
Consumption of Clothes in Europe between the XVIth and the XVIIIth Centuries (Research Problems)

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1. THE TOPIC

Social and economic problems are necessarily of importance in historical research. The years of crisis in the capitalist world of the last century brought economic problems to the forefront and in the second half of the XXth century we are interested primarily in the role of the State in the economy of particular countries, the strategy of investment, the development of regions, the protection of the environment, peasant husbandry, the importance of knowledge and technology in the process of industrialization¹, and finally in the necessity of supplying human needs. Our age is an age of consumption. Clothing is one of man's most basic needs, but the degree to which it is satisfied is far more difficult to determine than in the case of food for example. The changeability of fashion means that the issue of clothes consumption in various periods of history is very complicated. Fashion brings about the increased variety of clothes that are worn and influences the various branches of production. The consumption of clothes is not to be studied exclusively by methods applied in economic history or even in the history of technology for man's mental attitude in making his choice of clothes is part of the history of

¹ *Sixth International Congress of Economic History. 5 themes*, Copenhagen 19-23 August 1974.

culture. I have studied the interplay of fashion and clothes in my article: « Fashion and Clothes - Change and Permanence »².

The consumption of clothes in Europe of the XVIth - XVIIIth Cents, is closely connected with the variety and production capacity of the range of clothes, other textile products and leather. The changes in supply and demand for raw materials depend on the kinds of clothes used by different groups of European countries and has to be described. J. Heers has written on the connections between the forms of dress in northern Italy in the Middle Ages and local textile production³. I have produced a study of the connections between textile and tannery techniques and fashion in Europe of the XVIth and XVIIth centuries,⁴ but should however like to consider a wider research programme here. It is not a question of acquiring information on the number of pounds of wool, yards of cloth or pounds of leather per capita of the population in a given country. Such calculations are certainly necessary to establish a minimum supply required to satisfy the clothing needs of the widest range of population groups. However such information, to matter how full, does not solve the question of motivation in the choice of certain fabrics, leathers or clothing accessories. The mass demand for certain goods brings pressure to bear on producers and pushes forward improvements in technology and increase in production. The mass demand for ribbons and knit-wear brought about the invention of the first textile machines as early as the end of the XVIth Cent. After satisfying the most basic needs, consumption is a question of individual or social choice, but the problem of that choice in the range of clothes is a very complex one. It can be said that Europe in the period under discussion was ruled by: « La folie de la mode »⁵.

The term "clothes" (*vêtements*) is used consciously instead of "dress" or "attire". It embraces the basic articles of human clothing and the most important accessories characteristic of a given period. The importance

² Moda a odzież - zmienność i długie trwanie (Fashion and clothes - change and permanence), in « Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej », r. XXII, nr 1, 1974, pp. 87-99. « Il n'est pas possible de déterminer les besoins humains en fibres d'habillement sur une base aussi précise et aussi objective qu'on le fait dans le domaine de la nutrition », cf. *Les fibres textiles dans le monde*, Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture, Washington-Rome, 1948, p. XI.

³ J. HEERS, *La mode et les marchés des draps de laine: Gênes et la Montagne à la fin du Moyen Age*, in « Annales Economies Sociétés Civilisations », 26^e année, 1971, nr 5, pp. 1093-1117.

⁴ I. TURNAU, *Reciproca influenza fra l'arte tessile e pellettiera e la moda europea nel XVI e XVII secolo*. Terza Settimana di Studio. Produttività e tecnologia nei secoli XII-XVII, Prato 1971; *Związki technik włókienniczych i skórniczych z modą europejską w XVI i XVII wieku*, in « Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej », v. XX, nr 1, 1972, pp. 115-130.

⁵ F. BRAUDEL, *Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme (XVe-XVIIIe siècle)*, v. I, Paris 1967, p. 237.

of such themes are understood by the leading historian of fashion,⁶ but the history of clothes has not yet been studied. Research on the purchase of clothes requires not only vast historical preparation, including study of the records of the textile industry, but also a knowledge of the complex and changing design of garments, which is connected with the quantity and quality of fabric used in their manufacture.

2. WEST EUROPEAN FASHION AND THE NATIONAL COSTUMES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE.

The period from the XVIth to the XVIIIth century is particularly important and interesting in the history of clothes in Europe. At this time some of the countries of Central and eastern Europe ceased to be subjected, especially in men's dress, to the influence of Italian, Spanish and French fashion. French, Burgundian and Italian influence was strong in these countries in the XIVth and XVth centuries. But during the XVIth century in Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the territories of Moldavia and Valachia, men's national costume assumed its particular form, which was reminiscent of the dress worn in the Near East, but which also retained an individual character. These costumes were sometimes imitated, even in distant Finland.⁷ The national costume was generally long, draped in folds and consisted of two parts, one worn over the other and reaching down to the ankles. That costume required much more fabric than that used in costume of the early XVIIIth century, or in Western European and French outfits of the XVIIth century. The distinctness of the national dress worn by the nobles and townsmen in Poland was such that during the wars in the early XVIIIth century any man wearing a west-European costume was in danger of being treated as foreigner, and so risked his life. The national costume first disappeared in Russia, owing to a decree of Peter the Great, which forbade its use to boyars in 1700. In Hungary, men's dress was much shorter in the XVIIIth century and in Poland it slowly declined during the same century. The spread of men's national costume is important for the study of clothes in central and eastern Europe, as it required a considerable quantity of lighter materials. This was far less important in respect to women's clothes.

