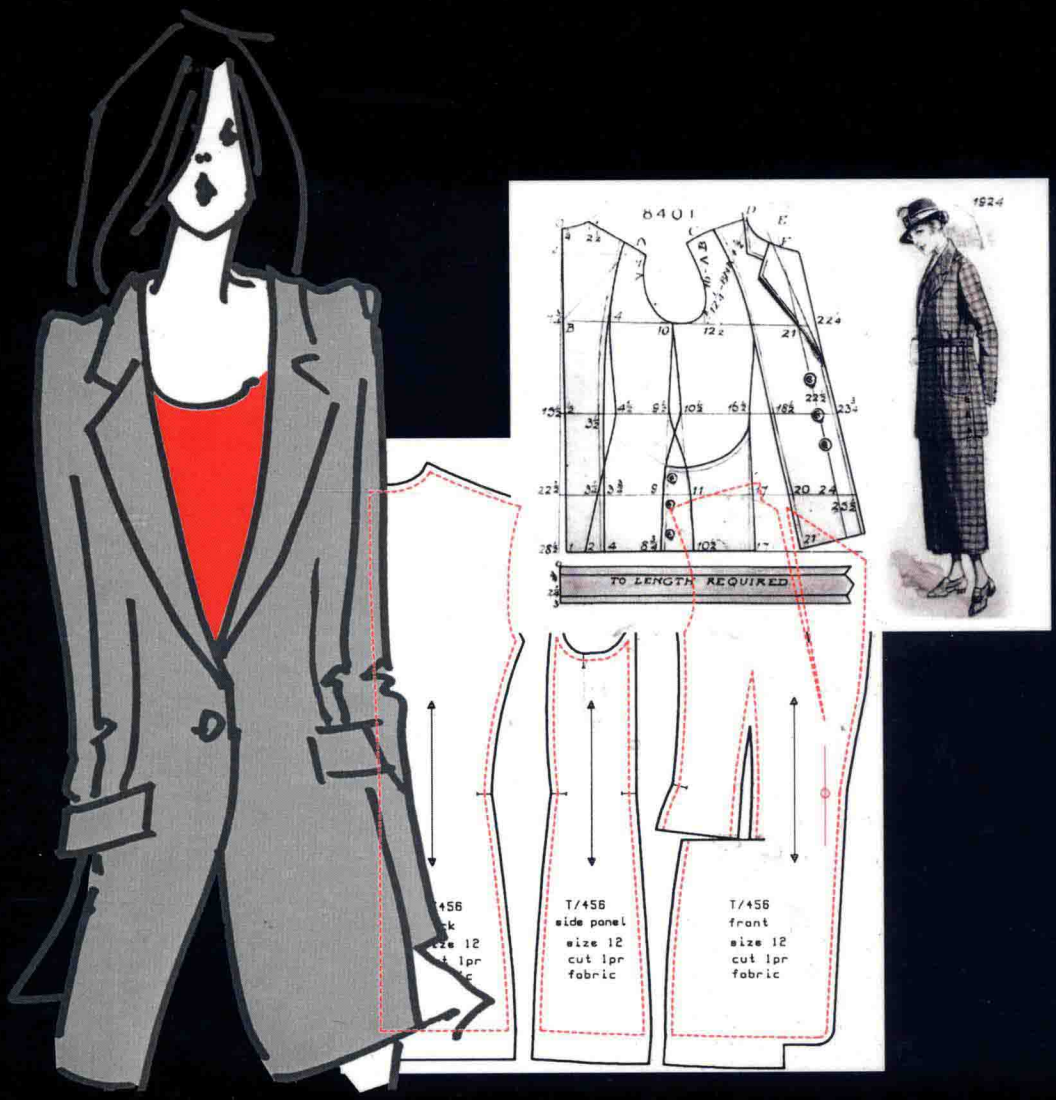
PATTERN CUTTING FOR WOMEN'S TAILORED JACKETS:

CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY



WINIFRED ALDRICH

Blackwell
Publishing

Blackwell Science Ltd
Editorial Offices:
Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EL
25 John Street, London WC1N 2BS
23 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh EH3 6AJ
350 Main Street, Malden
MA 02148 5018, USA
54 University Street, Carlton
Victoria 3053, Australia
10, rue Casimir Delavigne
75006 Paris, France

Other Editorial Offices:

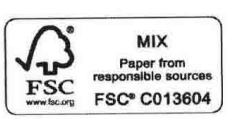
Blackwell Wissenschafts-Verlag GmbH
Kurfürstendamm 57
10707 Berlin, Germany

Blackwell Science KK
MG Kodenmacho Building
7–10 Kodenmacho Nihombashi
Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104, Japan

Iowa State University Press
A Blackwell Science Company
2121 S. State Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50014-8300, USA

