

# Techniques of marking and labelling textiles in the nineteenth century in the context of market creation of brands – as illustrated with the example of design houses and department stores



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The history of textile marking is becoming an important topic of today's research, which allows us to constantly expand our knowledge about the processes of manufacturing consumer products (labelling of products manufactured using traditional i.e. craft-based methods or modern i.e. industrial techniques has always been and continues to be one of the important stages of production). Development of clothing brands on the fashion market (be it local or international) is mainly based on managing their recognition, constructed and consolidated using various media, including, above all, the labels. In the context here presented, the issue of marking textiles, and especially clothing, gains particular importance.

Exploring the history of the origins, the first methods of production, and the marketing power of clothing labels establishes important foundations for further interdisciplinary research across the borders of different fields: history, art history, production engineering, materials science, economics, and trade.<sup>1</sup> Clothing labels that have been preserved to our times can be analysed in a variety of ways. Undoubtedly, they should not be ignored, because they had been – and continue to be – a very important part of the heritage of material culture: a source of oftentimes unique information about both the product itself and its manufacturer, and indirectly also about many aspects of the market for the production and trade of broadly understood textiles at the time.<sup>2</sup>

1 The scope of these studies could include, among others: the history of textile labels' production methods, their counterfeiting or creating clothing brands with the use of such markings, as well as the history of marketing, textile materials, and clothing technology, as illustrated with the example of clothing labels.

2 There is still a demonstrable shortage of literature devoted to the history of labels in whole or in part. Among the best-known publications in which small fragments concerning this kind of markings can be found, the *Fashion in Detail* series of books published by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (further: v&a) comes to the fore, as well as the very interesting publication by A. Coleman, *The Opulent Era. Fashions of Worth, Doucet and Pingat* (exhibition catalogue, Brooklyn Museum, December 1, 1989 – February 26, 1990), [New York] 1989, which describes and illustrates known examples of genuine and counterfeit clothing labels of the best

This article focuses on four key issues. Firstly, the general characteristics of various ways of marking textiles (fabrics and clothing) in the centuries preceding the nineteenth century are outlined. Secondly, the beginnings of direct labelling of women's clothing with textile tags are presented, while discussing the origins of the first tags and the issue of their placement in models of that period, manufactured by both traditional and industrial methods. In order to conduct an in-depth analysis of labelling techniques, the technology of label production was also considered. Then, in a slightly more general way, the practice of indirect marking of clothing products was presented, consisting in placing trademarks not on the product itself, but on various types of leaflets and brochures accompanying trade exchanges. The last part of the article consists of two thematic appendices, one discussing the issues of marking silk clothing fabrics, and the other addressing the beginnings of legal protection of trademarks, especially in international context. In the author's opinion, these two short discussions, which close the present article, constitute important – albeit not in-depth – complements to the entire study, allowing us to demonstrate to the reader that the history of clothing labels had developed on several levels: technological, aesthetic, marketing, and legal.

Research into the history of labelling women's clothing is the result of the author's activities as a collector, who for nearly 20 years has been accumulating, among other things, women's clothes marked with the labels of the major design houses and department stores that enjoyed the greatest recognition and customer following at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>3</sup> The article could not have been written in its current format without the ever expanding online access to Polish and worldwide museum resources. Digitization of collections allows for closer familiarisation with various objects, including historical textiles; and that enables efficient performance of detailed comparative analyses of objects from museum collections, and thus building a database that would allow for drawing broader, more general conclusions.

### **The genesis of textile marking**

Along with the development of in-house and then factory production, as well as the flourishing of trade and the evolution of sales techniques, appropriate labelling of goods, especially those bearing the name of the manufacturer, became an important element of commercial exchange. Marking was important not only during transport, but also during transactions between the manufacture and the buyer. Marking the goods was also of great importance from the perspective of the customer, who increasingly often made choices based on recognizing the manufacturer, that is, on identifying the brand marked on the product. Creating brands

design houses at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Among Polish literature, we should distinguish the works of P. Szaradowski, *Francja elegancja. Z historii haute couture*, Wrocław [2016], and A. Dąbrowska, *Herse. Warszawski do mody*, Warszawa [2019]. There are also websites devoted to the history of design houses in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They often do not contain much information about the actual activities of design houses or department stores (research on this issue is still in progress), although sometimes they may publish photographs presenting the surviving labels of specific studios (including very small ones that have not yet been thoroughly studied). An example of such a site is <[www.vintage-fashionguild.org](http://www.vintage-fashionguild.org)> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

<sup>3</sup> The author is particularly interested in issues of the history of design, production, and trade (also analysed in terms of materials science).

through appropriate labelling of products was conducive to competition. Already in the eighteenth century, great importance of the latter was recognized: “Competition is one of the most important principles of trade and an essential factor in its freedom. Anything that hinders or weakens this freedom [...] has a disastrous effect on the State, and is fundamentally opposed to the State’s purpose of promoting the happiness and well-being of as many people as possible.”<sup>4</sup>

The needs of trade have always been at the root of the marking of various goods. The exchange of goods forced the determination, orally or by means of various forms of signatures, of the origin of the product offered. The reliable provenance of the goods would confirm their quality. Particularly in trade between regions or countries, identifying the producer was sometimes decisive for whether or not to the goods would be admitted to trade on a given market. Marks have been used for hundreds of years. They included placing information on the product: about the manufacture or guild in which the craftsman operated, the city of origin of the product, and sometimes also its basic technical data.

Already in medieval Europe, marking textiles with trade seals (so-called cloth seals) was widespread, used to confirm the originality of the product, specify the craft workshop from which it came out, and the city of origin. This procedure made it possible to counteract the introduction to the market of inferior quality textiles made by the so-called “bunglers” (working *parte paternitatis* i.e. not affiliated with craft guilds). Customers, on the other hand, were able to distinguish foreign cloth from domestic material thanks to these marks.<sup>5</sup> Each piece (bale) of material coming out of the craftsman was equipped with a cloth seal. The fabric received a seal with the signature of a specific master after each stage of the production process (weaving, dyeing, printing). Ultimately, before it went on sale, the fabric would have passed the final inspection at the craft guild, usually receiving the last seal. The best quality textiles in the Middle Ages sometimes had up to five trade seals.<sup>6</sup>

All types of fabrics that met certain standards and could be legally placed on the market were equipped with cloth seals. Many examples of such seals have been preserved on both woolen and semi-woolen fabrics. Silk and semi-silk textiles were also given seals. Standard seals were made of lead, and had the form of a double-disc clip. When tightening them with pliers, they pierced the edge of the material, permanently connecting with it; at the same time, markings were imprinted on one or both sides of the seal (for instance, the coat of arms of the city, also identifying the guild; the mark of a weaving, dyeing, or pattern-printing master). There were also markings describing the basic parameters of the fabric (the name of the weave, the thickness of the fabric – thin, medium or thick – and even unevenness of its surface).<sup>7</sup> These types of cloth seals were still used in the eighteenth century. It was only in the next century, especially from the mid-nineteenth century, that other types of marks developed, corresponding to the needs of the contemporaneous textile production and sales market. Cloth seals and other simple textile markings used for centuries have evolved into elegant tags identifying the maker: a tailor representing

4 Author’s translation from: D. Diderot, J. D’Alembert, *Commerce*, in: *L’Encyclopédie / Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 3, Paris 1753, pp. 690–699.

5 M.K. Kocińska, J. Maik, *Średniowieczne i nowożytnie plomby tekstylne z wykopalisk w Gdańsku*, Łódź 2004, pp. 7–19.

6 *Ibidem*, p. 5.

