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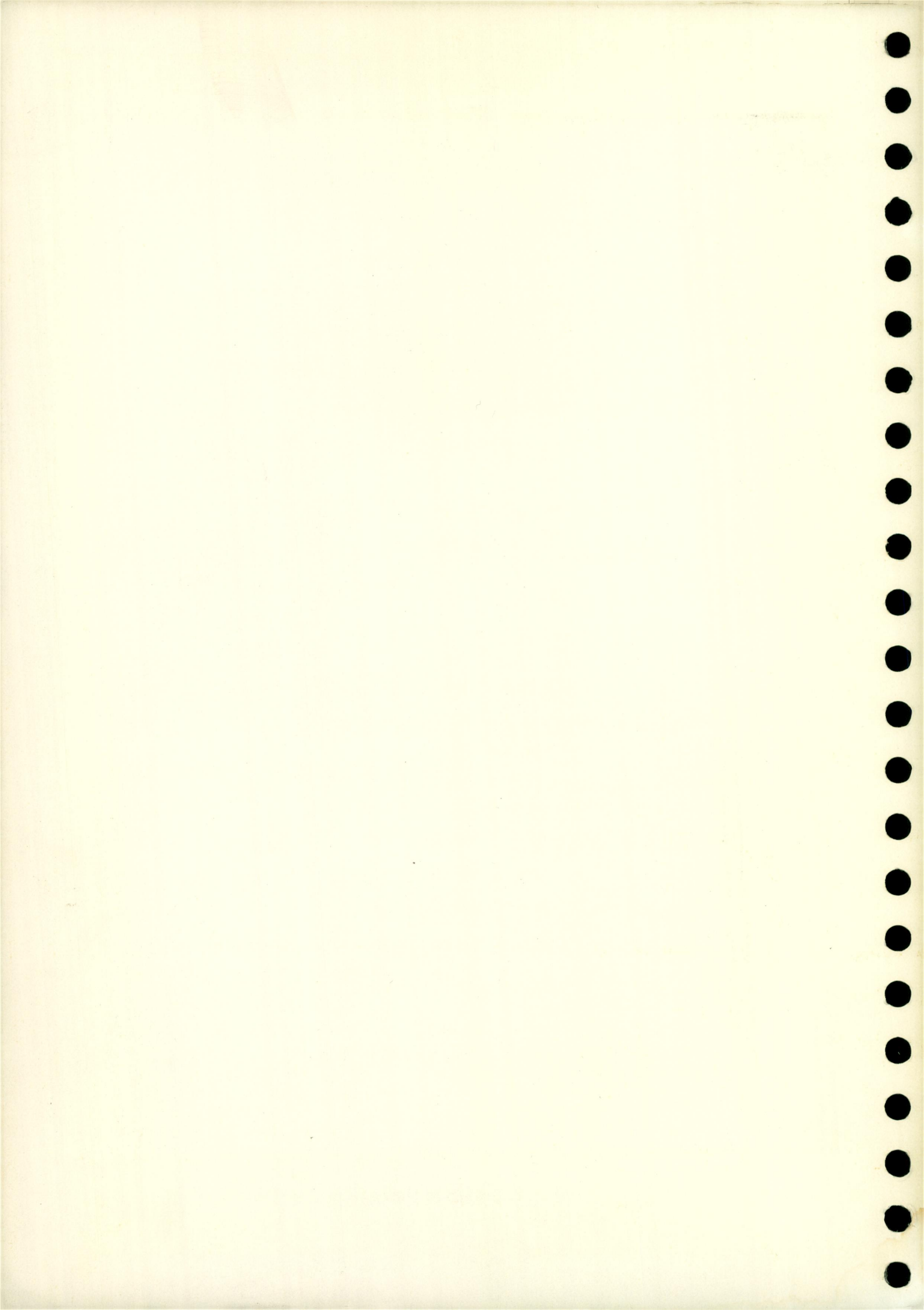


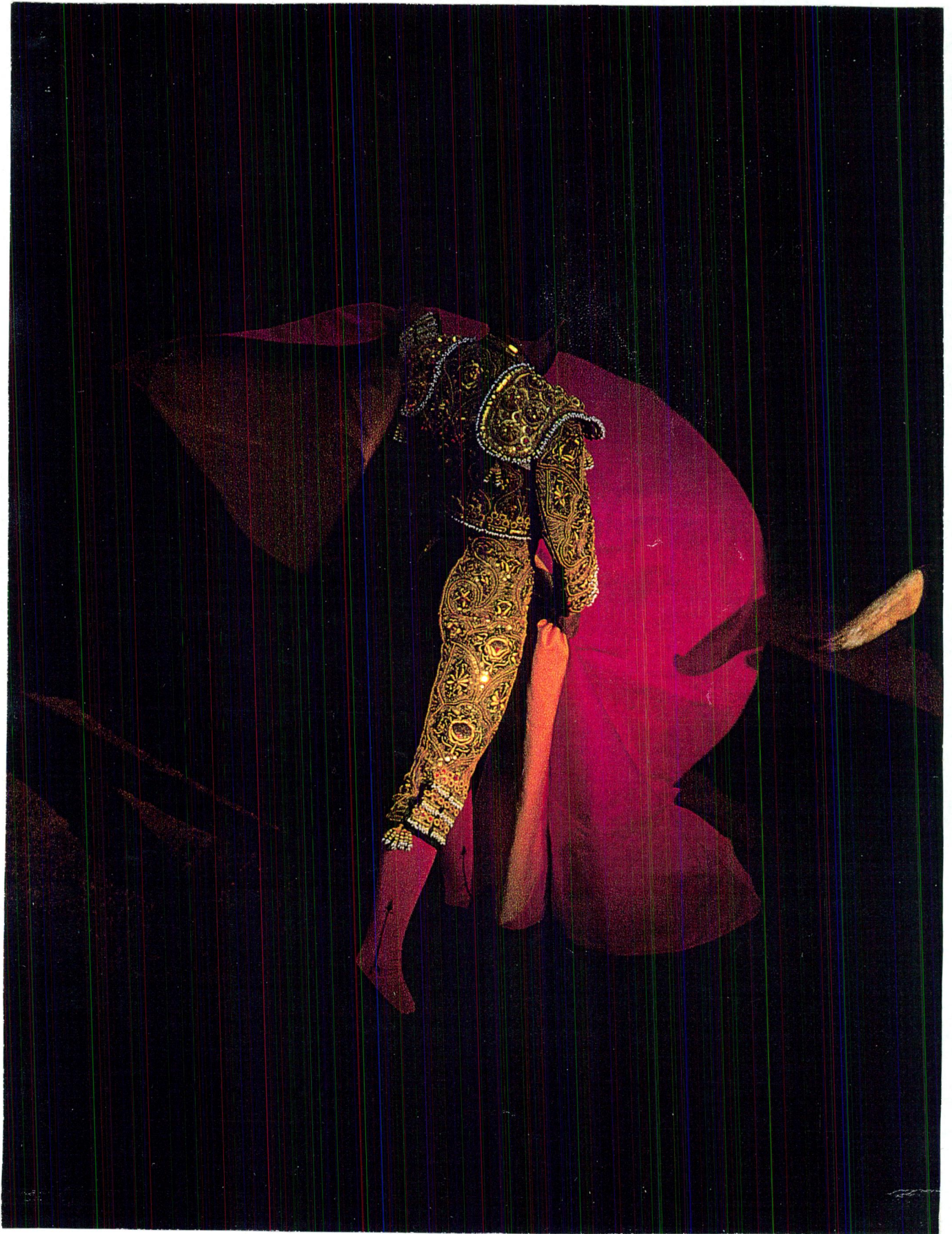
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
FACULTY OF DESIGN, DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES

'THE SUIT OF LIGHTS'

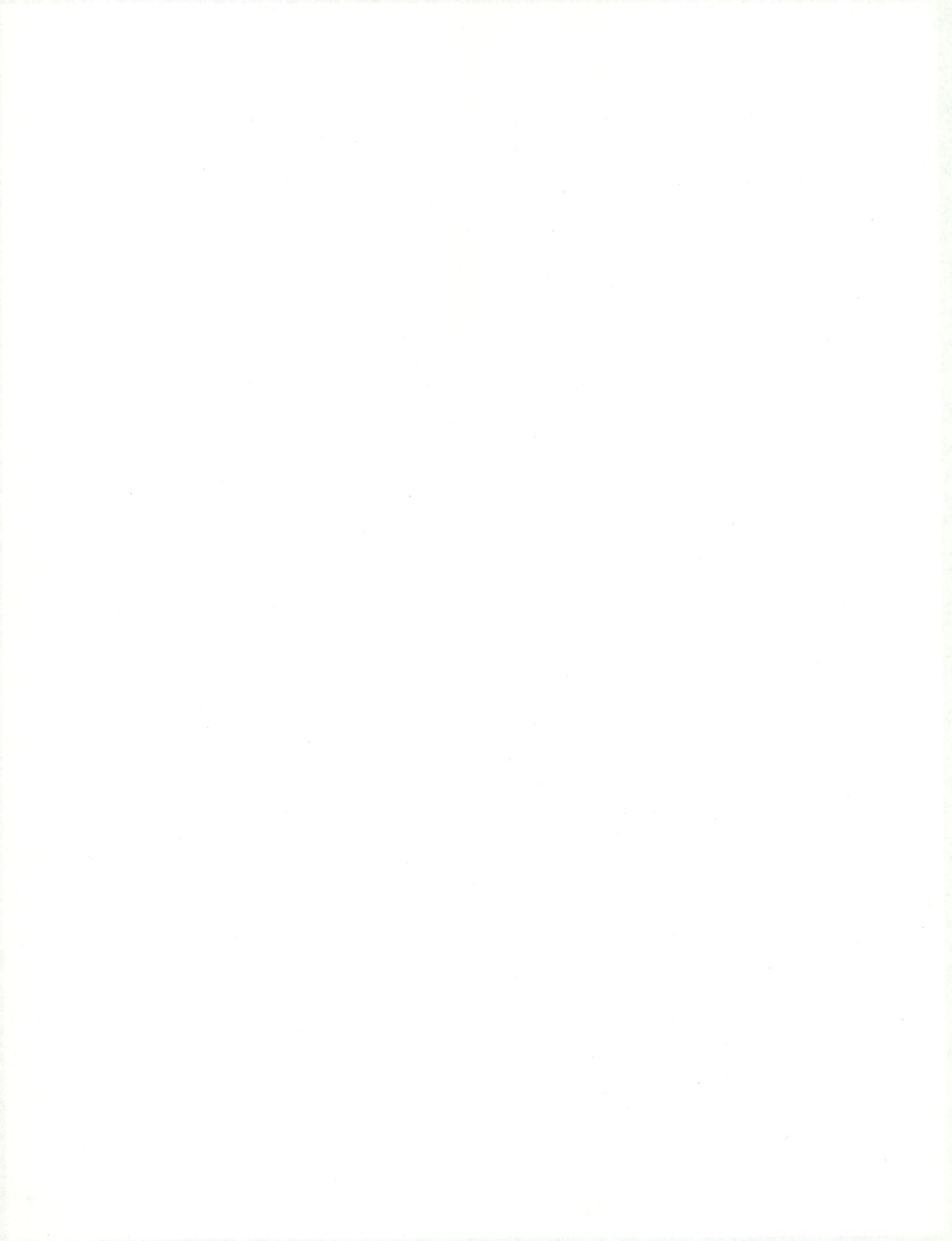
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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART DESIGN AND COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF FASHION DESIGN, 1998.





ill.1 The Suit of Lights



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: I would like to thank Ruth Roberts, an ardent bullfighting enthusiast for her endless help. The contacts she provided made this thesis possible. I would also like to thank John Fulton, an artist and bullfighter and Justo Algaba, costume maker for their time and information.

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INTRODUCTION

El traje de luces, the *Suit of Lights* is a most fascinating and beautiful costume. It is an outfit that is based on luxury rather than on practicality. It has developed little since the 18th century and is regarded as an icon of Spanish culture. Having grown up in Spain, I have always admired the costume and had a keen interest to find out more about it. The contradiction between the suits elaborate beauty and it's function fascinates me, together with the way in which it plays such a major role in the atmosphere of a bullfight.

From a designer's point of view the *Suit of Lights* presents an amazing costume which, in both its structure and emotional meaning, stands on its own. The tradition, ritual and honour associated with the costume give it a meaning that is almost sacred and it is of vital importance to the spectacle of a bullfight. In fact the most enduring and unique Spanish tradition of the bullfight would not be complete without the *Suit of Lights*.

The design of the suit has been almost untouched for centuries and current bullfighting literature suggests that it was designed by Goya himself. Since then, it has been almost frozen in time which is a characteristic which it shares with many other costumes, (the highland dress and the coiffe of Brittany), but the precise influences that have intervened to hold the *Suit of Lights* in its present form are unique.

In two hundred years little has been written on the *Suit of Lights*. In fact there is only one book dedicated solely to the subject of this costume, written in 1968 by Luis del Campo Jesus. While this increased my interest in using this topic as a subject for my thesis it also meant I needed many other sources of information in my research. Much of the research was done in Spain and any of the originally Spanish sources quoted in the text are translated by myself.

One of my most valuable sources of information was personal interviews, particularly with John Fulton and Justo Algaba. John Fulton (who studied art before becoming a bullfighter) was very informative about the designing and wearing of the costume. Justo Algaba is a maker of the *Suit of Lights* and he gave me invaluable help in understanding the technical aspects of the garments.

National costume plays an important role in Spanish society, it is a culture that enjoys dressing up. Regional costume and even specific costumes for individual cities are common. Elaborate costume at official and popular level are often seen in Spanish society. While the Queen might wear a national headress, full traditional dress is more often associated with singing, dancing and local festivities. However the *Suit of Lights* is different. It is a costume apart created for one specific purpose which in turn serves towards creating a national identity.

I found that the complexities of the *Suit of Lights*, in both its design and role, made it a very interesting topic for a fashion design history thesis. I aim to discuss aspects of its history, the superstitions which surround it and the technical characteristics of a suit that must accompany such physical exertion. I will not be discussing any of the moralities of bullfighting but have included a chapter on the position of bullfighters in Spain, and some detail about the history of bullfighting itself, as I feel these are relevant to understanding the *Suit of Lights*.

THE POSITION OF BULLFIGHTERS IN SPAIN

While in a sensible country people first eat enough and afterwards dress well, the Spaniard adorns himself first with the greatest elegance, even when his food leaves much to be desired, for nobody sees the latter. (Diaz-Plaja, 1971 p.21)

The *Suit of Lights* is the flamboyant costume of the bullfighter, it is the outer expression of the standing the bullfighters have in society and the pride with which they walk into the arena.

Until recently, the caste system was very prevalent in Spanish society and until the 18th century, the Church and the army were the only establishments which enabled men who did not have financial means or social influence to reach 'the top'. Bullfighting became the third establishment.

The story of El Cordobes is that of a typical Spanish fairy tale hero. He was born in 1937, in a one bedroom house during the Spanish civil war, in Cordoba, in southern Spain. Through perseverance and a passion for bullfighting, he eventually achieved greatness and renown. In their book, *Or I'll dress you in mourning*, Collins and La Pierre give us examples of how the *Suit of Lights* was regarded by youngsters of the time of El Cordobes. It describes how children of the neighbourhood wanted to be bullfighters and how the *Suit of Lights* represented the ultimate goal. It was an icon to worship. "To those youngsters he (a bullfighter visiting the area) exuded a special awe, for he had once worn a *Suit of Lights*" (Collins, La Pierre, 1988, p.135).

This demonstrated the dreams of many young Spanish boys, aspiring to be matadors.

For generations the sidewalks and back alleys of Spain's communities have been animated by youngsters putting that simple maxim into action. With noisy shouts, they play at the *corrida* (bullfight) the way other boys play football or basketball, charging each other's *muletas* (cape) to learn the basic gestures of the *toreros* trade (Collins, La Pierre 1988 p.135).

Many young *aficionados* do their utmost to fight before they reach the minimum age limit of sixteen. Some even go to South America where there are no age restrictions.

Bullfighters may now mix with duchesses and film stars at the top of the social ladder in Spain. The actual number of bullfighters in relation to the Spanish population is small as is the number of avid followers at a surprisingly low thirty percent. Yet still Spain is automatically associated with bullfighting. They appear on television, keyrings, t-shirts and even wrapping paper. Though one may not agree with or follow bullfighting every Spaniard knows the top bullfighters names. They are constantly appearing in gossip magazines that inform the readers of the last restaurant they ate in, or who they might marry (ill. 2&3). Their standing in society come partly from their wealth, as they sometimes earn £45,000 per fight. Perhaps more importantly, however, it is their demonstration of courage, grace, strength and passion, that are virtues which greatly appeal to the Spaniards. The idea of a man facing a bull in this spectacular way is so well regarded that the man who achieves this goal is idolised. Statues are made of them, streets are named after them and music is written for them. The *Suit of Lights* is a demonstration of this lifestyle, glamour and showmanship.

Even without the influence of tradition and social position, the bullfighter would be sure to turn himself out in an impressive outfit. Spaniards have always had an enormous sense of pride - it is inherent in their way of life. The *Suit of Lights* reflects this - the idea of the Spaniard putting on impractical luxury out in the arena just because it looks beautiful. When the matador steps into the arena the crowd applauds. The matador has not performed as yet, but the crowd appreciates the splendour. "The Spaniard is impressed by everything that is grand and magnificent even though it be useless or out of proportion" (Diaz-Plaja, 1971, p.22).

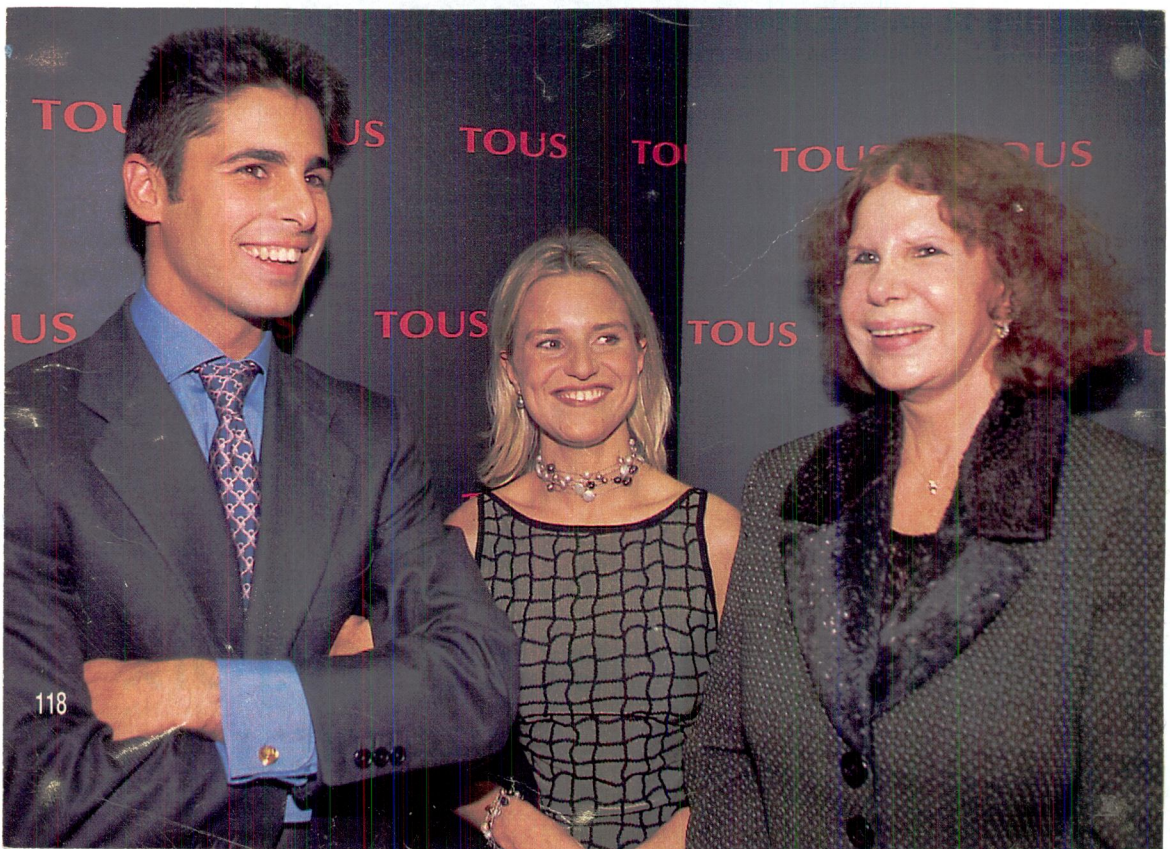
For this applause a bullfighter goes to great lengths when he is to get his first *Suit of Lights*. If he is going to fight, he needs a costume - be it rented, borrowed or



Foto: Constanze

ill. 2: (Left)
The Matador Fran Rivera, entering the bullring in his *Suit of Lights* and Parade cape.

ill. 3: (Below)
A picture from Spain's most popular social magazine, HOLA showing Fran Rivera with his girlfriend Eugenia Martinez of Irujo and her mother the Duchess of Alba. The Duchess of Alba is allegedly the most titled woman in the world



bought. Bullfighters remember their first *Suit of Lights*, how it was obtained and its individual characteristics. In Or I'll dress you in Mourning, the mood of El Cordobes is described the night before his first fight,

All night, unable to sleep, he stared at that suit caught in the moonlight coming through his shack's one open window. Time and time again he reached out to stroke its satin surface as though he were caressing the fur of a kitten. Half a dozen times he got up and in the darkness slipped on the blue jacket as though to reassure himself that it was really there (Collins, La Pierre, 1988, p.250).

