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**ADORNMENTS IN THE
TRADITIONAL ROMANIAN SOCIETY.
IMAGE AND ETHNOLINGUISTIC CONTEXT**

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Our research intends to analyse the image of adornments of Byzantine and Ottoman influence in the traditional Romanian society, representations of adornments and garments in the Romanian literature of the nineteenth century, as well as a historical and ethnolinguistic contextualization.

We have no knowledge of any strict approach to analyze garments and adornments in literary works. There are studies and analyses referring to them, perhaps starting with Lazar Saineanu, who, for the compilation of the *Dictionarul universal al Limbei Romane* (its first edition was published in 1896), defined terms based on literature; examples from the works of the above-mentioned five writers abound, as testimonies of terms' truthfulness. There are also critics who refer to both the garments and adornments: when analysing literary works, directly or indirectly, they all refer to these elements.

Interest in Orientalism is manifested throughout the period from these writings to present days, with greater or lesser intensity. The past decade proves to be one with a pronounced interest for the first half of the nineteenth century, that eclectic period of transition from the Eastern to the Western influence in the Romanian Principalities. Analysts of the period, philologists, historians, art historians, memorialist, published in the last decade a significant number of volumes regarding the period of interest, either own creations or translations, publications or republications of old Romanian and foreign works; monographs of the nineteenth-century writers emerge now with new and exciting approaches. However, the themes closest to ours are those about the women of the period. Their characters, manners, culture, customs, etc. are presented. Adornments and garments are listed or referred to everywhere: in dowry lists, in the description of opulence, in the presentation of the Ottoman archaic framework, etc. However, nowhere, adornments and garments of the Phanariot epoch are given special attention, getting a detailed description, and no complete outfit is presented.

We believe an approach to garment and adornments in literary works was necessary, to add another element that contributes to the definition of a period about which so much was written, but which continuously provides new resources.

Our corpus of texts of interest consists of fragments of the writings by the five authors, paradigmatic for the transition from the Phanariot epoch to the beginning of the Romanian modernization, both through their literature and their political, administrative and cultural activities: Costache Negruzzi, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Nicolae Filimon, Vasile Alecsandri and Alexandru Odobescu.

The idea we want to develop is interdisciplinary, encompassing data of the Romanian history, the history of modern literature, memoirs of the writers of interest, ethnography - as evidence of a period in which discipline was then taking shape -, the history of art (religious and

secular), from a time when the influence of writers played a more or less important or beneficial role, the historiography of garments and adornments preserved in museum collections and much more. This approach derives from the fact that nature, architecture, the man - physically and mentally - enjoyed the attention of critics, but never the human as manufacturer and wearer of garments and adornments. From the anthropological point of view, we consider that such an approach is necessary.

The starting point of our research structuring was based on a formula commonly used, “who, where, when, how”, which we changed a little, specifically to “who, where, how, why”. This solution led us to a structure composed of five chapters, followed by conclusions, glossary, bibliography and appendices.

Chapter 1 creates a background for the writers and their works in a spatial and temporal area of living and creation. It includes presentations of the political, social and cultural situation. Three accents are required, one in the realm of social life with its specific structures, morals and garments, the second with reference to the literary movements and Western influences in the Romanian literature of the period, and the third with increased attention on what has characterized the artistic context, painting and music of the nineteenth century.

“Five writers: C. Negruzzi, D. Bolintineanu, Al. Filimon, V. Alecsandri, Al. Odobescu” is a headline that announces and defines what the second chapter includes: bibliographical data of the five writers. They are not exhaustive, including only those elements that contribute to a more accurate understanding of the motivation and cover the work topics’ requirements for the writers. A biography is presented to help understanding the professional relations, access to certain social, political and cultural circles, access that influenced, inspired or led their writing. The bibliography intends to bring to date or recall ideas and ideals of writers, representing a canvas of knowledge and judgements on which we can work and build. We wanted to highlight all that was of concern for the writers alongside literary work, considering important those elements with impact on our proposed subject, on its more detailed or synthetic knowledge. Our intention was only to mark the literary movement that have influenced them, without intending a critical exegesis, which was made by major literary critics, contemporary to the writers or to us, because we are talking of a relatively short period between the literary work and present days - about 150 years. Moreover, we have continuously considered the reading of these specialists, depending on our proposed episodic or general objectives.