The period under discussion is therefore distinguished by a great diversity of types of clothes used in different European countries. We shall not discuss the Balkan countries, because of the lack of publications

⁶ F. BOUCHER, *Histoire du costume en Occident de l'antiquité à nos jours*, Paris 1965, p. 5.

⁷ R. PYKKÄNEN, *Barokin pukumuoti suomessa 1620-1720* (Baroque Costume in Finland in 1620-1720), Helsinki 1970.

on the history of the dress worn in the towns and countryside. The influence of southern and western Europe was prevalent in all German, Czech and Scandinavian countries. Requirements for all kinds of fabrics, accessories and black or coloured leathers therefore varied according to differing needs and tastes in all parts of Europe. In studying the problem one must take account of the production capacity of the most important textile and tanning industries in Europe, at various stages in their economic development, and the increase in production brought about by progress in organization and the introduction of the first mechanically driven machinery.

3. THE RANGE OF CLOTHING FABRICS, OTHER TEXTILE PRODUCTS AND LEATHERS.

In the period from the XVIth to the XVIII century, unlike the late Middle Ages, there was a far greater range of manufactured fabrics, while new textile products and coloured leathers were introduced. Before considering the production of the most important centres of the textile and leather industry in Europe, we should discuss the most important groups of these new products. The method of draping a folded garment depends on the kind of fabric used and whether it can be properly adjusted; the range of fabrics and accessories, determined the type of clothes worn.

We are interested primarily in clothing materials in everyday use, that is those which were purchased by the widest groups of consumer in a number of European countries. There are fewer studies of these types of fabrics than of figured silks, luxury cloths or even printed calicoes. Home-made imported fabrics in everyday use in Poland and Hungary have also been studied in detail. The problem of the changes in terminology in these three centuries, the type of materials and their country of manufacture and use, together with technical analysis of surviving samples,⁸ have been the object of interest and consideration.

In the period under discussion increased textile production brought a growing number of new names for the fabrics used for clothes. Encyclopaedias, commercial articles and all sorts of technical publications provide extensive information on these products.⁹ Their variety mainly resulted

⁸ W. G. ENDREI, *Tissus d'usage quotidien aux 16e-18e siècles* (Étude méthodique), in « Bulletin de Liaison du Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens », nr. 16, 1962, pp. 17-26; I. TURNAU, *Les tissus d'usage quotidien au XVIIIème siècle en Pologne*, in « Bulletin... », above mentioned, nr. 20, 1964, pp. 18-26.

⁹ The most important are: J. SAVARY DES BRUSLONS, *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*, v. 1-IV, Genève 1750; JAUBERT, *Dictionnaire raisonné universel des arts et métiers*, contenant l'histoire, la description, la police des fabriques et manufactures de France et des Pays étrangers, Paris 1793.

from mixing textiles; there was an increase in half-woollen texture of cotton, linen or silk warp and linen-and-cotton or half-silk fabrics appeared. The same names were often used for different kinds of fabrics produced in different countries, manufactured by a similar weaving technique, but using different, and more readily available materials. Different names were also applied to the same products in different periods. The idea of compiling an international dictionary of the names of fabrics and other textile products has often been put forward, but as yet only a modest technological dictionary, containing about 300 terms has appeared.¹⁰ Many authors include technological dictionaries as appendices to their works.¹¹ This does not however help us to overcome the difficulties in establishing which basic types of fabrics were used in various European countries. This article only gives the names of the most important types of fabrics, other textile products and leathers.

In discussing raw materials, worsted fabrics and cloths should first be mentioned. Woollen materials were divided into «woollen and worsted» as early as the Middle Ages. Cloth was woven from a short carded wool and fulled, while worsted fabrics were woven from long combed wool and not fulled. This distinction became particularly marked in the Middle Ages, when cloths were heavily fulled, and was of particular importance in the period under discussion. In European cloth manufacture the wide loom operated by two craftsmen became common at that time, as well as the spinning wheel and fulling press, which was driven by water power. The mass production of thicker kinds of cloth led to its use among wide groups of the population. Clothes made of thick cloth were, however, heavy and stiff but the long, folded national costumes in central and eastern Europe, as well as the more close-fitting Italian, Spanish and French garments required fabrics that were easier to arrange. This prompted the spread of worsted and half-woollen fabrics, and instead of thick cloth a more lightly fulled and softer baize was manufactured. Products based on worsted fabrics were used in Central Europe such as the well carded, slightly fulled, woollen cloths known in Poland by the name of "sajeta".¹² In this part of Europe there was a far larger supply of short wool and the shortcomings of loose weaving could be compensated by fulling.