First published 2002

Set in 9/10pt Times
by DP Photosetting, Aylesbury, Bucks



DISTRIBUTORS

Marston Book Services Ltd
PO Box 269
Abingdon
Oxon OX14 4YN
(*Orders:* Tel: 01235 465500
Fax: 01235 465555)

USA
Blackwell Science, Inc.
Commerce Place
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148 5018
(*Orders:* Tel: 800 759 6102
781 388 8250
Fax: 781 388 8255)

Canada
Login Brothers Book Company
324 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 3T2
(*Orders:* Tel: 204 837-2987
Fax: 204 837-3116)

Australia
Blackwell Science Pty Ltd
54 University Street
Carlton, Victoria 3053
(*Orders:* Tel: 03 9347 0300
Fax: 03 9347 5001)

A catalogue record for this title is available
from the British Library

ISBN 0–632–05467-0

Library of Congress
Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Aldrich, Winifred.
Pattern cutting for women's tailored jackets: classic and contemporary/Winifred Aldrich.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-632-05467-0 (alk. paper)
1. Jackets. 2. Dressmaking—Pattern design.
3. Tailoring (Women's) I. Title.

TT535 .A43 2001
646.4′5704—dc21

2001037727

For further information on
Blackwell Science, visit our website:
www.blackwell-science.com

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

CONTENTS

PATTERN CUTTING FOR WOMEN'S TAILORED JACKETS:

CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY

WINIFRED ALDRICH

b

Blackwell
Science

Blackwell Science Ltd
Editorial Offices:
Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0EL
25 John Street, London WC1N 2BS
23 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh EH3 6AJ
350 Main Street, Malden
MA 02148 5018, USA
54 University Street, Carlton
Victoria 3053, Australia
10, rue Casimir Delavigne
75006 Paris, France

Other Editorial Offices:

Blackwell Wissenschafts-Verlag GmbH
Kurfürstendamm 57
10707 Berlin, Germany

Blackwell Science KK
MG Kodenmacho Building
7–10 Kodenmacho Nihombashi
Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104, Japan

Iowa State University Press
A Blackwell Science Company
2121 S. State Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50014-8300, USA

First published 2002

Set in 9/10pt Times
by DP Photosetting, Aylesbury, Bucks

DISTRIBUTORS

Marston Book Services Ltd
PO Box 269
Abingdon
Oxon OX14 4YN
(*Orders:* Tel: 01235 465500
Fax: 01235 465555)

USA
Blackwell Science, Inc.
Commerce Place
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148 5018
(*Orders:* Tel: 800 759 6102
781 388 8250
Fax: 781 388 8255)

Canada
Login Brothers Book Company
324 Saulteaux Crescent
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 3T2
(*Orders:* Tel: 204 837-2987
Fax: 204 837-3116)

Australia
Blackwell Science Pty Ltd
54 University Street
Carlton, Victoria 3053
(*Orders:* Tel: 03 9347 0300
Fax: 03 9347 5001)

A catalogue record for this title is available
from the British Library

ISBN 0–632–05467-0

Library of Congress
Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Aldrich, Winifred.
Pattern cutting for women's tailored jackets: classic and contemporary/Winifred Aldrich.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-632-05467-0 (alk. paper)
1. Jackets. 2. Dressmaking—Pattern design.
3. Tailoring (Women's) I. Title.

TT535 .A43 2001
646.4'5704—dc21

2001037727

For further information on
Blackwell Science, visit our website:
www.blackwell-science.com

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people and organisations have contributed to the production of this book; it could not have been completed without their support. I would like to give the following people my sincere appreciation for their interest and help.

The Leverhulme Trust for providing the grant which enabled the project to be undertaken.

Professor Edward Newton for his continuing encouragement and advice.

Kathleen Farrell for administrative support and James Aldrich for the photography, layout and research assistance which were needed to bring the book to its fruition.

The following organisations, libraries, archives and museums for help in researching pattern journals and costume examples or who have given me permission to reproduce some of the images in Chapter 1.
The Archives Lavigne, ESMOD, Paris
Bibliothèque Nationale of France, Paris
Bibliothèque Forney, Paris
Bankfield Museum, Halifax
Bradford Art Galleries and Museums
Chethams Library, Manchester
EMAP Publishing (Nederland) BV
The British Library, London
The Butterick Co. Inc. Archives, New York
The Hagley Museum and Library, Delaware
The London Centre for Fashion Studies, London
The Library of Congress, Washington
The New York Public Library
The Nottingham Museum of Costume
The Nottingham Trent University Library
The Metropolitan Museum of Art * The Costume Institute, New York
Musee de la Mode et du Costume, Palais Galliera, Paris
The Platt Hall Gallery of Costume, Manchester
Public Record Offices in Leicester, Manchester and Leeds.
The Smithsonian Institution, Washington
The Victoria and Albert Museum, London
The Winterthur Library, Delaware