7 *Ibidem*.

the design house, the manufacturer, or the department store. Their purpose, unlike in earlier centuries, was not only to offer a schematic definition of a manufacture or a craftsman's guild. New signs became the carriers of an increasingly complex message addressed to the customers. They were supposed to identify the brand, build associations with luxury, as well as improve brand recognition on the market, which offered an increasing range of materials and clothing.

The range of ways of marking textile materials was expanding along with the progress of production and the development of trade; the impact of such practices on customers was also growing. In earlier centuries, it sufficed to indicate the manufacturer, the guild, and the city of origin. In the eighteenth century, international competition, similar production standards, and increasing specialization in the production of certain types of materials (mainly fabrics), as well as the gradually rising number of significant production centres, forced the creation of new marking techniques, and thus the promotion of individual producers and their products on the market. Along with the increase in the scale of production and progress in obtaining ever improving design and finishing effects, the number of product elements that could be used to promote the goods also multiplied, thus influencing purchase decisions by recipients – especially since large and reputable warehouses would offer the customer interested in luxury silk products and materials an increasing variety of choice: from among products that were similar, though not identical, in terms of quality, colours and designs. High culture of production was no longer enough to defend one's product and assert oneself on the market. The need to establish a product in terms of its commercial attractiveness, to build a market based on the art of presenting the goods offered to customers, was increasingly recognized. This concerned primarily textiles made of high-quality raw materials, manufactured on the basis of the strictest standards, i.e. mainly silk and woolen fabrics, but also knitwear and haberdashery products.

In trade, especially in international trade, customs tariffs for goods exchanged between various countries were determined, as well as the type and nature of marking these goods. It was prescribed that, if possible, products should be marked by craft guilds, and that they should receive certificates of origin in customs chambers. All these activities were formalized. As part of international trade agreements, the form of hallmarks (guild marks) and certificates of origin was determined, among other things, so that the trade in goods would be as fair as possible.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from the manufacturer's seals and/or stamps, the goods referred to as by-the-metre goods (for instance, fabrics) and non-metre goods (e.g. ready-made silk costumes), which were intended for export, were often scrutinised in customs chambers and subject to verification through inspection. By-the-metre products, after receiving the appropriate duty from the merchant, were sealed with a customs seal at both ends of the cloth.<sup>9</sup> In turn, non-metre ones were stamped (clothing probably from the bottom, that is, on the lining or on the inner side of the fabric) with stamps of a colour that distinguished them from the marked goods. It was impossible to fit such products with metal seals, because it would lead to perforation and thus destruction of the product. The clamping shields of the seals forged a permanent connection that could not be removed in a non-invasive way, therefore, for textiles,

8 *Wiadomość Traktatu Handlowego z Austryą*, "Dziennik Handlowy", 1786, issue 1–3, p. 70.

9 Sealing the material at both ends was intended to protect the entire product (down to the metre) against being introduced to trade without prior collection of appropriate customs duties.

such markings were used only on the edges of flat materials and on packaging containing textile raw materials or yarns. The third method of marking goods, apart from stamping and security-sealing, was adding a non-metal seal, also applicable to products that could not be stamped or security-sealed.<sup>10</sup> Among the textiles, these groups of goods would include various types of accessories or semi-finished products (for instance, packaging with buttons, laces, hooks, and whalebones). Forms and methods of marking various goods in individual countries were usually standardized throughout Europe.

Merchants involved in the sale of foreign textiles had to be able to produce the appropriate markings of goods, confirmations of customs duties, and invoices listing the contents of crates, bundles, and packages, both during transport, and during the actual trade. In transit, the cargo was required to be sealed until it arrived at the place of trade, or inspection point in the given city.<sup>11</sup>

### **The beginnings of a modern approach to marking and labelling silk clothing in nineteenth-century design houses**

Eighteenth century failed to bring revolutionary changes in the marking of textile products (or fabrics and clothing in particular). The old methods of marking were still practiced in trade: metal seals, non-metal seals and stamps.<sup>12</sup> In the indirect marking of goods, printing was increasingly used in the form of small paper trade cards and invoices, usually issued as handwritten, but often filled in on pre-printed blanks. Ephemeral prints of this kind were used by warehouses, manufactories and craftsmen who offered their services in large cities. This was before labels permanently attached to clothing (sewn on) were introduced, which would mark the garment by indicating the origin of the product – the name of the studio and the address of the tailor or milliner.

In the nineteenth century, the old methods of marking goods, especially textiles, underwent transformation, evolving towards elegant emblems. Gradually, labels appeared on every piece of clothing (men's and women's alike), both those that came from the workshop of a recognized tailor and those from one of the ready-made clothing factories established in the mid-nineteenth century. Classic and new types of markings on textiles became an increasingly important element of this type of products. Previously, the value of markings resulted mainly from documenting the origin in a simple way, and possibly basic technical parameters (for fabrics, that would be the type of weave, thickness and finish); with time they came to

10 "Dziennik Handlowy i ekonomiczny", 1788, issue 5, pp. 367–368.

11 "Dziennik Handlowy", 1786, issue 1–3, p. 79.

12 At the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, paper labels were already in use. They were not placed on clothing, but glued inside elegant footwear. Typically oval or square in shape, with a sophisticated inscription, they contained the name of the workshop, its address, or any information emphasizing the manufacturer's prestige. Due to the placement of these tags on the inner sole, many of them have completely worn off. Also in the second half of the eighteenth century, it happened, albeit rarely, that paper tags of the shoe seller or manufacturer were glued to shoes. The collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (further: Met) includes a pair of silk women's shoes from the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century (accession no. 2009.300.1406a, b), with paper labels of a British shoemaker Thomas Ridout glued inside, and a pair of silk women's shoes from around 1815–1820 (accession no. 2009.300.1468a, b), with a paper tag of a shoemaker named Vandervell glued inside. On the latter, next to the address of the workshop, the aforementioned craftsman also included the information that he worked under the patronage of the Princess of Wales and the royal family.



be conceived as an emblem that was important from a commercial perspective – the manufacturer’s signature, but also a carrier of content related to the intangible values, such as luxury and brand recognition on the local, national, or international market. Brand creation by labelling products with carefully designed and meticulously made labels became a necessity, making it possible to distinguish manufacturers who offered a similar range of goods in terms of quality and selection.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, there were many factors initiating further, increasingly dynamic development of methods for marking silk products. The purposefulness of this practice was being redefined at the time. Novel labelling methods were designed to meet the needs of the nascent consumer society, as well as the emerging large, serial production and tailor-made couture evolving in the background. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the first design houses began to set the tone for the latter, originating from classic tailoring workshops, and presenting a new model of dressmaking and trade in custom-made clothing.

The dynamic growth of the modern textile industry, the birth of methods for serial production of ready-made clothing, the establishment of the first large department stores, and the appearance of the first exclusive design houses on the market collectively meant that the traditional stamping, sealing and schematic description of goods on various types of forms had to be transformed, giving the old marks a more up-to-date, elegant expression. New techniques of trade, promotion and branding were increasingly based on visual identification. Thus, the marking needed to be more visible and it had to constitute an integral part of the material or clothing model, and not just an informative addition as before. Against this background, the first clothing labels were born, placed directly on the products – on the inner side, but in a place that would guarantee visibility.