Spaniards are not renowned for their punctuality, but at the appointed hour exactly, on a bullfighting afternoon the trumpets will sound and the spectacle will commence. The crowd have come to see a man fight and kill a bull and it is the *Suit of Lights* that symbolises and embodies the conflict and human drama that is about to unfold.

(i) THE HISTORY OF THE SUIT OF LIGHTS

The history of the *Suit of Lights* is interwoven with the history of Spain itself. The traditional costume of the matador is a beautiful piece of work, made to order and mainly hand-embroidered with thousands of gold-plated sequins, thread and wire. It is often said to have been designed by Francisco Goya (1746 -1828) (ill. 4).¹

As befit a robust, fiery Spaniard of provincial background, Goya was fascinated by the bulls. Some romantic biographers even claim he was once a professional *torero*. There is no proof of this, but only an artist thoroughly familiar with bulls could, impart the vitality, accuracy and astonishing psychological realism to the bullfight that Goya does (Schickle, 1970,p.162).

Whoever designed it, the *Suit of Lights* of today has changed little from the suit worn more than 200 years ago.

The fighting of bulls started around 60 B.C. and “Julius Caesar might be considered the grandfather of bullring *empresario* for it was he who first presented bullfights in the Coliseum of Rome” (Fulton,1992,p.10). The bulls that the Romans found in Spain were the fiercest they had seen, the fights were exciting and became popular. The Christian Church of Rome, however, did not approve of the public killing of animals and it was forbidden under the penalty of death. As the Church’s influence increased, bullfighting receded. In the 4th Century A.D. following the Visigoth invasion, the military leaders fought bulls on the Spanish plains or in arenas left by the Romans. By the time the Visigoth reign fell to the Moslems in the 8th century, bullfighting was once again well established in Spain. The Moslems fought with beautiful and skillful Arabic horses and brought about a certain elegance and style to the fight.

After the Christian reconquest of the Iberian peninsula, (mid 13th century) bullfighting became a common pastime. With the lack of war many nobles now turned to bullfighting as a way to practice their skills. The Christian Church’s

1. Festival bullfights are still held today where the *Goyesca* costume as it is known, is worn (ill. 5).



ill.4 'La novillada' by Francisco Goya (1779 - 1780), Prado Museum, Madrid.





ill.5 Matador, Cristina Sanchez and Mari Paz Vega in *Goyesca* costume at a festival bullfight in Oct. 1997. (Men also wear the *Goyesca* costume.)

approach varied over the years, but eventually with the ceremony taking hold among the people, the Church was forced to accept it, even using bullfights to celebrate holy days and festivities.

The nobles fought the bulls on horseback using long lances and repeatedly aiming between the shoulder blades of the bull. During one of these spectacles, at the beginning of the 18th century, the following happened;

... a noble and his horse were upended by a bull's charge. The noble was pinned to the ground under his mount, helpless before the horns of the bull he had intended to kill. As the bull poised to drive those horns into the nobleman's body, one of the village poor, hired to tend the Royal Riding Circle, leaped into the ring. Using his flat-brimmed Andalusian hat as a lure, he drew the bull away from the helpless rider. Then, to the awe and admiration of his noble employers, he continued to wave his hat before the bull's eyes, and fixing the beast's stare to its movements, lured the horned animal past his body time and time again. The poor man's name was Francisco Romero. He was a carpenter's assistant and through those gestures with his Andalusian *sombrero*, Francisco Romero founded the ritual of the modern bullfight, a conflict between a dismounted man and the lure of a fluttering piece of cloth (Collins, La Pierre, 1988, p.9).

The nobles started using men on foot to direct the bulls and assist them in achieving a good aim with the lance. These men were poor, they wore their work clothes and the nobles wore their own rich, elaborate clothes, class distinction was very apparent. The rich began to dress the poor labourers who worked for them as footmen and as a result a certain uniformity of dress began to emerge, which helped distinguish which nobleman each footman was fighting for. Eventually, the main footmen began to dress slightly differently, for two reasons. Firstly, they were requested to wear a coloured headpiece so that they stood out even more. This idea also led to the wearing of a brightly coloured sash by the footmen who were actually contracted to fight for specific events. Secondly, the main footman was the only one who got paid so he began to invest in some form of better dress and protective clothing, made out of heavy cloth or leather. The issue of whether leather is in fact protective or not is unclear, as different sources provide contrasting opinions. Though the leather would protect them from minor scratches or falls it was really rather useless against the bulls' horns.

As the footmen began to change their costume to make it more spectacular, so too did the noble horsemen. They were attracted by the bright colours and the gold and silver decoration of the military costume and imitated it.

By the beginning of the 18th Century, King Philip V decided that he was losing too many of his good men and his best horses in bullfighting so he requested that nobles did not fight any more. Fighting was not banned completely for the noblemen, but bullfighting fell into the hands of the common man and the importance of the footman, as a bullfighter in a unique costume, began to emerge.

The bullfighter should appear in the ring dressed in fine suede or another material that pleases everyone, one that cannot be penetrated by the bull without great difficulty (Campo Jesus, 1968, p.97).

Pedro Romero (1754-1839) was the first to really make an art out of fighting a bull on foot (ill.6). The costume worn by Romero can be seen in the bullfighting museum of Ronda (southern Spain), the home of the oldest bullring in Spain dating back to Roman times. The fabrics were meant to protect the man from the horns - experience has shown only a cumbersome suit of armour can do this. The jacket and trousers were suede with heavy velvet sleeves. The sleeves were laced in and buttoned up at the wrist (sleeves of the *Suit of Lights* are still detachable today). The suede was brown with embroidery down the centre front jacket and down the sleeves. The jacket also tied at the centre front in a simple bow and it has a peplum.

At this time, with fighting on foot now predominant, special training developed and rules emerged. Footmen had to take their *Alternativa*, which is the formal ceremony in which a *novillero* (novice bullfighter) graduates to a full matador. For this special day, one bullfighter Costillares (1748-1800) requested that he should be allowed to wear a costume as elaborate as the nobles (Campo Jesus, 1968, p.42). This request was granted and a further step in the development of the *Suit of Lights* was made.



ill.6. : Painting by Antonio Carnicero (1743-1812) painted in 1788 of Pedro Romero. He is the most famous early bullfighter, reported to have killed 5,600 bulls in his 28 year career without ever having been tossed or gored.



(ii) INDIVIDUAL GARMENTS

As the bullfighting costume began to emerge, it became in essence the same style as the fashionable male dress of the 18th century. What was considered to be fashionable dress began to change and a more relaxed and democratic approach to dress developed. By the middle of the 19th century the bullfighting costume had remained almost as it was earlier in the 18th century whereas the fashionable male dress had changed.

THE JACKET

The jacket pattern consists of two front pieces, one back, two epaulettes and two sleeves. Apart from the first leather jackets (before Goya's time), the jacket of the *Suit of Lights* has never had any buttons or other form of closure. Fashionable mens jackets towards the end of the 18th century gradually became shorter. The bullfighters' jacket did the same (ill.7). This suited them for practical, fashion and aesthetic reasons. The longer jacket hanging down to below the waist tended to swing around with the body, distracting the bull from the moving cape and drawing his attention to the matador. Furthermore, the horns of the bull were more likely to catch on loose fabric. Aesthetically, it is important to see the body of the matador while he twists, turns and struts; it is all part of the performance. If the waistline and lower back are covered by the jacket a great part of the movement is lost. By the beginning of the 19th century, the bottom of the jacket was just above the waistline, where it has remained to the present day.

At the beginning of the 19th century, military style epaulettes were at the top of the arms rather than on the shoulders as they are today, this is probably because it was fashionable for men to have sloping rather than broad shoulders (ill.8). When the bullfighters moved the epaulettes to the shoulder emulating the military, the sleeves were still slashed under the arms to facilitate movement. From the shoulder point, to the back shoulder point, the sleeves are laced in before the fight, leaving the underarm completely open (ill.9).



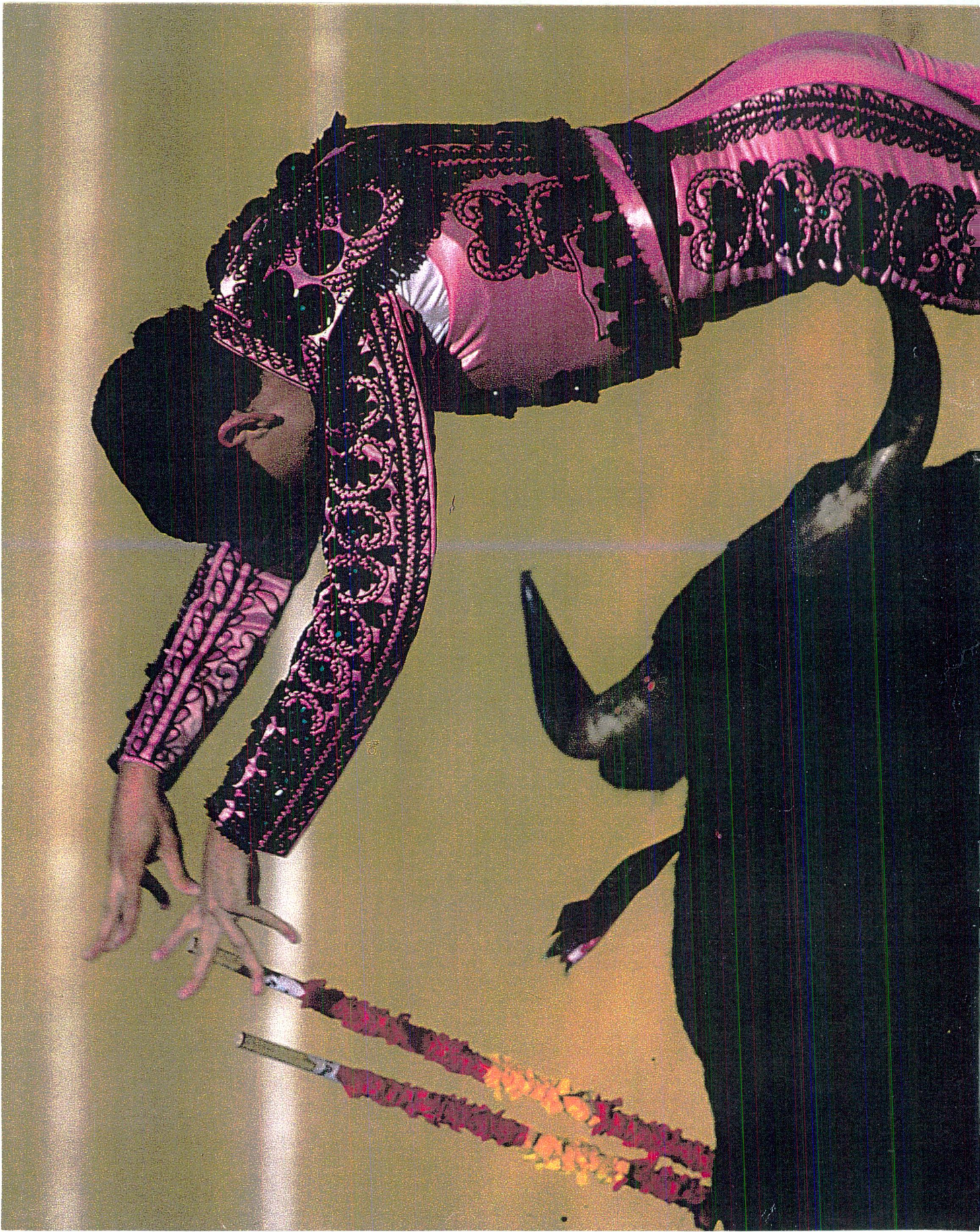
ill. 7: Etching by Juan de la Cruz Cano (died, 1790 other dates not recorded in original source) of Costillares, Municipal museum, Madrid. The first bullfighter to wear an elaborate costume.



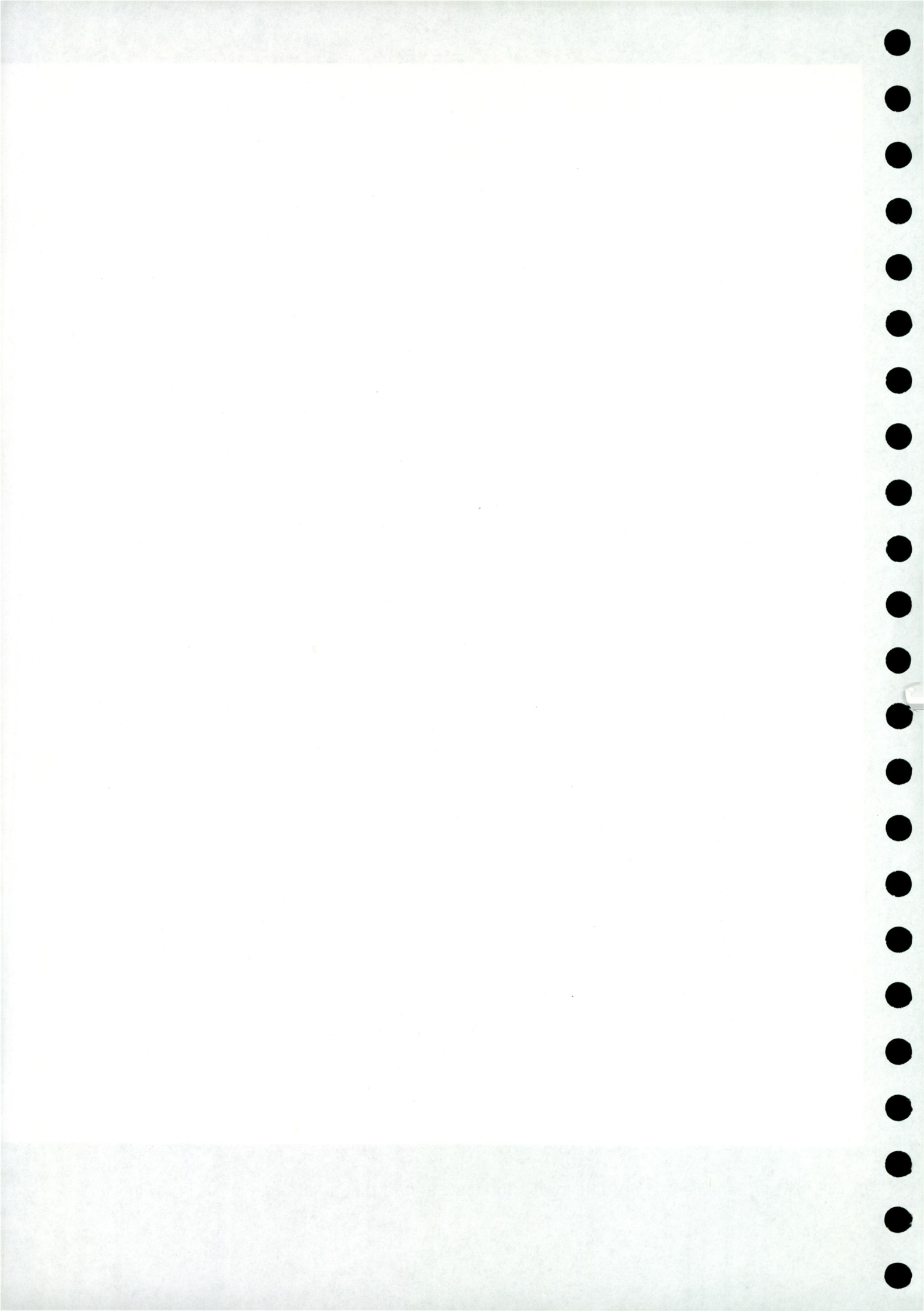


ill. 8: Print from the 19th century by Jose Becquer (dates not recorded in original source) showing the bullfighting costume of that time.





ill. 9: The *Bandillero* in action showing the underarm of the jacket open to allow for movement.



By the beginning of the 19th century the jacket had small front panels and no lapels, which allowed a great deal of the shirt and waistcoat to be seen (ill.10). When the jacket neckline was reduced, the front panels were extended to maintain better proportions. The jacket of today almost meets down the front, just below the knot of the tie, when the bullfighter is standing still (ill.11). Both sides hang down parallel to each other, allowing the spectators to see a very small amount of the waistcoat and shirt. From the 19th century until the 1970's the jacket was backed with layered white cotton fabric sewn together and dipped in starch to produce a rigid suit of armour effect. Though the layering and starching no longer exists, the jacket is still extremely stiff and able to stand up on its own.

THE BREECHES

The breeches are called *taleguilla* - they are never referred to as *pantalones*, (the Spanish word for trousers). At the beginning of the 18th century, trousers worn by the footmen were somewhat baggy, as seen in paintings by Goya (cf. ill.4). In 1780, tight trousers were introduced and have changed little since then. They were made from taffeta or silk and similar to the male underpants worn in those days. The aim was again to move with fashion and for aesthetic but not necessarily practical reasons. Furthermore, "In the considered opinion of some moralists, the dress sense displayed by Adam, who wore nothing but a mere leaf, was far more decent than what the bullfighters wore" (Campo Jesus, 1968, p.18). This view was also held by the Pope, whose opinion was of utmost importance, in such a strong, Catholic country as Spain. The Spanish government arrested and punished some bullfighters for their indecent dress, along with the shop owners, who made and sold them. Despite this, the fashion persisted - encouraged by the positive attitude with which it was received by the common people.

