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TRADITIONAL COSTUME AS A MIGRATION PHENOMENON ON THE PART OF THE ADRIATIC COAST IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY

Migrations from Herzegovina and Montenegro to the Herceg Novi region, during the period from the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries, were the reasons for investigation (thanks to the preserved archive material) of female “traditional costumes” involved in these migrations. Clothing retained the influence of Balkan, Slav, Oriental and Mediterranean cultures. The function of clothing (for work and ceremonial occasions) was studied, as well as changes within the generation, regardless of whether the individual items were in constant use or only used on one occasion.

Key words: migration, cultural influence, hinterland and Adriatic coast, “traditional costume”, and acculturation.

Studying migration, we are confronted by the fact that everything is a process, that everything undergoes appearance, transformation and disappearance (appears, transforms and disappears), depending on the general conditions, economic, social-historical climate, the needs and habits of individuals or group.

Boka Kotorska was never blessed with even one long period of peace, when its coast or hinterland did not experience a flow of migration.

Our study embraces the dramatic years at the end of the 17th and first decade of the 18th century, in the north-west part of the most beautiful fjord in the Adriatic.

In the whirlwind of war, in which Turkish rule is supplanted by that of Venice, mass migration, demographic, historical, social and economic changes are characteristic of this time and clearly influence the general development of this region, when the general social-political system leaves a visible mark on one aspect of the material culture.

The newly arrived Orthodox Serbs from Herzegovina and Montenegro brought with them the characteristics of their birthplace (way of life, dress and numerous customs). The whirlwind of war from the end of the 17th century brought with it an almost complete change of population, so that at one period more than 300 families settled here.

¹ D. Radojičić, *Krajina novska u sudaru svijetova, Etnoantropološki problemi, monografija knj. 19*, Beograd 1994, 15–35; 53–63,

The newly arrived settlers came upon indigenous inhabitants of the same faith, while newcomers of Catholic faith, from both Adriatic shores, complimented ethnic diversity.¹

This work presents a reconstruction of items of clothing that belonged to inhabitants, who migrated to the south-east Adriatic coast at the end of the 17th century — the Hercegnovi area, which experienced its rise during the 18th century. Ship owners, merchants, tradesmen, sailors, landowners, agricultural workers, fishermen, Venetian lower and higher administrative personnel, soldiers, priests, doctors, apothecaries and advocates lived in this small urban — rural region. All wore dress like that worn a century earlier, in their birthplace, and in those far away more developed urban centres of the Mediterranean.²



Material in the archives of Herceg Novi, Kotor and Venice, predominantly inventories of dowries, together with testaments and other archive documents (material evidence is lacking), offered an insight into part of our cultural past, unknown up to now and for this reason the reconstructions, resulting from study of this material, are very significant.³

Archive material also provided assistance concerning trades connected with clothing. Apart from domestic spinners and weavers, it is characteristic of the relevant period that together with tradesmen — tanners, rollers, ink-makers, furriers, tailors, shoemakers, slipper-makers, boot-makers goldsmiths — there was developed import of textile and decorative details, as well as individual pieces of clothing, particularly from Italy, then France, Holland and the oriental market.

² D. Radojičić, *Nošnja i barokna odjeća u XVIII vijeku*, Nikšić 1995, 7.

³ Montenegro State Archive: Archive Department, Herceg Novi; Venetian political-governmental Archive Fund; Historical Archive Kotor, Archive Fund: Governmental-political documents of extraordinary providurs of the Venetian government, I, VI, Archivio di stato di Venezia, Venezia. Inquisitori di stato.

In spite of the lack of material evidence and a deficit of archive data we have attempted to reconstruct the clothing of the immigrants, which we defined as “traditional costume”.

The objects we are going to list are indications of the message that each garment possesses concerning ethnic and professional affiliation, economic situation and taste. This investigation emphasises particularly the need to preserve cultural and ethnic identity and draw attention to the rapid transition to an urban surrounding. Due to the lack of original ethnographic evidence certain gaps arose. For example, it was not possible to distinguish the segment of clothing, which belonged to young girls or married women, with or without children, from among the clothing and peculiarities of national dress “traditional costume”.

The data collected defined the time of origin and duration of a particular item of clothing, and in the process of migration, its transformation. This item, as a piece of non-verbal communication, provides an insight into the life style of the inhabitants on this part of the Mediterranean coast with all its constants, variables, cultural borrowings and changes.

It is necessary to emphasise that this is just part of a more extensive study, which besides “traditional costume” (as a migration phenomenon) which new settlers brought with them from their native region, there was the clothing of the Christian population already residing there, as well as the urban costume, which includes all elements of the leading fashion trends on the Mediterranean and in Europe of that time.

It was essential to discover the structure of the population as well as their territorial and ethnic origin. Archive data, concerning the economic and social development of the town and its hinterland, were of great value. On the basis of all the available data, together with knowledge of the owner’s names, we described pieces of female clothing, which had arrived in the Herceg Novi area along the migratory routes from Herzegovina and Montenegro.⁴

After migration, as life followed its developmental course (where clothing was in question), intensive contact was established between town and village cultures, that is between the hinterland and Adriatic coast. Luxurious articles belonging to the immigrants served to represent economic strength, social influence and family status, most frequently achieved through rapid development of marine and land trading, and the development of individual crafts.