The first tags of this type appeared on the market around the middle of the nineteenth century. They accompanied custom-made clothing sewn in exclusive tailoring workshops and large fashion companies, now more and more often called design houses.<sup>13</sup> Worth was one of the first design houses to use clothing labels. The partnership led by Charles Worth and Otto Bobergh began operating in 1858.<sup>14</sup> The bodices of the dresses (ensembles), and whole dresses from the 1860s have been preserved, with labels from this particular design house.<sup>15</sup> In museum collections, we

13 Design houses produced mostly custom-made clothing. The sewing process was generally manual, and only the simplest stitching (usually invisible) was done by machine. Design houses also produced ready-made or semi-finished clothes – the so-called ready-to-wear clothing. However, it was typified by the highest quality and, if necessary, these clothes could be individually adjusted and tailored to the customer’s taste. The largest and best-known nineteenth-century design houses evolved from small tailoring or millinery workshops, which organizationally dated back to the eighteenth century. After years of operation, some design houses that had been run by great tailors were bought out by commercial companies, who were interested in these exclusive brands, already developed on the market. See: P.K. Faryś, *Damska konfekcja a odzież miarowa – podstawowe różnice i podobieństwa w projektowaniu, wytwarzaniu oraz handlu w drugiej połowie XIX wieku i na początku XX wieku*, “TECHNE. Seria Nowa”, 2021, issue 7, pp. 25–45.

14 Information next to the dress; Met, Worth and Bobergh design house, ca. 1862–1865, accession no. 2009.300.1372a–d, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/156080>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

15 Met, fitted corseted bodice of an ensemble, Worth and Bobergh design house, ok. 1865, accession no. 2009.300.7477, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/174537>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

can also find clothing with labels from other studios active at the time.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to say for sure which tailor's workshop or design house was the first to mark its clothing products with sewn-in tags.<sup>17</sup> It is generally believed that the first textile clothing tags permanently attached to an article of clothing began to appear from the 1850s onwards, and known examples of the first tags surviving in clothing are for models from the 1860s.<sup>18</sup>

From around the middle of the nineteenth century, tailoring workshops that managed to gain a great reputation on the market often took the name of design houses. The new nomenclature was meant to emphasize the progressive style of work, panache, and exclusivity of the offer. Measuring models, prepared with the utmost care for individual customers, received clothing labels in the form of a stamp, typically imprinted on the inner belt of a blouse or dress bodice. Sometimes the skirt also had a label in the form of a stamp. In that case, it would have been imprinted on a short (as wide as the stamp) piece of the same belt as the one that was placed inside the bodice of the dress; alternatively, the belt with the stamp label could have been sewn around the entire perimeter of the skirt. Outer clothing (cloaks, mantles, coats, etc.) also received labels. Stamped labels were usually gold in colour (see: Fig. 1a), but black stamps were also in use (see: Fig. 2). A separate stamp with the serial number of the model may have been placed next to the stamp on the belt (see: Fig. 1b).<sup>19</sup> Sometimes, numbering was also added, done by hand on a cut-out fragment of a textile tape sewn into the lining of the garment.<sup>20</sup> This would have been a sequence of several numbers, in which the workshop encoded a range of important information (customer number, year of the model's creation, type of clothing: dress, blouse, outerwear, clothing accessory), allowing for precise identification of a specific model. The number and the label combined made it possible to verify the originality of the product.<sup>21</sup>

It is a curious fact that the first labels sewn into clothing were stamped, rather than woven in jacquard technique. The jacquard woven pictures of the 1830s<sup>22</sup> were



**1.** Stamp label marking the bodice of an evening dress by the Parisian fashion house Jacques Doucet, ca. 1895: a – gold stamp impressed in a traditional way, i.e. on the inner belt of the dress's bodice, b – pink stamp with the serial number of the dress placed on the reverse of the same belt; from the author's collection. Photos by Przemysław K. Faryś  
→ see p. 126

16 Met, evening dress, designed by Mme Olympe, ca. 1865, accession no. 2009.300.3009a–d, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/157899>> (accessed on 12.12.2022); dinner dress, designed by Maison Vignon, ca. 1875, accession no. CI69.14.12a, b, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/83889?ft=CI69.14.12a%2c+b&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

17 It is cautiously assumed that the Worth Parisian design house was the first to sew labels into fitted clothing at the turn of the 1850s and 1860s. However, at that time in Paris there were also other tailors and seamstresses running recognized workshops (for instance, Mme Rodger, Mme Vignon, Mme Palmyre). It is possible that their products began to be labelled at the same time as Worth's. See: P. Szaradowski, *Francja elegancja*, p. 20. In the 1860s, Worth's rival, Emile Pingat, also labelled his exclusive clothing models. See: Met, ball gown, ca. 1864, accession no. CI69.33.12a–c, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/82642?ft=CI69.33.12a%e2%80%93c&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

18 P.K. Faryś, *Konfekcja damska 1800–1914. Produkcja – wzornictwo – handel*, Warszawa 2019, p. 192.

19 The design of the label for the Jacques Doucet Parisian design house presented in Fig. 1 is standard – typical for European design houses operating in the second half of the nineteenth century. It bears the name of the designer who ran the design house, and the address of the studio: “DOUCET / 21. RUE DE LA PAIX / PARIS”.

20 Met, number 78771, hand-made on a piece of tape sewn to the underside of an evening dress, ca. 1898–1900, accession no. 1976.258.5a–c, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/81751?ft=1976.258.5a%e2%80%93c&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

21 A.E. Coleman, *The Opulent Era*, p. 110, table *Dresses and gowns*.

22 Silk, black and white jacquard pictures woven in Lyon resemble finely crafted graphics. They feature various historical events and famous people recorded therein. Once popular items, today



2. The example of a stamp label imprinted on a inner belt of a corset blouse, Mme Irma Simon, Paris, ca. 1875–1882, from the author's collection. Photo by Przemysław K. Faryś  
→ see p. 127

so detailed that it can be taken for granted that the jacquard looms of the time would have been able to produce small tags with woven inscriptions, and the preparation of a design for a jacquard loom with a short inscription on the tag most certainly would not pose a technical difficulty. Why, then, did the first partly or completely jacquard labels appear on garments gradually only from around the 1870s?<sup>23</sup> There may be several reasons for this. It is unlikely that in the first half of the century there was no awareness of the technical possibilities of weaving labels on jacquard looms (incidentally, very simple inscriptions could also be obtained on non-jacquard looms, equipped with an appropriate number of heddles or units controlling warp movement, also on eighteenth-century and earlier looms). Considering the economic aspect related to the cost of producing woven labels also seems misguided, because the first models of clothes that received textile labels were luxury products, made to measure by the best tailors or design houses. Protection against counterfeiting of tags, although important at that time, was not the most important thing – a stamped label was probably easier to counterfeit than a woven, custom-made tag.

The sense in favouring stamp labels over jacquard labels in the early labelling of clothing – that is, from around 1840 to around 1870 – should rather be sought in the organization of the sewing process at the time, particularly women's clothing, dresses or blouses. The inner belt with the imprinted label was sewn inside the bodice in such a way that it ran along the entire internal perimeter of the blouse.<sup>24</sup> As mentioned above, if the skirt was also to be labelled (which was not very common), it was usually equipped with an identical belt, but cut only to the length that would allow the stamp to be imprinted on it. It was then gently sewn into the lining of the skirt. It was only the outer clothing (cloaks, mantles, coats) that had stamp markings sewn in at the neck (much like today). However, if the outer garment, for instance a blouse, had an inner belt, then the stamp would have been imprinted on it.<sup>25</sup>

Marking clothes with the methods described above was probably more efficient with the use of stamp labels than jacquard labels, because the stamp could be placed on the belt in the most appropriate place for a given model. The inner belts were cut to measure by the metre. When the blouse was ready, the right amount of tape was measured, it was finished with hooks and eyelets at both ends (allowing the inner belt to be fastened when putting on the blouse), then the tailor's workshop or design house stamp was very carefully imprinted on the tape. The stamped belt then became a clothing label, which was then carefully sewn to the inside of the blouse. For example, in the workshop of the Parisian fashion designer Jacques

they are considered valuable heritage pieces in the history of jacquard weaving. They were created thanks to the use of very thin wefts and warps, based on an extremely detailed design, written out on a huge number of perforated cards. See: G. Blazy, *Przepychny i blask jedwabnictwa lyońskiego. Lyońskie tkaniny jedwabne od XVII do XX wieku*, Warszawa 2004, pp. 86–89.