Men's long habits falling in folds were widespread in the countries of central Europe and prompted the demand for cheaper quality worsted fabrics. The mass export of "kersey" to central and eastern Europe in

¹⁰ *Vocabulary of technical terms. Fabrics*, Centre International d'Etude des Textiles Anciens, Lyon 1964: with the versions in seven European languages.

¹¹ One of the most important: K. G. PONTING, *The Woollen Industry of South-West England*, Bath 1971, Textile Glossary, pp. 177-202.

¹² I. TURNAU, *Les tissus*, op. cit., p. 19.

the XVI-XVIIIth centuries¹³ shows that England was best able to adapt its production to a determined sales market. Other particularly common woollen fabrics were camlets (*camelots*), druggets (*droguets*), cassimeres (*casemirs*), serges, shalloons (*shalons*) and flannels. Camlets, whose name alone is connected with camel hair, were a half-woollen stuff, on a silk warp in France, while in Poland they were made of pure wool. Druggets (*droguets*) were woven by tabby or twill; they were made of silk in France in the XVIIIth century and of wool in Central Europe. Casemirs were made of cloth in England in the XVIIIth century, while in France they were made from an inferior kind of worsted wool. All sorts of serges were woven initially in England on a worsted woollen warp and by carded weft, later they became a worsted fabric. In France they were the most common coloured fabrics for garments in the period under discussion, often half-woollen on a silk warp, and were widely used in Poland and Hungary also. Shalloons (*shalons*) were worsted fabrics manufactured in England, mostly in the West Riding, while France manufactured them at Chalons-sur-Marne. They were sold in short pieces in Poland, but in Hungary more carefully finished fabrics were sold by the same name in the XVIIth and XVIIIth century. Flannels were lightly fulled in England, or else they were made in worsted fabric, with a proper finish. During the XVIth-XVIIIth century were increasingly halfwoollen stuff on linen, or in west European countries, on cotton warp. Poland produced many coloured flannels in pure wool.¹⁴ These examples show how difficult it is to specify the production methods, raw materials, and quality of the fabrics produced in different European countries, as different names often referred to the same material, or one name denoted various products. At any rate, the manufacture of lighter fabrics, which could easily be organised, now became the important question.

From the XVIth to the XVIIIth century the production of half-woollen stuffs, or fabrics woven from two kinds of raw material steadily increased in Europe. Half-woollen fabrics were woven on silk, cotton, linen and even hemp warp. Silk and cotton warps made the fabrics warmer, while silk gave them gloss, but limited their warmth. Linen and hemp warps were used in central and northern Europe, particularly in rural hand-weaving. Mixed fabrics were rarely produced by guild weavers, for strict rules prevented the mixing of different materials. They became common, however, in all

¹³ W. ENDREI, *Northern Cloths and Kerseys in Eastern Europe XVIth-XVIIIth Centuries*, in «Textile History», v. 5, 1974.

¹⁴ All vocabulary information is from the books mentioned in the notes 9-12 and from article: I. TURNAU, *Problematyka słownika staropolskiej terminologii narzędzi i wytworów materialnych na przykładzie baset włókienniczych, skórnicych i odzieżowych* (Problems concerning ancient terminology of tools and products exemplified with textiles, leathers and costumes entries), in «Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej», v. XVIII, nr 4, 1970, pp. 685-707.

kinds of domestic manufacture in the country and in private households. Fustian (*futaine*) was a fabric made from half-woollen material on cotton warp.

Cotton was used in Europe as a raw material from the XIIth century, mainly to make fustian. It was imported from the Near East in increasing quantities.¹⁵ The production of half-cotton fustian spread particularly in Southern Germany from the XIVth century and in Little Poland from the XVth century.¹⁶ In the XVIth century the quantity of fabrics woven on cotton or silk-and-cotton warp steadily increased, with the mills of northern France leading production. They appeared here under the name of "*bombazine*" and "*sayette*" and were known in England as "*says*". In England bombazine was a fabric with a woollen warp and silk weft,¹⁷ but in France, Belgium, Holland and Poland they were, in the XVIth and XVIIth century, materials made from worsted wool, sometimes on a cotton warp, with a special finishing process called "*corroi*".¹⁸ We should also consider the production of half-cotton fabrics, which was widespread in western and central Europe and which preceded and soon gave way to the manufacture of pure cotton goods. Printed calicoes (*chintz*), which was a most fashionable fabric in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries and which introduced Indian patterns, spurred on the English and French textile industry. The dictates of fashion and the need for cheap, light and coloured clothing fabrics caused the production of cotton goods to spread swiftly.

The production of silk, mainly coloured, fabrics is one of the best researched subjects in the history of the European textile industry. The mass production of inferior kinds of silk and half-silk fabrics, which was widespread in Italy in the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, and somewhat later in France, has aroused less interest. There were attempts to introduce these goods into Prussia, Poland, Hungary, Russia, and Denmark and Sweden. Attention should be drawn to the production of the cheapest and most used silk fabrics in Italy, for export to central European countries. An exceptionally large quantity of such samples have been preserved in Poland.¹⁹ It must, however, be remembered that not all silk fabrics were luxury goods, for

¹⁵ W. ENDREI, *L'évolution des techniques du filage et du tissage du Moyen Age à la révolution industrielle*, Paris 1968, pp. 12-13.