The following companies who have kindly taken time to find the most appropriate images for Chapter 5.
assyst bullmer, Barnsley
echzeit AG, Germany
Durkopp Adler AG, Germany
Gerber Technology, Manchester
Telmat Industrie, France
Veit GmbH & Co., Germany

Some copy on page 10 and Figures 8 and 9 were published in W. Aldrich, 'Tailors' Cutting Manuals and the Growing Provision of Popular Clothing 1750–1870, *Textile History*, November 2000. These are included by courtesy of the Pasold Research Fund.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this book is to explain the wide range of cutting methods used to produce garments which claim the term a 'tailored' jacket. Although the main focus of the book is modern methods of producing clothing, it acknowledges and uses a cutting heritage which is rich and complex. Libraries and museums of costume provide a rich resource for students and over the last decade American publishers such as R. L. Shep and Dover Books have made available facsimiles of old cutting books. However, to inspire the modern garment designer or to recover methods that retain their validity today, an understanding of the development of cutting methods and sizing is needed.

The term 'tailored' has changed as methods of manufacture and the retailing of clothes have evolved. Until the second half of the eighteenth century, tailors cut men's and women's garments which had little relationship to the tailored garments produced by the middle of the nineteenth century. High quality men's and women's jackets were crafted, moulded and shaped with layers of canvas and stitching. Today there are tailors who still believe that the word 'tailored' should only be ascribed to a garment crafted by these methods. From the middle of the nineteenth century, the growth of the ready-to-wear industry and retail outlets, and the tremendous increase in professional dressmakers, meant that the word 'tailored' or 'tailor-made' began to be used to describe a style or to infer quality.

It is possible to cut and 'fit-up' a woman's jacket with interlinings and linings using almost identical methods to those used in men's structured tailoring. This is very rarely required; today very few women's jackets are either bespoke tailored or engineered to create this effect. Although fashion sometimes dictates a structured high shoulder line, most high quality women's jackets are influenced by the softer tailoring methods of the style made famous by the Italian designer Armani. As men are opting for less structured jackets, the internal construction of men's and women's jackets has become more similar. Today, the increasing cost of labour has meant that not only are very few jackets hand-made, but that the machinery of mass production thrives on the repeatability of styles. This has resulted in a sameness about many of the jackets offered in the major retail stores.

This book sets out to explain in a simple way the evolution of the cutting and grading of women's jackets. It makes clear the different approaches to 'tailored' cutting by describing it under three headings: *bespoke cutting, engineered cutting* and *style cutting.* The rich heritage of the latter came from the tremendous creativity that was unleashed by women's emancipation at the turn of the twentieth century and the merging of tailored styles with fashionable clothing. The section on style cutting has derived some of the cutting techniques from that period, thus demonstrating their relevance to current methods of production.

Note Chapter 1, 'The Evolution of the Woman's Tailored Jacket', is a summary; the subject is covered in more detail by the author in 'Tailors' Cutting Manuals and the Growing Provision of Popular Clothing; 1750–1870', *Textile History*, November 2000. A further article covering the later period is in the process of preparation.

1 THE EVOLUTION OF THE WOMAN'S TAILORED JACKET

The Evolution of the Woman's Tailored Jacket

The woman's tailored jacket has changed its shape, methods of construction, and its cutters and makers during the last two centuries. During the nineteenth century, the tailored jacket became an accepted and essential part of the wardrobe of most men and women creating a large market which could no longer be satisfied by the bespoke tailors and mantle makers. Methods of mass manufacture and workshops using sweated labour provided garments at prices which most of the population could afford.

The word 'tailored' creates a problem. Vincent, a tailor of men's and women's garments, stated in 1924 that the difference in the construction methods of tailors and dressmakers was that dressmakers worked from the 'inside', creating a lining that fitted the body, then covering it with the cloth, whilst tailors worked from the 'outside', moulding and fitting the outer cloth to the form of the body and then inserting a lining[1]. Although a significant proportion of the jackets made by dress and mantle makers during the nineteenth century were based on the 'inside' approach (Fig. 1), by 1924 the influences of fashion and mass manufacture had radically changed the cut of jackets and their construction. The new methods became the foundation of the garment industry today. This chapter explains the evolution of jacket manufacture, the methods we have inherited and their potential for further change.