23 Jacquard labels were used by the Parisian fashion designer Emile Pingat appeared in models from the 1870s, taking the shape of a small rectangle, just like modern labels. See: Met, jacquard label with the following text: "Emile Pingat / 30. Rue Louis le Grand. 30 / PARIS", placed in a cloak, ca. 1879–1880, inventory no. C.I.60.6.7, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/107875?ft=C.I.60.6.7&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

24 The aforementioned belts, especially in corset blouses, apart from being a carrier for the stamp label, also served as an inner belt, which was fastened with hooks. It stabilized the corset blouse fitted to the woman's body and prevented the uncontrolled movement of the corset bodice worn under it as underwear.

25 Based on the analysis of women's blouses from the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the author's collection.



Doucet, the stamps on the belts were always oriented so that they were at the level of the stomach and not at the back of the blouse, regardless of whether the latter was buttoned at the back or front.<sup>26</sup>

There were also studios where stamp and jacquard labels were used at the same time. For example, the Parisian fashion designer Emile Pingat used both types of markings in parallel at least as far back as the 1870s.<sup>27</sup> Stamping tags were used more typically for the bodices of dresses, and jacquard tags were used for outerwear.<sup>28</sup> It is likely that this was dictated by the greater abrasion resistance of jacquard labels – when wearing outer garments, the markings placed within them were more exposed to friction than stamp labels located on the inner belts.

When comparing the eighteenth-century trade cards with the first stamp or jacquard labels, we can observe that in the nineteenth century the manufactured products were still marked according to the old rules (see: Fig. 3a, b). The labels always bore the name (or name and surname) of the fashion designer and the address of his studio. There may have been a graphic element between the name and the address. Eighteenth-century trade cards were similarly conceived.

The tradition of placing labels in the appropriate parts of women's clothes and the sewing methods themselves underwent some modifications, at least partly resulting from the individual approach to the sewn model of the garment. Some surviving labels of nineteenth-century design houses indicate a certain standardization of solutions. The label by the Gustave Beer design house (see: Fig. 3b) had been sewn into the bodice of the dress in such a way that one of the fastenings of the underwire tape of the blouse went through the stamp label,<sup>29</sup> thus spoiling its aesthetics. On the one hand, it proves that the stamp was imprinted on the belt before and not after it was sewn on, which may also indicate that the belt had been prepared earlier, regardless of the specific model of the garment. On the other hand, such procedure would seem to indicate a certain degree of standardization of the craft process, which makes it closer to ready-to-wear fashion than to tailoring. There are more such examples. They include the label of a formal blouse from around 1908, made in the Warsaw design house of Bogusław Herse.<sup>30</sup> On the inner belt of the blouse, a textile jacquard label of the workshop was sewn by machine, rather than stamped. Although the blouse has a small basque that could accommodate a label – and there had also been cases of blouses with labels sewn



**3.** Similar rules for formulating the designation of a craftsman or merchant in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as illustrated by the examples: a – a fragment of a trade card for the store offering various clothing materials, late 18<sup>th</sup> century (the name of the merchant and the address of his warehouse featured in the card's header), b – a gold stamp label from the Parisian fashion house of Gustave Beer, placed on the inner bodice strap of a walking dress, ca. 1895; from the author's collection. Photos by Przemysław K. Faryś → see p. 128

26 Based on the analysis of the original models by the Jacques Doucet design house in the collections of the author and the Met.

27 To give some examples of the use of both types of labels: there is a gold stamp label imprinted on the inner bodice belt of a dinner dress from the Emile Pingat design house (Met, Paris, ca. 1877–1880, accession no. C.I.60.6.9, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/107876?ft=C.I.60.6.9&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> [accessed on 12.12.2022]) and a jacquard label sewn into an evening cloak from the Emile Pingat design house (Met, Paris, ca. 1885–1889, accession no. 2009.300.484 <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/159020?ft=2009.300.484&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> [accessed on 12.12.2022]).

28 Based on the analysis of tags preserved in dresses and models of outerwear (capotes, coats, cloaks, jackets, mantles) of the Emile Pingat design house in the Met collection; <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search?q=emile+pingat>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

29 The sewing style of the inner belt and its uniformity along the entire length prove that the sewing is original, therefore, it must have gone through the label from the very beginning.

30 Blouse in the collection of the Museum of Warsaw [Muzeum Warszawy], reference no. MHW 17199, presented and described in: A. Dąbrowska Herse. *Warszawski do mody*, Warszawa 2019, pp. 214–225.

into the basque (see: Fig. 7b) – the makers of this one decided to sew a ready-made jacquard label on the inner belt. At the same time, no care was taken to make it perfectly visible, because a technical stitching passes through its middle,<sup>31</sup> connecting the inner belt with the lining of the blouse.<sup>32</sup> This may indicate that the belt with the label sewn on had been prepared independently of the blouse – in that case, ready-made, labelled tapes of a certain length, corresponding to the individual sizes of the blouses, would be sewn onto the finished items. Thus, it is possible that the blouse was a ready-made model with a specific size, and was sold as “ready to wear”.<sup>33</sup> In addition, it can be assumed that the textile jacquard label of the design house sewn onto the belt itself – on its own, without the belt – was a current label used at the time, also added to other parts or types of garments. However, since it had been decided that the classic interior belt, very often used in blouses at that time, should be applied to this model, it was somehow an automatic decision to put a jacquard label on it. Similar situations could have occurred in the context of ready-made clothing offered by department stores,<sup>34</sup> as exemplified by the label from the Au Printemps department store (see: Fig. 6).

Starting from the 1880s, a higher degree of standardization of marking products with jacquard labels than with stamp labels can be observed in relation to the models of dresses of the leading design houses. The standardization concerned the marking process itself. The stamped label was probably made on site in the tailor’s workshop, at the end of the sewing process of a particular piece of clothing, or separately on strips of a certain length, which were then matched to the finished models. The marking process took place in the workshop. Jacquard labels, as textile products woven on very narrow jacquard looms, intended for the production of patterned ribbons, had to be ordered at a weaving mill and made on the basis of a specific design. Thus, the process of their creation took place outside the tailor’s workshop. Probably orders for labels were carried out by trusted manufacturers who guaranteed confidentiality, thanks to which the label design did not leak out and thus could not be used to produce counterfeit jacquard labels, deceptively similar to the original.<sup>35</sup> Small rectangular or square jacquard tags were fully standardised; they were woven

31 The sewing style of the inner belt and its uniformity along the entire length prove that the sewing is original, thus it must have gone through the label from the very beginning.

32 A. Dąbrowska, *Herse*, p. 223.

33 In addition to the main offer of tailor-made clothing, made to customer’s order, design houses, especially from the end of the nineteenth century, also had a selection of ready-to-wear models in their assortment. These were high-class clothes, but their partial standardization allowed customers to buy good quality clothes from a renowned design house at a lower price than that of made-to-order models. At the request of the purchaser, the serial garments could be partially adapted to the client’s individual taste. See: P.K. Faryś, *Konfekcja damska 1800–1914*, pp. 156–166.