¹⁶ D. FUNK, *Biberacher Barchent. Herstellung und Vertrieb im Spätmittelalter und zur beginnenden Neuzeit*, Leinfelden bei Stuttgart 1965, pp. 14-25; J. WYROZUMSKI, *Tkactwo małopolskie w późnym średniowieczu* (Weaving in Little Poland in the late Middle Ages), Warszawa 1972, p. 37.

¹⁷ K. G. PONTING, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

¹⁸ J. PILISI, *L'industrie textile, Histoire générale des techniques*, v. II, Paris 1968, pp. 225-226.

¹⁹ M. TASZYCKA, *Włoskie jedwabne tkaniny odzieżowe w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku* (Italian silk cloths in Poland in the first half of the XVIIth century), Wrocław 1971, pp. 29-51.

some were in everyday use in many European countries, and were considered to be the best linings between the XVth and XVIIIth centuries.

Finally, the widespread use of linen and hemp fabrics should be mentioned. They were of basic importance not only for men's underwear and ladies' linen, but also for the light working clothes purchased by the largest groups of the population in central and northern Europe. While the production capacity of all the greatest cloth manufacturing centres in western Europe and Italy and silk weaving has been written about, the production of linen goods still awaits detailed study. The need for such research was stressed at the textile section of the VIth Congress on Economic History at Copenhagen.²⁰

The production of linen goods developed mainly in the rural domestic putting-out industries. Only a small proportion came from the urban guild workers, and manufacturers, who were concerned with bleaching, dyeing, pressing and eventually printing patterns on homespun raw linen. The difficulty of studying linen production is due to the scarcity of written records, but its considerable size indicates that it was certainly the basic clothing fabric used by the largest groups of consumers.

In the period under discussion there was also an increase in the production of non-essential fabrics. Felt is a kind of compact cloth made by rolling or pressing, used for making hats, lining winter footwear and for other accessories. The fashion for felt hats brought an increase in production in the XVIIth and particularly the XVIIIth century. Knit-wear was in great demand for headgear, socks and stockings, warm gloves and complete articles of clothing and underwear, and began to be mass produced. The demand for knitted stockings prompted the discovery of a knitting machine in 1589 which was widely used in England and France in the XVIIth century, and later in other European countries. The wide use of ribbons and galloons speeded the introduction of machines that would mass-produce them between 1586 and 1604,²¹ for haberdashery manufacture was now important, and had its own guilds. The indispensable trimming for ladies' underwear was lace, handmade in the XVIth century and produced mechanically in England between 1760 and 1770.²²

The vegetable tanning of cattle hides was practised throughout Europe. The fashion for coloured footwear brought increased mass production of finer and dyed leathers in all economically developed European towns. The skill of applying a wider range of dyes and tannins spread from the Near East,

²⁰ W. H. CRAWFORD, L. M. CULLEN, D. DICKSON, *Informal Meeting on the European Linen Industry*, Copenhagen 1974.

²¹ J. PILISI, *L'invention du métier à la barre — à l'aube du XVIIe siècle — amorce l'ère des machines*, in « L'Industrie Textile », nr 887, 1961, p. 1-16.

²² W. FELKIN, *History of the Machine-Wrought Hosiery and Lace Manufactures*, Newton Abbot 1967, pp. 133-179.

and made its way to Europe partly through Italy and Spain, and partly through Turkey and Russia. The great quantity of skins used in the finishing of clothes throughout Europe, came by the trading routes from the hunting grounds of Russia and Siberia, later also North America, and from the main breeding centres for fur-bearing animals, such as the British Isles. The use of animal furs was not limited to lining winter clothes for the cheaper pelts were also used for lining lighter wear, like trousers, skirts, dressing gowns and household clothes. Sometimes detachable linings made in woollen fabrics were used instead.

The use of fur coats was widespread in Poland as in all countries with a cold climate. Wealthy townspeople wore ermine and sable coats, and the top boots which completed the national costume were generally made in coloured leather. The supply of raw materials and craftsmanship meant that in the XVIth century at most two pairs of footwear were made per annum for every citizen.²³ The decline of the hunting grounds and limited breeding of livestock breeding due to brought a decline in the supply of hides and furs in the XVIIIth century, which led to the fashion for textile footwear.

4. PRODUCTION OF CLOTHING FABRICS IN THE XVIth-XVIIIth CENTURIES

Production capacity is determined by the technical possibilities of producing a certain quantity of products, in a limited time, using technical devices, tools or machines. The term is not quite identical with the determination of productive possibilities, although the concepts are close. Thanks to the records of particular textile manufacturies we know that production was sometimes stopped by such economic factors as a lack of raw materials, capital, manpower or markets, even when good tools and machinery were available. Recent studies on the production capacity of certain textile centres in a given period have provided very interesting results. Many of these investigations are, however, concentrated only on the conditions of production in the spinning, weaving and finishing industries between the XIIIth and XVIIth centuries.²⁴ The outcome of these investigations for the history of technology is very important, but not adequate. however, for the historian studying clothes in Europe in this period. Certainly an approximate estimation of the scale of production of individual products

²³ The information on consumption of leather is from my book: *Leather for Clothes in Poland from the XVIth to the XVIIIth Century (Techniques and Organization)*. Wraclaw 1975, p. 26.

