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ШЛЯХИ ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ ТРАДИЦІЙНОЇ ЧОЛОВІЧОЇ СОРОЧКИ В МОЛДОВІ

Мета. Дослідження особливостей мистецтва молдавської чоловічої традиційної сорочки та шляхи її відродження.

Методологія. Використані художньо-композиційні методи, аналітичний, морфологічний, тематико-порівняльний аналіз.

Результати. У результаті дослідження вивчено праці етнографів та проведено аналіз еволюції та типології молдавської традиційної чоловічої сорочки. Також було проведено аналіз традиційних чоловічих сорочок, створених на прикладі музейних експонатів, а також відповідно до місцевих традицій в організації *Şezătoarea Basarabia* за 6 років плідної роботи.

Наукова новизна полягає в аналізі основних типів молдавських традиційних сорочок, представлено еволюцію крою, а також проведено огляд декоративних технік традиційної вишивки, варіанти композиції орнаментального декору на складових елементах сорочок різного крою. Представлено автентичну термінологію щодо декоративних елементів та знакової символіки орнаменту, а також колірні аспекти, що застосовуються традиційно і в сорочках, створених учасниками організації *Şezătoarea Basarabia*. Представлено галерею з найбільш виразними експонатами, які допоможуть розкрити суть вивчення.

Практичне значення: В останнє десятиліття зростає інтерес до національного одягу, а саме до традиційних сорочок, що, на думку автора, незабаром вимагатиме поглиблених відомостей про цей предмет національного костюма. Вивчення форми, крою, автентичної символіки в орнаментальному декорі, технік виконання традиційної вишивки, палітри кольорів, а також грамотне поєднання елементів національного костюма важливе для сучасного покоління, оскільки розкриває глибину духовного розвитку наших предків. Вивчення особливостей традиційного костюма необхідне збереження цієї спадщини і гармонійної інтеграції їх у сучасне життя.

Ключові слова: костюм, національна сорочка, декор, орнамент, символ, колір.

WAYS TO REVIVAL THE TRADITIONAL MEN'S SHIRT IN MOLDOVA

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Purpose. Study of the features of the art of the Moldavian men's traditional shirt and the way of its revival.

Methodology. Artistic and compositional methods, analytical, morphological, thematic-comparative analysis are used.

Results. *As a result of the research, the works of ethnographers were studied and an analysis was made of the evolution and typology of the Moldavian traditional men's shirt. Also, an analysis was made of men's traditional shirts, created on the example of museum exhibits, as well as in accordance with local traditions in the organization Șezătoarea Basarabia for 6 years of fruitful work.*

The scientific novelty. *An analysis of the main types of Moldovan traditional shirts, the evolution of the cut is presented, as well as a review of the decorative techniques of traditional embroidery, options for the composition of ornamental decor on the constituent elements of shirts of various cuts. Authentic terminology is presented regarding decorative elements and iconic symbols of the ornament, as well as color aspects used traditionally and in shirts created by members of the Șezătoarea Basarabia organization over 6 years of work. A gallery is presented with the most expressive exhibits that will help to reveal the area under study.*

Practical significance: *In the last decade, interest in national clothes, namely traditional shirts, has been growing, which, according to the author, will soon require in-depth information about this item of national costume. The study of form, cut, authentic symbolism in ornamental decoration, traditional embroidery techniques, color palette, as well as a competent combination of elements of the national costume is important for the modern generation, as it reveals the depth of the spiritual development of our ancestors. The study of the features of the traditional costume is necessary for the preservation of this heritage and its harmonious integration into modern life.*

Key words: *suit, traditional shirt, decor, ornament, symbol, color.*

Introduction. Over the past decades, boundaries have been blurred in communication between people from different countries. In this regard, there is a growing need to express national identity through the national costume or some of its elements. In many cases, this element has become a shirt. With the increasing industrialization of society, traditional clothing gradually began to move into the realm of folklore and the stage. The positive changes of recent decades in terms of the revival of interest in traditions and folk costumes have led to the creation of groups of people who want to make women's and men's shirts using traditional technologies with their own hands. The first of these organizations was Șezătoarea Basarabia, which began its activities at the Chisinau National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History (NMENH) in 2016. This museum has a rich collection of traditional shirts, which has served as a reliable base of authentic vintage designs for the revival of the art of traditional shirts. Members of this group belong to different professions, and along with women, men sew with success. It is important to note how valuable the help from the museum staff is in recreating ancient techniques and observing traditional canons. The members of this organization are residents of different regions of Moldova, and therefore it has become natural for many to transfer models from their locality in the shirts they create. These shirts are not created for commercial purposes, but for themselves and for family members. The process of studying ancient techniques in compliance with all stages proceeds at a measured pace without haste.

