

УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВЪРХНА АНТРОПОЛОГИЧЕСКА ШКОЛА



«На одно крыло — серебряная, На другое — золотая...»

Сборник статей памяти Светланы Рябцевой

*Под редакцией
Р. А. Рабиновича и Н. П. Тельнова*

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HIGH ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCHOOL UNIVERSITY



‘ONE HER WING IS SILVER, THE OTHER ONE IS MADE OF GOLD...’

Selected papers in memory of Svetlana Ryabtseva

*Edited by
R.A. Rabinovich and N.P. Telnov*



KISHINEV
2020

Памяти
Светланы Станиславовны Рябцевой
посвящается



In memory of Svetlana Ryabtseva

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F. Nițu

Jewellery consumption in Wallachia and Moldova, 17th—18th centuries

Keywords: Wallachia, Moldavia, 17th—18th centuries, jewellery consumption, luxury, fashion

Ключевые слова: Мунтения, Молдова, XVII—XVIII вв., потребление ювелирных изделий, роскошь, мода

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Jewellery Consumption in Wallachia and Moldova, 17th—18th centuries

The study explores the evolution of jewellery consumption in Wallachia and Moldova, during the 17th—18th centuries, from the perspective of the luxury consumption at the level of the elite. The documents that were analysed highlight a transition from oriental luxury, introduced through Phanariot rulers to Western luxury, directly inspired by contact with travellers or foreign officers and ambassadors passing through the Principalities, but also indirectly through fashion magazines. On the other hand, we can see that jewellery is closely related to fashion and follows the trends and consumer options in connection to it. They mark the social or political position, but also the cultural values adopted by the elite, which are expressed through in fashion choices. There are jewels that are neutral in terms of western or oriental influence, just as belt clasp (paftale) are directly related to the oriental costume. After the middle of the eighteenth century, we notice a mutation in the dowry sheets regarding the relationship between jewellery and clothing, in favour of the latter; the typology of jewellery is limited, but we find valuable jewellery, adorned with diamonds or diamonds and, also, the number of some of the pieces increases (rings, for example).

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Потребление ювелирных изделий в Мунтении и Молдове в XVII—XVIII вв.

Исследуется эволюция потребления ювелирных изделий в Мунтении и Молдове в течении XVII—XVIII вв. в контексте престижного потребления предметов роскоши среди элит. Проанализированные документы демонстрируют переход от предметов роскоши восточного происхождения (традиция, обязанная своим появлением правителям-фанариотам) к предметам роскоши западного происхождения. Побудительными факторами этого перехода были как прямые контакты с западными путешественниками, иностранными офицерами и послами, так и опосредованное влияние со стороны журналов мод. С другой стороны, мы видим, что ювелирные украшения тесно связаны с модой, следуют ее трендам и имеющимся в этой связи у потребителей возможностям выбора. Они маркируют социальное положение или политический статус, а также восприятие элитой культурных ценностей, выраженных через выбор в престижном потреблении. Также необходимо отметить как существование ювелирных изделий, нейтральных с точки зрения дихотомии восточного-западного влияния, так и являвшихся неотъемлемой частью костюма восточного происхождения, как застегки пояса (пафты). После середины XVIII века в списках приданого отмечается изменение количественного баланса между ювелирными украшениями и платьем — в пользу платья. Наборы украшений не очень разнообразны, но среди них мы видим дорогостоящие ювелирные изделия, украшенные алмазами, или просто алмазы. Число некоторых ювелирных изделий (в частности, перстней) возрастает.

Our research proposes an analysis of the Wallachian and Moldavian societies during the 17th—18th centuries, from the perspective of jewellery investments, as a luxury consumption. This approach allows the understanding of some economic, social and cultural behavioral aspects, in a territory that records in the studied time period a transition from Ottoman and Eastern influences to European models and, surely, to modernity.

Thus, we will seek to identify the jewellery consumption mentioned by the dowries, the testaments and recordings of goods or reflected in travel journals, other sources (iconographic, archaeological), the value and the place within the wealth, the forms of investments, the rhythmicity in which some of

them appear, their characteristics depending on the social condition of its owner, in order to understand the values and behaviours which can be identified through this type of luxury consumption.