High-waisted, and extending to mid-calf, these breeches are flattering. The outside of the leg is covered with a heavily embroidered panel, from the waistline to the *machos*. (The *machos* are decorated tassels on the ends of the cord threaded around the bottom of the leg of breeches. The *machos* represent the fruit of the *madrono* tree, known in English as the strawberry tree). The inside

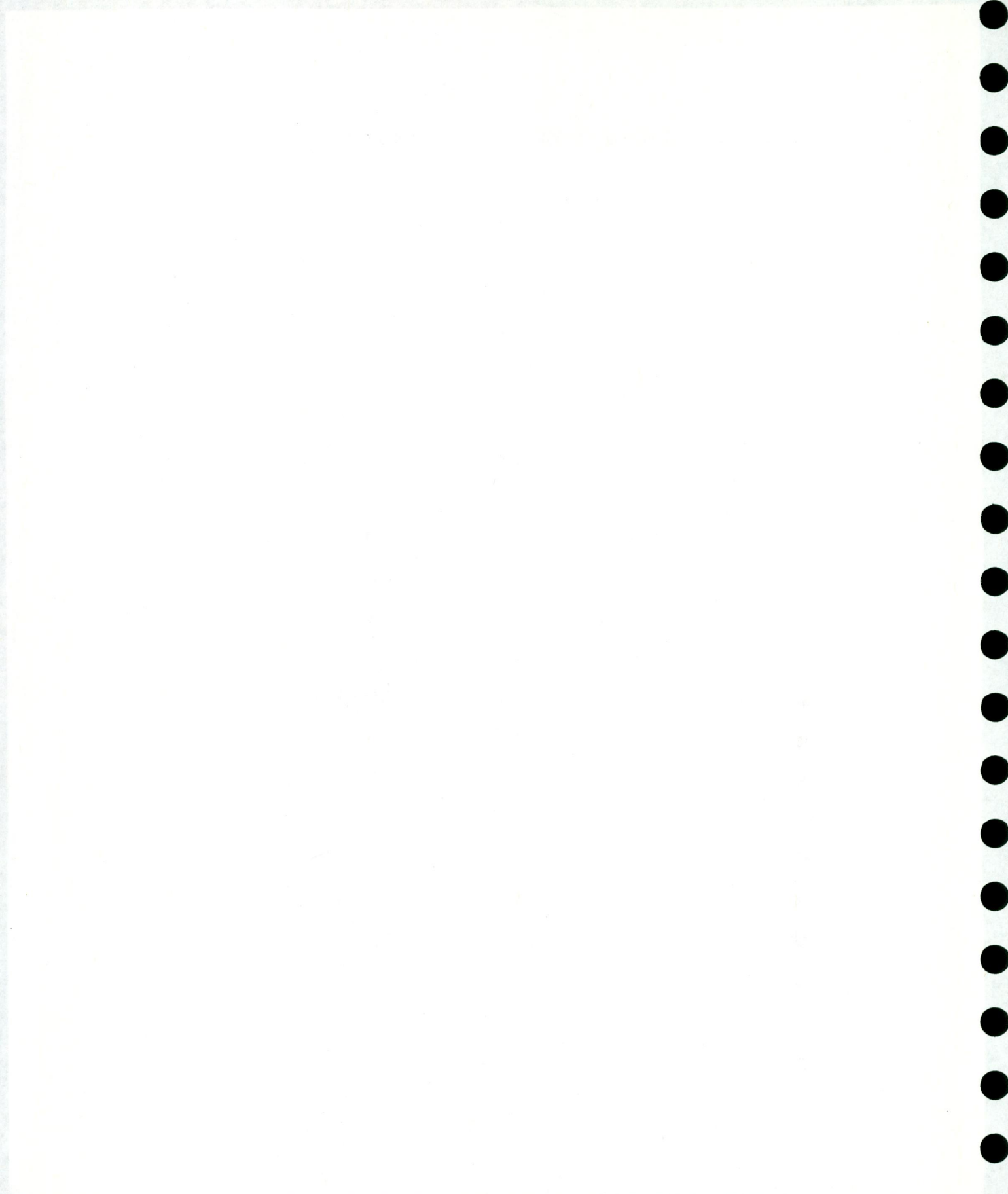


ill.10: Painting by Jose Elbo, (1804-1844 exact date of painting not recorded in original source) of Francisco Montes, known as 'Paquiro' Taurine art museum, Lima. The jacket of this time was very open down the centre front, revealing much of the waistcoat and cummerbund.





ill.11: The jacket fronts hang down parallel to each other showing a small amount of the waistcoat and the tie. Note the religious tie pin and the black embroidery on the *bandilleros* costume.



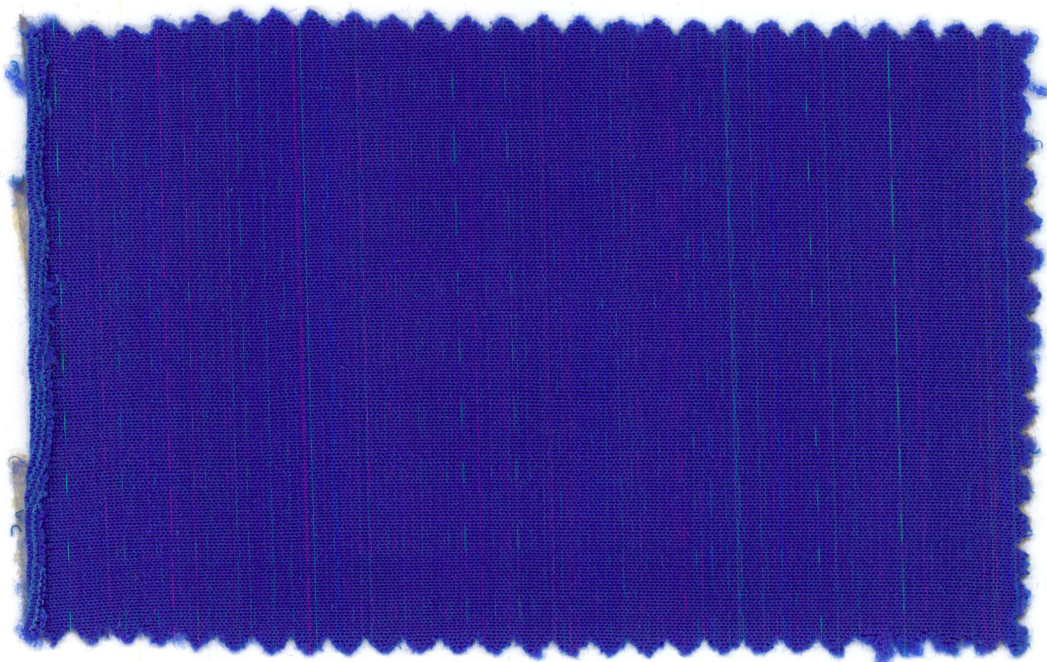
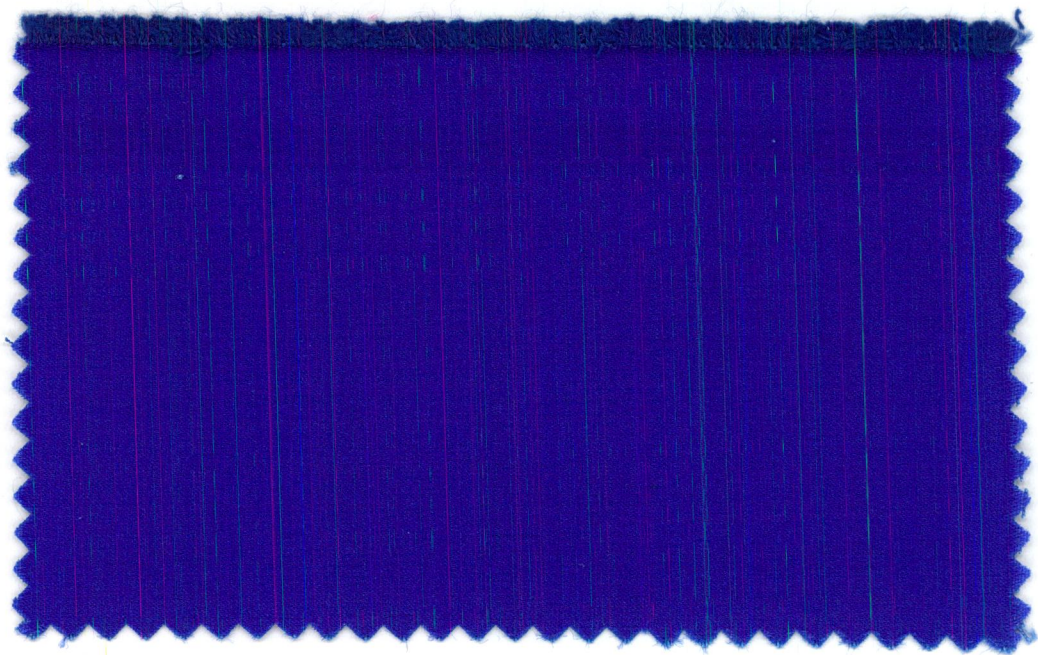
of the legs, abdomen and back are now made from silk jersey, with no decoration (ill.12). Because the breeches are so tight there is no way that protective clothing can be worn underneath. "Apart from being awkward and totally dishonourable, such protective equipment would be inadequate against the force and horns of the bull" (Fulton, 1992, p.42). This point is well demonstrated by a picadors (horsemen involved in bullfighting) stirrup, on exhibition in the bullfighting museum in Valencia. Picador's stirrups are made of steel, yet this one was pierced by the horn of a bull. Campo Jesus agrees with John Fulton as to the uselessness of decorations as protection, saying "...all the pieces embroidered on would not protect the leg, but would damage it even more seeing as they were like little knives" (Campo Jesus, 1968, p.24).

THE WAISTCOAT

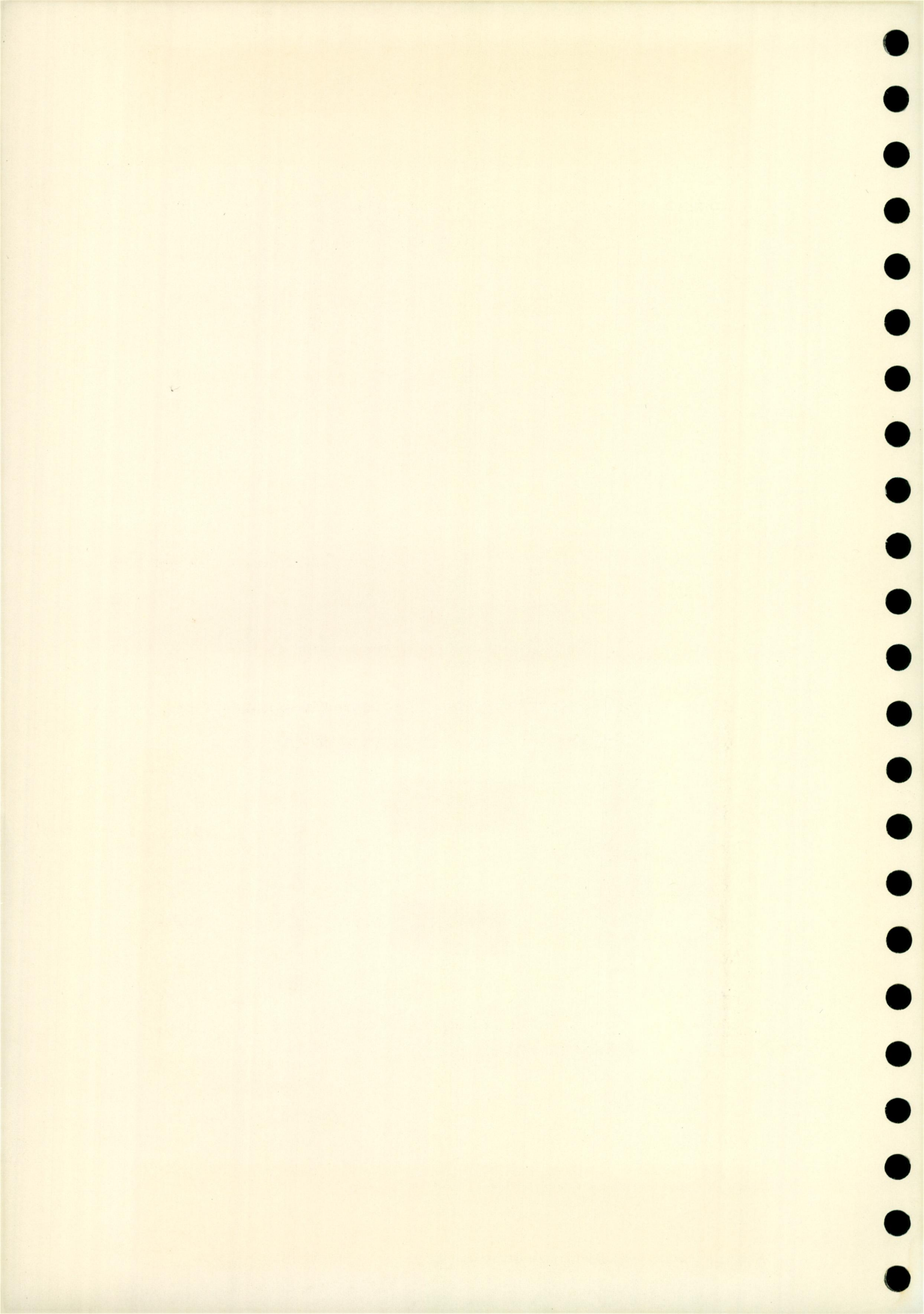
Since the waistcoat was introduced in the 18th century it has always matched, in colour and embroidery pattern, the breeches and jacket. The waistcoat of today is tight fitting; it hooks together down the centre front and can be adjusted with drawstrings down the back. The same fabric is used for the waistcoat as the trousers and jacket, though the back panel is made of a lighter, white cotton. The waistcoat is a lot more supple than the jacket, even though there is also a vast amount of embroidery on it.

THE SHIRT

In contrast to the elaborate work on the other items of the suit, the shirt is fairly plain. As with all shirts it is believed that this was originally worn in order to have something between the skin and the leather jacket, purely for comfort and cleanliness. When the jacket opened down the centre front and became more ornamental so did the shirt which was white, and long sleeved, with a starched standard collar and a ruffled, lace front. Because of the expense of cleaning and starching many matadors opt for a more functional shirt, one that can be washed easily. Nowadays they vary from an ordinary white business shirt, to an elaborate evening dress shirt.



ill. 12: The top fabric is used on the outside of the breeches and the lower fabric is the one used on the inside of the breeches.



THE TIE

The tie originated in Navarra (a region in Northern Spain). It had always been the custom to wear a scarf or some kind of material around the neck - for both decorative and functional (perspiration) reasons which is why the first footmen wore them. In the 18th century, the functional use of the neckwear became obsolete and it became a purely aesthetic item. The 18th century tie (ill.6) was much more voluminous than those of today, but over the years it has been reduced to the narrow tie we now know.

THE CUMMERBUND

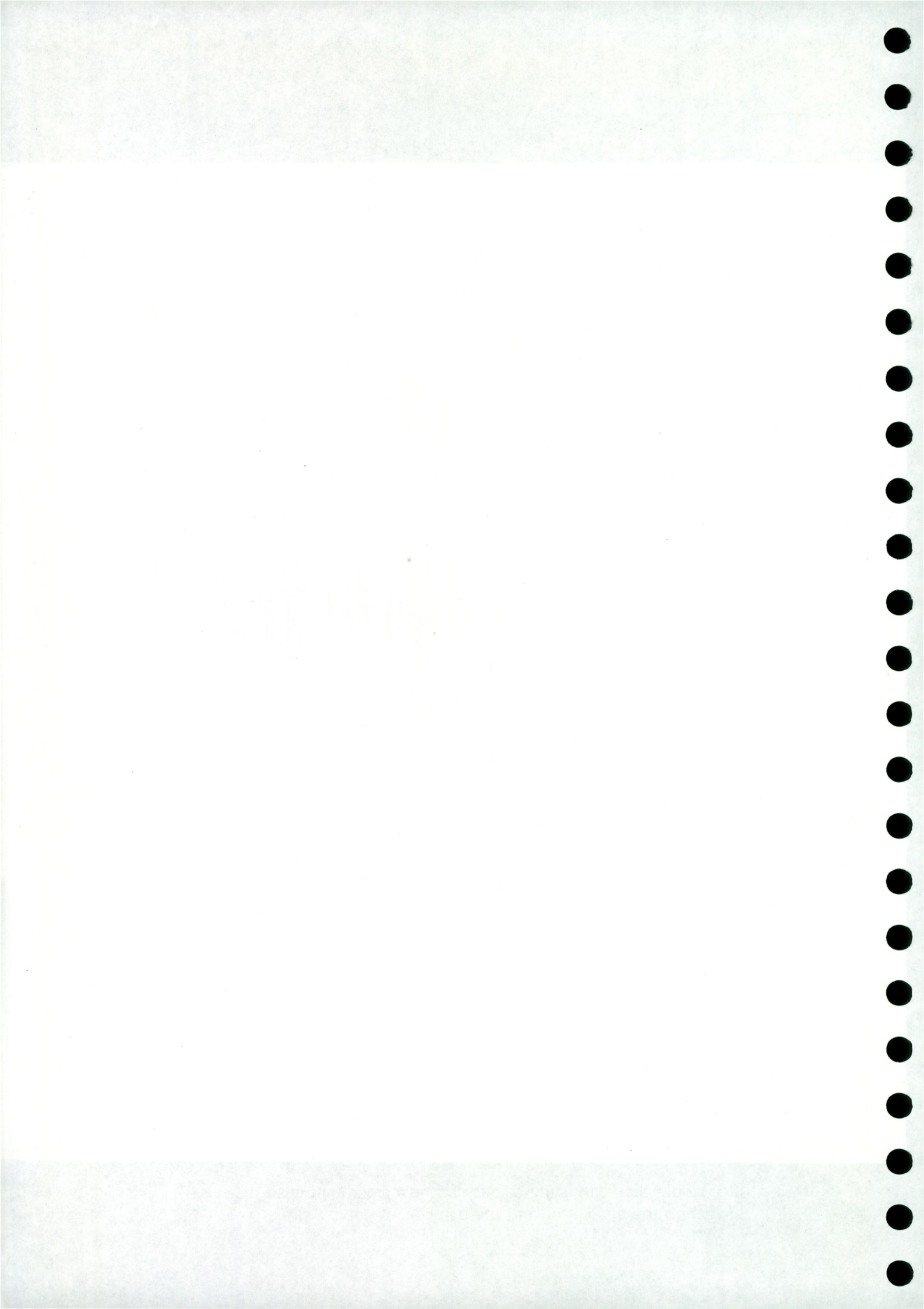
The cummerbund of today is made of the same fabric as the tie and they usually both contrast in colour to the suit. The cummerbund of the 18th century consisted of several meters of silk, wound tightly around the bullfighter's waist and abdomen. When the waistcoat came into fashion, there was no need for such a large sash and as it made the matador's waist look bigger rather than smaller, the sash was made narrower. The modern sash is about 7 inches wide and 46 inches long (18cm by 116cm). It is folded until it is about 2 inches (5cm) wide and wrapped around the waist. It is worn just below the waistcoat, thus giving the appearance that it extends up under the waistcoat (ill.13).

THE STOCKINGS

Fine woven silk stockings were introduced in the 18th century and remain, virtually unchanged, to this day. They have an embroidered arrow (clock) decorating the outer sides and are salmon pink in colour (ill.14). The pink is always referred to as 'salmon' pink though the illustrations do not really bear this out. Orange stockings or colours matching the particular *Suit of Lights* are sometimes worn, but this is usually greeted with displeasure. There is no concrete evidence as to the origins of the pink stockings, but it is believed that pink was fashionable among the 18th century noblemen at the time the stockings were adopted as part of the suit. It is a tradition that people are against changing. "I have tried to trace the origin of this tradition of uniform pink for all toreros stockings, but I have been unable to determine its significance, if any" (Fulton, 1992, p.41).



ill. 13: Note the contrasting colour of the cummerbund, also the raised flowers on the epaulettes and the beading.





ill. 14: The bullfighters stockings and the shoes with a small wedge heel and black silk bow.