34 Department store – a large trading company in terms of capital and floor area, offering a variety of ready-made and semi-finished goods, specializing in providing customers with a very broad access to clothing and other textiles and products of various quality, produced by industrial or semi-industrial methods; products, which were readily available. The largest department stores, established around the middle of the nineteenth century, introduced innovative, modern techniques of selling and promoting goods and services. The most exclusive enterprises of this type could compete with design houses. See: P.K. Faryś, *Damska konfekcja a odzież miarowa*, pp. 24–25.

35 For example, jacquard labels made on the belts of the Parisian Worth design house were so packed with details (lettering that was difficult to weave precisely, a change of weave for the background in individual parts of the label and strictly defined dimensions were used) that, apart from giving the labels an original look, it effectively made them highly difficult to counterfeit.

until the design house changed the design (which had been known to happen). It was similar in the case of jacquard labels already woven on the inner belt sewn into blouses and bodices of dresses or some models of outerwear. Such jacquard stripes were very elegant.<sup>36</sup> They were presumably developed as by-the-metre products. A tape was woven, many meters long, on which the label (also woven) appeared at one-metre intervals, and then the product was wound onto spools and sent to the design house. There, subsequent fragments of the tape were cut off and sewn into the prepared pieces of clothing as inner belts with a label.

### **The beginnings of a modern approach to the marking and labelling of silk clothing in nineteenth-century department stores**

Stamp and jacquard labels soon also appeared in clothing models offered by the first large, exclusive department stores. Initially, the largest department stores in Paris were the leaders in serially affixing fully or partially ready-made clothing items with both stamp and jacquard labels (counted in tens, if not hundreds of thousands).

Department stores, whose spectacular development took place in the second half of the nineteenth century, called in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century “the large warehouses” (Fr. *les grands magasins*), played a significant role in the retail trade in all kinds of goods, especially textiles (fabrics, clothing, and accessories). The first luxurious, large department stores opened in Paris. Already at the end of the nineteenth century, the group of the three best, most exclusive and most profitable department stores in Europe included: Au Bon Marche (operating since 1852), Au Louvre (since 1855), and Au Printemps (since 1865).<sup>37</sup> All of these were located in Paris. They served not only domestic but also international customers (orders were delivered by mail). Catalogues with the latest offers (two main ones every six months, and several smaller ones in between) were sent out to the places where the orders came from – to both Americas, almost all European countries, and some Asian countries, including Japan.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to exclusive design houses, which were the first to label all clothes sewn for individual customers, it is department stores that offered ready-made garments both in the form of mass-produced models<sup>39</sup> (available immediately in

See: Worth fashion labels in the Met collection available online, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search?q=worth+>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

36 See for example the jacquard labels on the inner belts of the Worth design house of Paris. See: Met, evening dress, ca. 1889, accession no. C.I.59.20, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/106576?ft=C.I.59.20&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> (accessed on 12.12.2022); ball gown, 1895–1900, accession no. 2009.300.1290a, b, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/155989?ft=2009.300.1290a%2c+b&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> (accessed on 12.12.2022); evening dress, ok. 1898–1900, accession no. 1976.258.5a–c, <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/81751?ft=1976.258.5a%e2%80%93c&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

37 W. Mataja, *Wielkie magazyny i drobny handel*, Warszawa 1899, s. 8.

38 Sending catalogues to different parts of the world made it indispensable to prepare these materials in many languages. See: *Groupe Printemps. History*, <<https://www.groupe-printemps.com/en/history>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

39 Ready-made garments – a commercial term for clothing and accessories designed to accompany them, mass-produced in a large number of identical models, developed in a standard way so that they can be produced as quickly and cheaply as possible, entirely or almost entirely by machine. Ready-made clothes were of good, medium and low quality. Ready-made garments began appearing gradually on the fashion market from the 1840s onwards, and at the end of that



**4.** Jacquard label of the Au Bon Marche department store with a stamped serial number of the garment, marking a ready-made cape, Paris, ca. 1900, from the author's collection. In the box next to the word "PARIS" the size of the model should have been entered, but this was not done, presumably because the tag was placed on a short cape that could fit several sizes. Photo by Przemysław K. Faryś  
→ see p. 132

**5.** Au Louvre department store label, jacquard, with a handwritten description, marking a ready-made velvet blouse, Paris, ca. 1895, from the author's collection. Photo by Przemysław K. Faryś  
→ see p. 132

**6.** Au Printemps department store stamp label on the inside belt of a corset blouse, Paris, 1880s, from the author's collection. Photo by Przemysław K. Faryś  
→ see p. 132

a specific size and range of materials and colours) and those produced in small batches (partly adapted on site to the individual needs of the customer), led to the dissemination of the custom of marking each piece of clothing with labels or tags. Thus, the universality of labelling clothes of all quality has been established.

When analysing the surviving labels of department stores and design houses, it is apparent that in the latter, the markings were usually sewn in more carefully. The sewing method was standardized both for labels on belts and those in the form of small, rectangular or square jacquard ribbons (less frequently, stamped ones) (see: Fig. 4–5). Differences in aesthetics usually resulted from the specificity of trade in goods. Employees of large department stores had to deal with a large number of new clothing models daily. When these garments came to the store (as new models, commissioned by a department store and sewn both in large sewing rooms and small, home-based cottage industries), they were labelled on the spot.<sup>40</sup> Presumably, the department receiving new textile goods sewed the labels onto the garments and, if necessary, manually filled them with information about the size and/or serial number of a specific piece of clothing. It seems unlikely that labelling would take place in a sewing shop outside the department store. Such procedure would carry the risk of illegal marking of other products with department store labels. Since *les grands magasins* had large departments to handle the sending and receiving of correspondence with orders, invoices and other documents, as well as the distribution of catalogues, plus the departments packing goods and sending them to various parts of the world, all the more care was taken to ensure that new blouses, dresses or outer garments were labelled on site, just before being offered as novelties. The need to label a large amount of clothing of various sizes and the constant pressure resulting from the need to put new models on sale within a certain timeline (often in accordance with the rhythm imposed by the current issue of the catalogue on offer) meant that activities related to labelling had to be carried out efficiently and quickly. Despite the rush and serial sewing of tags, this task was almost always performed manually, which sprang from the fact that the seam fastened the tag to the lining of the sewn garment, and could not be visible on the outer side. This necessarily precluded the use of a sewing machine.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, albeit with an even greater care, the same process was followed in design houses.<sup>42</sup> However, in the latter, there was more time available to perform the task, and the finish of the custom-made pieces of clothing (also from the inside) had to be of the highest quality.

The largest department stores operating at that time served hundreds of thousands customers every year, and their annual turnover amounted to tens of millions. In the case of Au Bon Marche in the 1880s, the turnover counted between 100 and 134 million francs, similar to that of the Grand Magasin du Louvre (135 million francs

same century they began to compete with custom-made clothing, tailor made for individual customers. Initially, they appeared in department stores; then, they began to feature in the offers of many design houses that had high-quality ready-made models in their assortment. See: P.K. Faryś, *Konfekcja damska 1800–1914*, pp. 9–12.

40 Ibidem, pp. 127–130.

41 These were the sewing machines of the time, which did not have mechanisms that would allow for efficient sewing of the label into the lining of the finished garment.

42 Based on the analysis of labelled items of women's clothing from department stores and design houses from the second half of the nineteenth century in the author's collection and the collections of the Met and v&a available online.



in 1889).<sup>43</sup> These figures testify not only to the wide range on offer and the large number of customers that allowed for such high turnover, but also to the huge brand recognition in France and abroad – the recognition built, among other things, by labelling the products offered with the name of the department store. Servicing such a vast market, sometimes including the distribution of goods even in the most remote corners of the world, required care for the aforementioned brand recognition. In this context, labelling of clothing became particularly important. The closer to the end of the nineteenth century, the more often department stores used rectangular or square jacquard labels sewn into the lining at the neck height (see: Fig. 4, 5), resembling today's practice.

