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ICONIC SYMBOLS IN THE DECOR OF TRADITIONAL VESTS OF THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ETNOGRAPHY AND NATURAL HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Purpose: *the study of signs and symbols in the decoration of vests included in the collection of the Chisinau National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History (NMENH).*

Methodology. *Visual-analytical, morphological, artistic-compositional method and thematic and comparative analysis were applied.*

Results. *As a result of the analysis of museum's collection of vests from the NMENH of the Republic of Moldova and the inventory description for each exhibit, it was found that the museum purchased vests from Moldova, as well as from Romania, Bulgaria, Gagauzia. The paper offers a wide range of special terminology related to the vest of Romania, Moldova and Ukraine.*

The scientific novelty. *As a result of this work, the analysis of decorative elements was carried out for the first time and the iconic symbolism of this collection of vests was characterized. A gallery with the most remarkable exhibits will help to reveal the area under study.*

Practical significance. *Over the last decade, there has been a growing interest in traditional shirts, which, according to the author, will soon require in-depth information about traditional vests. The study of signs, symbols, color palettes that come from the depths of our roots are important for the present and future generations, as they reveal the depth and sophistication of the spiritual development of our ancestors. The study of the characteristics of the traditional vest is necessary to save this treasure and use it as a bright source of inspiration for creating modern collections, for researchers, scientists, ethnologists, etc.*

Key words: *textiles; traditions; costume; clothes; decor; ornament; symbol; color.*

Introduction. The NMENH is a museum in the capital of Moldova – Chisinau. It was founded in October 1889. This is the oldest museum in the Republic of Moldova, which, during its existence, has gradually expanded its field of activity, creating collections that reflect the natural history, modern nature, the evolution of human society and traditional culture on the territory of Bessarabia, and then the Republic of Moldova. Currently, its collection includes about 135 thousand exhibits. The museum held numerous exhibitions, in which items from the museum's collections were exhibited at various exhibitions in many countries of Europe, Asia, America and Africa.

NMENH has a rich collection of leather and fur items belonging to the folk costume of Moldova and other countries. Folk costume is the emblem of every nation and the best way to identify an ethnic group. Sheepskin and

textile vests are part of the traditional costume of Transcarpathia and beyond. These garments are worn by Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Romanians, Croats, Bulgarians and Ukrainians. In many cases, these clothes are very richly decorated.

The leather craftsmen performed the artistic processing of these materials. According to the original traditions, leather and fur were made of various items of clothing and accessories: hats, belts, shoes, vests, various items of winter outerwear and other items. The vests are sleeveless and are worn over a shirt all year round, on various occasions. Traditionally, vests were worn by both sexes.

The art of coats in Moldova was mentioned in the 15th century in the documents of the ruler chancellery [1, P. 176]. In cool weather, women and men wore vests, coats to protect themselves from the cold.

Only a few details distinguished the thick clothes worn by women from those of men [2, P. 199]. Fur vests were called «bondă», «bondiță», «pieptar» and were divided into three types: 1) vest without buttons; 2) short vest without buttons; 3) vest with a fastener on the side [3, P. 68]. According to the study by V. Zelenciuc and N. Kalașnicova the first type is the most widespread.

An integral part of the folk costume of Moldova, Bukovina and Bessarabia is a vest called «polka», «muntyan», «mahalean», «gutsulyak», «tsurkanka», «bonditsa», «rumunchak», etc. «Pieptar» is short fur coats without sleeves. Initially, they had a simple ornament or its absence, sometimes there was no fur trim along the edges [4, P. 6].

Analysis of previous studies. The traditional costume of Moldova has typological forms common with the costume of Munienia and Transylvania. Traditional clothing in the central part of Bessarabia has common elements with the clothing of Moldova on the other side of the Prut River, in the regions of Tsara Oashului and Maramures, and in southern Bessarabia we see the influence of the traditions of Muscel and Dobruja. However, each area had its own characteristics [3, P. 58]. In the past and present centuries, the development and enrichment of information about the traditional costume of Moldova and Romania, as well as other countries, has been greatly facilitated by the work of researchers. Now we can benefit from many reference works on the issue of ornamentation and symbolism in popular art.