We discovered articles of clothing which women made themselves from local raw materials, while items of ceremonial dress and jewellery were handed down from generation to generation. When the social situation in society stabilised, a new class took the lead in setting “traditional costume” trends, and a tendency towards the use of items of clothing, that belonged to the Adriatic urban districts, is clearly seen.

The garments studied were defined as traditional female costume that contained elements, or just traces of elements, of many cultural influences, which were conditioned by historical and social events. Thus in traditional costume we found traces of Balkan, Slav, oriental and Mediterranean culture.

Paying attention to these cultural influences, individual costumes were studied from a chronological point of view. According to their ornamentation and the material

⁴ This paper is the result of many years of archive research work, presented in two published books, D.Radojičić, *Krajina nova*, 1–286, and D.Radojičić, *Nošnja i barokna odjeća*, 1–58.

used, their function was established, that is, were they in daily use or were they worn only for special ceremonial occasions.

Particular items of clothing appear just in individual situations. They belonged to the wealthy class, and were not widely utilised.

“Traditional female costume” consisted of traditional and alternative items. A shirt, *raša* (skirt), *pregača* — *kecelja* (apron), belt, scarf and socks were the basic items, while *camisole*, *koret*, *dolama*, *zubun*, *čurdiya* and *kaftan* were alternatives. Items like *mintan*, *anterija*, *alača*, *benluk* and *mrčina* were rarely seen. Shirts, skirts and aprons were represented in “both variants” of “traditional costume” with the obligatory head covering — scarf, of which there was a wide variety.⁵

In 1659, Stane Ridjanin brought with her, to the new surrounding, the type of shirt worn in her place of origin. It was the basic item of clothing at a time when skirts were unknown. Likewise at that time, Jane Matišorović owned a “big shirt”, also worn in her place of origin. These shirts were woven from flax or hemp. Another type of shirt, which was part of the Mediterranean cultural heritage and worn with the *raša*-skirt, was shortened in the late Renaissance period on the east coast of the Adriatic. Thus the “new inhabitants” had not possessed this type of shirt in their home region but adopted it already in the early decades following their arrival. They were made of damast, tele and silk, ornamented with lace and gold embroidery as well as embroidery with gold and silver thread. Many were fastened with buttons which had a decorative as well as functional purpose.

Stane Ridjanin owned a shirt embroidered with silver and gold threads and fastened with buttons.⁶

The “*raša*” skirts were made from material of the same name. This was a item of outer clothing which was worn over a white shirt, and survives with two variations in the folklore costume of the Adriatic region — skirt hanging from the shoulder and skirt with waistcoat. These were also transported items and were in strong colours: red, green and the natural colour of woven wool.⁷

Traversa — *pregača*, “*opregljača*”, “*futa*” or “*vuta*” are names for this outer decorative item, known in many variants, in all dowry inventories which women from the hinterland brought with them. It was worn over a long shirt or skirt and was of narrow rectangular shape with fringes. It was intended for everyday use, but also for ceremonial occasions. In Stane Ridjanin’s inventory, there is a cotton one for everyday use as well as a silk one. There were also some decorated with gold embroidery and in colours like light blue, white and black.⁸

It is not possible here to give a description of every items of clothing that arrived by way of migration to Boka Kotorska, on the Adriatic coast but it must be emphasised that the “*fassu*” — belt, part of traditional costume was woven and made of different materials depending on its function. The belts woven of different woollen yarn, 6–8 cm wide and done in inter weave technique belong to the older type. The majority of belts were of silk, Turkish silk and cotton. Their length and decoration varied according to their use; belts for work were of cotton and flax while ceremonial were embroidered in

⁵ D.Radojičić, *Nošnja i barokna odjeća*, 9 and 16.

⁶ Archive Herceg Novi (further AH), Political-governmental Venetian archive (further PGVA), fasc.12,4.

⁷ PGVA, fasc. 118,6.

⁸ D. Radojičić, *Nošnja i barokna odjeća*, 10.

addition. They were wound around the waist or fastened with a buckle or button. This inescapable detail of traditional costume was noted as belt with button “alla Morlacha” at the end of the 17th century, together with belts of silver cord with buckle from the same period.⁹

“Mrčina” an item of outer clothing, made of domestically manufactured material of the same name (type of black, rolled, coarse cloth), derives from the Middle Ages (a long dress with sleeves in black and dark blue), was seldom decorated and survived into the 20th century.¹⁰

Jecerma, koret and zubun are objects of outer clothing worn, to the present day, in the hinterland. “Traditional female costume” included dolama, kapama, čurdija, alača, anterija, benluk, kaftan, mintan and camisole. Apart from the last, all are of oriental origin while the camisole (type of waist-coat worn over a shirt), in “traditional costume”, was adopted with the arrival of the Venetians.¹¹

There were three variants of socks; below knee, half way up the calf or somewhat above the ankle. They were knitted of white wool, with red and black tops ornamented with different patterns worked into the knitting. Later one meets linen, silk and cotton socks but these are mainly imported.¹²