Before the Nineteenth Century

The background of the tailored jacket is well recorded. It emerged in earlier centuries as riding wear, but it was also used as a practical alternative to court dress for morning wear. In France, the jacket and skirt were catalogued mainly as the costume of the working classes, and it was not until the second half of the eighteenth century, during the Revolution of 1789, that the jacket and skirt became the new fashion, very certainly under the influence of the bourgeoisie who occupied an increasingly important place in the economic and social life of the Parisien. The costume was seen as representing the new spirit of the age[2]. In England it was common for the jacket and the greatcoat to be worn by women of all classes for many practical and social pursuits throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Fig. 1). Pepys in 1664 said, 'Walking in the gallery at Whitehall, I find the ladies of honour dressed in their riding garbs, with coats and doublets with deep skirts, just for all the world like mine.'[3] Women's gig coats, spencers, pelisses, and riding habits were offered by both tailors and clothiers across a wide range of quality and prices catering for a much wider class of people than is apparent from many of the costume history books.

The well-established second-hand trade of clothes provided a variety of garments for the poorer classes, but as the textile mills produced cheaper cloth and the provincial towns expanded, there were opportunities for drapers and the new ready-to-wear warehouses to expand[4]. Tailors and dressmakers were at the heart of this expansion; large-scale hand-production was of major significance in industrial growth. Women were working in both the dress and tailoring trades in small workshops or outworking. The scale of their productive capacity is often ignored by many economic historians because of their invisibility in records, but it was the labour of these women in Britain, France and America which underpinned the expanding ready-made clothing industry[5].

Knowledge of the actual appearance and structure of tailored garments for men or women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is limited to examples that survive in museums, written descriptions and images in paintings and illustrations. The main interest of costume historians seems to have been the garments of the aristocracy or occasionally peasant costume, and they therefore give little information about the garments of the middle classes. The fashion plates which appeared in the latter half of the eighteenth century were intended to influence fashion and stimulate purchasing, and were aimed, therefore, at the affluent groups in society. It was not until the books and magazines for tailoring, dressmaking and fashion trades spread, during the early part of the nineteenth century, that the literature began to expose clearly the costume of the middle and aspiring working classes. From the middle of the nineteenth century, increasing amounts of information began to become available, generated by the proliferation of women's magazines, department store trade catalogues and the growing popularity of the photographic image.

Few garment drafting books written before the nineteenth century for dressmakers or tailors have survived. But it is clear that cutting systems used by tailors and dressmakers were simple point to point instructions which enabled them to cut basic garments or a fashionable coat shape[6]. They used notched strips of card to record the body size (Fig. 2). Many women's garments were draped on the body or patterns copied from existing gowns (Fig. 2). Who invented the inch or metric tape measure is disputed amongst historians. Dressmakers were using marked pieces of ribbon in the eighteenth century but the adoption of the tape measure by tailors seems to have occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The most important factor at this time was the standardisation and use of units of measurement, the inch and the centimetre. These were units which could be divided easily and they allowed more complex drafting and sizing systems to be developed[7].

Fig. 1 Detail from *Vaux-hall*, Thomas Rowlandson, 1785.
By permission of The Victoria and Albert Museum

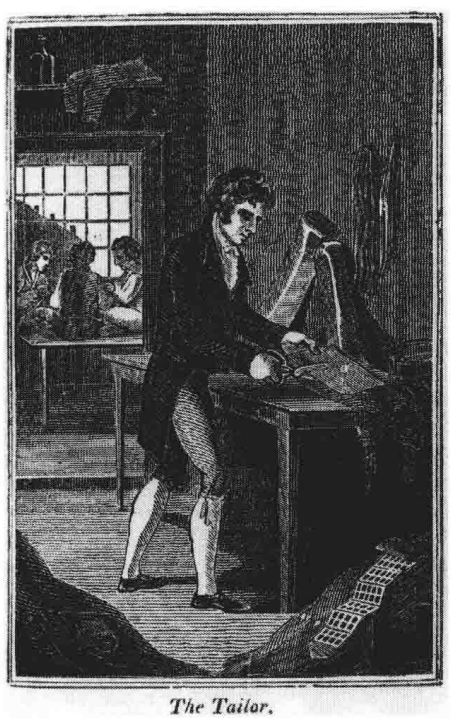
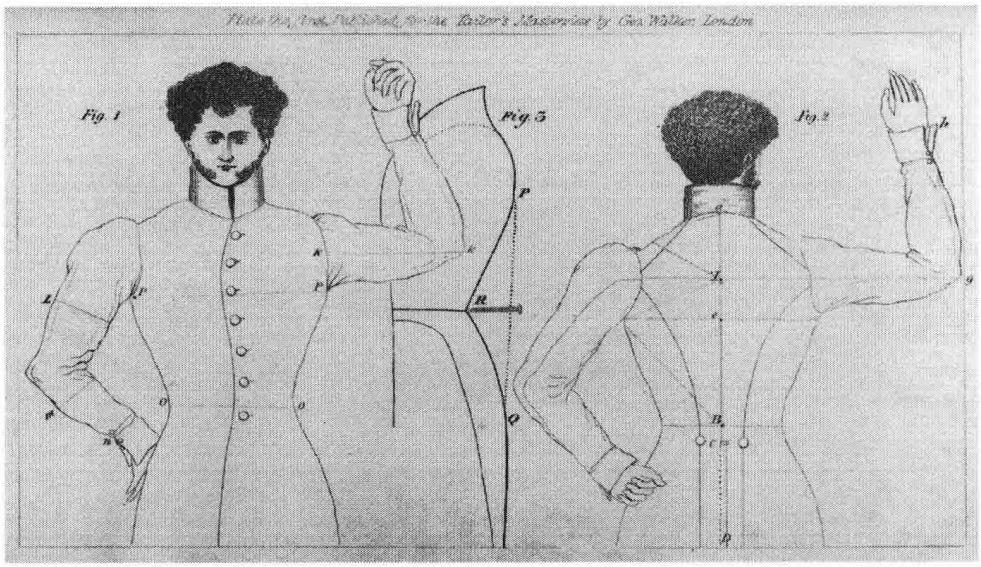