If we know who created these literary testimonies of garments and adornments, we must consider where they were integrated and thus, the third chapter is defined and reserved for literary works.

The presentation was made in the chronological order of historical events and not by the year when the work was published or the order in which writers were introduced. An analysis of the periods addressed by writers in their writings led us to the idea of a temporal unity, both in the historical evocation writings, and in those inspired by their contemporaneity. I presented (in tabular form) the order of writings depending on the period in which their actions take place, and a first conclusion we reached, was that action in works of historical inspiration takes place somewhat around the events marked by the Battle of Mohács (1526) and in those of contemporary inspiration within the first half of the nineteenth century. We emphasize the temporal limit of the year 1526 from which, the Ottoman Porte's influence is more powerful in the life of the Romanian Principalities, thus on garments and adornments, which occurs during the reigns of Petru Rares Mircea Ciobanu, Despot Voda, Alexandru Lapusneanu, etc. We reproduce the genealogical tree of the Basarab family, with the personalities that interest us and some helpful additions to our theme. This, along with the Brancovici Despots' genealogy will allow us an easier evocation of the characters from the historical writings.

Writings with topics from the contemporary period of authors show periods falling in the first half and middle of the nineteenth century; the earliest action is, as shown, in *Ciocoii vechi și noi*. Filimon narrates in 1862 - 1863 (the period in which the novel was published) the Romanian society during 1814 - 1825. In 1837, when *Zoe* was published, Negruzzi presented the society in 1827; in 1855 and respectively 1862, in *Manoil* and then *Elena*, Bolintineanu referred to the period between 1850 and 1860. Alecsandri assigned the satire *Kera Nastasia* to the first years of the seventh decade, and the poem *Crai Nou* published in 1843 is timeless as timing of the action, as are all poems by Bolintineanu, published during his lifetime (1847-1872).

In this chapter, we also present the characters that benefited from a fashion description from the writers, those referred to in the quotes of interest. Here we use again a tabular solution and an overview of the degrees of kinship, where necessary, or social position of each character.

As a conclusion of this chapter, we can say that none of the historical characters received a characterization purely in chronicle style, based on testimonies only. Including Odobescu, in the two short stories, uses the imaginary to create some moments or even whole chapters, and that due to a pure literary need, born of the editing requirements of a given species. Regarding the literature inspired by the society of the nineteenth century, no critic or literary historian made the slightest hint of any possible similarities with real characters, which entitles us to say that all female characters of the nineteenth century are characters created for the theme and manifesto they would "sign".

Chapter four is a necessity for presenting the information sources of writers for what the historical subject meant. Moldavian chroniclers Ureche, Costin and Neculce must be mentioned

when writing about Lapusneanu and his lady or Petru Rares, just as *Invataturile lui Neagoe Basarab catre fiul sau Teodosie* or *Cronica lui Eftimie* cannot be omitted when we go back to the sixteenth century in the Wallachia, especially through the writings of Odobescu.

How could we address the chronicles and chroniclers without evoking the immense personality of Dimitrie Cantemir or the presence of others who do not reach his level of knowledge and European reputation, but who left an important documentary material?

“But enough!” says Odobescu, in *Cateva ore la Snagov*, at the end of an extensive description of adornments and garments of Lady Milita Despina and dowry list of monk Dositeiu Brailoiu’s daughter, “we have forgotten that we were talking...” about garments and adornments. They will be included in chapter five.

“Introduction to literature” is the title of the first sub-chapter that comes to show the major works that were the sources of comparison and reasoning of our analysis.

Further, the structure of the chapter is marked by two directions: the periodization and, of course, the one conditioned by gender. We presented garments, jewellerys and accessories from the quotes of interest according to these two criteria and thus we have structured the sub-chapters “male garments and adornments found in history evocation works”, “female clothes and adornments found in history evocation works”, “garments found in works inspired by the contemporary times of authors” and “adornments found in works inspired by the contemporary times of authors.”