Many old models of shirts were recreated from fragments from museums, from photographs. The first fruitful results were presented at the NMENH at an exhibition called 100 shirts from Bessarabia in 2019. Visitors were presented with men's and women's shirts as close as possible to the traditional canons, and some even surpassed the originals. After this event, many exhibitions were held in Moldova and abroad. In June 2022, an album 6 ani de cămăși tradiționale cusute în Șezătoarea Basarabiei was released, which included 176 shirts created during the activity of this organization [1]. The author of this article has been a member of this organization for four years. In connection with the study of the evolution of the art of clothing on the territory of Moldova, it was decided to analyze the men's traditional shirts included in the published album. As a result of the study, it was found that the number of men's shirts of different ages, including children's, was 38 units, of which 8 were children's.

Analysis of previous studies. An important role in the study of the Moldovan national costume was played by scientists and ethnographers thanks to the works of Ciocanu M. [2], Paliț-Palade I. [3], Pavel E. [4, 5], Zevina A., Livshits M. [6], Zelenchuk V. [7] and others. The cut of both women's and men's traditional shirts can be traced in the work of Ciocanu, M. [2].

Features of fasteners, cut of sleeves, collar, as well as the color and ornamental characteristics of the decor of shirts can be seen in the work of the ethnographer Plăcintă V. [8]. Particularly

noteworthy are studies in the field of natural dyeing of textile fibers and color symbolism in traditional Romanian culture, presented by scientists Apostol-Macovei T. [9], Șofranksy Z. and Șofranksy V. [10].

The costume of the peasants and the clothes of the middle class, as well as the clothes of the clergy, military, artisans were systematized in the work of scientists and ethnographers Zelenciuc V. and Kalașnicova N. [11]. The costume of the upper class of both Romania and Moldova, including the features of the shirt of the upper strata of society, can be traced in the work of Nicolescu C. [12].

Methodology. In this study, artistic and compositional methods, analytical, morphological and thematic-comparative analysis were used.

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this work was to study the features of the art of the Moldavian men's traditional shirt and the way of its revival. Also, one of the tasks was to analyze the ornamentation used in the collection of men's shirts created over the years of the organization Șezătoarea Basarabia.

Results of the research. The main element of the traditional men's costume in Moldova was a shirt made of white homespun cloth. It was worn loose and tied with a belt. Until the end of the 19th century, a tunic-shaped shirt was common. Side rectangular inserts were sewn to the main fabric, which was the back and the shelf. When sewing the sleeves in its lower part, a square gusset called "pavé" was used. This type of shirt was called "kemeshe batrynyaske" and most of all remained in use in the north of Moldova. Later, yoke shirts, shirts with shoulder inserts and shirts with skirts came into use.



Of the ancient collar, there was a carved round shape, and various collars appeared in the 19th century. At first, a low standing collar appeared with a straight neckline, with ties or button fastening (fig. 1). Later, under the influence of Russian and Ukrainian clothing, they began to use an oblique cut of the neckline of the shirt. By the end of the 19th century, turn-down collars came into use [13].

Men's shirt of the Dalmatian type was sewn from a single piece of cloth and was part of the folk costume throughout Romania. In the region of the city of Iasi, this type of shirt was sewn from white wool, silk or cotton for holidays. But the men's shirt with a skirt of Illyrian origin spread from Mehedinti to the north of Moldova along both banks of the Prut [14]. The most ancient materials for clothing and shirts were hemp, linen, and wool. From the middle of the 19th century, it became possible to buy factory-made cotton fabric [13]. Until the middle of the 20th century, shirts were made of linen and hemp homespun linen, created in an agricultural household on a horizontal loom. At the beginning of the 20th century, industrial cotton threads began to be used to create fabric. For traditional Moldovan embroidery, it is necessary that the number of horizontal and vertical threads of the fabric in one cm be from 16x16 to 16x18. Compliance with these characteristics allows you to create embroidery that corresponds to local traditions. For embroidery of a traditional ornament on shirts, were used thin treads of linen, cotton, and woolbeing dyed with natural pigments, as well as other kinds of threads: arnic (dyed cotton tread), mulineu (throun silk), silk, different kinds of cotton, fine wool with twisted threads, of different size [15].