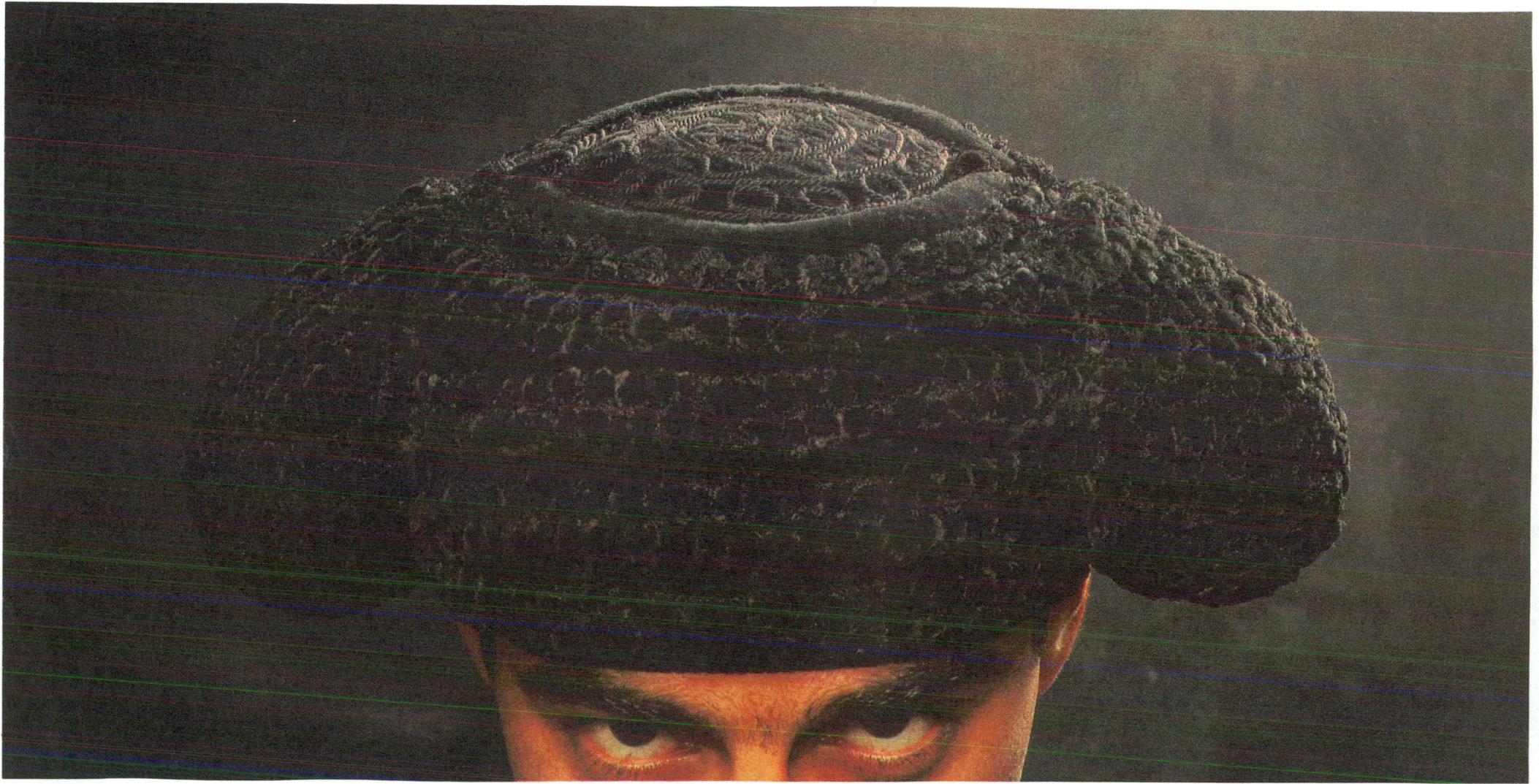
THE SHOES

At the beginning of the 18th century bullfighters shoes were like the fashionable court shoes, with small heels and a small silver buckle at the centre front. Since then, the shoe has had a very small heel or a very slight wedge heel, as it was found that a larger heel tended to obstruct movement and interfere with balance. It was only when certain bullfighters started scraping lines onto the soles of their own shoes that the makers actually started to produce them with a deeply crosscut sole to allow for grip and traction. The black, leather slippers have an appearance similar to that of ballet shoes though they are much stronger. They are made from one piece of soft leather and tightened with a piece of elastic around the top. Of all the bullfighter's costume the shoes are designed for practicality and comfort, whereas the main suit design is focused on display and decoration. Even so, the bullfighter could not resist decorating them in some way by adorning the front with a black silk bow (ill.14).

THE HEADGEAR

The bullfighter's head piece consists of two parts, the *montera* and the *anadido*. The *montera* is the actual hat (ill.15) whereas the *anadido* is a round velvet pad covering a metal clip with a mini-plait of false hair (ill.16). In Goya's time, the 1700's, a form of crocheted hair net was worn. The *Majos* and *Majas* (the young fashion leaders) of this time wore their hair in these hair-nets, which the bullfighters copied. Traditions are preserved in bullfighting and when long hair ceased to be fashionable some way of keeping it symbolically was needed. By the 19th century the long hair had gone except for a small pigtail at the back of the head. To this real pigtail was attached a false bun.

By the 19th century a new style of hat was introduced, very similar to the ones of today but, because of the size of the bun, they had to be positioned much lower down at the front, just about covering the eyebrows. This hat position was not popular so the bun was replaced with a circular clip, similar to the clip worn nowadays. The original pigtail remained and became symbolic of a bullfighter and therefore of honour. A young boys dream was to have a pigtail and it was said that gold scissors were used to cut it off when a bullfighter



ill. 15: The bullfighters *Montera* (hat) hand sewn of black silk and velour.



ill. 16: (above) Matador John Fulton, after removing his *montera*. Note how the *anadido* stays in place.



(right) Matador John Fulton, having his *anadido* put in place by his sword boy while dressing.



retired.² The ceremony of the cutting the pigtail on retirement sometimes continues to this day.

The hat (*montera*) is hand sewn of black silk and velour, it weighs approximately 1/2 kilo and is the uniform black hat for all bullfighters. The hat is worn during the initial stages of the fight and is often used as a form of communication between the matador and the crowd. When the matador comes into the arena for the final kill he will take off his hat, and raising it in the air, he will dedicate it to a particular person, for example, a film star he admires. He also may do a 360° turn with the hat raised dedicating the bull to the whole crowd. Then he will often toss the hat over his shoulder.³

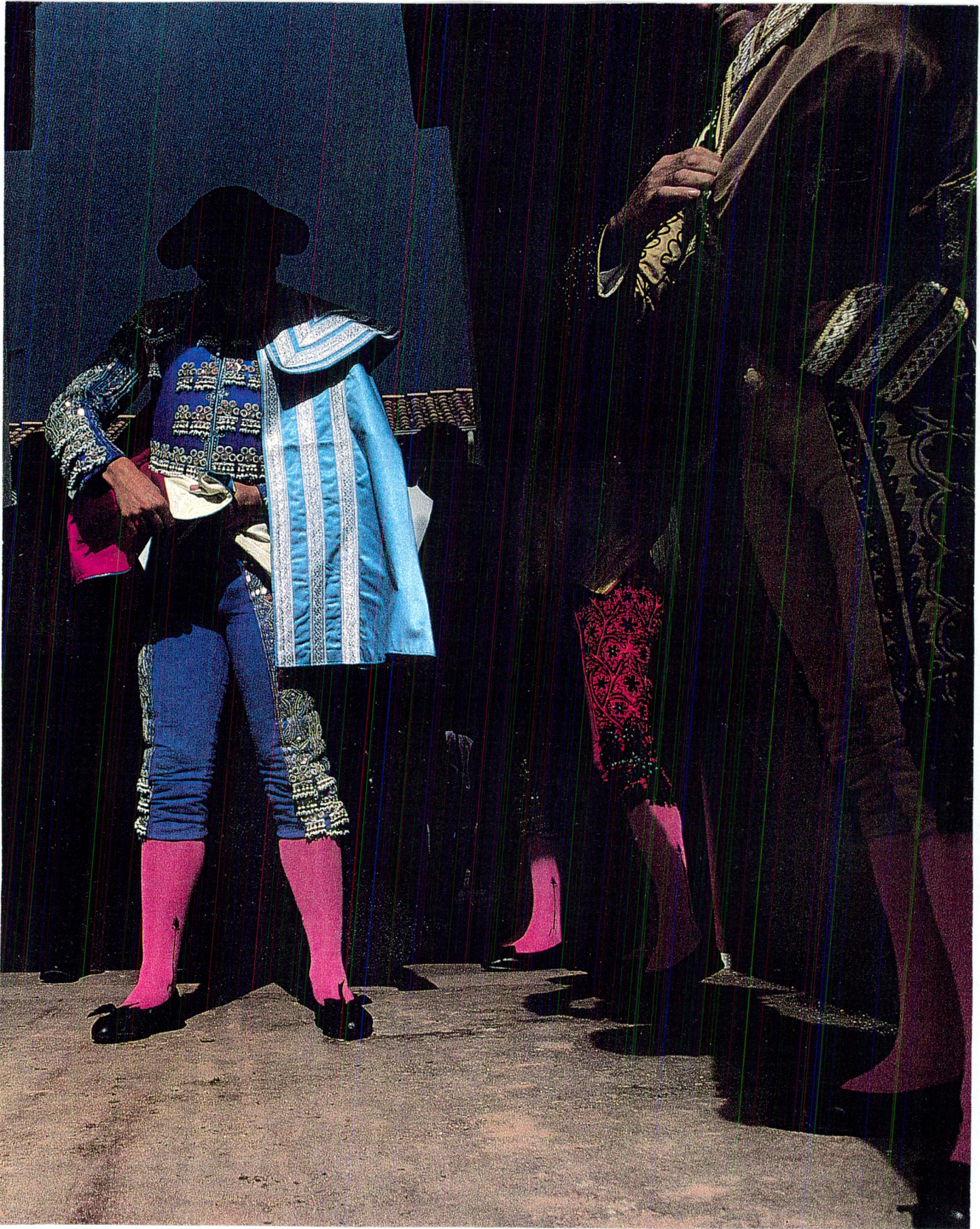
THE PARADE CAPE

The *capote de paseo* or parade cape is another important part of the matadors costume. It is worn in a specific way over one shoulder, under the other arm and held tightly at the waist by one hand, when the matador first steps into the ring and parades across to the other side (ill.17, cf. ill.2). He then takes it off and drapes it over the second barrier, usually in front of his sweetheart or a close friend. It is made of heavy silk and is usually a different colour to the suit. As with the suit, the cape is heavily embroidered with coloured thread or gold and silver thread. The decorative design on the parade cape is chosen by the matador himself but is usually an embroidery of their patron saint. The possibilities for decoration and colour on the cape are limitless, they are truly beautiful works of art (ill.18 & 19).

2. When Juan Belmonte the most famous bullfighter of the early 20th century came into the bullfighting world the pigtail, or ponytail, still created controversy. The writer, Antonio de la Villa, wrote about his decision to cut his pigtail -

Juan (Belmonte) walked into the barber and said to the boy: cut my hair and shave me, I am in a hurry; he sat down in the chair whistling, picked up a newspaper and prepared himself for the sacrifice. The boy started cutting his hair and, as usual, went around the ponytail. 'What are you doing, I told you to cut my hair, I want all of my hair cut, including the ponytail.' 'The ponytail as well Juan?' - now once the boy had said this, all the other people in the barber shop gathered around - 'Are you retiring?' they all asked. Belmonte looked at the group and smiled and continued whistling. 'Please cut my hair and my ponytail.' Belmonte was being daring, stepping out and breaking tradition, it caused quite a stir. It is said, for instance, that the coming of World War I had less impact in Madrid than when the great matador, Juan Belmonte, casually decided one day to have his *coleta*, or pigtail cut off. He continued to fight bulls without his ponytail until the 16th May, 1920, when he was killed by a bull. When he died, the other bullfighters of the early 20th century, also cut off their ponytails to pay respect to Belmonte.

3. Superstition enters here, for if the hat lands upright it is believed that the bullfighter's luck will drain out onto the sand and if it lands upside-down, it is also believed to be bad luck as the white lining of the black hat looks suspiciously like an empty coffin. Which ever way it lands, the matador will more than likely leave it as it is, or turn it over, according to his particular version of good luck.



ill. 17: The matador preparing his parade cape just before entering the ring.





ill. 18 & 19: Two beautiful parade capes, with religious pictures on the center back which would be on full display when worn into the ring.



(iii) THE FEMALE BULLFIGHTER'S COSTUME

Women bullfighters never existed in an official capacity until the late 1960's. Women who were interested in bullfighting would only fight on family farms or at purely social occasions. Initially women bullfighters wore the more casual suit which has no decoration whatsoever and is basically a pair of high-waisted, slightly flared trousers with a short, bolero jacket and wide-brimmed hat.

For both sexes there are three styles of suits. One is the Goyesca costume (cf. ill.5) which is worn only for the Goyesca festivals. The second suit is the *campera*, which is regarded as a casual suit to be worn at unofficial bullfights for example at festivals or on private farms. The third is the *Suit of Lights*, worn at all official bullfights.

In the late 1960's Angela (Angela Garcia) was to be the first woman to progress to the world of bullfighting in a *novillada* (a novice bullfight - the stage before one becomes a full matador). It was made clear by the authorities that she had to wear a *Suit of Lights* or she would be unable to fight. A well-known dressmaker, *La Nati*, made an outfit for her that was slightly more feminine, through the colour and the amount of embroidery but still fitted into the strict bullfighting rules. She created a *Suit of Lights* of dark blue, almost black, embroidered in gold with large roses all over, which has a great deal more embroidery than that of a man's. Angela never progressed to become a full matador and the woman's suit remained essentially the same as a man's.

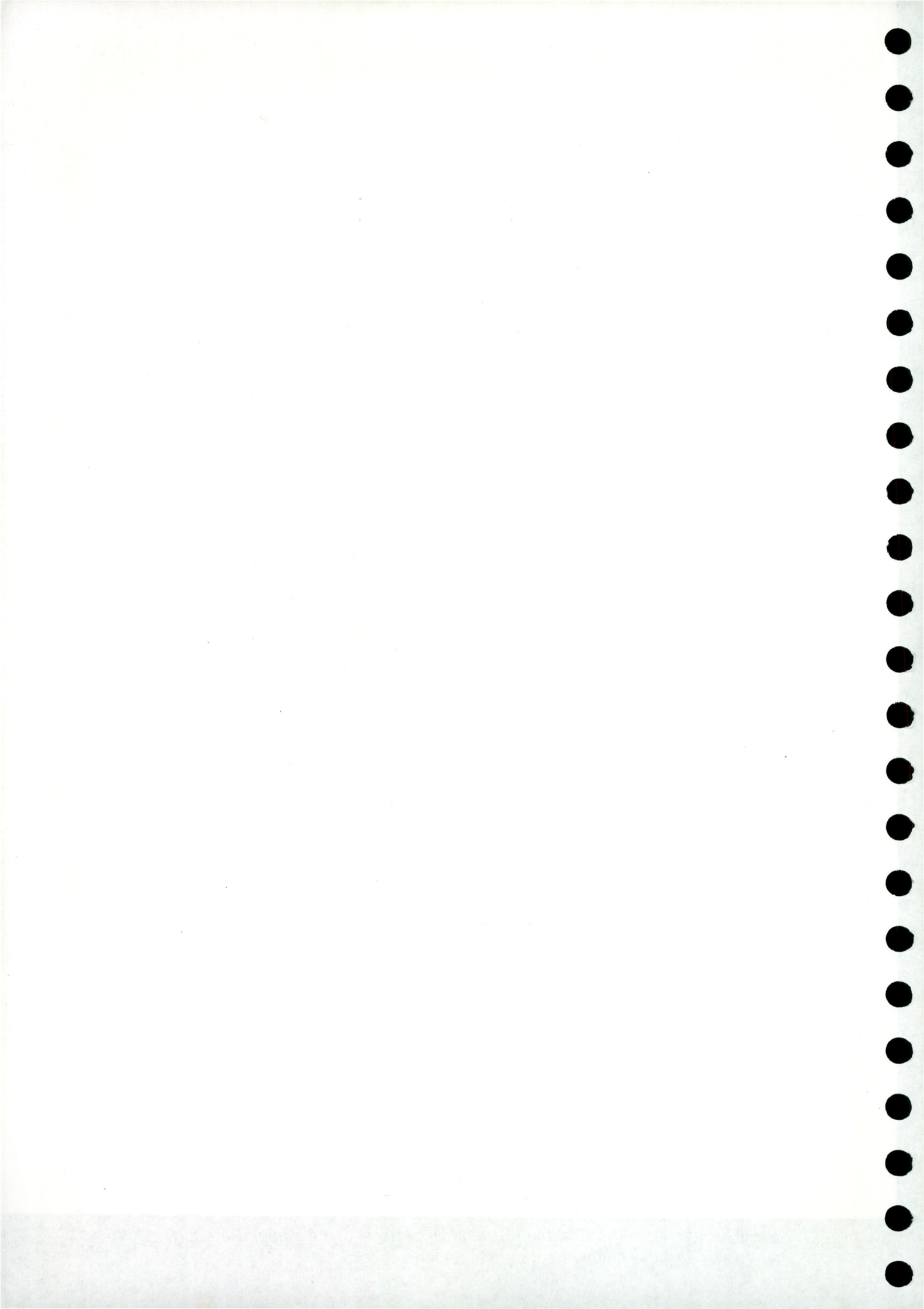
In 1996, Cristina Sanchez became the first woman to take her *alternativa* and become a fully fledged matador. For her, and the few other female bullfighters, the *Suit of Lights* has been slightly modified. A minor variation in the cut of the jacket was introduced so that it now goes up at the center front and has a larger opening. The waistcoat is often embroidered in a different coloured thread to the trousers and jacket, a rare feature in men's outfits. The suit adheres very much to tradition, but is nevertheless a huge step forward in taurine fashion (ill.20).

SANCHEZ

EJAS EN
DRILLO,



ill. 20: Cristina Sanchez, the first woman to become a matador. Note the cut of the jacket and the different colour embroidery. 35



(iv) INDIVIDUAL VARIETY

Each bullfighting outfit contains the same items - jacket, trousers, stockings etc. and there is little variety of style within these. Therefore when a bullfighter is commissioning his costume he has only to decide on two aspects: one is colour and the second is the embroidered pattern. To help him decide, the tailor will show him either a suit recently made up that is still in the shop, photographs of suits already made, or sketches of different embroidery patterns. The bullfighters choice will be influenced firstly by fashion and secondly by superstition. As with all items of clothing certain aspects of the costume come in and out of fashion. Currently, the slightly less embroidered suit is becoming more fashionable and there is a greater range of colours. Bullfighters are often superstitious and, with regards to the *Suit of Lights*, this may particularly influence their choice of colour. Yellow is seldom used as it is regarded as unlucky by Spaniards (to the extent that even the spectators at a bullfight rarely wear it)⁴. If a bullfighter has had a particularly good fight, the suit he wore on that day may become his lucky suit, for as long as possible. Later the colour of that suit will become his lucky colour. In contrast, if certain bullfighters have an unlucky day with the bull they are unlikely to wear that colour again (ill. 21).