²⁴ W. ENDREI, *La productivité et la technique dans l'industrie textile du XIIIe au XVIIe siècle*, Terza Settimana di Studio. Produttività e tecnologie nei secoli XII-XVIII, Prato 1971.

found in the consumer's symbolic « shopping basket » is indispensable, and now attempts are being made to calculate raw materials used by the world textile industry, but the conclusions drawn from the massive statistical data may present difficulties.²⁵ No accessible information can, however, be neglected if it concerns the scale of the production of clothing fabrics in different European countries which had trading contacts in this period. But it is not enough to know what different classes of the population were wearing; we must also know the range from which they made their choices.

Research into the production of cloth and woollen and silk fabrics enables us to make a general calculation of its scale. It is far more difficult to calculate linen production and quite impossible to estimate the scale of production of other textiles and leather goods. Approximate data may be obtained for large centres producing fabrics partly for export. In many cases we only have data on the output of items for trade interlaced with data on the number of weavers' looms in operation, craftsmen's workshops and the number of people employed. R. van Uytven has criticized this sort of calculation, and refuted earlier estimations of the scale of cloth production in Ypres in the XIVth century, where estimates range from 40 to 100 thousand pieces per annum.²⁶ The number of studies on the subject means that there is much information of this kind. For instance, the « Journal of European Economic History » published much of the most recent data in a number of articles.²⁷ But the available data should, if possible, be considered together with a general estimation of production possibilities, in the main centres of the textile industry in such countries as England or Holland and the silk industry in Italy, Spain and France. Customs registers can provide data on the export and import of particular textiles, as in the case of the famous Sound Toll Register which cover long chronological periods. Without emphasizing the importance of imports in certain European countries, it should be remembered that for many centuries Hungary imported cheaper woollen fabrics and cloths from western Europe, as well as from Turkey, for its home production did not develop until the XVIIIth century.²⁸ Better kinds of cloth and silk fabrics were imported to all northern and middle European countries. The supply of fabrics in various periods of

²⁵ For instance: *Les fibres textiles dans le monde*, op. cit.

²⁶ R. VAN UYTVEN, *Technique, productivité et production au Moyen Age: Le cas de la draperie urbaine aux Pays-Bas*, Terza Settimana di Studio. Produttività e tecnologia nei secoli XII-XVII, Prato 1971.

²⁷ For instance: J. A. VAN HOUTTE, *Economic Development of Belgium and the Netherlands from the Beginning of the Modern Era. An Essay on Comparative History*, v. 1, nr 1, 1972; H. KISCH, *From Monopoly to Laissez-faire: The Early Growth of the Wupper Valley Textile Trades*, v. 1, nr 2, 1972; F. MORALES PADRÓN, *The Commercial World of Seville in Early Modern Times*, v. 2, nr 2, 1973.

²⁸ W. ENDREI, *L'approvisionnement en matières premières des manufactures de laine hongroises au XVIIIe siècle*, in « La lana come materia prima », Firenze 1974, pp. 343-351.

these three centuries was different in different countries, a factor of fundamental importance for the market in clothes, so it is essential to obtain an approximate statistical estimate of supply. A separate problem is the import of silk fabrics and printed calicoes from Asia to Europe, and the export of cheap linen fabrics and printed calicoes to Africa and America.

A second trend in the study of the production capacity of the European textile industry attempts to assess the productive power of particular countries for clothing fabrics, leathers and other textiles. This can to some degree draw on studies of the rural economy, giving information on the scale of cattle and sheep breeding and the cultivation of fibrous plants. Both these branches of economy, although well developed in Hungary and Russia, for example, were concentrated on the export of such materials as hides, wool, flax and hemp. The scale of home production which is the easiest to assess must also be studied, guild production is more difficult, and the rural spinning and weaving industries catering for individual needs, is impossible to evaluate. Moreover, only manufacturing enterprises have left relatively extensive written records, so that research on guild production must employ approximate technical estimations, while domestic industries had no accounts to all. Guild production and various forms of putting-out production, has been studied in the cases of the larger cloth or linen producing centres in a single country or else exporting to neighbouring markets. For example the cloth industry in Czechoslovakia, Silesia and Greater Poland deserves mention. The latter did not perhaps provide goods for such large markets outside Europe as did the Czech and Silesian linen industry, but it was nevertheless important for the home economy.

The scale of production of clothing fabrics has been at least partly established for England, and for some parts of Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Research into the range and quantity of clothing fabrics in the different markets, might also be attempted. And comparing the data for imports and household production may provide a basis for studying the market for clothes in particular countries, which will allow further conclusions for different parts of the European continent.