Fig. 1. Elena Cotorobai (2021). Foto: Constantin Plugari

A shirt with shoulder inserts, both for men and women, appeared in the Romanian folk costume quite late, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The distribution of men's shirts with shoulder inserts has been recorded in all regions of Romania [16].

In the 19th century, urban clothing massively penetrated the rural Bessarabian environment, influencing the peasant shirt to such an extent that the cut of the shirt with shoulder inserts became the most common in this space [13]. The cut of the main part of the shirt was made from

a rectangular cut 2 meters long. The collar was narrow and fastened with a button. For working days, the shirt was sewn from hemp cloth. Decor was absent or simple with little geometric embroidery on the collar and sleeves. The festive shirt was made of high quality material, had more embroidery, which was carried out along the cut line of the shirt neck, on the collar, on the shoulders, along the edge of the sleeves and along the edge of the bottom. Over time, under the influence of urban fashion, changes were made to the shape of the collar in this type of shirt (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Lilia Țurcan (2020). Foto: Constantin Plugari

The old traditional Moldavian men's shirt was knee-length and below, made of dense home-made linen for work and thin cotton for holidays. The collar is fastened with buttons or was on strings [17]. Țurcanu-Ciobanu V. also claims that the tunic-type shirt is the most ancient element of the traditional men's costume and adds that at the end of the 19th century a shirt with shoulder inserts and a clasp on the left side came into use [14].

At the neck, the shirt had an embroidered piece of fabric sewn along the cut. Embroidery was also done on the collar, cuffs, bottom, less often on the shoulders [18]. As you can see, the evolution of this type of shirt was represented by a change in the length, shape of the collar, sleeves, and the appearance of lining on the back. The sleeve could be tight-fitting on the cuff

or wide loose. Ornamental decor of traditional clothes was placed on the neckline, chest, sleeves, along the bottom edge, as well as on the wedges using a rich color scheme, typical for most elements of the traditional Moldavian costume [19].

In the northern part of the Republic of Moldova, the decoration of men's shirts was carried out mainly in brown-black tones, in the center and in the south black and red colors were used. But with the advent of aniline dyes, yellow, green and blue colors began to be used in embroidery. Stylized plant motifs were used in ornamentation (fig. 3). Festive shirts were decorated with hemstitching or white woven lace. The sleeves were attached to the main part of the shirt with a white openwork braid made with a needle or crochet [18].



Fig. 3. Ioana Căpraru (2021). Foto: Constantin Plugari

An important role in the decoration of the collar and sleeves of a men's shirt is played by hemstitching (fig. 4). Part of the threads is removed from the threads of the main fabric, and

the remaining transverse threads are wrapped around with a needle and thread to create an openwork ornament [20].



Fig. 4. Natalia Miron (2020-2021). Foto: Constantin Plugari

Meander lines often frame individual elements of geometric embroidery. The color palette of Moldovan embroidery is expressed in diversity. Alexey Smerechinsky, parish priest of the St. Nicholas Church in the Moldovan village of Balta, describes the items of clothing. The men's clothing of this area has been attested in its traditional form. The men's shirt was knee-length, decorated with white thread embroidery on the collar, chest, bottom of the shirt and the bottom of the wide sleeves. [21].

It is important to note that both casual and festive shirts were decorated with embroidery. The art of embroidery in Moldova has been developing for thousands of years and has originality and artistic richness, being used to decorate items of clothing and everyday life.