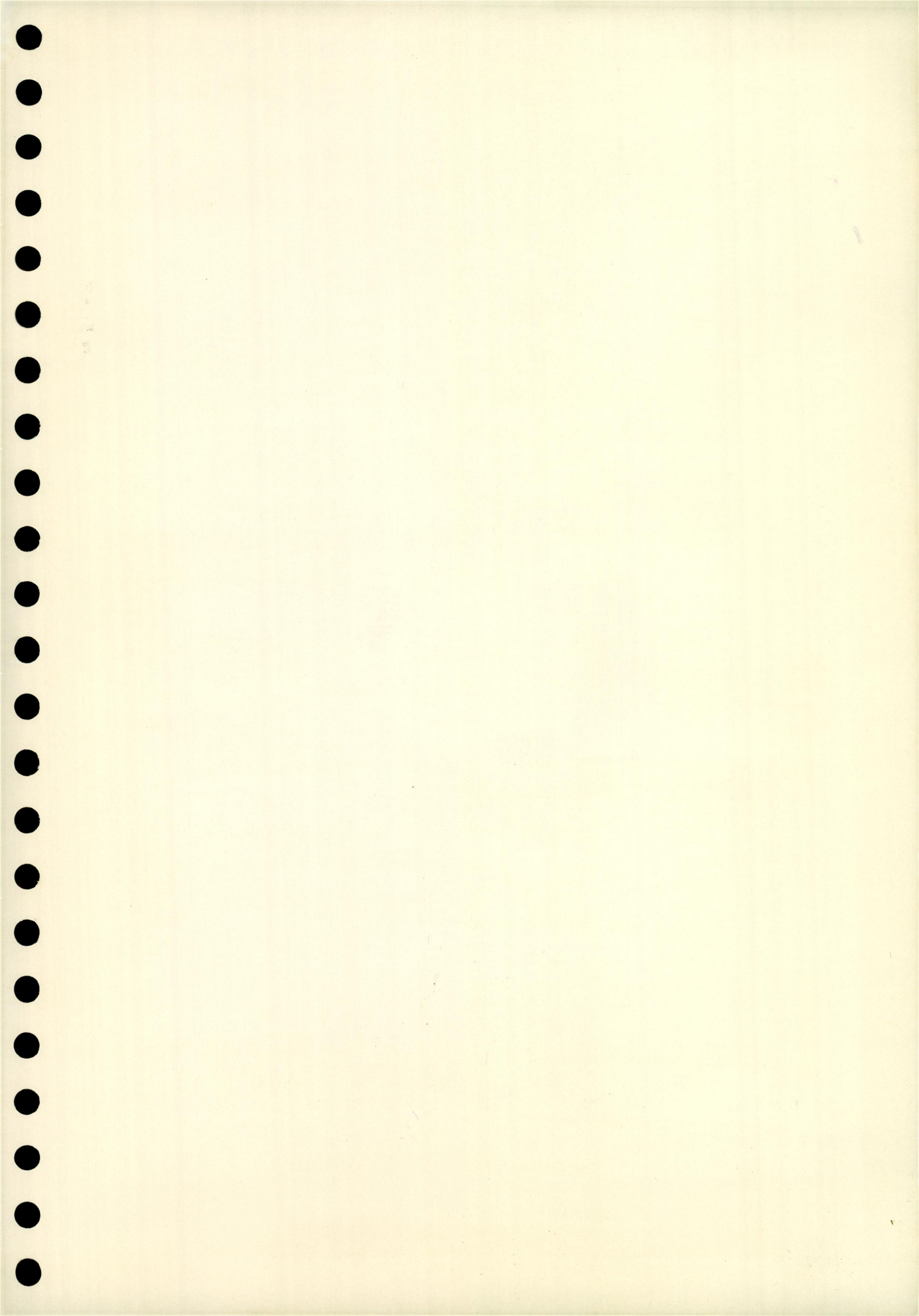
Manolete (a top bullfighter in the 20th century) was wearing a dark green and gold suit when he was gored, the suit was passed on to Parrita, who was also severely gored the first time he wore it. Stories like these are the source of many superstitions.

There is popular belief that if a matador wears a red suit he places himself in greater danger. This belief is based on the fallacy that the bull will confuse the suit, because of its colour, with the cape, and charge the man instead of the lure. So ingrained is this myth that *aficionados* refer to a red suit embroidered in gold as the suit of the valiant. Joselito El Gallo (1895-1920) received his fatal goring in a red and gold *Suit of Lights*. Actually, bulls are colour blind (Fulton, 1992, p.44).

4. Three different capes are used during a bullfight. Contrary to the superstition surrounding the colour yellow, the first cape used is magenta with yellow lining. This cape is the largest and is used when the bull first appears in the ring, to test his overall charge, movement and which horn he favours. The second cape is smaller and red in colour, it is used by the matador to show off his skills of control. The third cape used is again red and smaller still, this is used for the kill (cf. ill.38).

ill. 21: Samples of some of the different colour fabrics used.





Other than the limitations of superstition, bullfighters may be surprisingly impartial about the precise decorations on their outfit. The decorations do not vary greatly though one particular style may take a bullfighters fancy. It might be assumed that a bullfighter so full of pride and passion for a *Suit of Lights* would be exacting and demanding in its details. It appears, however, that it is the suit, as a whole, that is important - the symbol of achievement and not its specific details.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE COSTUME

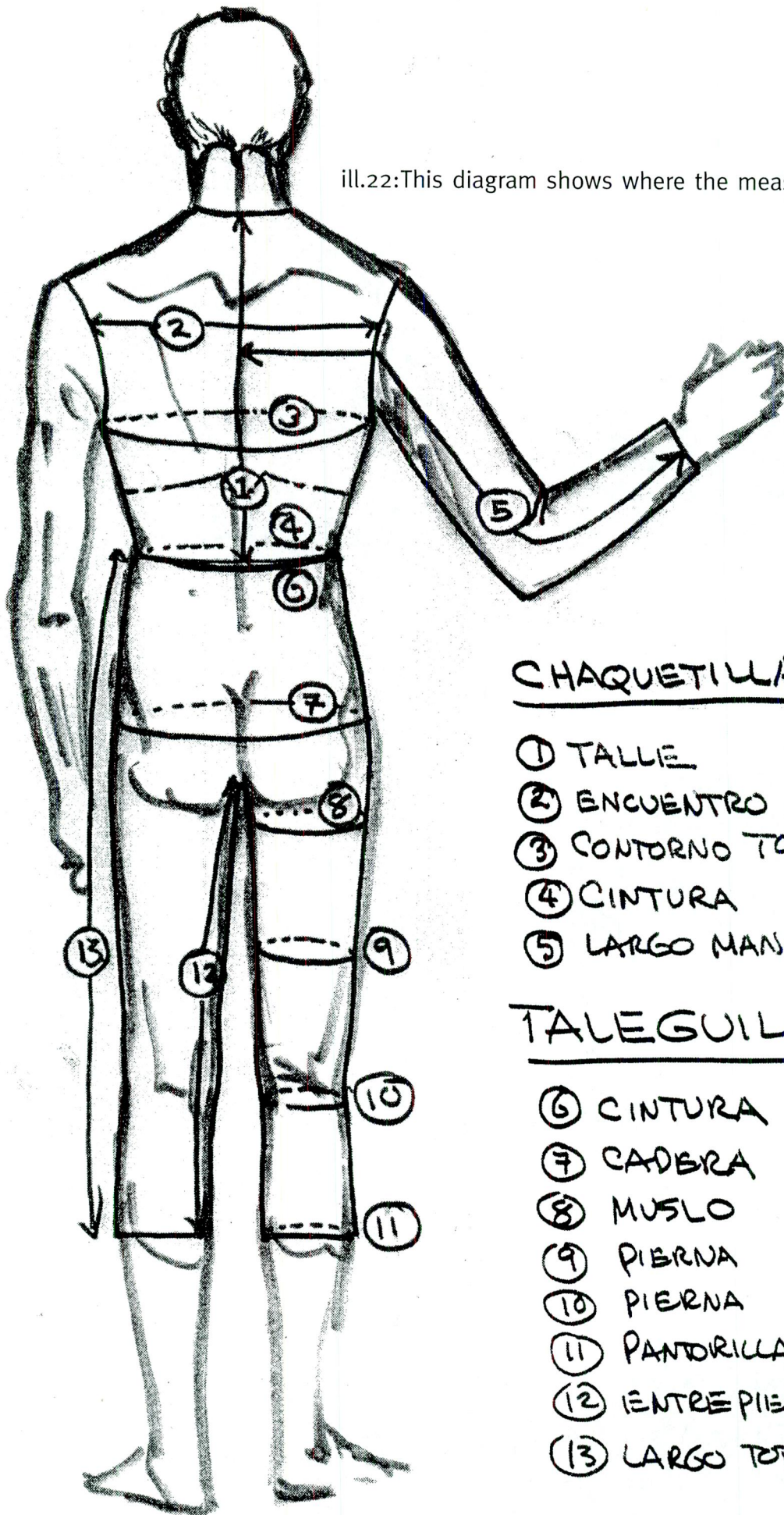
There are only four tailors in the whole of Spain where the *Suit of Lights* are actually made and all of these are in Madrid. Relatives or close friends of these tailors, have outlets around the country where they are ordered and sold. It is an extremely specialised and competitive area and perhaps this is why very little information is published or readily available.

Leather was the original fabric used for the bullfighting costume in the early 18th century. Later that century silk was introduced. This change was purely for fashionable and aesthetic reasons as the silk was not only expensive, but difficult to look after. Silk embroidered suits could not be washed and people were specifically employed to scrub the dry blood off the *Suit of Lights* with a little brush. In the early 1970's new functional synthetic fabrics became available and were used so that suits could be put in the bath and hosed down with cold water. This new method gave the suits a longer life span. For special occasions, the matador's costume may be made from velvet. These costumes look far more luxurious, but are more expensive and more difficult to clean. They cannot be soaked in water as synthetic ones are, therefore, they do not last as long. The decorations on the velvet suits are embroidered in the same styles as that of the synthetic suits.

As the suit is so close fitting, the measurement process is extensive and precise (ill.22). Thirteen different measurements are taken. The leg is measured in four different places: top of the thigh, mid thigh, just below the knee and mid calf. The sleeves, on the other hand, have just one measurement, the length. The top bullfighters always have their suits fitting perfectly.

A new *Suit of Lights* costs around £2,000. This comprises breeches, waistcoat and jacket. One must then buy shoes, stockings, hat, braces, cummerbund, tie, hairpiece and shirt. These necessary extras will bring the total cost to nearly £3,000 (See appendix 1).

ill.22: This diagram shows where the measurements are taken.



CHAQUETILLA

- ① TALLE
- ② ENCUENTRO
- ③ CONTORNO TOTAL
- ④ CINTURA
- ⑤ LARGO MANGA

TALEGUILLA

- ⑥ CINTURA
- ⑦ CADERA
- ⑧ MUSLO
- ⑨ PIERNA
- ⑩ PIERNA
- ⑪ PANTORILLA
- ⑫ ENTREPIERNA
- ⑬ LARGO TOTAL

The amount of decoration on the *Suit of Lights* is vast and the majority of it is hand embroidered. There are a few styles of flowers that are machine embroidered (ill.23). The overall suit is embroidered by the same group of embroiderers - this is because different people have different styles of stitching. Some may do it slightly tighter or on a slight angle and these minor variations would be noticed. It takes twelve people, usually women, about two weeks to do the embroidery (ill. 24 & 25). The only part of the suit that may have slightly different embroidery is the inside of the sleeves. This is so as to give apprentice embroiderers a chance to practice their skill. Along with the actual embroidered designs the intricate patterns of flowers etc. are created with almost 3,500 decorative beads. These include *golpes* (which are raised semi-circular decorations), pearl-like beads, coloured jewels, *bellotas* (acorn shaped beads) half of which are on the epaulettes (ill. 26). The suit also has around fifty *alamares* which are the decoration pieces made up of five circles and *bellotas* (ill.27, 28, 29 & 30). The suit, once made up and embroidered, weighs a total of five kilos.

The paper pattern from which the costume is made works in the same way as for any other garment. The original block is used after being adjusted to a matadors particular shape. The decorative design is drawn onto tissue paper (ill. 31 & 32) in detail and then laid on top of the fabric. Tiny pin holes are pierced through the tissue paper to reveal the fabric and fine chalk is then dusted over the complete piece of tissue paper. Once the paper is removed, the chalk will show the pattern. There are standard shapes in the costume, for example, the raised flowers on the epaulettes (cf. ill. 13) which are well known making individual stitching lines unnecessary.

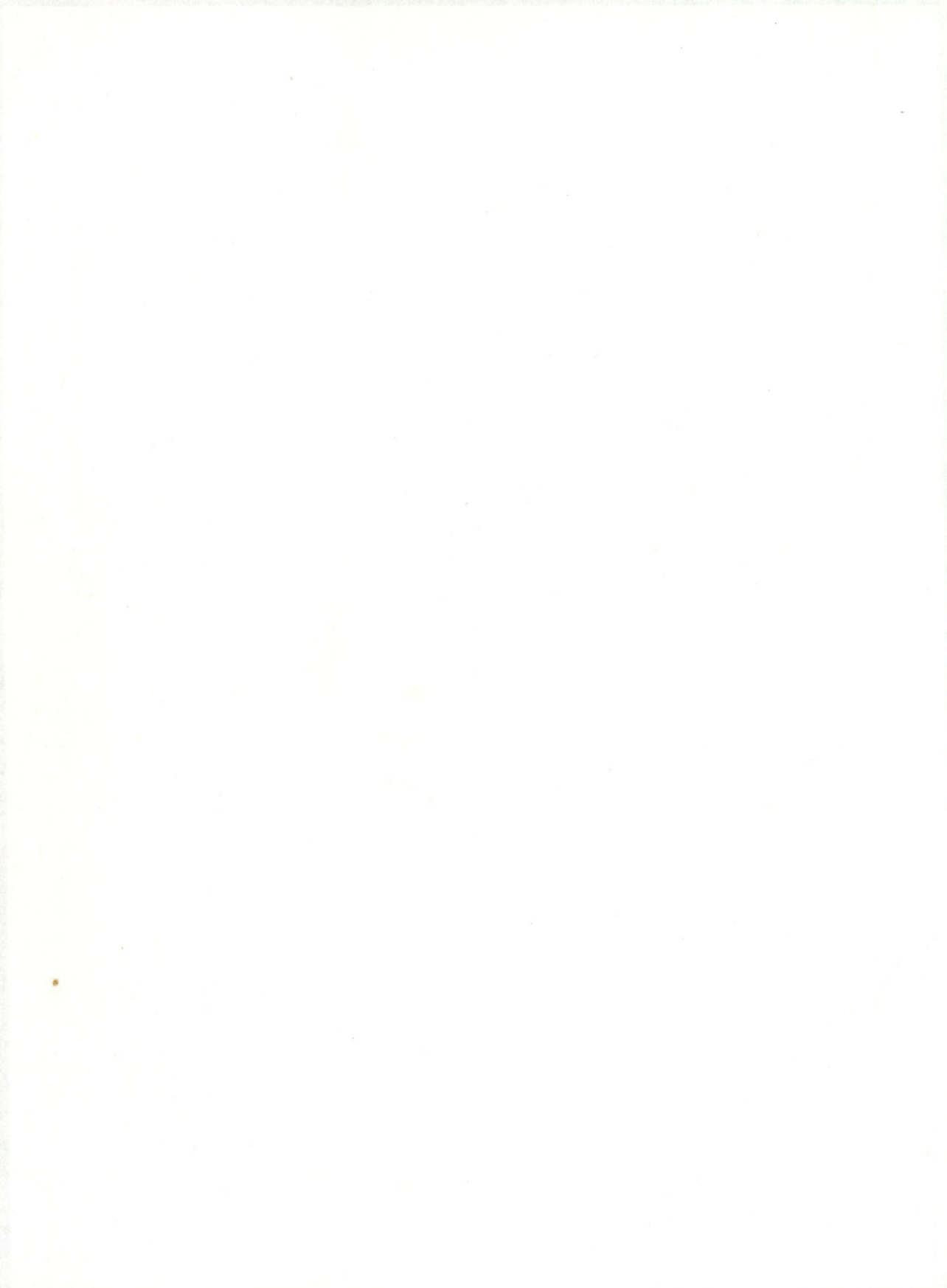
When designing a pattern for decorating a *Suit of Lights*, initial quick sketches are done and then, once the concept is beginning to work, it is drawn up full size (ill. 33). From this, adjustments are made - making certain aspects smaller, or increasing the width of one particular area. Only when the design is drawn up to the exact size it would be on the body, can the decision be made as to whether the pattern will be a success, or not.



ill.23: This sample shows some machine embroidered flowers.



ill.24: Close up of the breeches, showing the detailed hand embroidery.

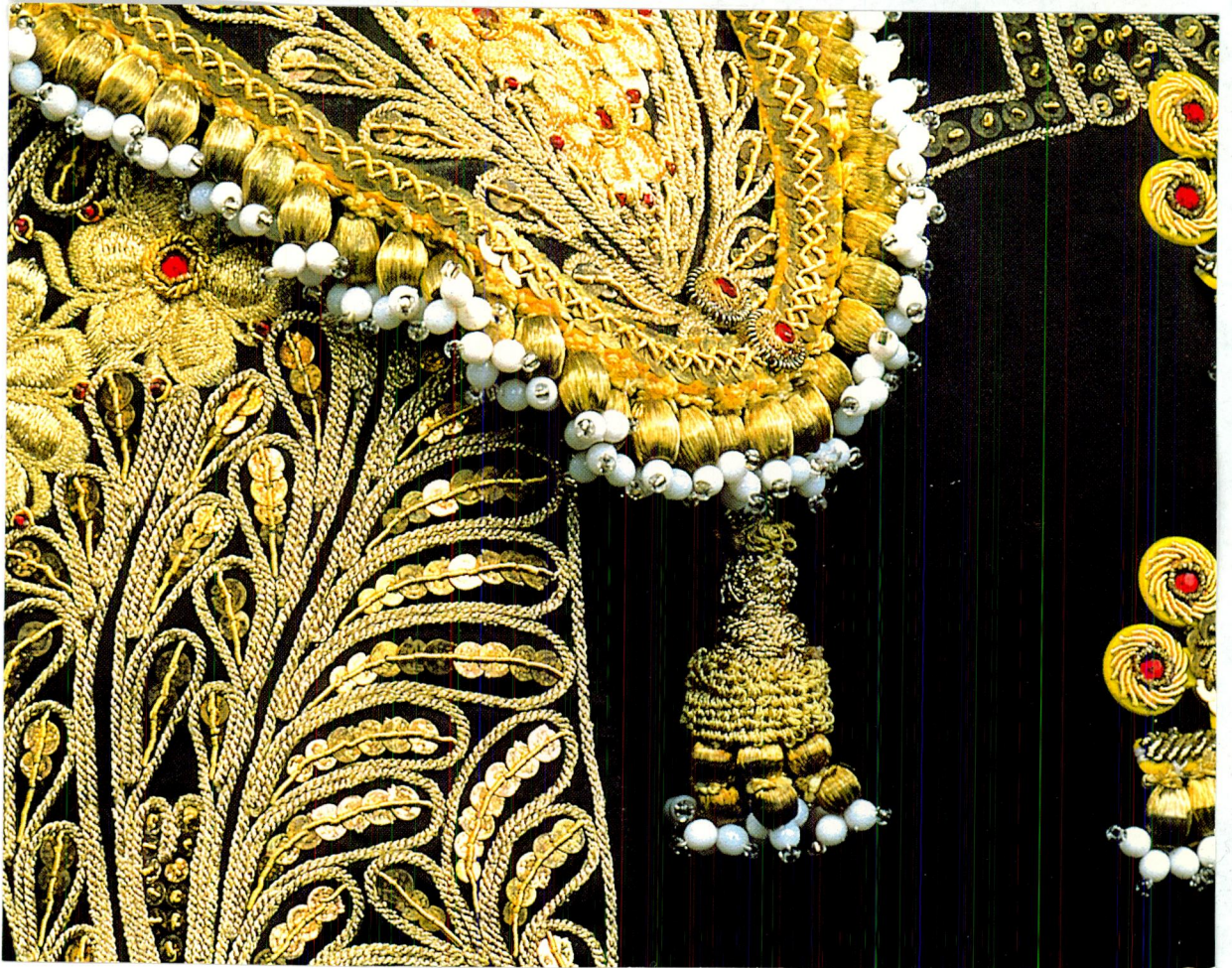




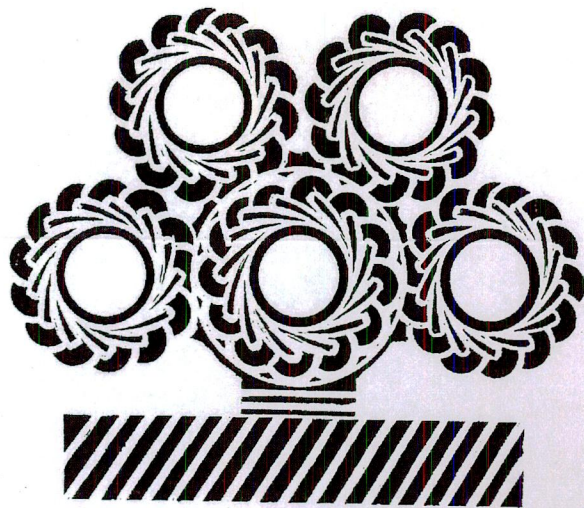
ill.25: This is part of an old jacket front. Note the holes where the sleeve has been laced in and the hand stitching on the underside.