Fig. 2 Dressmaking and tailoring as different crafts.
The Book of English Trades and Library of Useful Arts, 1824. *By permission of The British Library, 1420.d.2*



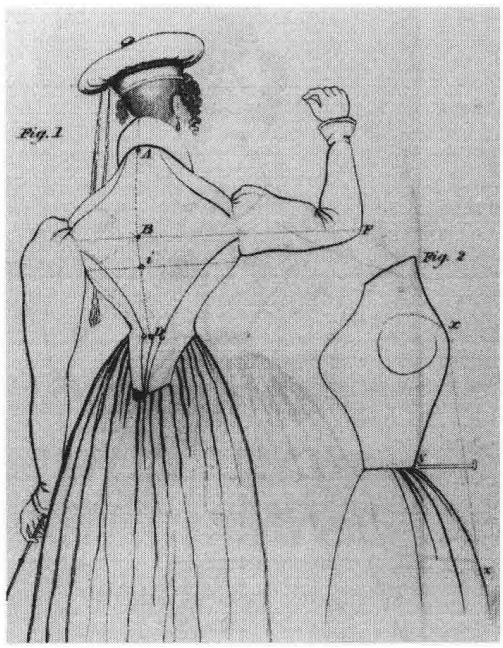


Fig. 3 A comparison of Walker's measurement positions for men and women. George Walker, *The Tailor's Masterpiece, The Art of Cutting all Kinds of Coats*, 1834; *The Tailor's Masterpiece, The Art of Cutting Ladies' Riding Habits, Pelisses, Gowns, Frocks &c*, 1836. *By permission of The British Library, RB23.a.17302*

The Emergence of Drafting Systems 1800–1860

During the first half of the century, many tailors' drafting systems appeared; the tailors were competitive and vigorously criticised each other's systems. Whilst there were some women working in the tailoring trade (a tailor's drafting book by Amanda Jones published in 1822 has survived)[8], it was dominated by men who began to allude to it as the practice of science and art. The use of the tape measure stimulated interest in the human body and its proportions. Places and points on the body were identified with recognition of the male and female differences (Fig. 3). Complicated harnesses and measuring machines were patented[9]. The number of body measurements taken increased; these were later refined and became accepted as the basic landmarks on the body which could be used for drafting and graduation. The few dressmaking books that have survived from this period give minimal instructions for taking measurements and it is not until the middle of the century that they began to contain measurement diagrams[10].

The strong image that emerges from the early nineteenth century fashion plates is the similarity of the cut of women's and men's garments that were worn outside the home (Fig. 4); both were close-fitting with narrow backs and full sleeve heads. By the middle of the century, garments became more related to the form of the body (Fig. 5) as cutters strove to create 'anatomical' drafting systems.

It is clear that the production of ready-made and 'mass produced' made-to-measure clothing for men and women owes a debt to the cutting and sizing methods created by the early nineteenth century tailors, who shared their knowledge in full scale drafts, pamphlets and books.