5. THE ORGANIZATION OF CLOTHES PRODUCTION

In the XVIth-XVIIIth centuries the production of clothes and footwear was, typically, organized by the guilds, and only items such as hats, knitwear, gloves, ribbons and galloons were manufactured. Female labour at home met the clothing needs of the main groups of urban and rural consumers, and clothes for small children were always made by hand. Guild production became increasingly specialized. In many countries tailors sewed the clothes for both rich and poor while others catered for men or women alone, and

others made underwear. Milliners, who made complicated headwear and various accessories, appeared early and by the XVIIIth century they had become important in the creation of Paris fashion. The distinct styles of men's clothes in central and east European countries meant that some tailors specialized in either national costumes or clothes made to west-European patterns. Dressmakers were careful to follow the latest fashion. Shoe-style, while cobblers were mended worn footwear. Some furriers made makers made boots, shoes and slippers in both eastern and western European ordinary sheepskin coats, others specialized in out-door clothes and warm winter caps made of expensive fur. These specialized professions prove there was a considerable range of services.

Available literature on the subject implies that guild-produced clothing was aimed at individual consumers. In the period under discussion there was, however, a distinct increase in production for local, and even distant markets and fairs, although this still needs further investigation. A large proportion of clothes and footwear was produced in Poland for sale in local market, especially clothes made of cheap fabrics and meant for the poorest sector of the population. Footwear made for unknown consumers was of varying qualities and prices, and from the XVIth century there were at least nine sizes available.²⁹ The early standardization of ready-made clothes and footwear for large numbers of urban and rural consumers, is a very important subject for research on consumption. It would be useful to study the production of clothes by the guilds in the more advanced European countries. In the XVIIIth century division of labour developed, particularly in Jewish tailoring outside the guilds, and also the dependence of producers on the putting-out system.³⁰ This problem requires further research.

6. POSSIBILITIES OF CONSUMPTION AND ATTITUDES

The problem has been treated so far only from the point of view the supply of such articles as clothing fabrics, leathers, textile products and ready-made clothes. Various factors which conditioned the demand for certain articles on the market should now also be considered. The problem is very complex, for it is connected with the level of social well being and the attitudes of consumers, who wished to invest their surplus money in elegant dress after satisfying their basic clothing needs.

Purchasing power has always been closely connected with the economic situation of a country, or its most important regions, in different periods. The historian of clothing must gather all accessible statistics on the structure

²⁹ See note 23.

³⁰ I. TURNAU, *Odzież mieszczaństwa warszawskiego w XVIII wieku*, (The Clothes of Warsaw burghers from the XVIIIth century), Warszawa 1967, pp. 72-74.

of a country's population, its divisions into property groups, and finally the distribution of the national income. These data depend on the degree to which thorough records have been kept, and they are often difficult and sometimes quite impossible to decipher. Old records contain very little quantitative material, for such questions as the size and distribution of the national income are of interest only to historians of our own age. Even approximate numerical data are difficult to obtain for certain countries and particular areas. However, these records do provide abundant information on the wealth of certain groups of the population and on their purchasing power in the local markets. The most important factor is the general economic condition of the country and the peasants' purchasing power, while it is important to determine the periods when labour services were most oppressive, as they caused the impoverished peasant to withdraw completely from the market. These were not long in certain countries, but were very intense in XVIIIth century Europe. In Hungary, anybody wishing to know the quantity of woollen fabrics purchased around 1780, would discover that peasant used only sheepskin coats³¹ and wore clothes of raw hides and handmade linen. Polish peasants widely used home produced cloths in the XVIth and first half of the XVIIth century, but also purchased cheap imported woollen fabrics.³² The distribution of various raw materials requires further investigation, which is easier to pursue in respect of towns.

A basic source for the history of clothes consumption in this period are the inventories contained in the official records of a man's property after his death, the documents recording the division of belongings, and inventories of daughters' trousseaux. This material provides information on the use of garments which is some 20-30 years out of date, but it is however an invaluable source for the history of clothes consumption which has been little used till now, and only sporadically in quoting fragmentary descriptions of clothes and their prices. Such inventories should certainly be studied collectively, and a calculation attempted of the importance of the clothes in the movable property of individuals of various classes. On the basis of random investigations, it has been established that fairly wealthy towns-people and poorer nobles spent a large part of their fortune on good clothes, while the most wealthy owned quantities of jewels, silver and decorative fabrics. In the period under discussion, clothes were relatively valuable on account of the high price of fine fabrics and furs, more so than in the XIXth and XXth centuries. The demand for cheaper, but up-to-date, fabrics and accessories was often not fully satisfied. Calculations of the

³¹ W. ENDREI, *L'approvisionnement*, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

³² A. SUCHENI-GRABOWSKA, *Materiały do dziejów kultury materialnej chłopów w województwie sieradzkim i ziemi wieluńskiej w XVI wieku* (Materials for the history of material culture of peasants in voivode Sieradz and Wieluń from the XVIth century), in «*Studia z Dziejów Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego*», II, 1959, pp. 229-322.

fluctuation of prices should be made, and are already well advanced in some countries. The high value of festive clothes, often handed down from generation to generation, meant that they were described very precisely in many inventories.