We note the work V. Buzilă [5] that reveals the intricacies of everyday and festive folk costume. The role of historical events and stages of costume development. The masculine and feminine appearance and attire that presented complete the image of the traditional costume.

In the work E. J. Ciocan [6] the geometric motifs used for the decoration made on folk art objects were researched and described. G. T. Niculescu-Varone [7] made a

retrospective of the folk costume from all areas of Romania as a whole. In scientific papers E. Pavel [8], V. Țurcanu-Ciobanu [9], [10] demonstrated the phenomenon that the traditional costume faced. In the paper Z. Șofranschi [11] were described an evolution marked by several important factors: contradictory ideologies (imperialism and nationalism, totalitarianism and liberalism), the industrial and social revolution, urbanization and the consumer society. V. Zelenciuc [12] presents the typology of the folk costume from Bessarabia in the context of the structure of the Romanian national costume. In the work V. Zelenciuc & N. Kalashnicova [3] is exposed a vast study as problematic and consistent as documentation with the clothing of the urban population of Moldova (XV–XIX centuries). V. Zelenchuk [13] analyze costume of the Ancient Period, Garments of the Middle Ages Epoch. The costume of the Townspeople. Very serious work from a historical point of view when discovering the field. The symbolic, fragmentary, allusive approach to cultural heritage stimulated the creation of a new costume, which was given national and scenic status at the same time.

In the list of works for the last 5 years in this area, the works of the following authors should be noted: T. Bujorean [14], V. Buzilă [2], [15] where we can watch the present interest of the identity discourse of the traditional costume. Collections of the NMENH – generous hints regarding the historical designs of the traditional dress. Decorative interdependence: motifs, structures, chromatics. The photographs in this study clearly demonstrate how traditional vests complemented the costume. The researcher Maria Bâtcă [1] also contributed to revealing the issue of the field by examining our costume in the context of the traditional Romanian costume and revealing its specificity. S. Moldovanu [16] described the main symbols and demonstrated options for their combination in traditional embroidery. But the researcher T. Apostol-Macovei [17]

warns about the meaning and symbolism of colors in traditional Romanian culture. This series of works helps us to carry out the objective analysis of the ornamentation represented on the vests from the studied collection.

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this work is to analyze vests included in the collection of the Chisinau NMENH. The task was to analyze the decor of the studied exhibits. The author proposed to study this topic because the vest plays an important role in the complex of the folk costume of both Moldova and Romania, as well as other European peoples. In the wake of the increased interest in traditional shirts, according to the author, the need for information about traditional vests is expected in the near future, since this element of the costume is a necessary addition to the shirt.

Results of the research. As a result of studying the vests from the museum's collection and the inventory description for each exhibit, it was found that the museum purchased vests from Moldova, as well as from Romania, Bulgaria, Gagauzia. At the moment, the number is more than 80 items of vests made of materials of animal and vegetable origin. The smallest in terms of the number of exhibits, but the most valuable part of this collection is made of fur and leather. Most of the vests from this collection are made from homespun and factory-made textiles.

Decor for textile and leather exhibits includes: a) perforated leather elements of complex configuration and stripes (inv. No. 4028, 21857); b) decor from silk wool braided cord (inv. No. 15441, 105107_4, 20401); c) embroidery with colored threads of silk, wool, cotton (inv. No. 30789-2, 12208, 24479, 13316, 12210, 23975); e) embroidery with beads, sequins (inv. No. 14384).

The ornament is one of the oldest and most stable art forms. Having originated many millennia ago in canonical art, it is still an integral part of people's lives. At all times, ornaments play a very important role [18, P. 3].

Creating any ornament based on the laws and general rules for building a composition: completeness, symmetry and asymmetry.