An amazing number of different tailor's drafting systems emerged in the years from 1800–1850. The dominant ones which have survived are: *divisional*

Fig. 4 The similar cut of male and female jackets
Costumes Parisiens, 1812 and 1826. *Personal Collection*

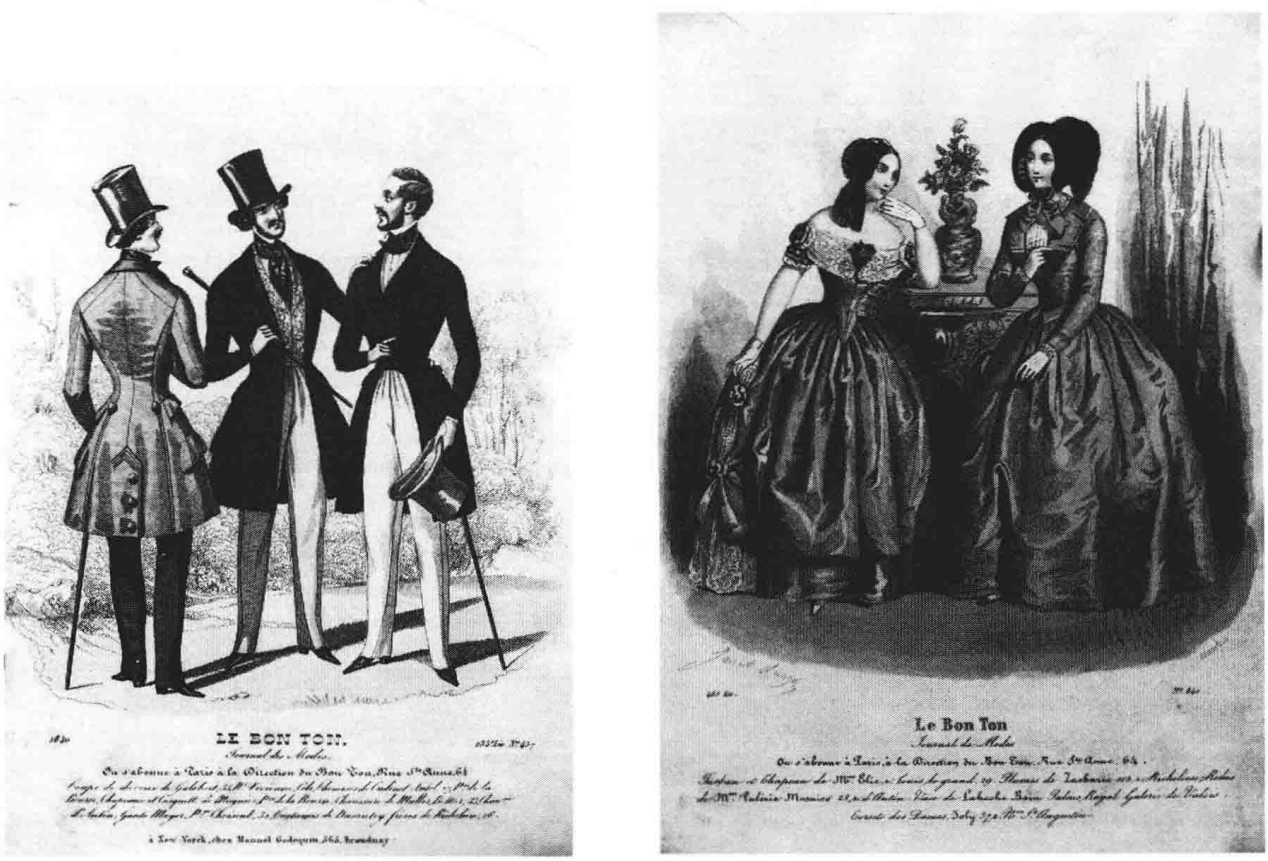


Fig. 5 The cut of the jackets begins to reflect the figure shape
Le Bon Ton, 1840 and 1842. Personal Collection