Financial conditions were not the only factor determining purchase of luxury clothes. Social and psychological reasons shaped attitudes that prompted the purchase of fine attire in the latest fashion. Here again the degree of economic development of a country influenced the evolution of these attitudes. The distinct class structure, which was well marked in every feudal society, was nearly always reflected in clothes. According to the accepted customs, every man was clothed as befitted his class. The upper limit was determined by sumptuary laws, which were imposed many times in Europe between the XIIIth and XVIIIth centuries. They were intended to stipulate the style of dress appropriate to a given class in societies where class differences were strictly observed. These rules deprecated « clothing inferior to the individual's class ». Many such documents have survived in the records of laws established by guilds. The frequent repetition of the rules shows that they were not obeyed meekly by the majority of citizens. In a well stabilized feudal society attire was an investment and a proof of good fortune, status and social independence. The first bourgeois revolutions in Holland and England altered the social importance of clothes, which then ceased to be an investment, for money spent on garments which could be devalued, owing to the frequent changes of fashion, could now be profitably invested in companies. In the XVIIth century the standardization of male costume brought about the general appearance of a three-piece suit of clothes, related to a military uniform and adapted to professional work. Such simplifications in attire were, however, slow to be accepted.

The diaries of Samuel Pepys are an invaluable source of information on the mentality of a citizen whose fortune was rapidly growing in the years of the Restoration, and show his attitude to court fashion. He tended to limit large expenditure on fine clothes and to invest in capital assets. However, after 1660 he imitated court fashion as best he could to demonstrate his growing fortune and social importance, but he also avoided elegant and costly dress, which would make him outshine his environment. He also invariably deplored the increase in prices.³³ Women's clothes were simplified somewhat in the second half of the XVIIIth century, as figured silks were partly substituted by printed calicoes and some elements of bourgeois fashion were adopted, such as the style of the "caraco" bodice worn by women in Nantes, which became the Paris fashion about 1768.³⁴

³³ *Dziennik Samuela Pepysa* (The Diary of Samuel Pepys), v. I-II, Warszawa 1966.

³⁴ I. TURNAU, *Pour une histoire du costume. A Varsovie au XVIIIe siècle. Les costumes bourgeois*, in « Annales Économies Sociétés Civilisations », XV, nr 6, 1960, p. 1136.

The changes in dress of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries tended towards simplification and a still more uniform dress emerged in the XIXth century before the advent of standardization in mass ready-made clothes. It is difficult to distinguish basic forms in the petticoats, wigs, complex head-dresses, embroideries, ribbons, lace and fashionable trippery of leading court fashion in the XVIIIth century. This peak period in west-European court fashion imposed the ideas of Paris milliners on the wealthy classes of nobles and townspeople via the royal courts of many European countries. The well organized French clothing industry of the XIXth century and the English industry after 1850 endeavoured to increase world-wide demand for their attractive goods, which were consequently purchased, with only slight delay, in all central European countries, in Russia and in Scandinavia. The novelties of French fashion spread to Poland and Hungary in only about 10 years.³⁵ The influence of royal courts and great travellers, and the growth of journals and magazines devoted to fashion which were now widely read, helped it to spread.

The influence of Parisian styles brought a growing standardization of dress in towns. Present-day trends in European fashion of introducing national styles are an expression of the desire to shake off the influence of west-European fashion which has held sway for about two centuries. The attitude of consumers shows their ability to be selective among numerous alternatives provided by the latest fashion, and shows how such factors always indirectly determine the level of expenditure on clothes.

7. FASHION AND TECHNIQUES

In the period between the XVIth and the XVIIIth centuries in the majority of European countries there was a drop in guild production and the development of various forms of manufacture of a capitalist character. The influence on styles in clothes and the evolution of all sorts of textile techniques — particularly those that provided ready-made parts of clothes or their accessories — has not until recently been studied. Guild production was rather rigid in its tendency to specialization, standardized production from specific raw materials of established quality, and the use of workshops of limited size, producing a limited quantity of goods. This caused hostility towards the introduction of technical improvements, as well as towards changes in the organization of work. The period of the dissolution of guild organization saw certain modifications, however, in the general rules and laws. The principle of capitalism was to operate by the cheapest possible

³⁵ I. TURNAU, *Odzież, op. cit.*; M. EMBER, *Az egrí Rozália-kápolna textiljei* (Textiles from the chapel in Eger), in «*Folia Archeologica*», v. 9, 1957.

means to produce the greatest possible amount of goods. Those truisms acted on the attitudes of consumers. Guild production was designed to meet the basic clothing needs of consumers, but capitalist production started to increase and differentiate the population's wants and desires. Historians of clothing have often stressed the growing frequency of changes in west-European fashion of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. Their main characteristic were not alterations in basic types of dress, but rather the introduction of new kinds of fabrics, knitwear, ribbons, lace and accessories, new colours, styles of wigs, and complicated hairdress varied by eccentric bonnets. The influence of these changes, was brought about by milliners rather than tailors and gradually activated new trends of industrial production. This mutual conditioning has recently been noticed by two English historians: D.C. Coleman has emphasized the tendency to meet the needs of consumers of textile goods in Europe in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. Joan Thirsk raised a more detailed problem, concerning the very rapid changes in English knitwear, to meet changes of fashion, evident for several types of knitted products in the years 1500-1700.³⁶ These new statements are highly interesting.