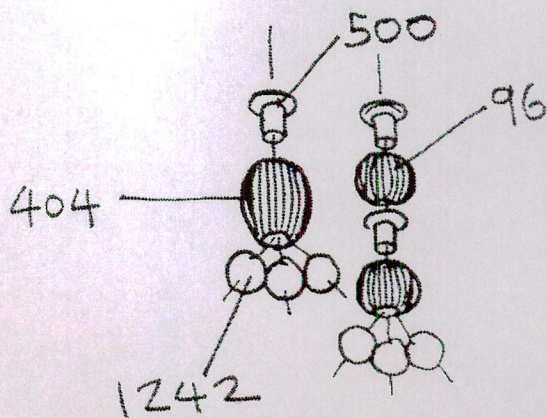




ill.26: A close up photograph showing the detail on a jacket. Note the amount of *bellotas* on the epaulette.



ill.27 : (left) Diagram of an *alamare* showing the positioning of sequins, gold thread and the coloured jewels.



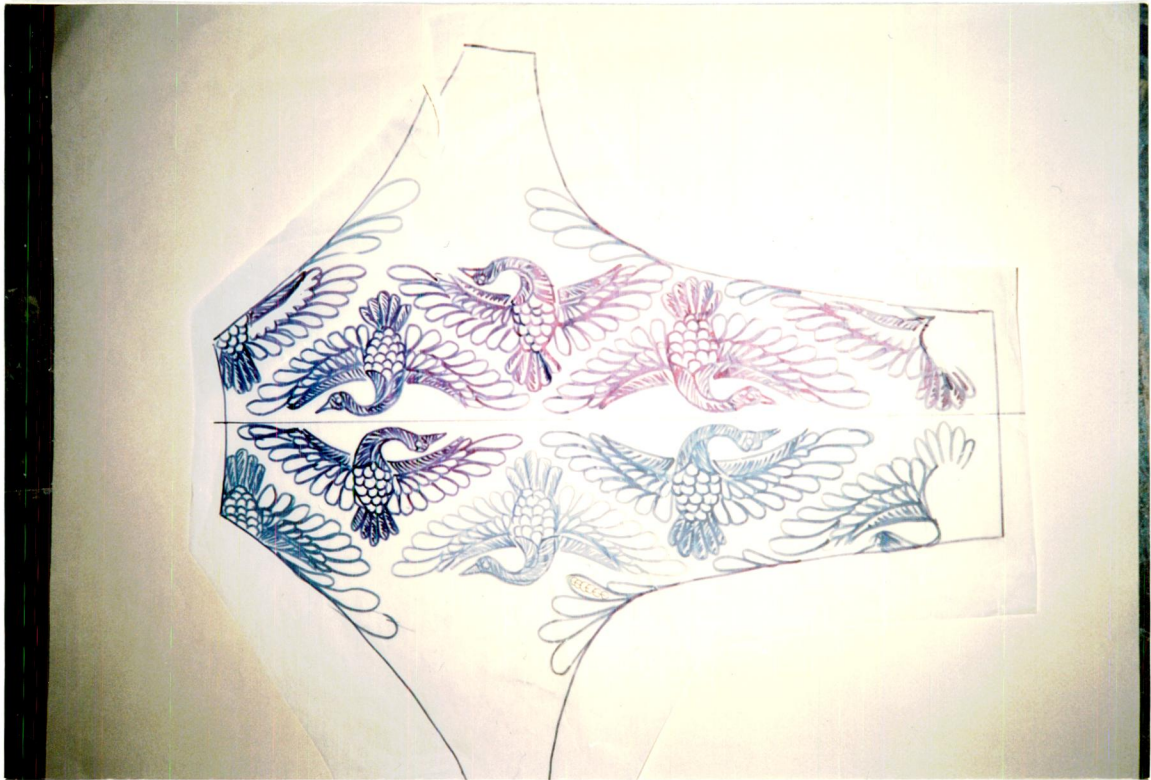
ill.29 : (above) Diagram showing the technical construction for the lower half of an *alamare*. These are the *bellotas* which also appear on the epaulettes and on the *machos*.



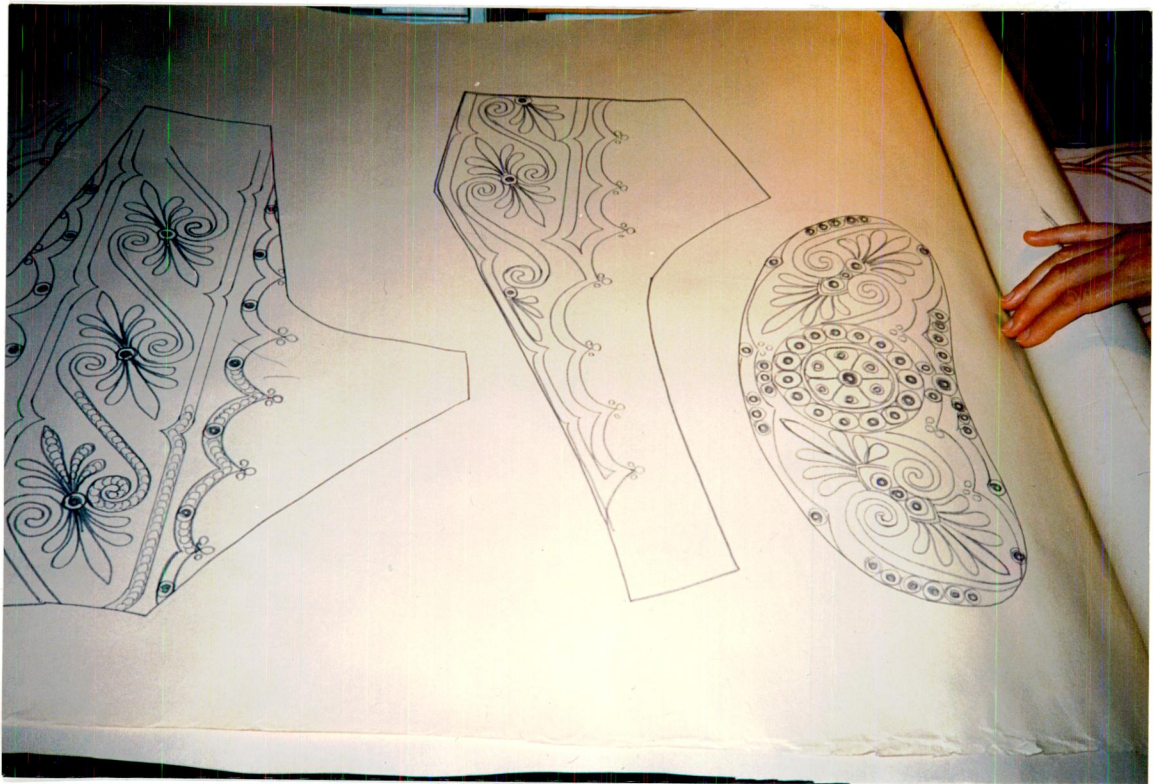
ill.28 : (above) An *alamare* from a second hand *Suit of Lights*. Note the plastic beads extending from the *bellota*.



ill.30 : (above) These are the most expensive *bellotas* available. These have not yet been attached to an *alamare* as they are new. Note the white silk thread made into little balls as opposed to the plastic ones (ill. 28) this is what makes this type of decoration more expensive.

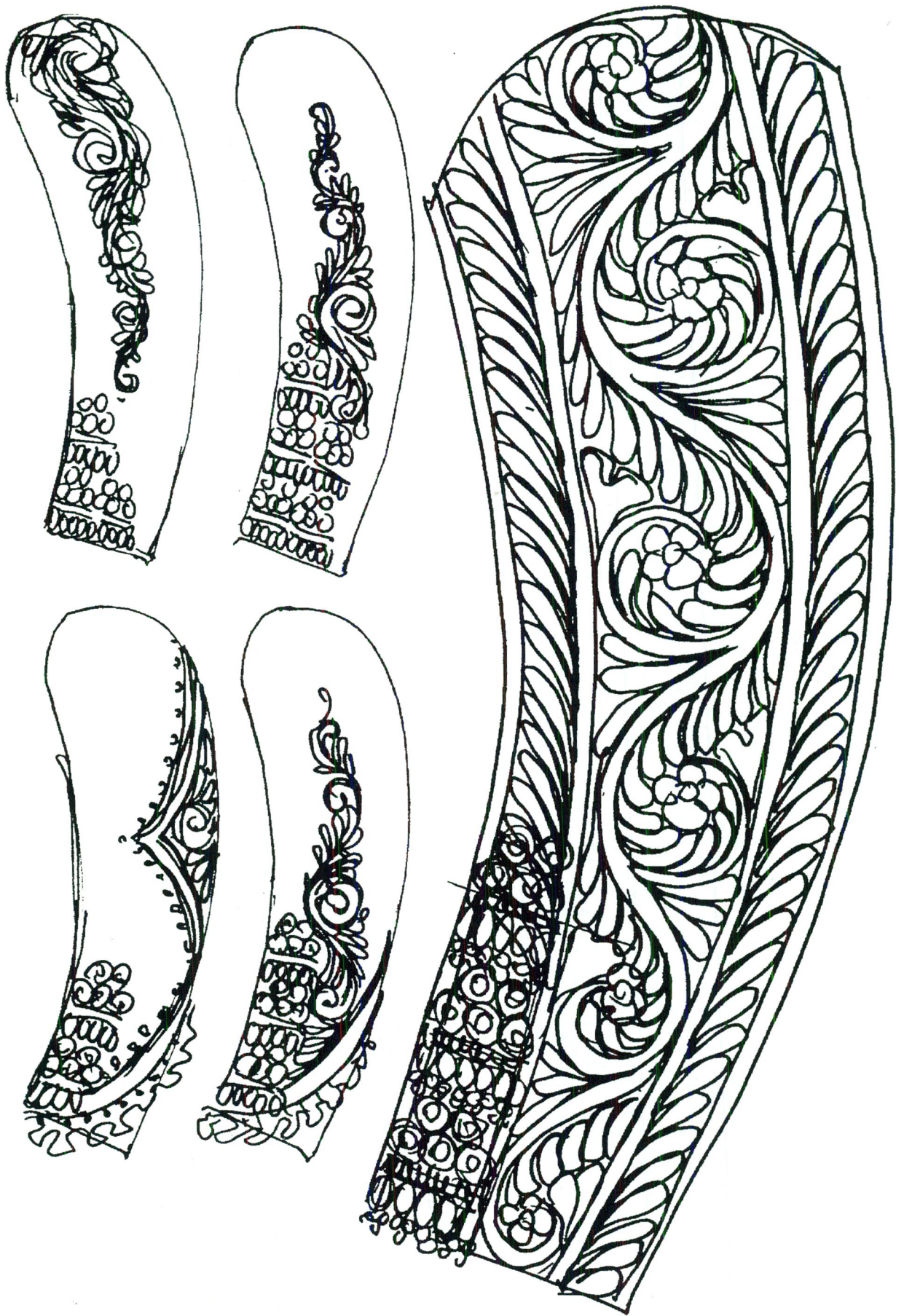


ill.31: Design for back panel of a jacket, drawn up to full size.

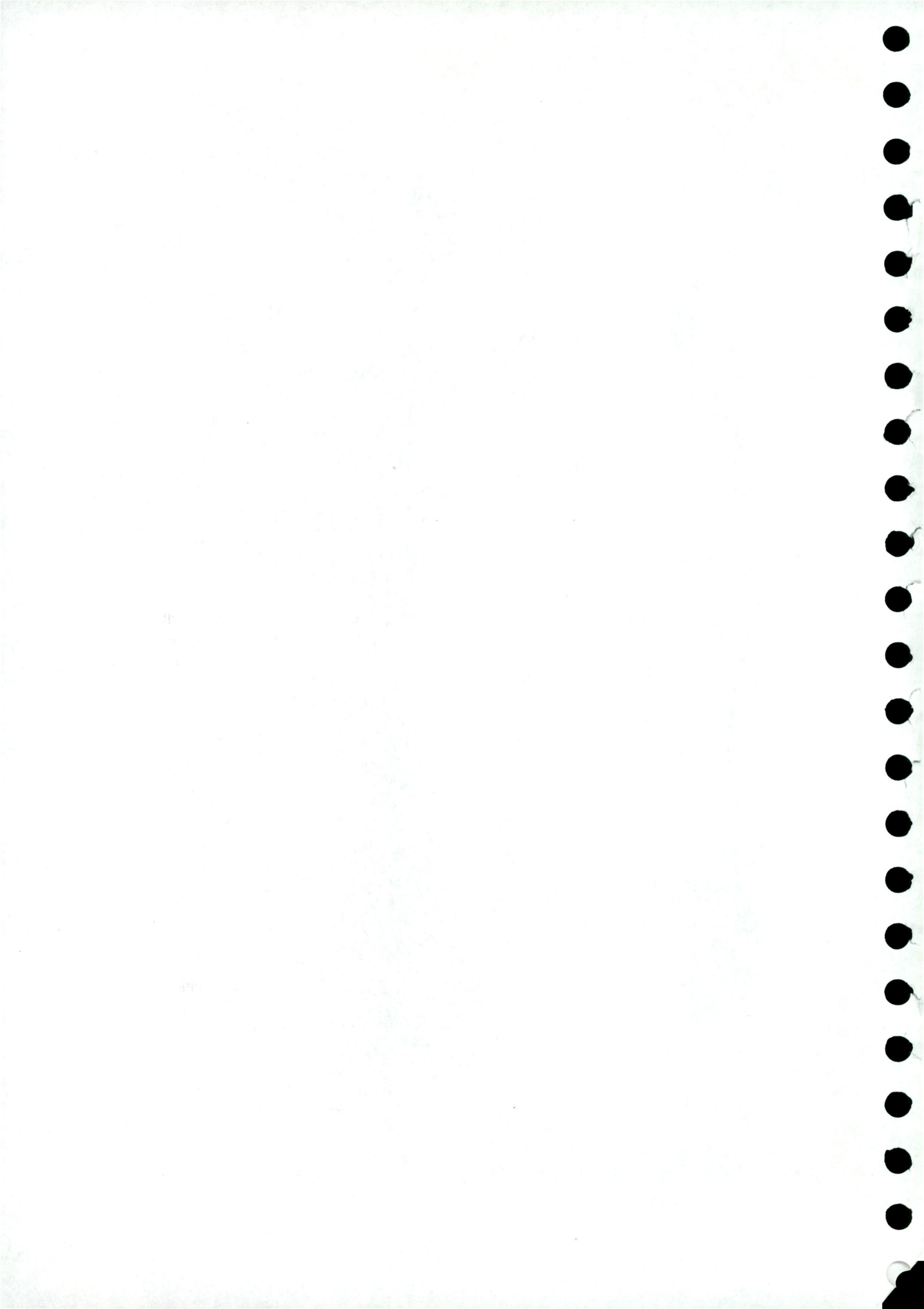


ill. 32: Embroidery designs drawn up to full size on paper before they are put on the fabric.





ill. 33: Original small designs for variations of embroidery on sleeves.



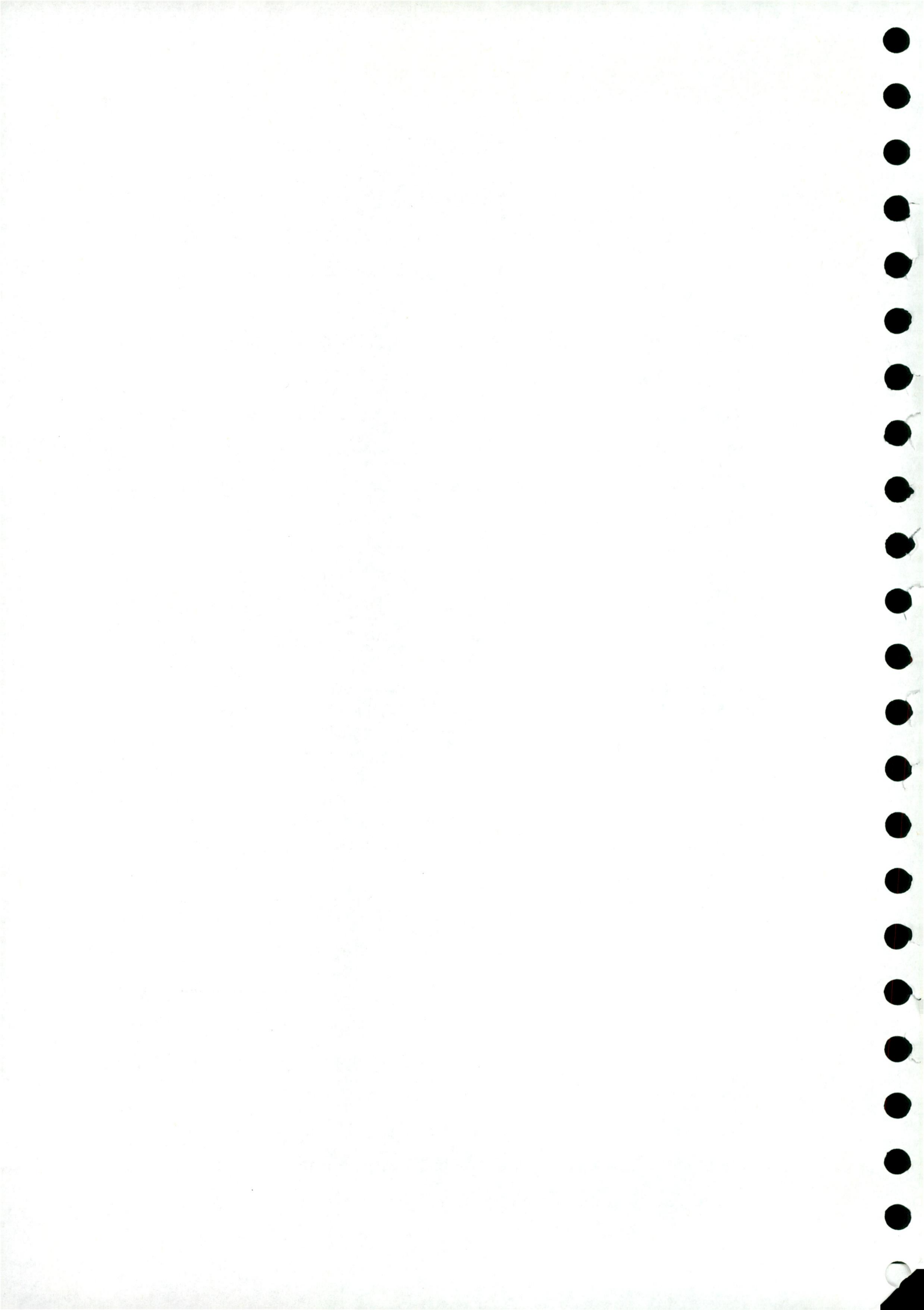
CHANGE IN THE COSTUME 1970'S

John Fulton, an American-born Spaniard, is a well known matador and artist in Spain. For many years, he has worked closely on the design of the embroidery and on minor adjustments to the *Suit of Lights*, with costume makers.

Early in the 1970's he hit the newspaper headlines as *The American Matador from Seville* (Taylor, 1973, p.2). In the article Fulton suggested slight changes to the *Suit of Lights*. In any other garment this probably would have gone unnoticed, but because the *Suit of Lights* had in the popular imagination, not changed in more than 200 years this was important to Spanish bullfighting circles. The debate started.

Two years ago, a respected bullfight tailor, Madrid's Don Luis Alvarez, stated ex cathedra, 'There will be no changes in the *Suit of Lights*; change must originate with the bullfighters themselves and their ideas. Perhaps in a hundred years there may be some differences, but slight. The suit is a thing of tradition'. In fact, even as Alvarez was making his proclamation, a revolution was beginning in the shop of his competitor, Fermin Lopez. As a tailor, Fermin shares the stature and success of Alvarez, but not his subservience to the past. 'I honour my ancient trade and I deeply respect the customs of bullfighting', Fermin says. 'Tradition is fine and noble, but a lake that is not fed by springs eventually grows stagnant. We have known for a long time there are changes that could be made in the *Suit of Lights*, changes of construction and design to take advantage of new materials and new ideas, without breaking completely with the traditions of the art' (Englund, 1974, p.57).