For ready-made, ready-to-wear, readily-available models, jacquard labels were used almost exclusively,<sup>44</sup> which could be partly filled by hand or stamped by placing information on the serial number and size of the garment on the label. It was the department stores that popularized the custom of placing information on the specific size, expressed with a number, on the labels of garment. Size tags for ready-to-wear clothing have been popular since at least the 1890s (see: Fig. 5). On the other hand, in the case of bespoke clothing, made to order by tailors and design houses, documenting the size of the model on the label was largely pointless, because the garment was made for an individual customer based on several fitting sessions. If ready-made models were included in the secondary offer of some design houses, sizes would sometimes appear on their labels (however, this was quite a rare phenomenon in those days).<sup>45</sup>

The name and surname of the tailor who ran the design house gained the status of the proper name of the design studio, and was immortalized on the labels. This was different in the case of department stores at the time. They were often large companies run by a management board consisting of multiple persons – such was for instance the Au Bon Marche department store, as testified by the information printed on the letterhead of its invoices (see: Fig. 9). As a result, department stores did not have their own names, and traditionally they were referred to by the name of the merchant, or of the two shareholders running a joint business.<sup>46</sup> Presumably, it was for these reasons and for purely marketing purposes, that their names appealed primarily to their main clientele to which these companies addressed their offer – that is, to women.<sup>47</sup>

43 W. Mataja, *Wielkie magazyny*, pp. 11–12.

44 Department stores would also sometimes use smaller types of stamped or jacquard labels, which were sewn into very delicate products, for example cambric blouses, as was the case of the small stamped label of the American department store Lord & Taylor (see: Fig. 6b). The graphic design of the label, especially the lettering, was a very important element that allowed the brand to be identified through the increasingly common press advertisements. Lord & Taylor, founded in 1826 and still operating today, is considered to be one of the oldest upscale department stores in the United States of America. With the increasingly frequent labelling of clothes in the second half of the nineteenth century, every detail reproduced on the label was important from the point of view of advertising as well as the protection of products against counterfeiting.

45 P.K. Faryś, *Konfekcja damska 1800–1914*, pp. 141–142.

46 This did not apply to all department stores. Medium-sized department stores, often established by one family, were traditionally named after their creator. This is how the Warsaw department store Bracia Jabłkowsky [the Jabłkowski brothers] was marked. See: F. Jabłkowski, *Dom towarowy Bracia Jabłkowsky. Romans ekonomiczny*, Warszawa 2005, pp. 63–66.

47 The first offers of department stores were addressed exclusively to women. Men's departments appeared gradually, for example, in Parisian Printemps, the men's clothing department was established only in 1878, that is, 13 years after the opening of the department store. See: *Group Printemps. History*.





7. Collation of: a – a fragment of a press advertisement for the New York department store Lord & Taylor, ca. 1900, b – a stamp tag sewn into the skirt of a cambric blouse, 1900–1910; from the author's collection. Photos by Przemysław K. Faryś  
→ see p. 135

## Indirect marking<sup>48</sup> of clothing and fabrics in the advertisements of design houses and department stores

The direct presentation of the goods, their promotion, the possibility of touching the products and trying them on were still practiced in both design houses and department stores. At this crucial moment, the material or the piece of clothing could be most effectively advertised. No label, no leaflet, no catalogue or poster, even though it praised and described the goods, the trader or the manufacturer in the most attractive way, could replace direct contact with the assortment of interest to the customer. This fact has been known for centuries, but it was in the nineteenth century, and especially in its second half that numerous modern and ground-breaking methods of trade in consumer goods were introduced, which then went on to develop on an unprecedented scale. Extremely wide-ranging advertising campaigns aimed at the mass audience were also developed. These activities were pioneered by upscale department stores, which increasingly competed with traditional design houses.

Department stores of the time distributed millions of copies of periodically published catalogues,<sup>49</sup> all kinds of printed inserts (i.e. a form of leaflets), including samples of materials, and business cards (see: Fig. 7a, 11a). Press advertisements maintained the interest on the part of the clientele, ensuring good brand recognition. A large department store would send as many as over a thousand letters a day (invoices, catalogues and inserts with samples were attached therein – all marked with the name of the department store).<sup>50</sup> The cost of beautifully decorated vignettes and invoice forms alone, together with wrapping paper, could go as high as to one million francs a year.<sup>51</sup> Preserved postcards showing the luxurious, spacious interiors of department stores testify to their owners' very serious approach to the issue of promotion. Postcards always display the splendour of the surroundings, an astounding selection of goods, and crowds of buyers. It was in these ways – directly and indirectly – that attempts were made to influence a potential customer. When opening the newspaper, in the advertising columns, the prospective client could see pictorial graphics promoting the department store, and next to it a printed insert with a description of the latest offer. It was also possible to receive or send a beautifully printed postcard depicting the interior of a department store. Running along the streets of the cities where department stores prospered were elegant horse-drawn carriages, and just before World War I there were even small freight cars, delivering the goods that the customers had purchased to their homes. These automobiles were marked with the names of the department store. Each, even the smallest package with the purchased goods was stamped with the name of the department store. Design houses followed suit, albeit on a smaller scale.<sup>52</sup>

48 Indirect marking takes place not by placing the trademark directly on the product, but by duplicating the marking with other information carriers (e.g. invoices, packaging, catalogues), as well as word-of-mouth advertising, praising and presenting the product.

49 At the end of the nineteenth century, the large French department stores were able to issue the main catalogue of their products even every six months, in a circulation of 1–2 million copies (some of these were sent to domestic customers, and some to customers abroad). See: W. Mataja, *Wielkie magazyny*, p. 63.

50 Ibidem.

51 Ibidem, p. 64.

52 Design houses served the wealthiest customers; therefore, they had a much smaller clientele than department stores (we need to remember that the latter offered a very large number of different

Wandering through the individual departments (and there could have been as many as over a hundred of those), the customer looked at clothes, each piece of which had its own label with the name of the store. When visiting a photographer's atelier (as there were in-house photo studios in the department stores), he would receive a portrait photo placed on an attractively printed cardboard pad, equipped, to be sure, with the name or emblem of the department store. When leaving the store after successful shopping, he would receive an invoice, the vignette of which also reminded him where he had just purchased the goods.<sup>53</sup>

All the factors that could bring a design house or a department store to publicity and attract crowds were eagerly used for indirect branding in the retail market. If new electric lighting was installed, allowing shopping even after dark, without the fear of being unable to judge silk or wool fabrics correctly, as had been the case with the old gas lighting, the news would have been reported by the press, communicated on posters as well as in the catalogues and newspaper advertisements.<sup>54</sup> If, on the other hand, lifts were installed in the department store, attempts were made to take advantage of the fact that this technological marvel was a chance to attract families with children who would like to test the latest invention.<sup>55</sup> Thanks to this type of treatment, the number of customers grew.

The general arrangement and scope of information provided by means of the nineteenth-century invoices (see: Fig. 8–10) was similar to that in the eighteenth century. At the top, you would still find the company mark, with a more or less artistic vignette. Next to that, or slightly below, brief information about the main scope of activity was placed. Below it was a blank space or a printed table in which a list of purchased or ordered goods was entered by hand. Eighteenth-century invoices differed from nineteenth-century ones mainly in the poorer quality of print and the greater simplicity of the vignettes.<sup>56</sup> When looking at these flyers as a means of indirect marking of goods, it is worth noting that the names of department stores or design houses were usually printed on invoices in the same or very similar font as on clothing labels (see: Fig. 4, 7a, b, 9). Efforts were made to make the advertising message as coherent as possible. The value of visual brand identification was increasingly appreciated.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, people were well aware of the growing role of advertising, including the kind of advertising that made use

goods – from textiles to household appliances). However, this did not translate into the quality of advertising, which in design houses was of the highest standard, and it would often be widely available (especially thanks to the cheaper ready-made models that the design houses offered).

