

THE TRADITIONAL ROMANIAN COSTUME BETWEEN AESTHETICS, COMMUNICATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Viorica CAZAC

Technical University of Moldova, Faculty of Design, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
viorica.cazac@dtm.utm.md

Abstract. *The ancestors bequeathed us a huge material and immaterial treasure resulting from their cognitive, creative, artistic, graphic, structural, technical, mathematical, etc. skills that directly materialized other skills such as communication, thinking, psycho-sensory, etc. The traditional Romanian costume presents the result of the integrated functionality of all abilities. The analysis of the identity characteristics allowed the finding of its survival in time, the testimony being the long life span of over 150 years. Each piece of the traditional costume was conceived as a result of the profound analysis of the correlation: medium-functionality-spiritual aspirations/values-carrier-materials-constructive solutions-technological solutions-destination. The objective of the study was focused on analyzing the aesthetics and sustainability of the traditional costume, identifying solutions in this regard offered by our predecessors. The applied research methods are direct observation, comparative analysis, semantic analysis, visual evaluation of museum traditional costume collections, materials used, structural analysis and their positioning within the costume, analysis of constructive and technological solutions of costume pieces, field interviewing, and analysis of photographic materials. The result of the study allowed the finding that the traditional costume presents a code of aspirations of the wearer or creator codified by the ornamental motifs organized in compositional modules, respectively in ornamental registers. The arrangement of the ornamental registers in the morphological structure of the traditional costume pieces forms the image of the costume correlated with the image of the wearer, with the anthropomorphological and conformation peculiarities. The coded messages hidden in the language of the ornamental motifs have made the pieces of the traditional costume timeless products through their continuous actuality, characterized by unity through diversity. The depth of the aesthetics and the symbols of the traditional costume is accentuated by the sustainable solutions offered to us by our ancestors. They refer to: the constructive solutions focused on the elements of regular geometric shapes, the high degree of lightness of the shirts allows their use throughout the wearer's life with all the morphological and conformation changes supported during life, the use of techniques for combining the elements through the keys ensure unrepeatable aesthetic shirts, suggestively capitalize with finesse and elegance the elegance silhouette lines, but also ensure the resistance of the joints to various dynamic stresses of any complexity and extension. Each piece of the traditional costume represents a wise guide of aesthetic, functional, and sustainable solutions offered for the wearer to meet the societal challenges, to communicate, to be environmentally friendly, thus also ensuring the protection of the environment, to be healthy, and to highlight the cultural values of the people and the personal values of the wearer. The study was done within the State Project 20.80009.0807.17. "Education for the revitalization of the national cultural heritage through traditional processing technologies used in the Republic of Moldova in the context of multiculturalism, diversity and European integration", running at the Technical University of Moldova.*

Keywords: codes, message, traditional shirt, ornamental motifs.

1. INTRODUCTION

The traditional Romanian costume is as beautiful as it is aesthetic at first perception, as many as it hides from the multiple aspects that determine it. His deception requires knowledge of the language with which he was operated on reproduction.

The remarkable ethnologists from the Romanian space: Ioan Sorin Apan, Doina Ișfănoni, Ion Gherciu, Varvara Buzilă, Nelu Dumitrescu, Marius Matei, and others, claim that the traditional Romanian costume

is of great cultural value and is very complex, hiding deep essences about existentialism and eternity, struggle and peace, beautiful and ugly, good and bad, etc.

Each piece of the traditional costume was conceived by the creator as a result of the correlation analysis: environment-functionality-culture-user. The analysis of these variables in the relationship determined the identification and elaboration of solutions with an impact on aesthetics-functionality-sustainability.

Thus, the objective of the study was directed to the analysis of the aesthetics, the functionality of the traditional costume, and the solutions offered by our predecessors regarding its sustainability.

2. EXPERIMENTAL PART

The study included the traditional costumes identified in the museum patrimonies of the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, Edinet County Museum, Cahul County Museum, Museum of Ethnography and History from Recea village, Strasen district, Museum of Ethnography and History from Crocmaz village, Stefan Voda district, Museum of History and Ethnography from Slobozia Mare village, Cahul district, History and Ethnography Museum "Lazar Dubinovschi" from Falesti, The Museum of History and Ethnography in Balti, the Museum of History and Ethnography in the Sofia, Drochia.

There were analyzed the traditional costumes for women consisted of a shirt, a girdle, a "catrinta" (skirts), a "fota", vest/"bondita" and waistcoat/"cojoc" (table 1).