Luxury is considered to be tightly linked to consumptions, it being an ostentatious consumption in Th. Veblen perspective (Veblen 1899), or the result of excessive and economically unproductive expenses or a way of consolidating the dominance through the use of specific marks (Bourdieu 1984). Henceforth, wealth is an essential condition for accessing luxury and the main sources we will discuss concern especially the social categories with a good and very good economical situation.

The interpretation of jewellery consume in the consumerist paradigm allows us to identify the values which can be associated with these goods, owned by the rich people, their place in different social, cultural and political practices. This way, we can see the reproduction of a group's or communities' social identity. The more compact and impermeable the group is to external influences, the more constant the meaning and value of these goods remains. When the group or the community makes contact with external influence factors, the meaning of these goods begins to change. New behaviors about the acquisition of prestigious goods appear, these objects are charged with new symbolic values. A special mention is worth adding about the significance of using certain precious stones, for which the Europeans develop a series of beliefs and superstitions; so far, there is no analysis dedicated to these aspects in the Romanian territory, due partially to the poverty of sources, but it is hard to believe the Romanians borrowed oriental or occidental models and fashions without also borrowing their original significances. Which of the precious stones bring luck? Which are the precious stones charged with misfortunes? These are questions with answers that would allow the understanding of profound manners of thinking and acting of the premodern Romanian society and, certainly, the frequency in which certain stones appeared in the jewellery ornamentation. Generally, it is thought that precious stones protect oneself from evil spirits, cure some illnesses, ensure strength and indestructibility (the diamond) or maintain one's memory alive (turquoise). Certainly, the most important criteria from the perspective of an expression of wealth and refined taste is the price, thus it is not surprising that in the dowry records made by Constantin Brâncoveanu for his daughters, the diamonds are the main stones, them being rather rare in comparison to other precious stones from the Orient. Likewise, during the 18th century we will meet diamonds and brilliants through the elite's jewellery in the Romanian Principalities. Probably, we can also consider the innovations concerning the process of cutting this stone in the 17th century relevant. Still, until the 19th century, when documents explicitly mentions the presence of brilliants in the decoration of jewellery, in the Romanian countries, the sources talk mostly about the shape, size and colour of diamonds, rarely about their cut. We can consider the fact that the "roze" diamonds, mentioned in Brancoveanu's dowry records, refer to rosette cut of the diamonds, which appeared in the 17th century and assures its highest brilliance level.

The diffusion and the valorization of luxury goods by society led to condemning reactions from both the Church and the State, that are frequently documented until the end of the 18th century, prove that the society are already captivated by this model. Moreover, luxury was also noticed by foreign travelers that pass through the Principalities. The development of production and commerce, the emergence of some changes in distribution and in the level of income led to a larger level of development and diffusion of consumption in Western Europe, that were specific during the last centuries to a small number of people, making the 18th century be considering by researchers the century of luxury.

The *narhs* (maximal fixed prices) from the 18th century try at first to keep the prices low for some of the essential products, but as the consumption excesses grew higher, the Phanariot rulers try to limit the Bucharest prices for larger types of commodities and services, proof that the concern for building an opulent life style became a characteristic of wealthy townspeople.

The boyars, the high clergy and the princely family used the incomes obtain by trade with products from their own domains, to acquire some luxury objects (like the jewellery, different clothing articles, fine shoes, shawls, precious fabrics and fine silk, furs) from import, in the instances when they didn't use the services of their own artisans. Del Chiaro (Călători străini 1983: 380) talked about the fact that, twice a year, the boyars and the ruler used to buy precious objects brought from Venice and Bohemia by Levantine merchants or by the ones from Lipsca (Leipzig). For the Wallachian elite, there also use to be brought silverware from Austria, jewels, precious fabrics and other luxury items from the Ottoman East (Călători străini 1983: 1083). These luxury products are rarely mentioned in custom registers, proof that they weren't regular products, but purchases made by ordering them, maybe even with the payment in advance. In other situations, these objects were made by agents of the ruler or those of the boyars, situations in which they were exempted from custom taxes. The Căineni custom records mention few of these luxury merchandises: cloth, sable and amber (Giurescu 1962: 446).

