merchants shipping coal to London, builders supplying the construction of fortifications and ships, and even goose farmers, who provided feathers for the thousands of arrows required by Henry's armies. Finally, Gunn does not shy away from the miseries of war, noting that English soldiers were just as capable of carrying out atrocities on civilian populations as Continental mercenaries. But even amid all these horrors, Gunn can just as easily raise a chuckle. His comparison of the Tudor gun shield to a "lethal dustbin lid" (91) and almain rivets to a Ford Capri suggest that the lectures, like the book they produced, were as enjoyable as they were informative.

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Bejewelled: Men and Jewellery in Tudor and Jacobean England.

Natasha Awais-Dean.

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Focusing on the period from the accession of Henry VIII (1509) to the death of James I (1625), this beautifully and richly illustrated book examines jewelry worn by men. Drawing on objects within the British Museum's collection, archaeological materials, inventories, household records, wills (not only of the elites, but of everyday citizens), and references to drama, Awais-Dean makes a strong case for the importance of jewelry for men from all classes, who wore and prized the objects, whether they were made of gold and precious gems or more base materials. Much has been written about women, clothing, and accessories, but this text is not only a fine contribution to the growing scholarship on material culture and attire, but also to masculine studies as well. Awais-Dean seeks not only to describe what jewelry men were wearing during this period, but also to consider the social, cultural, and political attitudes and practices behind these bejeweled men. While she deals with the male desire for "magnificence" (1), she also argues against the assumption that male jewelry was only about adornment. She reveals how jewelry played a role in the construction of masculinity, creating and sustaining social and political affiliations, ensuring marriage and familial bonds, and establishing and securing lineage status. Further, while items of jewelry signified wealth and political power, they were also concrete, visible signs of mourning and reminders of the inevitability of death.

Awais-Dean has divided the book into three sections, starting with information on “Acquisition and Ownership,” examining the role of goldsmiths and jewelers who might be commissioned to produce a piece but who also sold items at fairs and markets. For the less affluent classes, jewelry could also be bought from itinerant peddlers. While wealthier men had many more jewels, all men from Henry VIII to the lower classes could own at least buttons and rings. In part 2, “Display, Ornamentation and Male Dress,” Awais-Dean examines the visual evidence of male apparel and adornment in portraits. In agreement with Castiglione’s position that we can read a person’s interior self through their external construction, she argues that the clothing and jewelry that a man wore in real life and that was presented in portraits was even more crucial than the depiction of his face. Much of this section focuses on the fascinating subject of the hat ornament, a popular and fashionable item that could resemble a medallion affixed to a hat, worn by men of all classes. These hat ornaments, used to signify political and religious bonds and affiliations, drew their subjects from biblical stories, folklore, and classical myths.

The final and largest section, “Jewels and Social Networks,” focuses particularly on jewels that were often given as gifts and that signified reciprocity in multiple social relationships, including the Great George pendant, collar and garter of the prestigious Order of the Garter. Most of this section deals with rings, which were key players in betrothal and marriage, popular gifts between courtiers and monarchs at New Year’s, and visible signs of the “homosocial relations” (69) between men who received the sergeant-at-arms law degree; signet rings literally and visually left an impression of identity. The book concludes with a consideration of mourning rings and memento mori jewels. Money to have mourning rings made could be provided by the deceased in the will, in this way ensuring that he was remembered. It is perhaps appropriate that Awais-Dean concludes her book with memento mori, jewels that were made to remind not only the wearer but anyone who gazed on it that life was fleeting and death always nearby. One of the more striking jewels in the book is a pendent in the shape of a coffin, holding a visible skeleton for all to see.

The power of this small item is only one of so many striking pieces in this informative and engaging text. It is packed with important information that anyone interested in the early modern period in English history, the lives of men, material culture, social practice, clothing, and accessories will find compelling and worthwhile.

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