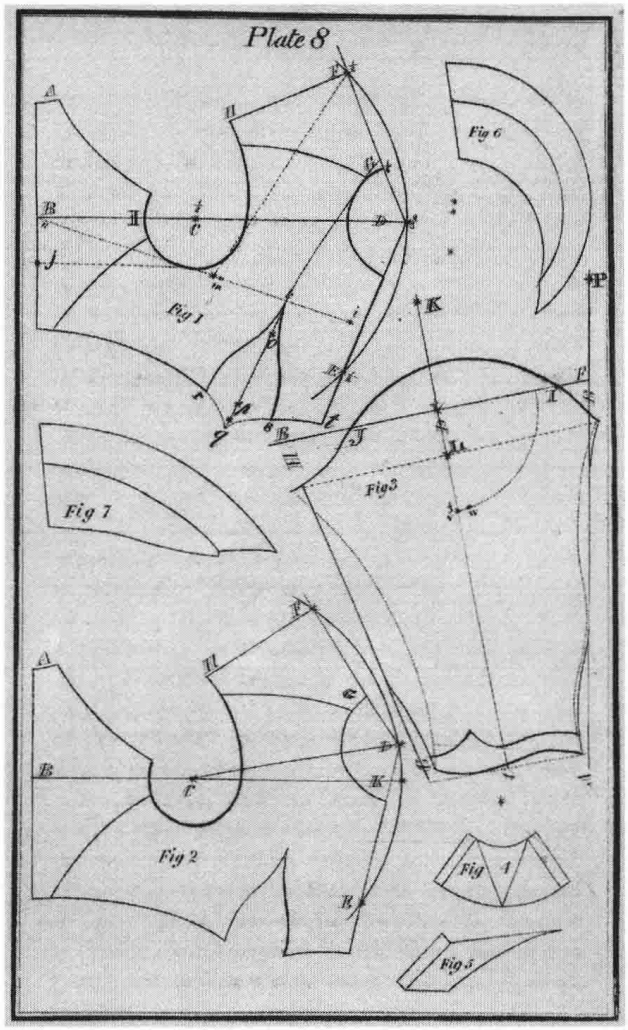


Fig. 6 A *combination system* used to construct a riding habit. Hamlet Hadfield, *The Tailor's Preceptor*, 1826.
By permission of The British Library, 1043.b.37

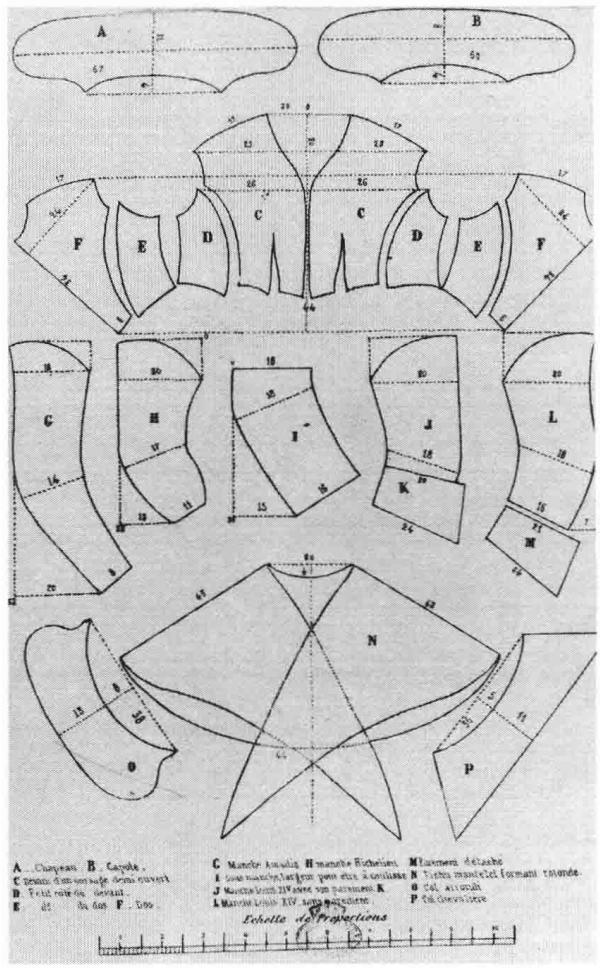


Fig. 7 A bodice pattern with a sizing scale printed on the back of a fashion plate. *Le Bon Ton*, 1841.
By permission of The Victoria and Albert Museum

systems, which divide major measurements proportionally; *direct measurement systems*, which identify most points by body measurements; *combination systems*, which are a mixture of the two. Most of the systems were developed by male bespoke tailors, and it is important to distinguish between systems that were simply a mathematical means of reproducing a garment shape and those based on anthropometry.

Systems based solely on proportions of the breast dominated the tailors' publications during the early part of the century, but many cutters saw this as illogical and recognised that height was also a factor. They also realised its limitations in the cutting of women's garments. Most women's garments constructed from the drafts were by direct measurement or combination systems (Fig. 6). However, anatomical theories of cutting and the use of the rectangle as a base for drafts and block patterns were developed[11]. These were important; they were ideally suited to the mass produced 'made-to-measure' trade which was beginning to emerge. The invention of graduated scale measures (Fig. 8) meant that ready-to-wear jackets could also be produced in proportionate sizes (Fig. 9); it also allowed dressmakers to scale patterns (Fig. 7). By focusing on a few basic measurements, the manufacturer could create and modify block patterns to offer 'custom made' garments. Many bespoke tailors who developed made-to-measure garments also used their knowledge to produce size charts which were a foundation to the idea that garments could be made for people using *average measurements.*

Before 1860 few drafting systems were developed specifically for dressmaker or mantle makers; many simply gave measurements (Fig. 10), and the earliest drafts were modified tailors' systems[12]. Whilst the ready-to-wear trade adopted proportionate systems many dressmakers used or developed direct measurement systems as body fitting styles dominated women's fashions for the next sixty years.