In the 1970's Don Fermin had started experimenting in creating new fabrics. He began working with textile chemists to produce a fabric which would be lighter and more flexible, but that would still look as good as the original silk lined with layered and starched fabric. Don Fermin, after two years of experimentation finally came up with a suitable fabric made from petroleum derivatives. His new fabric caused quite a stir and the fact that it could be cleaned with water was a major attraction for many bullfighters. The suits are expensive and removing the blood (their own as well as the bulls) without water was difficult. (There are certain passes, which incite a great 'ole' from the crowd, such as the *paseo por*



alto, which is when the bull brushes against the matador's chest leaving his blood streaked across his jacket. The crowd love it, as it shows the bravery of the matador, but for the matador it could mean another £2,000 for a new suit). The earlier suits with their layers upon layers of cotton absorbed the blood like a sponge and made it nearly impossible to remove later. They would last about six fights at the most, before they began to look too old and dirty for a professional matador and would have to be passed down to a novice. Fermin's new suits were reputed to be able to withstand fifteen fights or more. The new jacket was slightly more expensive to buy (by about £60), but for over double the amount of wear that a matador would get out of it, it was well worth it. This new fabric may not have influenced the ten or twelve top bullfighters, who are more often in the public eye and on television, because they would buy a new suit more regularly, simply for a change of colour. In the traditional world of bullfighting the new fabric was very controversial. The top echelons of bullfighting society value their pride, honour and tradition and, to some, any change was regarded as an interference with the spirit and memory of former great matadors.

Not only did Fermin Lopez introduce this new, revolutionary fabric, he also introduced new embroidery designs. The creator of these designs was not Fermin himself, but John Fulton. Fulton had started experimenting with new ideas back in 1963, when he took his *alternativa* in Seville. He wanted to replace the heavily embroidered epaulette with a single piece of fabric and simplify all the embroidery design. He took his designs to Manfredi (another tailor of the *Suit of Lights*) who made up a number of excuses for not making them. Despite this, after seeing Fulton's samples in Manfredi's workshop some bullfighters did request the new designs for their suits. This was in the mid 60's, but the idea never really took off at that time, as Manfredi died and John Fulton was too busy to pursue it on his own.

When Fulton showed his designs to Fermin some eight years later in 1971, the tailor was impressed. It was then that he included some of Fulton's designs with his new fabrics and sold them amongst other suits to the bullfighters (ill.34).

Initially they did not really comment on the design of the embroidery, but gradually realised that they much preferred them. The fabric was lighter and more practical, the designs, with less dense embroidery, were simpler, and therefore also lighter. Fermin decided that his next collection would solely feature these new designs. The response from the press was extremely positive. The matadors liked them because of the historical significance of the designs and the sword boys (the matador's right hand man) spoke of the wonderful, flexible fabric. Fermin and Fulton were a perfect combination - Fermin had the tailoring skills and Fulton, the artistic and practical creativity of a matador and artist. As Fermin said,

There is no other great artist in Spain who is also a professional matador and who knows how one of these suits feels when looking down the snout of a charging bull (Englund, 1974, p.58).

Fulton's designs were inspired by symbols from the ancient cultures, such as the Greeks and the Romans (ill. 35, 36 & 37) where bullfighting has its strongest roots. The Greek island of Crete is one of the places where bullfighting first started (the Cretan bull jumpers), so for Fulton it was appropriate to use the symbolic bee from Crete; it was also thought that these sacred insects brought good luck. From ancient Greece, Fulton used the laurel branch, symbol of triumph. For each of his designs he stylised ancient symbols and adapted them to the *Suit of Lights*.

The singular simplicity of these ornamental motifs designed by John Fulton, not only make the suits, made by Fermin, attractive, they also make them comfortable without losing their classical line (Blanco y Quinones, 1974,p.6).

Fulton and Fermin had got it right. But the line between acceptance and rejection was very slim. Earlier Matador Luis Miguel Dominguin, decided, at the age of 46, to make a comeback and ordered an entire wardrobe of lighter suits with less embroidery. The crowd did not like them, they felt that they were dull and lacked the sparkling brilliance of the other suits. Dominguin's fame as a bullfighter, of great skill and courage, did not save him from criticism in his attempt to change the *Suit of Lights*. Even the slightest move away from the norm created news. A change of stockings got headlines in The Los Angeles Times "Luis Miguel



ill. 34: A suit design by John Fulton in the 1970's with less embroidery.

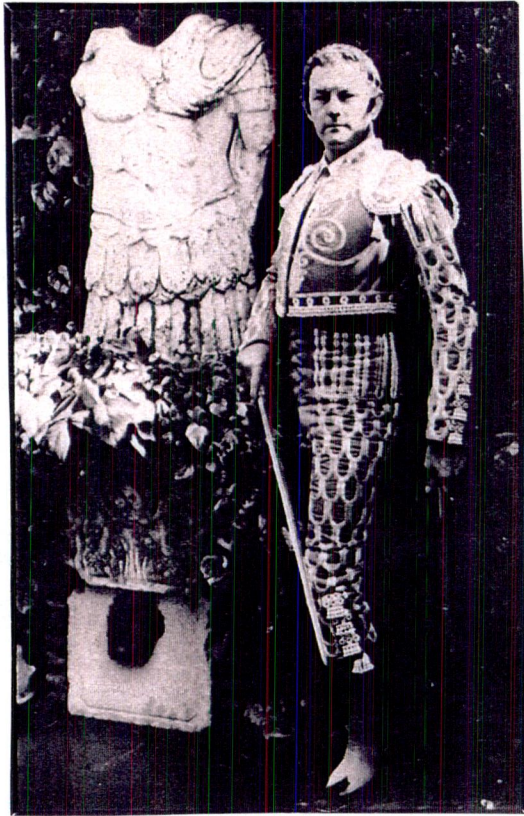




ill.35 : Variations of suits designed by John Fulton in the 1970's.

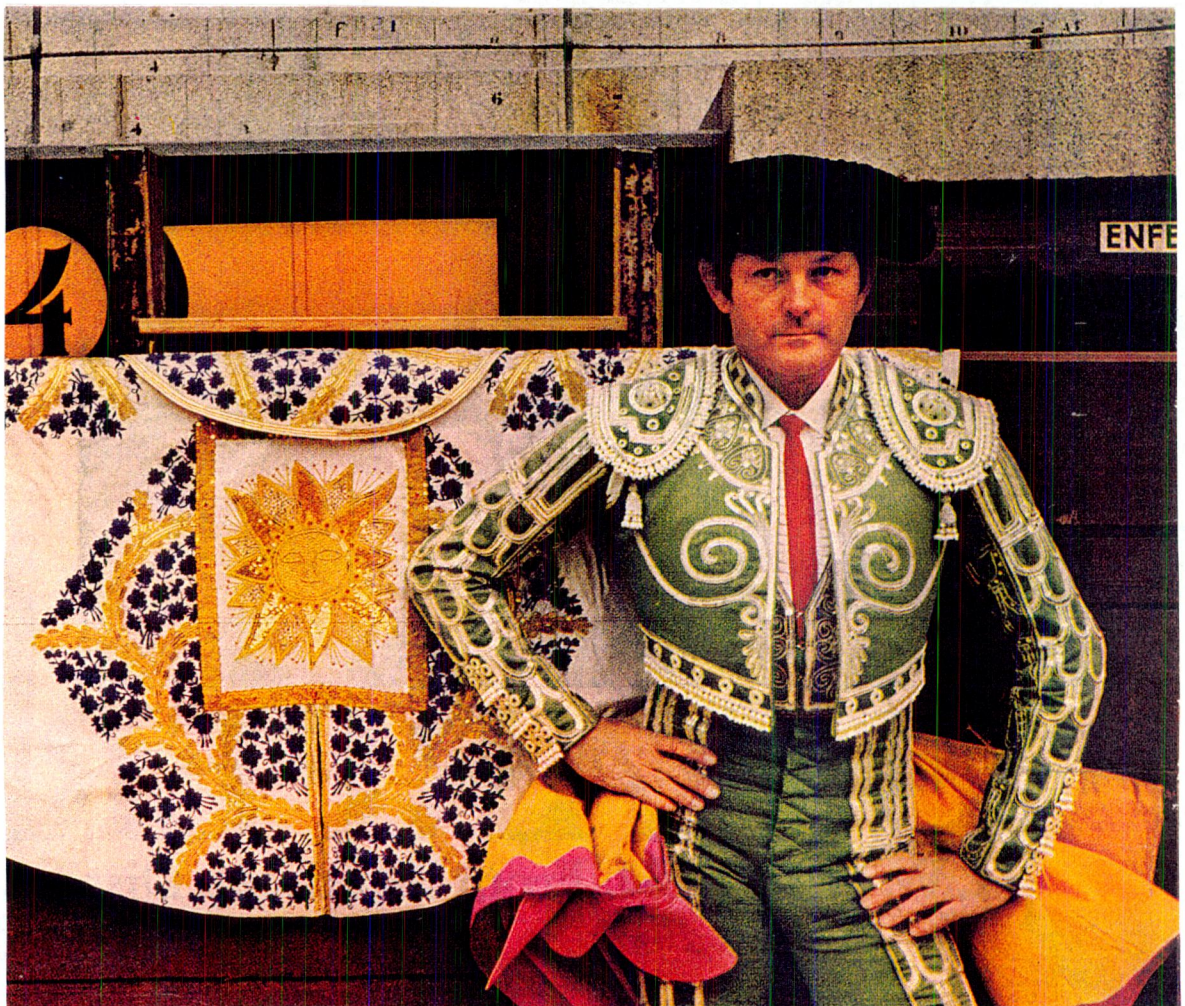






ill.36 : (left) John Fulton in one of his less densely embroidered suits.

ill.37 : (below) John Fulton in the same suit in the ring with his parade cape on display beside him.





Dominguin broke tradition last year by wearing stockings the same colour as his suit". Again, Dominguin was regarded as a heretic.

It is no wonder then, that there has been little change in the design and making of the *Suit of Lights* in the last few centuries. When John Fulton was asked in an interview with El Mundo de los Toros newspaper why the design could not be a more sporty uniform for the fighter, he replied "The *Suit of Lights* is part of the whole bullfight. Could we imagine a matador in shorts and tennis shoes? The answer is no, it wouldn't work" (Naturale 1973, p.16).

If anybody could have introduced a change it was Fermin Lopez. He has been in the business of tailoring the *Suit of Lights* for over sixty years and regards his profession as an art. In common with the many other traditional tradesmen associated with bullfighting he has been involved with the profession since he was a young boy. His mother worked on the suits as an embroiderer and he himself started as a messenger boy in a costume workshop.

Inside was a world of flashing rolls of satin: blue, lilac, scarlet, emerald, purple and white. A dozen heavy magenta and yellow fighting capes, standing with their own stiffness, were posted about the floor. Poised over a large work table littered with gold tassels and shreds of satin was the shop's fifty-eight year old proprietor. For more than forty years, since he had, as a twelve year old boy, delivered a suit of lights to the great Joselito, Santiago Pelayo, devoted his talents to the fabrication of that unique and revered garment, the *Suit of Lights* (Collins, La Pierre 1988).

This degree of involvement and understanding of each intricate detail on the *Suit of Lights* is important in attempting any change. Not only does it effect the bullfighters image but each change may have an impact on the equally traditional costume of the *Bandilleros*⁵ who accompany the bullfighter in the ring. Distinction is shown between *Bandilleros* and Matadors by the way they dress.

5. There are two *bandilleros* in the matadors team of assistants. Their role is to run out to the bull, three times, each time placing a pair of dowling sticks (covered with crepe paper and with a steel harpoon point at one end) in the hump of neck muscle behind the bulls horns to weaken it. Dress is important in distinguishing the matadors and *bandilleros*.

Matadors are at the top of the hierarchy and are the only ones permitted to wear gold embroidery (ill. 38). So any change has an affect all along the line. *Bandilleros* are only permitted to have black or silver embroidery on their suits (cf. ill. 9 & 11). Anyone outside the profession who suggested a change to the *Suit of Lights* would be regarded with suspicion and any evidence of a lack of respect or understanding for bullfighting would be rebuked- passionately.

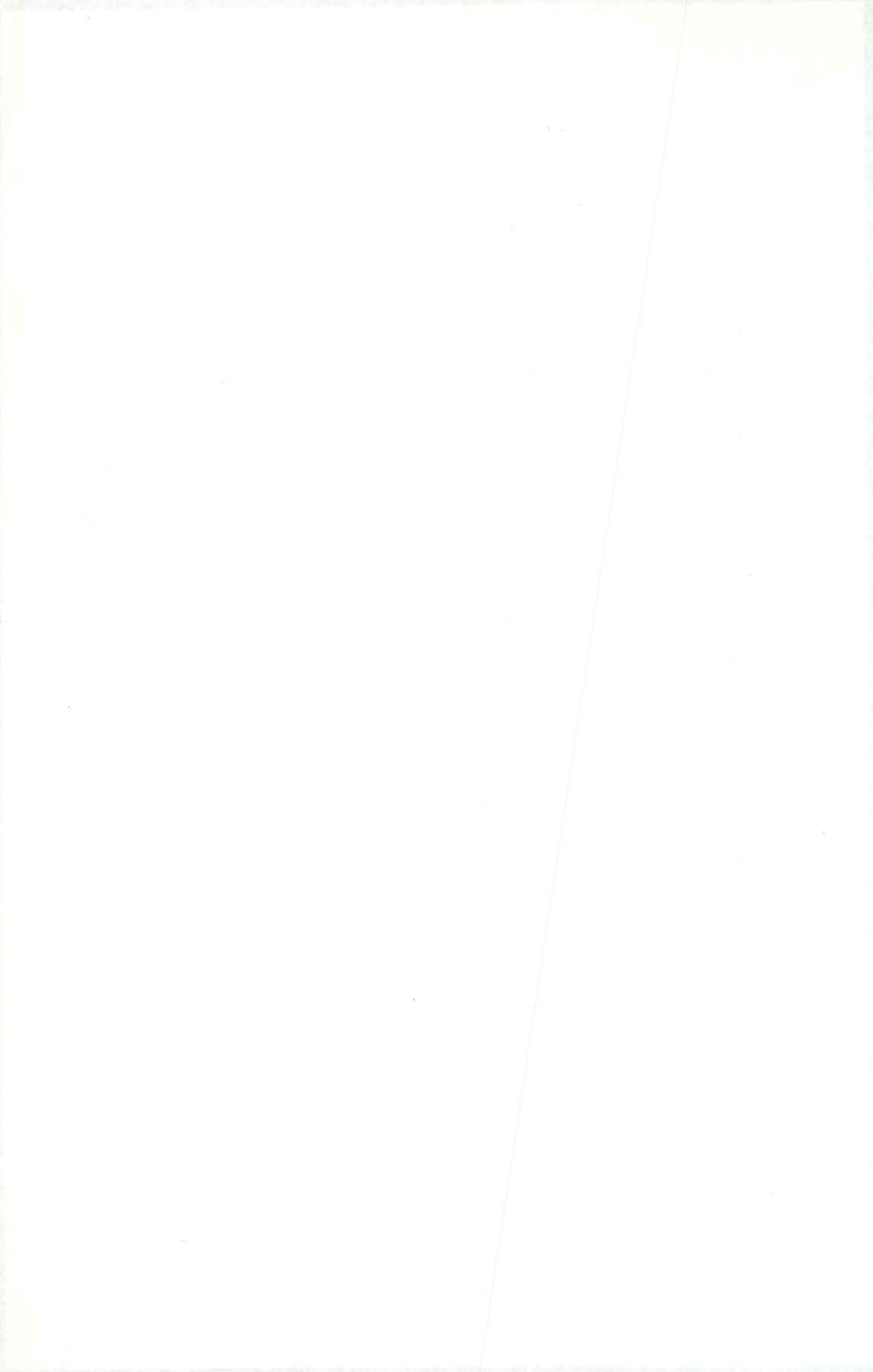
A few years ago Fermin Lopez was reported to have said that apart from bullfighters buying the *Suit of Lights*, other people buy them for private museums or for their collection of taurine curiosities (mainly second hand). Foreigners also buy them as dress accessories to use the waistcoat and/or jacket for parties. Fermin disagreed with this and felt that it was time that foreigners understood the history of the costume and only expose them in their homes as they would a piece of art. "People must realise he said that the *Suit of Lights* plays such an important role in the bullfight, and without the actual costume, the drama would be halved" (Naturale, 1973, p16).

The revolutionary designs of Fermin and Fulton in the 70's did not last long. They were again replaced in the late 80's by the earlier designs with their traditional heavy embroidery. Just as fashions come and go, and come again, the same has happened with the *Suit of Lights*. As recently as the 1997 bullfighting season, the less decorated and lighter suit of the 70's has had a revival.

At this moment, another innovative idea is again being developed by John Fulton. He has come up with a revolutionary and exciting idea to keep the suit beautiful, but much more functional. He has been working on a technique of screen printing gold (ill. 39) onto the fabric used for the jacket, front of the waistcoat and outside trouser leg. The technique works - and would drastically reduce the weight of the suit. Embroidery and beads would still be used to add colour and texture, but the amount of work would be halved. So far, it has not been accepted by the Spanish bullfighting community - the matadors almost regard this as cheating - and see it as taking away some of their demonstration of power and strength.



ill. 38.: A matador in a heavily embroidered *Suit of Lights* in gold thread.





ill. 39: Gold screen printed onto thick satin fabric
a new idea that John Fulton is working on.



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The crowd know how uncomfortable the suit is, it's hot and heavy, but the matadors move in it gracefully; they strut around showing off their luxurious suit to the full. If the suit were to change, they believe some of the glamour would go with it.

Wearing the suit makes one feel majestic and important. To lighten it, or change it in any way, might have a negative effect on the bullfighters sense of power and presence. In the world of bullfighting the clothes really do make the man.⁶

6: During my interviews and research with bullfighters and costume makers, I took the opportunity to try on a *Suit of Lights*. Straightaway I felt its effect on my body and my mood. I immediately stood up straighter, held my head high and felt like I actually could face a bull (this soon changed after I saw my next fight).

DRESSING BEFORE A FIGHT

On the morning of the fight the bullfighter's assistants take part in the allocation of the bulls. A matador will rarely go himself. The way a matador spends his day before the fight is up to him. Generally, however, they all follow a similar routine. They spend the previous night in a hotel and on the morning of a fight they get up late. Some matadors have lunch, others eat nothing at all, either due to nerves or because they prefer to have an empty stomach (just in case they need an emergency anaesthetic). After lunch the matador will have a siesta. While he is sleeping his sword boy carefully lays out his *Suit of Lights* on a chair in the correct order for dressing. About two hours before the fight, the matador is woken by his sword boy, he showers and begins to dress.

Dressing for the fight is an extremely important time that is taken very seriously. It is an honour to be invited to witness the dressing of a matador, and there are sometimes a number of people crowded into the room before the fight. They are usually close friends of the matador and are expected to leave before he is finished. Members of the family very rarely attend as their feelings of concern could distract the matador.

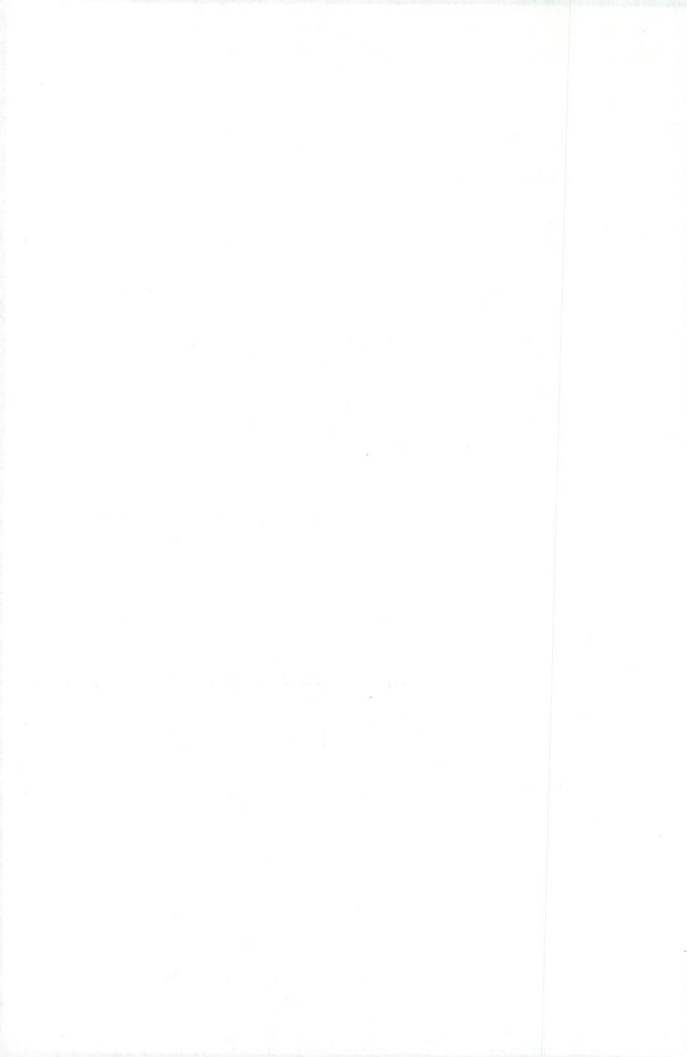
It is during the dressing that the matador gets into that state of semi-detachment that enables him to walk into the bullring, knowing what he has to face (Fulton, 1992, p.47).