53 Design houses also made use of a variety of textures with artistically elaborated vignettes.

54 For instance, in 1883, the Paris-based Au Printemps department store received electric lighting developed by Thomas Edison's company (160 arc lamps and 112 light bulbs), most likely installed in key departments. This was communicated in newspapers and in advertisements, highlighting the positive impact of better lighting on the shopping experience. See: *Groupe Printemps. History*.

55 In 1874, the Parisian department store Printemps installed two elevators going from the basement to the attic. See: *Groupe Printemps. History*.

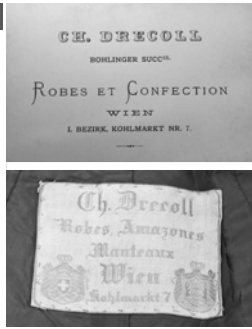
56 In the nineteenth century, the artistic value of vignettes increased. A large vignette on the invoice of the Au Bon Marche design house from 1866 (see: Fig. 8) shows the edifice of the store. Its name is written in capital letters along with the full name of the company – Maison Artiste Boucicaut, which still continues to run the same department store even to this day. Also, an artistically designed vignette on the invoice of the Des Nouvelles – Galeries department store in Bordeaux from 1898 (see: Fig. 9) presents its façade next to the name and address of the shop. Purchases, as indicated on the invoice, could also be made by telephone: by calling the number 1045.



**8.** Fragment of an invoice of a Paris store offering various silk, cotton and woolen fabrics, 1807, from the author's collection. An invoice with a vignette with the name of the merchant warehouse Remy Carette Md. de Draps. Photo by Przemysław K. Faryś → see p. 136

**9.** Fragment of an invoice from the Au Bon Marche department store in Paris, 1886, from the author's collection. Photo by Przemysław K. Faryś → see p. 136

**10.** Fragment of an invoice from the department store Des Nouvelles – Galeries in Bordeaux, 1898, from the author's collection. Photo by Przemysław K. Faryś → see p. 137



**11. a** – Business card of the Viennese fashion house CH. DRECOLL, dating from around 1885-1895, i.e. from the times when the company was run by the founder of the DRECOLL brand. The card declares that CH. DRECOLL is the successor of Friedrich Bohlinger's tailoring workshop previously operating at this address; **b** – An original jacquard label by the aforementioned fashion house, dating from around 1895 (either by the first owner of the fashion house, Christoph Drecoll, or by the new owner, i.e. the company), hand-sewn to the lining of the cape. Just like on the business card, the name and address of the fashion house are indicated. The main product range is also given. The two coats of arms mean that the fashion house at that time was the official supplier of clothing for representatives of specific aristocratic families.; from the author's collection. Photos by Przemysław K. Faryś  
→ see p. 139

of the appropriate marking of goods (clothing in particular). Its advantages were noticed, such as effectively presenting customers with a wide selection of different products; but its disadvantages were also understood – that sometimes a properly planned advertisement was intended to hide the poor quality of the product, only fuelling interest in it: “[...] technical and economic transformation of communication means must bring about a moral revolution in customs and habits [...] Advertising plays a significant role in this development. It shows the recipients new ways and new sources of purchases [...] but the abuse of this measure, when the true quality of goods is replaced by artificial publicity, only harms the national economy, whereas the advertising, which is not used to explain [...] but only to attract recipients, is at least redundant.”<sup>57</sup>

Large department stores operating in the second half of the nineteenth century were able to allocate about 1–1.5% of their turnover per year to the promotion of their goods.<sup>58</sup> Unlike small shopkeepers, whose sales, especially of materials and clothing, were subject to fashion changes, large shopping centres not only dictated new rules for retail trade, choice of goods, and the prices; more than that, they were also able to create new fashion trends, mainly thanks to well-designed advertising campaigns.

There are known cases of changing the appearance of clothing labels, usually resulting from the need to refresh vignettes and all other branding. Both design houses and department stores opted for this type of practice, most often due to market changes that forced the company to adapt to new trends, change of owner, or merger of smaller business into a larger corporation. Historians are still researching the details of the operation of many design houses that no longer exist today, but in the second half of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century they were universally known among wealthy clients from around the world. Apart from the simultaneous use of two types of labels by some design houses (for instance, stamp and jacquard labels), these types of changes happened from time to time in design houses and in department stores alike.

The change of the owner of the design house could have been related to refreshing the company's image by introducing new labels and other brand markings. An example of such actions can be the operation of the Viennese DRECOLL design house, which at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century was considered one of the most recognizable in Europe.

Christoph Drecoll founded his own design house in 1885, occupying the former dressmaking workshop of Friedrich Bohlinger at Kohlmarkt 7, one of the most exclusive in Vienna. Ten years later, in June 1895, Drecoll sold his design house to a Belgian-Dutch-Swiss partnership. After the change of ownership, the design house continued to use labels with the designation CH. DRECOLL (see: Fig. 11a, b). The former owner himself worked for several months with the company that bought his studio. The shareholders did not significantly change the style of the design house developed by the first owner and designer. At the beginning of 1903, the company opened a branch of its design house in Paris at Place de l'Opera 4, where the famous fashion designer Gustave Beer had previously had his studio (see: Fig. 3b). At that time, clothing sewn in Viennese and Parisian workshops received similar

<sup>57</sup> W. Mataja, *Wielkie magazyny*, p. 36.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 58.

labels, differing only in the address, and sometimes a common label with the name of CH DRECOLL was sewn in, accompanied by the names of the two cities, Paris and Vienna, placed on opposite corners of the tag.<sup>59</sup>

Interestingly, after the years spent in Vienna, Christoph Dreccoll went to Paris, and at the beginning of 1907 he opened his new salon there at 6 Rue de la Paix. It was named Christof (not Christoph, as before in Vienna) Dreccoll. Thus, in 1907 in Paris, there had been two design houses operating under a deceptively similar name: CH. DRECOLL (understood from 1885 as Christoph Dreccoll) and Christof Dreccoll. As a result, clothing products labelled with very similar markings of two different companies appeared on the market. The company, which bought the Viennese design house from Mr. Dreccoll in 1895 and then founded a Paris branch in 1903, sued the original owner, demanding that he stop using the name DRECOLL in business dealings immediately. The company claimed that in 1895 Dreccoll sold his Viennese design house together with the trademark understood as his name, placed on tags and other elements identifying the brand. The former owner used the argument in his defense that the rights that he had sold, allowing the purchasing company to use his name, were valid only on the territory of Austria-Hungary. Ultimately, the court sided with the company and ordered Mr. Dreccoll to close his newly opened Parisian design house within two months, and to remove labels and other media containing the brand name from the market. The master was also ordered to pay compensation to the company. Nevertheless, several years later, in 1912, he opened his third design house, this time in Germany, under the name of DRECOLL – Berlin. In the 1920s, he sold the Berlin house to another company, and the DRECOLL brand disappeared from the local register in 1937.<sup>60</sup> The Viennese design house under that name ceased to exist in 1932.

The history of the DRECOLL design house shows that at the end of the nineteenth century, the brand mark – visible on clothing, among others – had a very significant business value, constituting the basis for recognition against the competition. The complicated history of the manufacturer, or rather of the name DRECOLL, currently makes it difficult to attribute the preserved clothing with labels bearing that name (dated around 1895 or 1907) to a specific design house.