Opanci are home made while pašmage and papuče are oriental. Shoes began to arrive from the West by sea and were worn thanks to the increased economic power of the new arrivals.¹³

The only decorative details known are sleeves made of silk fabric, cotton and velvet. The owners of these items of clothing decoration were recorded in the first years of migration, which means that they owned the objects before their arrival.¹⁴

The beautiful, usually white head-dress — large scarf was for centuries a characteristic of this region. The refined authority on fashion trends in Venice, Cesare Vecellio (17th century), considered our head wear very attractive. This essential and obligatory part of traditional clothing was supplemented by other head dress like: “cacara”, “počelica”, “prevezača”, “aspurlija” and “faculet”.¹⁵

The “big scarves” were most frequently used. They were of thin silk fabric, decorated with gold thread. Simple scarves for daily use were of white linen. “Faculet” — a scarf of the Mediterranean cultural circle was adopted also by women who wore the traditional clothing of the wealthy class.

The influence of European cultural heritage was felt in Boka Kotorska, thanks to developed naval activity, as well as the influence of all previous classes of old Balkans, obvious in the items of “traditional costume”.

Many of the articles of clothing referred to, remain only in memories or achieve material. Some with modifications remain as part of the established costume — national costume, while others we surmise on the basis of frequent arbitrary drawings and engravings by curious travel writers, who visited our shores during this period.

⁹ AH, PGVA, fasc. 140, 69, 1741.

¹⁰ D. Radojičić, Nošnja i barokna odjeća, 11.

¹¹ D. Radojičić, Nošnja i barokna odjeća, 11, 12, 13.

¹² AH, PGVA, fasc. 208,31; fasc.90,14; fasc. 140,69; fasc. 103, 309.

¹³ D. Radojičić, Nošnja i barokna odjeća, 13.

¹⁴ AH, PGVA, fasc. 12,4; fasc. 103,309; fasc. 75,442; fasc. 103, 307; fasc. 140, 69.

¹⁵ M. Gušić, Starinska narodna nošnja na našem primorju, Pomorski zbornik 10, Rijeka 1972, 689; D. Radojičić, Nošnja i barokna odjeća, 14, 15.

Analysing all the relevant indications, which we gleaned from archive material, we studied the economic situation and social position of the owners of items of clothing, together with the function of these items, their historical life span and the acculturation processes. Employing two parameters: the name of the owner of the clothing (which meant previous acquaintance with the structure of the population, the ethnic and territorial origin, economic and social status) and the name of the clothing articles that were in use, (the type and quality of fabric employed, type and number of items of clothing), we also examined contact between village and urban culture, that is between the hinterland and Adriatic coast. Numerous items of clothing were handed down from generation to generation. This “traditional costume” may be defined as a migration phenomenon concentrated in this part of the Mediterranean, confirming the well known opinion that clothing has a significant place in the system of emitting messages.

Translation: A. Vasić

Драгана РАДОЈЧИЋ

НАРОДНА НОШЊА КАО МИГРАЦИОНИ ФЕНОМЕН НА ДЕЛУ ЈАДРАНСКЕ ОБАЛЕ У XVII И XVIII ВЕКУ

Овај рад представља реконструкцију одјевних предмета становника које су се крајем XVII вијека доселиле на југоисточну обалу Јадрана — херцеговски крај, који свој успон доживљава током XVIII вијека. У овом, мало урбано-руралном крају живјели су бродовласници, трговци, занатлије, морнари, земљопоседници, пољопривредници, рибари, млетачко више и ниже административно особље, војници, свештена лица, лекари, апотекари, адвокати, а сви они били су носиоци одјеће каква је ношена вијек раније у матичним областима новодосељеника, као и у оним далеко развијенијим урбаним центрима Медитерана.

Архивски фондови Архива Херцег Нови, Котора и Венеције, претежно пописи прђија, пружили су нам увид у један, до сада непознати, дио културне прошлости. Поред производа домаћих преља и ткаља, карактеристично је за релевантни период, да је поред занатлија: штављача коже, ваљавичара, мастионичара, крзнара, кројача, обућара, папучара, чизмара и златара, постојао развијен увоз текстила и украсних додатака, као и појединих одјевних предмета, посебно из Италије, па и Француске, Холандије и са оријенталног тржишта.

Прикупљеним подацима одредили смо вријеме настанка и трајања одређеног одјевог предмета, као и процесе трансформација и функцију које је имао док је био у употреби.

Посматрану одјећу означили смо као традиционални женски костим, који је у себи носио елементе или само трагове елемената многих културних утицаја. У традиционалном костиму смо наишли на трагове балканске, словенске, оријенталне и медитеранске културе. Хронолошки смо обрадили појединачно одјећу, а према украсима и материјалу, одредили смо функцију, тј. да ли су поједини предмети били у свакодневној употреби, или су се носили само у свечаним тренуцима.

Бројни одјевни предмети преносили су се са генерације на генерацију, а овај традиционални костим се може окарактерисати као миграциони феномен сливен на овом дјелу Медитерана.