From this range of vests kept in the museum funds, two types of ornamental motifs important to distinguished: geometric and floral. In various techniques, the decor of vests was made using geometric (inv. No. 4028, 4032, 27166, 12208, 12209, 12213, 12214, 12390, 12391, 20401, 12721) (fig. 1, a) and stylized floral motifs (inv. No. 461, 3561, 3574_2, 24479, 27162, 27164, 27169, 27170, 30789_2, 5656, 10507_4, 11408, 11669, 11670, 11671, 12666, 13043, 15604, 19234) (fig. 1, b, c, d).

It should be noted about a number of exhibits with stylized floral ornaments in combination with geometric (inv. No. 27172, 12210, 12301, 23975, 12716, 13316, 1341, 1342, 1438) (fig. 2, a, b, c, d).

Geometric or stylized motifs such as «rhombus», «square», «triangle», «circle», «straight or wavy line» enrich traditional art. Other common symbols are the so-called «shepherd's hook», «cross», «eye», «walnut kernel», «star», «ladder», «rope», «bird», «hands on the hip», «bud», «column», «wheat ear», «wolf fangs», «ram's horns», «tree of life» and other signs and symbols that adorn the elements of traditional dress, carpets, pottery, the exterior and interior architecture of our country. These signs are a form of communication of the past with the future through the help of the diligent soul and hands that wrote the stories of life, using symbols and colors. For many designers and creative people, the folk costume is a rich source of inspiration, because the components of this costume are enduring values.

The «circle» – a universal solar symbol with mystical meanings has been present since ancient times in various cultures and religions. The «circle», along with the spiral, volute, and other curved lines, representing the power of Heaven over life and God.



Fig. 1. The geometric and stylized floral ornamental motifs. Chisinau NMENH collection



Fig. 2. The geometric and stylized floral ornamental motifs. Chisinau NMENH collection



Fig. 3. The circle in various ornamental motifs. Chisinau NMENH collection



Fig. 4. Decoration with the ornament «tree of life», «ram's horns». Chisinau NMENH collection

This symbol speaks about the essence of life, and can symbolize the wheel of life, which is constantly spinning, but also the craft concern of some villages. Especially in Precucuteni, many concentric circles were used as a sign of regeneration, associated with the solar image (fig. 3, a, b, c, d).

The high frequency of the sun signs demonstrates the belief of our ancestors in the Cult of the Sun that was born and spread within the boundaries of the space of the first farmers of all non-Swiss sedentary peoples in the Carpathian area [17].

From the 13th millennium BC settled Carpathians invariably wore the aura of solar signs, which was an integral part of the dialogue with heaven in their spiritual life. Over time, the graphic signs spread throughout the spread of the Solar cult, throughout the area of the first farmers, the sedentary. Peculiarities of the Carpathian solar beliefs influenced the Cucuteni hearth, the hearth of the first civilizations that created the outline of Old Europe [19, P. 6].

The «zigzag column» is a symbol of the connection between Heaven and Earth and ascension to Heaven. Through this sign, a person can communicate with the universe. Later, from the «column», people developed other symbols: «rhombus», «angles», «stairs», «hourglass». The «rhombus» – a sacred sign of soil fertility – was everywhere in the center of attention of graphic compositions.

Nature-inspired motifs are very common. The tree or its stylized branches symbolize endurance, wisdom, resurrection or life. The «cosmic tree» – the «tree of life» – is one of the richest and most widespread symbols in traditional ornamentation.

The «tree of life» is a symbolic motif that often found on ancient Bessarabian carpets, wall runners, ceramics, wooden sculptures, etc. This symbol is common among many peoples, has various configurations, and there are many myths about it. This cosmic symbol comes from earlier cults in which trees were the embodiment of fertility. The Romanian

philosopher Mircea Eliade related that, the «tree of life» serves as a symbol for the cyclical character of cosmic evolution: death and regeneration. It facilitates the communion between the three levels of the cosmos: the underground one, through the roots; the surface of the earth, through the trunk and lower branches; high, through the branches from the top [20].