### **Marking of silk clothing fabrics in the nineteenth century**

Clothing materials were not marked with textile tags resembling those sewn into nineteenth-century clothing; instead, they were marked with textile seals, stamps, or cardboard tags attached to string bands tied to individual bales of materials.

First and foremost, design houses carried out individual orders for materials with specific patterns, often developed exclusively for the one house. They were able to accumulate large resources of materials, buying entire batches of textiles or knitted fabrics of interest to them from a given manufacturer.<sup>61</sup> As a result, customers received an original model made of unique material. The designation of the manufactory from which the material came was identified with the name of a particular design house. Collaboration between textile factories and tailors

59 B. Haase, A. Rasche, *Christoph Dreccoll: Rediscovering the Viennese Worth*, "Costume", 53, 2019, issue 2, pp. 191–194.

60 Ibidem, pp. 192–200.

61 P. Szaradowski, *Francja elegancja*, p. 96.





12. Press advertisement for a dress model from Gustave Beer's studio (1914) and *Le Peplum* satin fabric (manufactured by Bianchini, Ferier fabricants in Lyon), from which the dress was sewn; from the author's collection. At the bottom of the ad, there is a fragment of a selvedge of silk fabric with the trade name of the Lyon manufacturer's textile embroidered upon it. Photo by Przemysław K. Faryś  
→ see p. 140

was so close and fruitful that press advertisements were published for ready-made clothes, praising new garments sewn from a specific fabric. The name of the weaving mill was also indicated at that time. In her pieces of clothing, next to the label of the tailor's workshop, the client might also have the manufacturer's mark woven on the edge of the fabric (see: Fig. 12).

### Legal protection of trademarks

Progressive industrialization and the boom in consumption, new methods of trade, as well as the birth of an industry capable of mass-producing huge amounts of various goods – all these factors combined shaped the nineteenth-century market of production and trade. The old tailors' workshops had to compete against the new design houses. City shops and merchant warehouses of textile, clothing, and other goods, dating back to the eighteenth century, increasingly faded into the shadow of large department stores, while the latter imposed a new model of retail sales. Strong competition and a multitude of similar products from different manufacturers present in the market forced the marking of goods.

Initially, each country introduced internal regulations, guiding the protection of trademark rights and their appropriate use in trade. In England, the first regulations concerning these matters appeared in 1824, France followed 1857, Germany in 1874, and Switzerland in 1879.<sup>62</sup> The development of international trade and the increasing number of factories, design houses, and department stores, which increasingly and actively exported their goods to various parts of the world, made it necessary to develop international regulations. In March 1883, the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property<sup>63</sup> (*Convention de Paris pour la protection de la propriété industrielle*) was adopted in Paris. This ground-breaking act of international law regulated the most pertinent issues regarding the protection of industrial property in the field of patents for inventions, utility models, industrial drawings and prototypes, as well as factory or trade marks, trade names and designations of origin.<sup>64</sup> According to the convention, a new trademark registered in one of the signatory countries automatically received registration priority in the others.<sup>65</sup>

In April 1891, the Madrid Agreement on the International Registration of Marks (*Arrangement de Madrid concernant l'enregistrement international des Marques*) was established. The first article indicates that, pursuant to this Act, all countries

62 A. Michalak, *Interes publiczny i jego oddziaływanie na powstanie, treść i wykonywanie praw własności intelektualnej*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 28–30.

63 In 1883, the Convention was signed and accepted by France, Italy, Holland, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. By 1900, the United States (1887), England (1884), Tunisia (1884), Sweden and Norway (1885), the Dominican Republic (1884), Denmark (1894), and Japan (1899) had joined the group of signatories. Poland joined the Convention in 1919. See: *Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property*, <<https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/ip/paris/>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

64 *Konwencja Związkowa Paryska z dnia 20 marca 1883 roku o ochronie własności przemysłowej*, <<http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19320020008>> (accessed on 12.12.2022), Article 1.

65 The Convention stipulates that it is possible to refuse to register a trademark when it infringes, among others, on commonly accepted customs, when it is confusingly similar to the already registered trademarks, or when it might mislead the customer as to the quality, type and properties of the signed goods. Trademarks submitted for registration that infringe upon the interests of third parties may also be refused registration. See: *Konwencja związkowa paryska*, Article 6.



adopting it ensure mutual protection of trademarks for goods and services, provided that a given mark has been registered in one of the signatory states of the Agreement, and filed with the International Intellectual Property Office. Pursuant to the document, it was also possible to reserve a specific colour or palette of colours included in the trademark (Article 3). The International Intellectual Property Office was obliged to issue a periodic journal in which newly registered trademarks were published.

Probably due to the development of printing and photography, as well as the fashion for artistic vignettes that had increasingly been featured in trademarks, when registering such an extensive sign, it was necessary to attach a properly elaborated drawing or film documenting the details of the sign. Its first registration afforded twenty years of protection, with the possibility of further extensions (Articles 6 and 7).<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusions

The topic of trademark development in the nineteenth century is a very complex issue, deserving of further study. In that period in history, a large number of various tailoring workshops, design houses, and department stores had been founded. Some gained an international reputation and their names were universally recognizable. Au Bon Marche, Au Printemps, Worth, Doucet, Pingat, Beer – was there any person living in the second half of the nineteenth century that was not familiar with these brands? The carefully developed and placed trademarks, which made the goods and services of a given company famous, helped build their position on the market.

These marks were carriers of information about the origin of the product, which became more and more important in the proliferation of competition. If an enterprise managed to develop a brand of good standing, then its trademarks acquired greater intangible value, becoming symbols of good quality, reliable service, high status, and luxury. In the face of growing consumption, it was necessary to search for new sales and promotion techniques, while increasingly using images and short slogans. In a press advertisement, in a catalogue, on a poster, an invoice, in a leaflet, or at the front façade of a shopping centre or a design house, the trademark had to be in the foreground, loud and clear. The label needed be sewn in such a place that it could be easily seen when reaching for a ready-made garment or picking up an ordered, tailor-made model.

When analysing the preserved clothing labels and trademarks, immortalized on various leaflets used in trade and promotion, we can conclude that in the nineteenth century the marking of textile goods was treated in a very modern way – that is to say, modern from our point of view. Suffice it to say, most of the forms and methods of marking that were widespread at the time are still used today.

## Abstract

### *Techniques of marking and labelling textiles in the nineteenth century in the context of market creation of brands – as illustrated with the example of design houses and department stores*

The article presents the development of methods for labelling textile products – mainly clothing – in the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century. The

66 *Porozumienie Madryckie o Międzynarodowej Rejestracji Znaków z dnia 14 kwietnia 1891 r.*, <<http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19931160514>> (accessed on 12.12.2022).

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development of fashion houses offering clothes tailor-made to individual orders, and of large department stores selling ready-made clothing meant that clothing items were increasingly frequently provided with textile labels. The informative value of the latter grew along with the evolution of sales techniques and the increase in consumption. Over time, they have become indispensable in the process of creating clothing brand recognition. Clothing labels that have been preserved to our times carry information about the product and its manufacturer, and indirectly also about many aspects of the silk textile production market and textile trade. Exploring these aspects of textile history lays the groundwork for further, interdisciplinary research. The paper outlines the general characteristics of various ways of marking textiles, also in the centuries preceding the nineteenth century, and it presents the practice of indirect marking of clothing products. The marking of silk clothing fabrics and the beginnings of the development of legal protection of trademarks in international terms are also briefly discussed. The basis of the conducted research was a thorough comparative analysis of tags and labels preserved in the author's extensive collections and in digitized museum collections. The article proves that in the nineteenth century the marking of textiles was treated in a way that we would now consider modern, and most of the forms and methods of marking textiles that were popular then are still used today. ●

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