The last sub-chapter covers the “literary works - sources of inspiration for painters.”

Findings conclude our research on garments and adornments in the literature.

We believe this research leads us to the fact that three of the writers (Alecsandri, Filimon and Odobescu) are among those who founded a science of fashion design. But how did they use all this knowledge in literary works? Due to the multidisciplinary of each of the five personalities - Negruzzi, Bolintineanu, Filimon, Alecsandri and Odobescu - it is impossible to consider each one’s works in a uniquely defined ensemble.

For example, if, in the homonymous work, Odobescu intuited the garment of Mihnea Voda in perfect truthfulness except for the term “cioareci” (*n.t. traditional trousers*), Ilinca’s garment is a mix of garments from the sixteenth century and garments belonging to the next centuries.

With strict reference to the garments of the sixteenth century presented in the writings of Odobescu and Negruzzi, analysed by us, we can say that the terminology used by Negruzzi has a large proportion of interference with the fashion terminology of the following centuries.

Regarding the descriptions of the first one, each case must be reviewed separately. For Despina’s garments, there is certainly valuable information about the garments before restoration. It should however be noted that Odobescu’s attempt to liken Chiajna’s garments to Despina’s does not correspond to the results of specialists in history, art history and garments. The dowry list cited by

Odobescu in the continued description of Despina's garments is Stanca's dowry list, who, with her husband, cup-bearer Constantin Obedeau, built in 1748 - 1753 the famous church in Craiova that bears their names.

Neither the description of the two outfits of Mihnea Voda presented by Odobescu can be analysed together. Presentation of an outfit of Western influence is the great achievement of the description, but the terms used must be considered very carefully.

The garments of the nineteenth century were treated by all writers, as it was normal, considering the two spaces in which they formed as typologies: urban and rural.

Regarding the folk costumes, Odobescu brings his biggest contribution, which we could evidence by comparison to the ethnological research conducted by specialists in the field. He highlighted the characteristic elements of costumes very accurately and clearly.

We must emphasize that, strictly concerning our subject, Odobescu brings us significant information about two costume pieces: he identified the presence of "turieci" in the traditional costume from Oltenia ("gaiter" trousers – not to be confused with "cioareci"), elements that disappeared from the folk costume treaties in the past decades, and did not mention the fez in the listing of head coverings, which, as we proposed as a hypothesis and when we tackled the theme, entered the composition of folk costumes after the seventh decade of the nineteenth century.

Regarding the elements of folk costumes used by Bolintineanu, if they seem fanciful at first glance, yet, a careful examination shows that he used, unlike all others, elements less common or specific to the Macedo-Romanian or Oriental culture. Bolintineanu notes very accurately the presence of shirts with "oblique cleavage", "closed on one breast", as he said. This is a shirt rarely seen throughout the Romanian Land, but it is a certainty. In his works, all girls wear dresses. The traditional costume in the Romanian Land lacked this piece, but it is one of the important pieces of the Macedo-Romanian costumes. I could not identify any testimonies about the presence of harem pants in the Macedo-Romanian female costumes, but since it is about a Macedo-Romanian female in the Turkish Anadolu area (area of Istanbul, on the Black Sea shore), such pants may occur sporadically, as shown for the shirt. A more detailed research on Macedo-Romanians in Turkey will certainly explain this statement by Bolintineanu.

The glossary, necessarily accompanying such theme, includes exhaustive archaic terms or with meaning that has changed over time.

The bibliography is important not only to support the statement, but because it is a testimony to the importance of the five writers over time, whom we consider paradigmatic for our research, and interest generated by the analysed periods, while including interdisciplinary areas of interest that we invoked at the beginning.

Appendices include quotations of interest, the two genealogies mentioned above, and lists of manuscripts of the five writers amassed by the Romanian Academy Library.

As a conclusion of our research we can say that in each of the five writers, garments can be identified to complement the testimonies of objects and visual, but only after an interdisciplinary analysis and only using certain testimonies: original visual images, without subsequent interventions, artefacts that can be dated with precision, clear terminology for a certain fashion typology, etc.

We believe that an expansion of this type of research could bring significant contributions to the history of fashion.