Table 1

Traditional costumes included in the study

Museum institution	Elements of the traditional costume identified							
	Shirt with "altita"	Shirt with yoke	Straight shirt	"Fota" (piece from two landmarks)	"Catrinta" (piece of a landmark)	Girdle	Vest/"bondita"	waistcoat/cojoc
National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, Chisinau	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
National Museum of History of Moldova	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Museum of Ethnography and History from Recea village, Strasen district	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	+
Museum of History and Ethnography from Mereni village, Anenii Noi district	+	--	-	-	+	-	-	-
Edinet County Museum	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
Museum of History and Ethnography in Balti	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-
Museum of History and Ethnography "Lazar Dubinovschi" from Falesti	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+
Museum of History and Ethnography	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-

Museum institution	Elements of the traditional costume identified							
	Shirt with "altita"	Shirt with yoke	Straight shirt	"Fota" (piece from two landmarks)	"Catrinta" (piece of a landmark)	Girdle	Vest/ "bondita"	waistcoat/ cojoc
from Sofia village, Drochia district								
Cahul County Museum	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
Museum of History and Ethnography Slobozia Mare, Cahul district	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Museum of Ethnography and History from Crocmaz village, Stefan Voda district	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aesthetics of the traditional Romanian costume is determined by the general image created by the structural constitution of the clothing ensemble from different pieces, shapes, silhouette, chromatics, ornamental elements, ornamental compositional structure, proportions, the operation with the visual language through the key ornamental motifs used, the combination of ornamental elements in ornamental modules, the constitution of ornamental registers from the compositional modules, the stylistic character of the forms.

The communication of the traditional costume derives from the story reproduced on the shirt through the diversity of the techniques of sewing, weaving and crocheting, the significance of the ornaments used, and the positioning of the elements in the structure of the costume.

The functionality of the traditional costume is ensured by the constructive and technological solutions of the pieces correlated with their impact on aesthetics.

Just as the traditional costume results from the activity of several generations of creators, being defined by common contribution and acceptance, it presents a concept with multiple sustainable solutions skilled to ensure a long life span, being adaptable to the multitude of anthropomorphological and conformation changes of the wearers throughout life.

Our predecessors because of the imperatives of time and historical ones have been constantly preoccupied with what is currently a global strategy called sustainability. Thus, the sustainability principles defined by the 6Rs [1] were applied as intrinsic to the thought and conceptualization process in everything that represented the daily activity.

The applicability of the sustainability principles in the traditional costume by our predecessors will be initially analyzed based on the shirt with "altita" - an element on the shoulder of the sleeve (fig. 1). Being the piece of the traditional costume most subject to wear and the most demanded, leaning on the shoulders, it supports the most complex and dynamic requests to the wearer's movements. At the same time, religious canons imposed rigid exigencies concerning the degree of coverage of the surface of the human body.

Thus, the traditional shirt completely covered the upper part of the trunk to the base of the neck and the whole tomorrow. Based on these requirements, the creators noticed that the upper support area of the shirt is the most subject to wear, especially the upper part of the tomorrow.

Starting from those findings, but also from other reasoning, we notice the constructive solution of the shirts with the "altita" tailored separately. The distinguished ethnographer Varvara Buzila [2] mentioned that the "altita" is attested by the "XVII-XVIII centuries documents" as a separate element richly ornamented, which at washing was detached from tomorrow.

After drying the shirt, others were caught back. In the case of excessive wear and tear or starting from the personal aspirations of the carriers, others were exchanged for new ones.



Figure 1. Shirt with "altita", National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, Chisinau

The rethinking and modification of "altita" were correlated with the requirements imposed on their aesthetic solution. The ornamental motif inscribed on the "altita" – considered sacred – is not repeated anywhere else on the shirt, for example, the "rivers on the sleeve" on the face, or the back of the shirt, are easily repeated" [3, 5, pp. 53-54].

These rules were in harmony with the intention or necessity of modifying others, still largely using the original main landmarks of the shirt: front, back, and sleeves.

Here we note the application of the principles of sustainability: Rethink, Refuse to throw away the product, and Reduce the time and energy needed to make a new product, considering that making a shirt involves a lot of time of realization depending on the complexity from 2-3 months to 9, 12, 16 months, Repair the product, Reuse, Recycle (Table 2).

Table 2

Creating shirts with "altita" from the perspective of sustainability

Elements of the shirt with "altita"	Principles of sustainability					
	Rethink	Refuse	Reduce	Reuse	Recycle	Repair
Front	+	+	+		+	+
Back	+		+		+	+
"Altita"	+	+		+	+	+
Sleeve	+			+	+	
Pave	+		+			+
Cuff-Bracelet	+			+		+

We notice such an approach, based on the principles of sustainability as Rethink, Reuse, and Repair the shirts with yoke. Thus, in the Museum of History and Ethnography *Lazar Dubinovschi*, Falesti identified such a shirt (fig. 2) in which the shirt yoke was probably modified having another ornamental motif independent of the one in the front element both in form, style, and chromatics.