An important contribution to the study of the ancient art of embroidery in Romania and Moldova was made by Musicescu M. A. [22]. And the researcher Chițan M. In his work reveals the richness of traditional embroidery [23]. In the work Cherciu I. special sewing techniques for joining the details and the cut of the men's shirt is well illustrated [24]. The nature of embroidery is in accordance with the purpose and design features of the product. On clothes for everyday life, the color scheme of embroidery was more restrained, in contrast to the festive one. The geometric ornament is the most ancient and its symbols carried a magical meaning. The meaning of signs and symbols in traditional clothes is revealed in the works: Însemn și simbolul în vestimentația țărănească, Ornamentica țesăturilor tradiționale din Republica Moldova, Ornamente populare moldovenești [25-27]. To recreate the traditional ornament, an important role is played by studies on the traditional embroidery of Romania and Moldova, including collections

of samples presented in works and illustrated albums [28-35].

In the 40s of the 20th century, Niculescu Varone Gh. collected 138 names of ornaments from the popular port through the villages [36]. The ornamental motif in the form of the letter S, called the researcher found over 40 names [37].

Having passed through many generations of folk craftsmen, these symbols were used in



Fig. 5. Natatia Nicolaescu (2020). Foto: Constantin Plugari

the compositions of folk embroidery. acquired local flavor and unique techniques. Elements of the Moldovan traditional ornament have acquired interesting names *râuri* ("rivers"), *pui* ("chickens"), *fluturaș* ("butterflies"), *luceafere* ("stars"), *grebluțe* ("rakes"), *clopoței* ("bells"), *calea ciobanului* ("the way of the shepherd") [38]. In the decor of men's shirts, the *motif coarnele berbecului* ("ram's horns") is often used, which symbolizes male strength (fig. 5).

The *motif luceafere* ("stars"), is also popular - as a parting word symbol for moving in the right direction (fig. 6).



Fig. 6. **Bîzgu Tatiana (2022). Foto: Constantin Plugari**

All symbols of the ornament carried a certain meaning, including help in maintaining health and life. Craftswomen in certain parts of both men's and women's shirts embroidered a talisman in the form of various symbols, for

example: "cross", "bird", and it could also be a slight difference in the color of the ornament (fig. 7). Sometimes it was practiced that the trial ornaments remained as a mark of protection called *strajă* ["guard"]. Work on each shirt began with the making of assorted samples of the thickness of the embroidery threads, the fabric and the proportions of the ornamental motifs.



Fig. 7. **Lidia Rusu (2020). Foto: Constantin Plugari**

Also at the beginning of the work, the margins of the cut material were processed with *găurica* ("a little hole") stitch. We can find about the wide range of décor-stitches techniques of traditional shirts in the work [19].

Along with the most ancient geometric ornament, floral ornament has become widespread in recent centuries (fig. 8). Most often it can be traced in the northern regions of Moldova and in Transnistria. The beauty of the local nature was reflected in the floral ornament [38].



Fig. 8. Cristina Dan (2022). Foto: Constantin Plugari

Avramescu, E., Bobu Florescu, Fl. and Dunăre, N. compare sewing points as an alphabet, when each sewing technique has its artistic value [34, 39]. At the beginning of making the shirt decoration, the main embroidery points of the shirt spaces with ornamental compositions are made. In the evolution of the work, other techniques with more striking features intervene. After all the parts of the shirt are embroidered, their assembly is done with the help of joining points called cheițe ("keys").

In men's shirts, craftsmen embroidered an oak leaf motif as a symbol of strength and longevity. Usually the ornament is located along the edges, sides of products in a certain order. In clothes, embroidery is located in a well-thought-out system that adorns certain parts of a men's shirt: sleeves, floors, a slit at the collar and a neck. Teslenko V. rightly asserts: "Embroidery technique is closely related to the meaning and location of the ornament." The properties of the material are directed to certain techniques in embroidery [38].

In the Moldavian ornament, dominance belongs to the line. The harmony and rhythm of the entire composition is created with the help



Fig. 9. Grigore Lungu (2020). Foto: Constantin Plugari

of the graphic clarity of the line, which is parallel, intersecting, horizontally, vertically, diagonally, thereby subordinating the other components of the ornament. It can be thin, in the form of a stroke, "often ornate and lush, or laconic and mean." Often with the help of the line complex ornamental motifs are created, and sometimes it leaves only an elegant thin trace (fig. 9).