One century after del Chiaro's narrations, the stories of foreign travelers indicate the diversification of luxury items brought from the European centers. From Vienna, they use to bring velvet, satin, cashmere, mousseline, chevrons and embroidery, jewellery, from Leipzig fine cloth and cashmere, silk fabrics, mousseline, English and Italian silk fabrics, Dutch and Venetian fabrics, accessories from Paris and London, watches from Geneva, accessories made from silver and

gold from Prussia. Russia remained the main supply for furs. From the fairs in Lipsca and Viena, the merchants brought luxury products twice a year, including “a great number of jewels, pearls, watches and other items from gold and silver” (Călători străini 2000: 502, 695; Călători străini 2004: 443). A confirmation of these luxury acquisitions is brought by Baltazar Hacquet, who reported that in 1788—1789, at a fair in Iași, precious stones and pearls were brought from Western Europe (Călători străini 2000: 844).

The increase in luxury consumption became visible in the second half of the seventeenth century in elites; it can be documented by the significant amount of precious metal ornaments, by sumptuous clothing, accessories and other elements of house comfort mentioned by various inventories of preserved goods (Nițu 2006: 89—124).

These documents allow us to observe the changes in the structure of luxury consumption, following the fashion and representing at the beginning of the nineteenth century a sign of the modernization of society at elite levels. Thus, from a luxury consumption characterized mainly by personal items, such as clothing, jewellery and expensive clothing accessories, the interest in consumption has moved during the second half of the eighteenth century to exotic goods, in the field of food consumption (including tableware) or to forms of representation such as housing, carriage and later, household staff (servants). This observation corresponds to the assessments made about the characteristics of consumption at European level, which have gone from ostentation and opulence to refinement, expressed by fewer objects of personal adornment but more accessories that ensure the comfort of the individual.

Among the sources, the dowry records are the richest in information that helps us to reconstruct the typology of clothing consumption, the appearance of new products on the market, the spread of new habits closely related to the models of the time and especially a penchant for luxury and a type of comfort that announces modernity.

Those of the foreign travellers who returned to the Romanian space or lived for a longer period of time as private secretaries of the Phanariot rulers or teachers for the children of the great boyars had the opportunity to see both the gradual orientation towards the Western consumption model and the increase of luxury (Călători străini 2004: 767). However, European luxury was met in the Principalities with manifestations of oriental opulence. Even if they are up to date with European fashion, the Moldavian and Wallachian boyars still fail to convince Charles Frédéric Reinhard, consul general in the Moldavia about the

subtle assumption of European luxury elegance: “as for luxury items, although in Iasi it is read” “*Le Journal des Modes*”, the taste is not refined enough here to distinguish Vienna fashion from Paris fashion” (Călători străini 2004: 274).

In other situations, the travellers were a little more nuanced in their descriptions; for example, Ludwig Kreuchely von Schwerdtberg, who had been in Iasi before 1820 as preceptor of Beizadea Alexandru, the son of Mr. Scarlat Callimachi, summarized what he saw at a ball in Bucharest with the following words: “a lot of luxury, a certain lack of taste, yet elegance and kindness” (Călători străini 2004: 917).

Count d’Hauterive’s reflections on this subject, after living in Moldova for two years at the end of the 18th century, are also relevant; he said that the boyars seemed to want a combination of the brilliance of Asia with the “luxury of Europe” (D’Hauterive 1902: 191) thus assimilating different expressions of ostentatious consumption.

This situation is also specific to a larger area in contact with the Ottoman Empire; as Aleksandra Kontry-Jones remarks, there is no firm separation between East and West, but experiments in different shades and proportions of East and West, related to the level of understanding and assimilation of influences (apud Jasienski 2014: 183).

However, it is the clothing fashion that first attracts attention, which is why these stories focus much less often on jewellery, which completes and ennobles a costume made of luxurious materials.

What information do the documents provide? Those prior to the seventeenth century make rare reference to clothing and jewellery worn by the boyars, even though archaeological discoveries suggest an interest of this elite in clothing and accessories. Instead, land is the main form of wealth preservation, and most of the documents held are based on these types of property transactions. The elite is more mobile (the lord can lose the throne, the boyars in his party can accompany him in exile) and that is why we encounter several cases of investing wealth in movable goods, valuable and easy to transport in times of refuge.