In the Christian tradition – the «cosmic tree» is the Cross of Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The cross was made of the wood of the tree of good and evil, replaces the cosmic tree. The «tree of life» is associated with divine manifestation. This is because there is a resumption of symbols between the tree of the first covenant (the «tree of life») of which the Creation speaks, and the tree of the cross, or the tree of the new covenant, which saves man. Jesus himself is the Tree of Life, the cure for the disease of sin and death [21, P. 155] (fig. 4, a, b, c, d).

The spiral signifies the universal movement, which found in man, many examples of this symbol can be admired in the creations of the Cucuteni culture and the Vadastra culture. Sometimes the curved lines turned into angular spirals. It is a very old sign, with great spiritual charge, the symbol of infinity and immortality, the wearing of this symbol determines the attunement to the rhythms of the universe [16, P. 420]. From the spirals, other mystical signs were derived: the «S», composed of 2 opposite volutes, the «horns of the ram», composed of 2 volutes in the mirror, «hands in the hips» using the symmetrical volutes. As for the Romanian folk art, we are certainly not wrong when we say that it dominated by geometric motifs: dot, line, triangle, square, rhombus, circle, rosette, cross, spiral, etc. [6].

The main edges on the fur coat decorated with friezes made of symbols. The corners were adorned with spears, arrows. In addition to everyday vest, the people of Cucuteni from all their lands created and wore the bun richly decorated with solar symbols.

The vest for men was included in the list of obligatory ritual items of festive attire, being the most richly decorated of their clothing items [17, P. 110-111].

In the process of studying the museum collection, it is necessary to note the actively used symbols. In the decoration of the vests

we see: «shepherd's hook», «ram's horns», «tree of life» (inv. No. 13041, 27172), «column» (inv. No. 12213) (fig. 5, b, d), «rhombus» and «square» (inv. No. 12716) (fig. 5, b, d), «circle» (inv. No. 12390), «zigzag» and «wavy lines» (inv. No. 12214, 12721, 12391, 14384) (fig. 5, a, c).



Fig. 5. The various geometric and floral ornamental motifs. Chisinau NMENH collection

The colors have a special importance in the folk costume. They are specific to the geographical area, adapted to the age of the wearer, as well as his social status. Dyeing threads for embroidery has always been a special event. It began with special training, cleanliness, and prayer. The custom comes from the Cucuteni civilization, when exist the Goddess-bird [22, P. 35].

Conclusions. In the art of clothing, ornament, as shown by centuries of experience, can play a very important role. It can be almost invisible in the product, but sometimes it can play a leading role in the structure of the artistic image. In the modern art of creating clothes, it is necessary to know how to direct the work of an ornament and to be able professionally highlight some of its features and properties, but also level, soften others. The tact of using these changes, the understanding of these patterns determine the level of the artist. Undoubtedly, in addition to temperament, a heightened sensory perception of reality, it is very important to have a generalizing abstract thinking that allows you to skillfully combine the flow of feelings and the level of knowledge. Thanks to

the signs, symbols and colors that come from the depths of our roots we can reveal an advanced degree of spiritual development of our ancestors. Symbols express the inner state, mental practices and communications. Understanding the symbols will help us to know the social group or a certain person who used them and who through the cultic thought of expression in this way communicated on the stage of the civilization of that time. Continuing to decipher the symbols left by our ancestors is a necessary thing. The symbolic system is an important part of the spiritual and material treasure of our people. It is necessary to research in depth the meanings of each symbol, in order to increase the traditional values.

The greatest fashion designers are inspired by the folk costume, because they have discovered that it is a real hidden value. Deciphering this archaic "writing" and expression by creating cultic messages is necessary to pass this treasure on to future generations without loss of value. Reviving the traditional costume, revealing it and using it as an element of individuality, implies a great responsibility that we all must be aware of [23,

P. 10]. We see a growing interest in traditional clothing among designers and artists, which in turn contributes to the preservation and inclusion of such traditional elements of clothing as a shirt, fur vest, lambskin hat and other components of the costume into modern images. We can learn about the spiritual development and high level of various skills of our ancestors through signs, symbols,

colors, implementation methods that come from the depths of our roots. Subsequent work on the study of traditional vests, traditional technologies in the selection and preparation of materials, the creation and calculation of cuts and patterns, should explore the implementation of various vest decoration techniques.