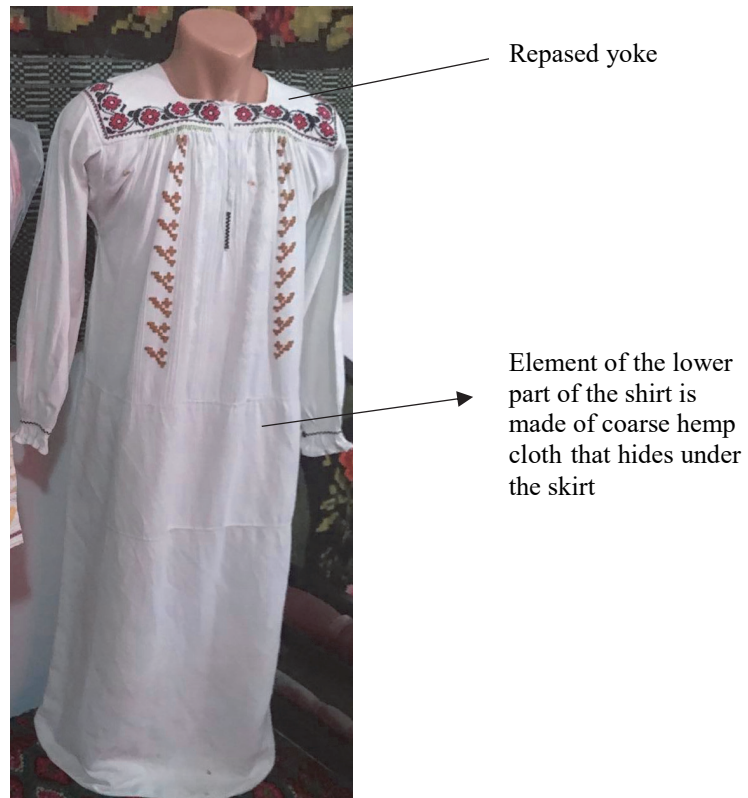


Figure 2. Shirt with yoke

The shirts were of great lengths covering the legs, thus requiring a big consumption of homemade cloth to make them. To save the canvas, the creators used in the visible areas of the shirt the cloth of a greater finesse, and in the areas that remained hidden behind the "*fota*"/skirt, to save the high-finesse canvas that was more difficult to obtain, the coarse cloth from the same raw material or hemp was used for example.

The shirts that have the neck ending processed with a headband and the sleeves with bracelets/cuffs, during their lifetime, in case of wear, were replaced by others.

The sustainability of the constructive solution of women's shirts with a different type of reference to defining the contours of the elements is of interest, these being represented by rectangular regular-shaped elements (fig. 3, 4).

The assembly of the elements resulted in a shirt of large width that was worn throughout life, regardless of the anatomy and morphological changes of the human body.

Such an approach is noted in the skirts/"*fote*" consisting of two elements positioned one in front [4], and another in the back, which is left free on the sidelines. They were fixed only in the waistband, which ensured a lot of freedom in making the movements.

In the case of the aprons/"*catrinte*," we notice their constitution from a rectangular element that fits on the human figure by fixing them using the girdle [4].

Synthesizing the approach of making the traditional costume, it can be concluded that the creators certainly applied extensively the principles of sustainability: Rethink, Reuse, Repair, Refuse to give up the product, Reduce, and Recycle. At the level of traditional costume, sustainability was approached through:

- the fabrics used;
- aesthetic solution;
- the constructive solution;
- technological solution;
- parts maintenance technologies;
- storage technologies.



Figure 3. Skirt type “catrinta” consisting of an element



Figure 4. Skirt type “fota” consists of two elements

4. CONCLUSIONS

The traditional Romanian costume was made starting not only from the aspirations for aesthetics of the wearers and creators. It was well correlated with the message that was intended to be communicated, with the functionality of the product intriguingly applying the principles of sustainability.

The traditional costume was a formidable tool for connecting the wearer with the divinity. Communication through the great diversity of artistic means of expression denotes the innate aesthetic qualities of the wearers and the attention attributed to the aesthetics, but also the connections with it.

The solutions offered by the example of the traditional costume are of interest for their takeover and application in the traditional costumes reproduced today, can be applied in contemporary clothing products while contributing to the promotion of traditional intangible and material values by perpetuating them, but also ensuring the continuity of intelligent solutions with secular experience.

The analysis of the traditional costume through the prism of the applicability of the principles of sustainability led to the finding of the excellence of the visionary approach of our predecessors, rethinking, reusing, repairing, refusing, reducing, and recycling.

Acknowledgements

We express our gratitude to the National Agency for Research and Development of the Republic of Moldova, and the Technical University of Moldova for the trust and support provided in carrying out the research within the state program project *Education for the revitalization of the national cultural heritage through the traditional processing technologies used in the Republic of Moldova, in the context of multiculturalism, diversity and European integration* 20.80009.0807.17.

REFERENCES

- [1] *Cei 6 R ai sustenabilității*. Available from: <https://www.biancaosvat.com/sustenabil-6-definitii-si-principii/> Accessed: 2022-08-30
- [2] Buzilă, V.: *Arta cămășii cu altiță-element de identitate culturală*, *Revista de inovare, știință, cultură și artă*, Akademos 1/2021, ISBN 978-9975-3453-3-0 (PDF); 978-9975-3453-4-7, Chișinău, Republica Moldova
- [3] Buzilă, V.: *Cămașa femeiască cu altiță-brand românesc*, *Studiul Artelor și Culturologie: istorie, teorie, practică* (2014), nr.2 (22), Chișinău, Republica Moldova
- [4] Iorga, N. *Scrieri despre artă*. Editura Meridiane, București, 1968
- [5] Secoșan, E.; Petrescu, P: *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1984