Complex problems which are difficult to solve using only the typical sources employed in the history of economy and the history of clothing have been raised. For now the following questions come forward: how did the changes of fashion influence the development of the textile industry? and why did it grow so greatly in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries? This article cannot go beyond posing such questions. The matter requires further research on specific branches of production, and the location of demand for their products. The study of selected branches of production, together with their markets, should be related to changes in the use of specific clothes. Such studies may be based on records of knitwear and hat-making rather than on those of clothing fabrics, because the ready-made parts of clothes were shaped and finished directly according to the requirements of fashion. My investigations into the history of knitting in Europe show in an interesting way how certain types of industrial products were developed as well as the changes in the way they were made, and particularly how various ways of finishing arose from the changes of fashion.³⁷ We must also remember that earlier manufactures also produced goods for sale to unknown consumers, although for fairly well defined groups in given countries. This is

³⁶ D. C. COLEMAN, *Textile Growth*; J. THIRSK, *The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: the English Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500-1700*, in «Textile History and Economic History. Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann», edited by N. B. HARTE and K. G. PONTING, Manchester 1973, pp. 1-2 and 50-73.

³⁷ I am writing a book on the European knitting industry between the XVIth and the XVIIIth century.

shown by the large sale of "kerseys" from England in Poland and Hungary, or stockings "*bas à la Pérouvienne*" from the south of France to Peru and other American countries, and the Silesian linens and French printed calicoes for sale to Africa. Some of the cheapest textiles were often designed for well-known groups of consumers, and these issues can be studied in the relatively abundant materials left by some of the textile manufactures. The mysterious factor of fashion, the psychological attraction of changes in clothes, can often be explained by political or social events impressed on people's minds in a given country, and sometimes simply by the abundant supply of certain products. Great industrial concerns as well as the leaders of fashion now endeavour to influence the consumer's choice, but early examples of the phenomenon can be noticed in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries in the more developed European countries.

8. THE SUPPLY OF CLOTHES

The nature of the supply of clothes kept by different classes of the population in different countries is an important problem. A stock of clothes could be the indispensable minimum to provide protection from the cold, adapted to the owner's work and following elementary requirements of hygiene. A supply of fine clothes might also be form of capital investment. Between possessing a minimum or a maximum of garments there are then a number of intermediary possibilities. There is the important matter of adaptation of clothes to make them not only more useful, but also more up-to-date. An interesting procedure is the use of inferior fabrics to patch up worn parts of good clothes, for instance lining a fur coat with second-rate pelts, while better pieces are put on the collar and facings, or a shirt may be similarly mended with two kinds of linen. These problems are still only slightly studied, because although historians of clothing have made use of iconography and clothing relics, they have seldom turned to the information provided by inventories of movables. These make it possible to state the quantity of clothes owned by wealthy consumers, beginning with the trousseau of royal families, right down to the lists of clothes belonging to humbler groups of townspeople. Minimum clothing requirements can also be estimated from the frequent references to the payment of wages in clothes to manorial workers, guild workers, guild apprentices, etc.

Establishing what supplies of clothes were possessed by people of different classes in different countries is essential for research on the consumption of clothes. This must be considered in connection with the economic situation and social development. While the number of shirts possessed by an indi-

vidual only give evidence of the state of his personal hygiene³⁸ the quantity of clothes in stock has wider importance. A detailed list of clothes made in specific fabrics, of furs, of pelts, together with fashionable accessories, provide proof of the owner's financial standing as well as of his choice. Inventories of daughters' trousseaux sometimes contain two or three fur coats and over a dozen dresses, implying that the girl was provided for life, providing she skilfully mended her belongings from time to time. However, some lists of clothes show that a much richer stock than was necessary was maintained and this demonstrates the feudal mentality of these consumers who provided for long periods, not caring for the requirements of changing fashion. It should be remembered that the changes in fashion did not particularly affect forms of clothes, for these could be adapted to new styles — the essential change introduced in the XVIIIth century lay in the amazing quantity of new textile products. The mass introduction of cotton goods, and especially printed calicoes, meant that following fashion was impossible for people investing their capital in collections of clothes. Women's dresses underwent gradual alterations; the last years of the XVIIIth century brought basic changes in the type of dress and underwear that required a total alteration of a woman's wardrobe.

In the period under discussion there are definite signs of mutual connections between the changes in production capacity and the changes in fashions in the majority of European countries. The production of substantial cloths and heavy figured silks gives way to light fabrics, combining several kinds of fibres which were ornamented at the finishing stage. New textile techniques allow the production of ready-made clothes and accessories. Swift changes of fashion and new types of products increase demand and the technical revolution, particularly rapid in England's textile industry, increased the supply and brought a wide assortment in the available goods. The consumption of clothes was therefore conditioned on the one hand by production capacity and on the other by the mentality of consumers, hence by the simplified term of "fashion".

³⁸ M. ST. CLARE BYRNE, *Życie codzienne w Anglii elżbietańskiej* (Elizabethan Life in Town and Country), Warszawa 1971, pp. 159-163; C. WILLET and P. CUNNINGTON, *The History of Underclothes*, London 1951.