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ЗНАКОВЫЕ СИМВОЛЫ В ДЕКОРЕ ТРАДИЦИОННЫХ ЖИЛЕТОВ КОЛЛЕКЦИИ НАЦИОНАЛЬНОГО МУЗЕЯ ЭТНОГРАФИИ И ЕСТЕСТВЕННОЙ ИСТОРИИ РЕСПУБЛИКИ МОЛДОВА

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Цель: исследование знаков и символов в декоре жилетов, входящих в коллекцию Кишинёвского Национального музея этнографии и естественной истории (НМЭИ).

Методология. Используются аналитический, морфологический, художественно-композиционный методы, тематико-сопоставительный анализ.

Результаты. В результате анализа музейной коллекции жилетов из НМЭИ Республики Молдова и инвентарного описания каждого экспоната установлено, что в музее хранятся образцы жилетов из Молдовы, а также из Румынии, Болгарии, Гагаузии. В статье раскрыт широкий спектр специальной терминологии, связанной с жилетами Румынии, Молдовы и Украины.

Научная новизна. Проведен анализ декоративных элементов и охарактеризована знаковая символика данной коллекции жилетов. Галерея с наиболее примечательными экспонатами поможет раскрыть изучаемую область.

Практическая значимость. В последнее десятилетие наблюдается растущий интерес к национальной одежде, а именно, традиционным рубашкам, что, по мнению автора, вскоре потребует углубленной информации о традиционных жилетах. Изучение знаков, символов, цветовых палитр национального костюма имеет важное значение для настоящего и будущих поколений, так как раскрывает глубину духовного развития наших предков. Изучение особенностей традиционного

ЗНАКОВІ СИМВОЛИ В ДЕКОРІ ТРАДИЦІЙНИХ ЖИЛЕТІВ КОЛЕКЦІЇ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО МУЗЕЮ ЕТНОГРАФІЇ І ПРИРОДНОЇ ІСТОРІЇ РЕСПУБЛІКИ МОЛДОВА

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Мета: дослідження знаків та символів у декорі жилетів, що входять до колекції Кишинівського Національного музею етнографії та природної історії (НМЕПІ).

Методологія. Застосовувано аналітичний, морфологічний, художньо-композиційний методи, тематико-порівняльний аналіз.

Результати. В результаті аналізу музейної колекції жилетів з НМЕПІ Республіки Молдова та інвентарного опису кожного експонату встановлено, що музей зберігає зразки жилетів з Молдови, а також Румунії, Болгарії, Гагаузії. У статті розкрито широкий спектр спеціальної термінології, пов'язаної із дослідженням складової національного костюма – жилетів Румунії, Молдови та України.

Наукова новизна. Проведено аналіз декоративних елементів та охарактеризовано знакову символіку даної колекції жилетів. Галерея з найбільш значущими експонатами допоможе розкрити область, що вивчається.

Практична значущість. В останнє десятиліття спостерігається зростаючий інтерес до національного костюма, зокрема, до традиційних сорочок, що, на думку автора, незабаром потребуватиме поглибленої інформації про традиційні жилети. Вивчення знаків, символів, палітри кольорів національного костюма має важливе значення для сьогодення та майбутніх поколінь, оскільки розкриває глибину духовного розвитку наших предків. Вивчення особливостей традиційного

жилета необходимо для сохранения этого артефакта и использования его в качестве источника вдохновения для создания современных коллекций, для исследователей, ученых, этнологов и т.д.

Ключевые слова: *текстиль; традиции; костюм; одежда; декор; орнамент; символ; цвет.*

жилета необхідне для збереження цього скарбу та використання його як джерела натхнення до створення сучасних колекцій, а також для дослідників, учених, етнологів тощо.

Ключові слова: *текстиль; традиції; костюм; одяг; декор; орнамент; символ; колір.*

ІНФОРМАЦІЯ
ПРО АВТОРА

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