As a result of the above facts, we come to the conclusion that the archaic version was distributed in all regions of the country and was used on holidays and working days. The work shirt was sewn from hemp and had almost no decor. Geometric embroidery was placed on the collar and sleeve. The festive shirt had more embroidery, presented on the neck of the shirt, on the collar, on the shoulders, along the edge of the sleeve and along the bottom edge (fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Grigore Lungu (2021). Foto: Constantin Plugari

It is important to note that from ancient times, lace was an expressive decor element of a traditional shirt. Ciocanu M. reveals the secrets of traditional Moldovan crochet lace [40]. This decoration was used as a decorative finish to the bottom of the sleeve, as well as the bottom edge of the shirt.

Rectangular details are added along the side lines to obtain the required width of the shirt. The same details are added to the sleeves if necessary to increase the width. The square gusset is used in the underarm area for comfortable freedom of movement. Embroidery on a men's shirt is a narrow register of ornaments, repeated in certain parts: on the chest, on the sleeves (both from the side of the shoulders and along the edge of the sleeves), along the bottom. In the case when the embroidery is narrower, it can be repeated

on the shoulders both from the side of the main part and from the side of the sleeve.

Traditional men's shirts impress with the openwork of the connecting decorative seam. On the example of old shirts, we can observe that women who sewed shirts for their husbands in the past put all their love and skill into it to show their strong feelings.

On March 26, 2021, the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History and the Society "Șezătoarea Basarabia" presented to the public the exhibition "Cămașa Unirii", organized in the context of the 103rd anniversary of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania. This is the first exhibition of traditional men's shirts in our cultural space. All exhibits of this exhibition were created within three years according to authentic models.

I would also like to note that in recent years there has been a significant increase in interest in men's shirts in ethnic style, which are created using modern sewing equipment. This greatly increases the level of affordability in terms of price, but in turn, these products reflect the traditions of the people in their design. A good example in the Moldovan fashion industry is the clothing brand Alina Bradu, which, along with different types of clothing, pays special attention to the men's shirt in ethnic style (fig. 11).

Conclusions.

National clothes are a great ethnic heritage and symbolize the characteristic concepts and artistic manifestations of traditions. Complexes of traditional clothes in the Republic of Moldova were formed over thousands of years, accumulating in themselves the primordial traditions and the deepest historical roots. The shirt, being the most important element of this heritage, carries the breath of the ancestors, demonstrating their diligence and creativity.

To preserve it, a very important condition is the observance of the archaic cut and traditional symbols in ornamentation, as well as the correct composition of the decor. The right combination of all of the above characteristics, combined with modern technology, will allow the traditional shirt to become more accessible for traditional ceremonies, events and stage looks. But first of all, it is important to correctly apply exactly manual execution techniques, which include a wide range of types of traditional embroidery, including openwork connecting seams that emphasize the beauty and conciseness of cut lines.

As a result of the work of the members of the



organization Șezătoarea Basarabia, shirts were created that emphasize the identity of all regions of Moldova. Traditional techniques were used in the decoration of the created shirts: *la fir* ("thread"), *punctul bătrânesc* ("old man's point"), *scărița* ("ladder"), *butuci* ("blocks"), *lănțisor* ("chain"), *gura păpușii* ("doll's mouth"), *cruciuliță* ("cross") and others. And in the structure of the ornamental decor, motifs were used: *crucea* ("cross"), *steaua* ("star"), *coarnele berbecului* ("ram's horns"), *coloana* ("column"), *colții de lup* ("wolf's fangs"), *cerc* ("circle"), *pătrat* ("square"), *romb* ("rhombus"), *triunghi* ("triangle"), *ungh* ("angle"), *frunză de trifoi* ("cloverleaf"), *cârligul ciobanului* ("shepherd's hook"), *spirala* ("spiral"), *zigzag*, *ochiul* ("eye"), *vârtelnița* ("reel"), stylized flowers and leaves. To highlight the national identity in some shirts, along with the basic colors, the colors of the tricolor were also used: blue, yellow and red.

Each traditional shirt carries a story that originated in the distant past, carrying the spirituality of this people into the future. Therefore, the study of material values expressed in garments, the manifestation of attention to their forms, textures, ornamental structure, coloring teaches to educate the modern generation in artistic, moral and spiritual consciousness. It is also important to note that with each shirt created today according to traditional canons, its authors make a significant contribution to the preservation of the national heritage and its transfer to future generations



Fig. 11. Designer: Alina Bradu. Source: <https://madein.md/alinabradu>

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