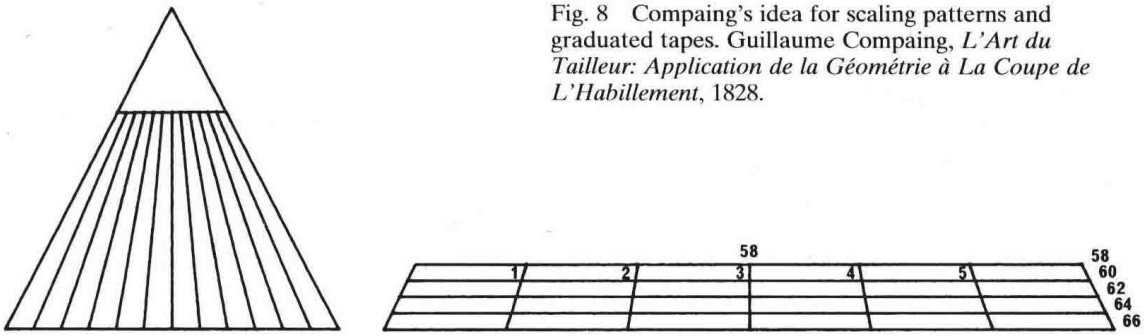


Fig. 8 Compaing's idea for scaling patterns and graduated tapes. Guillaume Compaing, *L'Art du Tailleur: Application de la Géométrie à La Coupe de L'Habillement*, 1828.

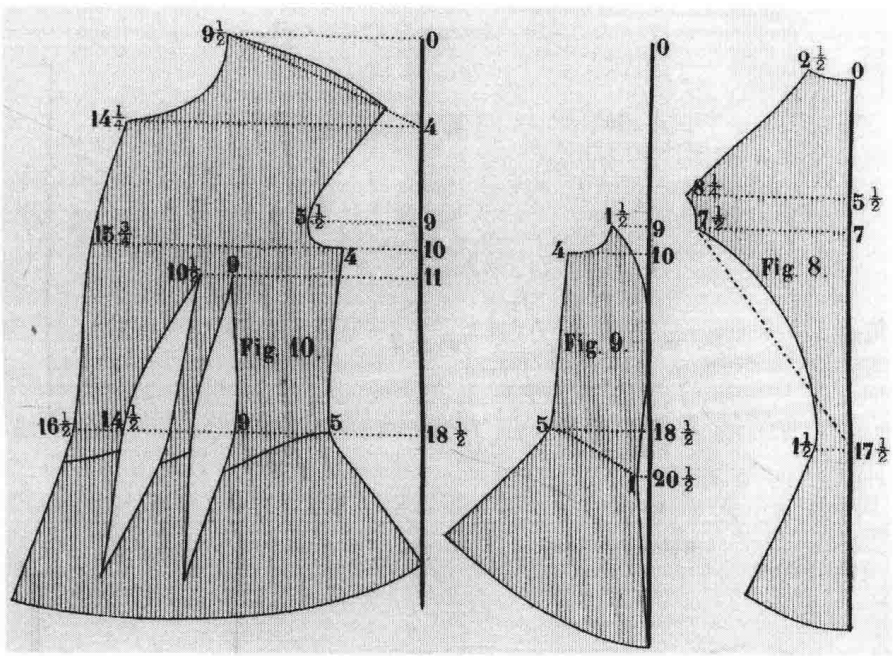


Fig. 9 The tailor's draft for a paletot based on the cut of a habit. Charles Compaing and Louis Devere, *The Tailors' Guide; a Complete System of Cutting Every Kind of Garment to Measure*, 1856. *By permission of The British Library, 1269.b.6*

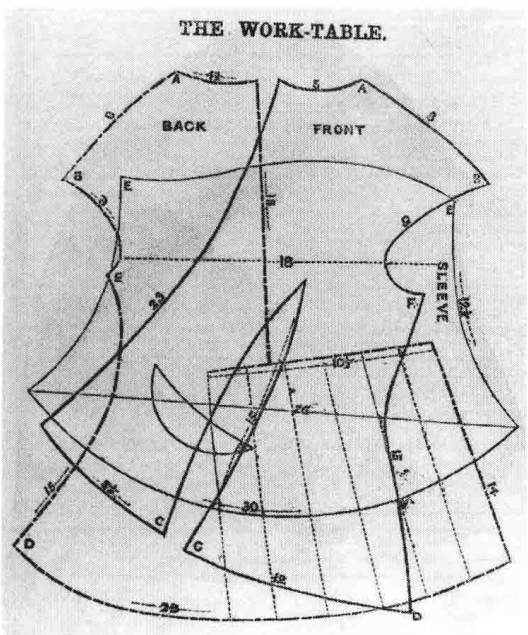


Fig. 10 The design and draft for a 'dressmaker' jacket. *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* 1858. *Courtesy of Nottingham Museum of Costume*