Firstly, he puts on white tights, (the same ones that are worn by nurses). These eliminate wrinkles in the outer stockings and are less constricting than underwear. Next the pink, silk stockings are put on, stretched carefully over the foot and calf and held up with elastic garters. The embroidered arrow (the clock) on the outside of the calf is aligned with the ankle bone and knee joint, precisely vertical.

Next the matador puts on the *taleguilla* (breeches) (ill. 40). Putting on the breeches takes a while and a lot of jumping, sweating and pulling is required to



ill.40 : On the left hand side we see the bullfighter in action. On the right his breeches have been split and his shoes have come off. We see his white tights underneath and that his pink stockings have not slipped down or become wrinkled, even though his shoes have come off.

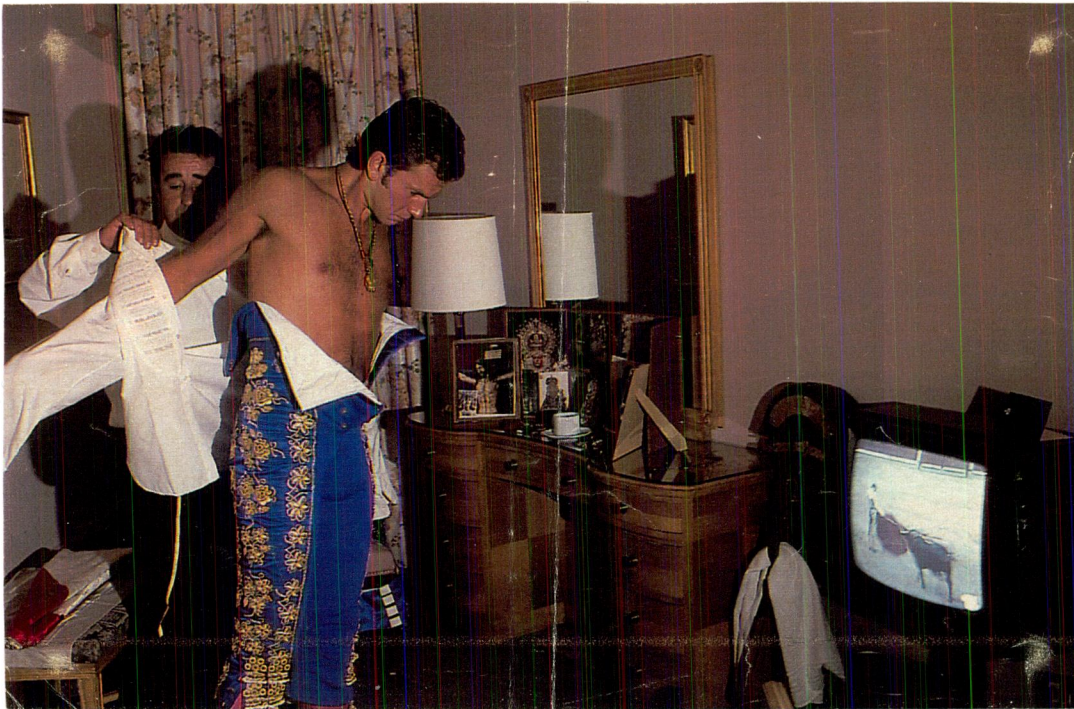


get them on as they are so tight-fitting.⁷

Often a towel is rolled up and placed between the bullfighters legs - he is then instructed to jump up and down - this way he is bounced into the breeches. There is a specific way in which the leg ties of the breeches should be knotted, so as to hang at the right height and not come undone in the ring. The cotton cords are pulled tightly around the calf and the *machos* are tied. Superstition has it that if a bullfighter wears his *machos* tied tightly he is energetic and brave, but if he wears them loosely knotted, he is slow and cowardly. The matador will tell his sword boy to tighten his *machos* - *apretar los machos* to show he is going to fight well. It has been known for the sword boys to take their orders a little too seriously and constrict the bullfighters circulation.

Next the matador's shoes are slipped on and at this point his *montera* (hat) will be placed on his head briefly, so that the sword boy can judge where to attach the pigtail - the lower edge of the hat should just touch the top of the pigtail. The shirt is then put on and tucked into the breeches and secured in place with drawstrings that tie around the waist (ill. 41). The cuffs of the shirt are usually left open. Once the shirt is tucked in, the breeches are done up. Firstly, a stiff piece of fabric, attached inside the breeches, is fastened, giving the same effect as a corset. The front of the breeches are then buttoned up. Braces are buttoned up on the inside of the trousers over the shirt. The thin tie will then be knotted in the same way as an ordinary suit tie and stitched to the middle of the front of the shirt, by one cross stitch of thread, the same colour as the tie. In recent years some matadors have taken to wearing pins with religious motifs. A picture of the Virgin Mary is sometimes sewn into the left hand side of the jacket and kissed before it is put on or just after it is taken off - a demonstration of religious devotion (ill.42). Next the cummerbund is folded and tied around the waist -

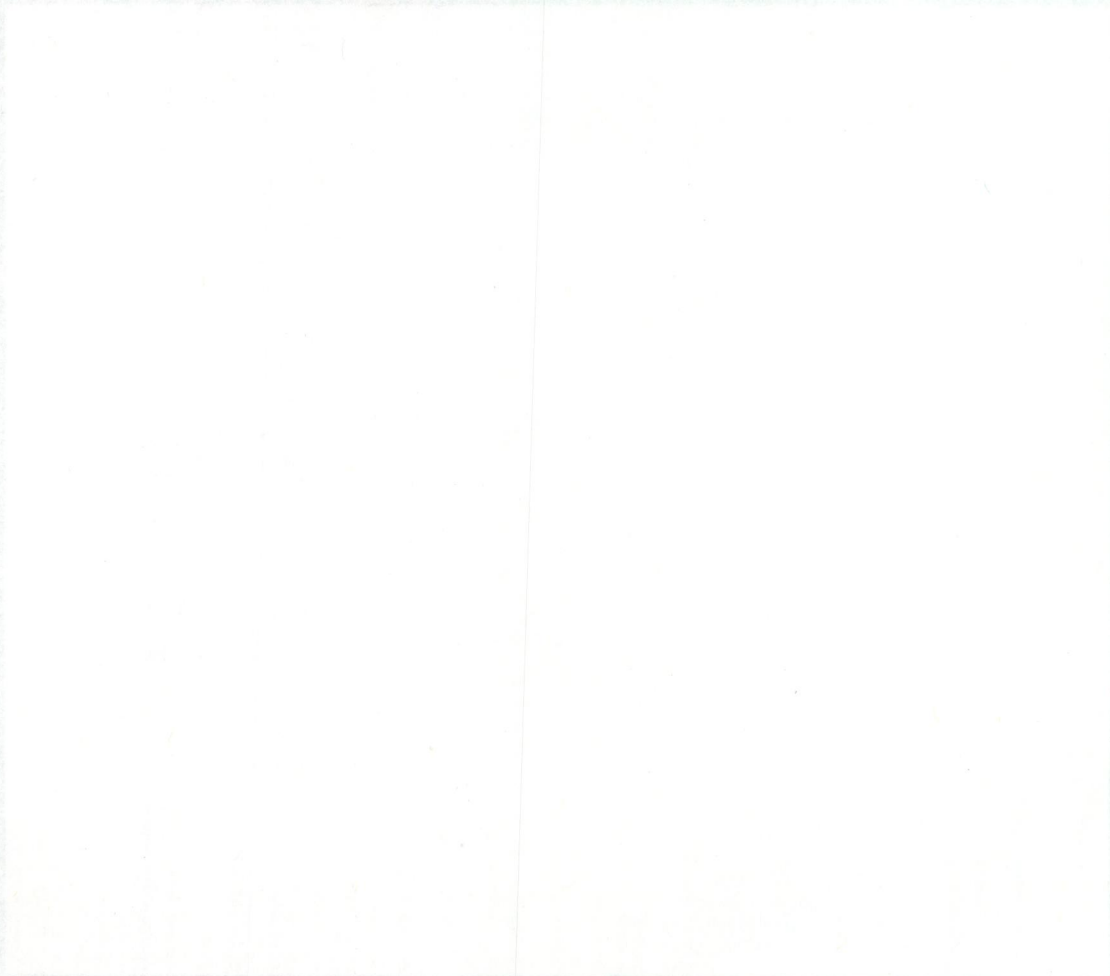
7. This point was demonstrated to me when I tried on a pair with great difficulty as they were so tight. Even taking them off took a long time. I was then informed by the matador that they were actually about two sizes too big for me!



ill.41 : Julio Aparacio getting dressed before a fight helped by his sword boy. Note the religious pictures in the background which every matador would take with him to the room he dresses in before a fight.



ill.42 : Julio Aparacio in his *campera* costume praying before going out to face a bull.



the ends carefully tucked into the braces. The matador must ensure nothing is loose to distract his attention, or to catch on the bull. He will then usually have a cup of coffee, and maybe a cigarette, before slipping on his jacket, picking up his hat and parade cape before leaving the room.

The dressing is a ritual. It not only shows the seriousness of the fight - how the bullfighter prepares to face the possibility of death or injury - but the importance that is placed on the costume. The time it takes (up to two hours) and the detailed lacing, stitching and tucking demonstrates how meticulous fighters are about this - quite different to most other sportsmen dressing for an event. The close fit, weight and beauty of the costume allow the bullfighter to feel strong and therefore brave. The *Suit of Lights* gives the matador a sense of power and presence.

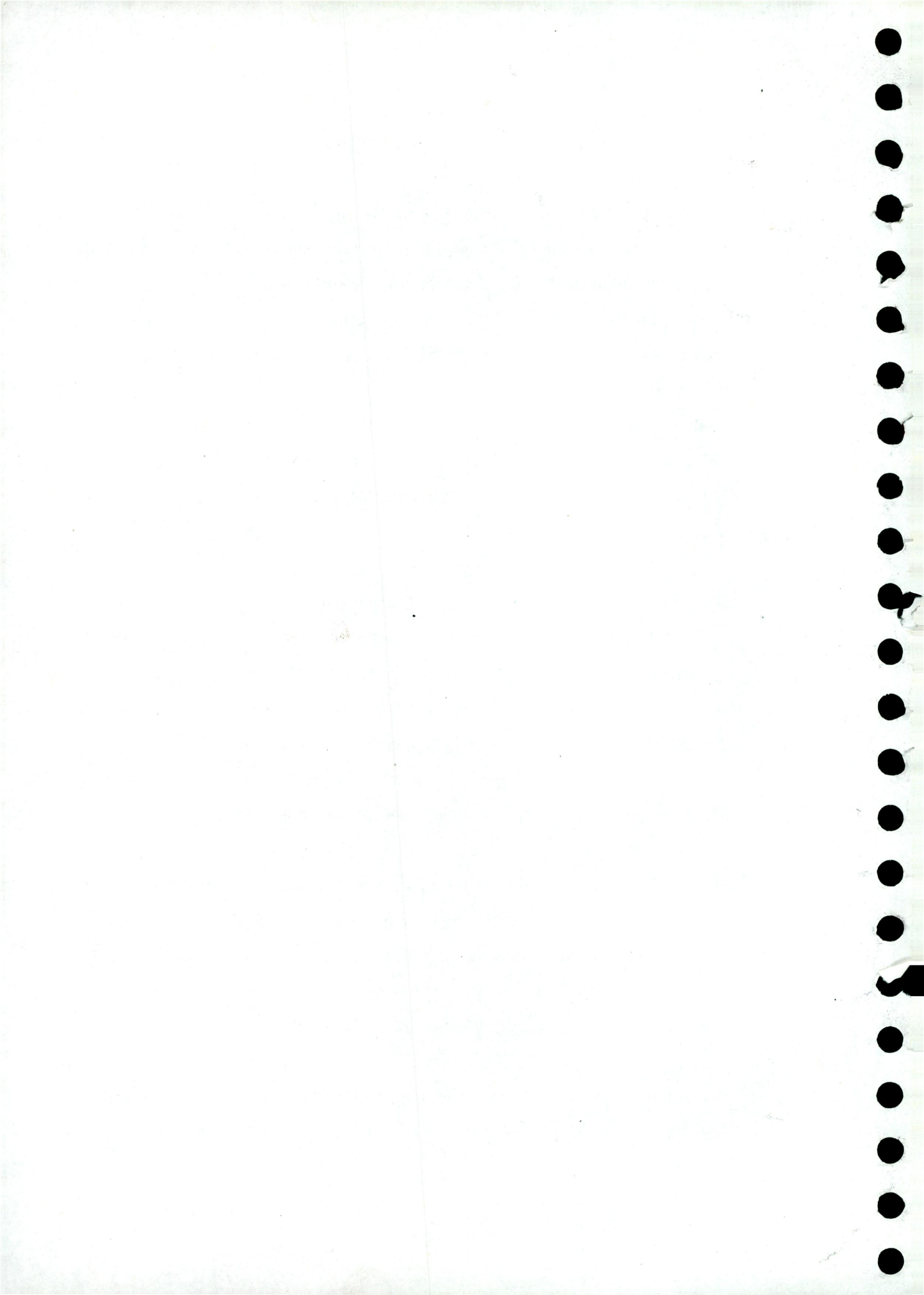
CONCLUSION

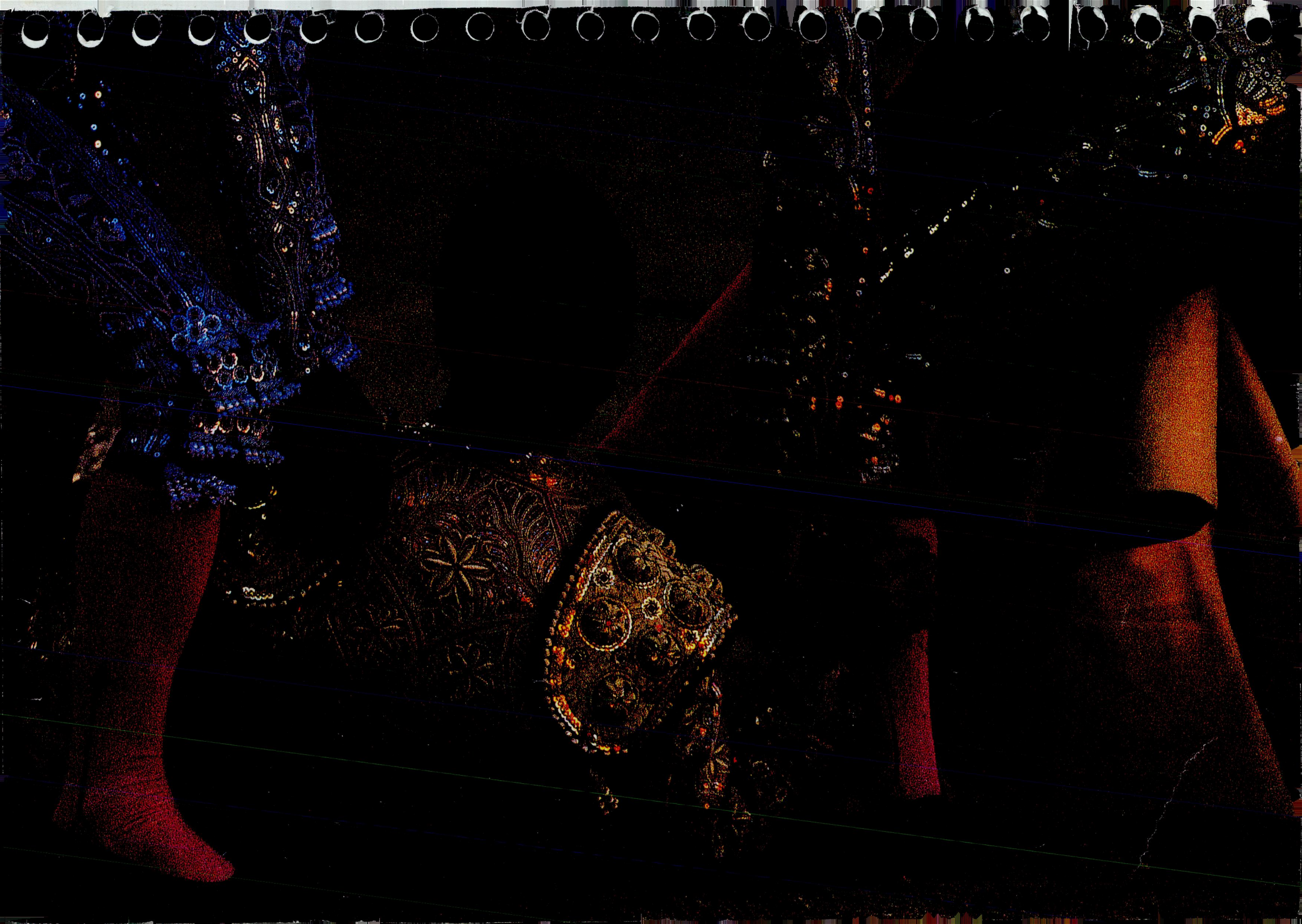
The bullfighter and his costume is a symbol of Spanish culture, tradition and identity. It is a symbol which emerged in the 18th century and has changed little since then. Originally the slight modifications were in keeping with the changes in fashionable male dress, but in the early 19th century these changes became more static. Male dress designed to distinguish occupation became fossilised at that time and the bullfighting costume was no exception. As the 20th century has catapulted Spain into the modern, and in some ways more uniform, way of living, the old identities and traditions have taken on a new importance. The *Suit of Lights* is one of the strongest of these identities and there is now great reluctance to make any changes to it at all.

In studying the *Suit of Lights* I have learnt not only about the history and technicalities unique to this particular costume but also about wider, equally important, aspects that can be relevant to any garment. There is always a conflict between aesthetics and practicality and each has its role. The outward appearance of a garment; the feel of a cloth's weight, tightness or softness on the human body; the unique meaning behind the colour or each stitch; can all combine to make the wearer feel proud, beautiful - and strong enough to face a bull.

The *Suit of Lights* embodies the flamboyance and bravado associated with the "Ole" which punctuates the bullfight. It is focused on display and decoration. The precision involved in making the suit, the superstitions which surround it and the ritual of getting dressed before a fight, show that it is more than just a costume. The spirit of the dress is the spirit of the man.

When the matador steps into the ring and his suit glistens in the setting Spanish sun, we understand the perfect name given to this most beautiful suit - the *Suit of Lights*.







Faint, illegible markings and a diagonal line are visible on the page. The markings appear to be bleed-through or very light ink. A diagonal line runs from the bottom left towards the top right. There are also some vertical lines and a small rectangular shape in the lower-left quadrant.

Appendix (i)

Price List for The Suit of Lights and accessories (January 1998)

Suit of Lights (consisting of jacket, breeches and waistcoat)	£1625 to £2000 (price variation depends on the quality of decoration cf. ill.28 &30)
Montera (hat)	£750 (a cheaper one can be bought for £200 though the majority of bullfighters wear the expensive one).
Shirt	£62.50
Cummerbund and Tie	£12.50
Stockings	£40
Shoes	£60
Anadido (hair piece)	£30
Tights	£10
TOTAL	£2040 to £2965 (price variation depends on the quality of the decoration and the quality of the hat).

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