As we advance in the seventeenth century, the fashion of clothing and expensive jewels or tableware radiates from the ruler and his family to the high and even middle boyars, so that in the eighteenth century we meet concerns of establishing wealth according to such models and at the level of rich townspeople.

A document from 1745 shows us the minimum clothing items for a young woman on the verge of marriage: ghiordia (long winter coat) and tivili-chia (short coat), both fur. So, beyond these piec-

es, we can consider that luxury was beginning to make its presence felt (Iorga 1903: 156).

The types of clothes worn by the elites gradually diversified, gaining an oriental influence more and more pronounced in the eighteenth century, both in terms of materials used and in terms of cuts or even the type of clothing. However, all these garments do not always reveal the jewellery, so the iconographic sources most often indicate only the wearing of earrings, chains, necklaces, rings and accessories such as buttons, hat pins, belt clasp (*pafta*). On the other hand, the withdrawal of women from the forefront of public life under the influence of the Ottoman model, deprives us of information on the evolution of women's fashion until the end of the eighteenth century. Dowry sheets and wills, however, testify to a much richer and more diverse range of ornaments and accessories, but also an evolution of jewellery from ostentation and massiveness to valuable pieces through the quality of material and craftsmanship. At the beginning of the 19th century, the ladies of the Principalities refer to European fashion, as a series of accounts indicate; the transition is made gradually, with financial efforts on the part of the spouses, with opposing reactions from the priests, so that the elderly women or the boyars of the third state still wore oriental fashion clothes (Auguste de Lagarde in *Călători străini* 2004: 565). Other accounts complete this picture by stating that European fashion is doubled by the oriental richness expressed in expensive furs, rich shawls and numerous jewellery (William Wilkinson and Robert Porter in *Călători străini* 2004: 640, 811). Therefore, although there was an increasingly visible orientation towards European fashion, the habit but also the richness of oriental materials made the Moldavian-Wallachian elites to swing at the beginning of the 19th century between the Eastern and the Western model.

The narrations of foreign travellers mention jewellery with diamonds and other precious stones (John Petty in *Călători străini* 2000: 669), but much more useful for reconstructing their typology remain wills, dowry records, various inventories of goods. As a typology, we do not find great differences between the jewels mentioned by the documents of the 17th century and those from the end of the 18th century. However, based on the documentary information we had at our disposal, it seems that the clothes started to acquire an increasing numerical and value proportions within the fortunes of the Wallachian and Moldavian elite. Thus, a white shawl from the dowry of Catinca, the daughter of Maria Cantacuzino, was worth 1800 lei, in 1815, i. e. three times more than the diamond engagement ring in the same document (Iorga 1903: 190—191).

Jewellery attested by written, figurative documents, as well as archaeological evidence, adorned the head (diadems, veil needles, earrings and "sărji"), the neck (necklaces or "ghiordane", gold chains, "salbe", pearl strings, pendants or "lefturi") and arms (pairs of bracelets, rings) but there is a richness and diversity including accessories: "sponci" (stitches for clothes), buttons, belt clasps precious stones or pearls embroidered on clothing. Made of gold or gilded silver, jewellery and clothing accessories were adorned with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, "balașuri" (a kind of rubies) or pearls, a work that increased not only the value of the pieces but also the magnificent appearance, which marked the social position but also fashion choices. Another observation that emerges from the analysis of the researched documents is that gradually, pins for hair and veil disappeared from fashion, as the head covering acquired an increasingly accentuated oriental influence. Also among the head ornaments, the crowns or diadems worn by the women of the 16—17th centuries were no longer found in the dowry sheets of the young boyaresses from the 18th century; likewise, those strings of money put on the head, a fashion of the seventeenth century, which survived in the folk costume of certain areas, are no longer found in the boyar inventories of the eighteenth century. In fact, the descriptions of foreign travellers often referred to the way the hair is braided and covered with ribbons, flowers, pearls, diamonds or ostrich feathers, as well as the tall, tapered hat that covered the head (Baltazar Hacquet, Alexandre de Langeron, Charles-Joseph de Ligne, Andreas Wolf in *Călători străini* 2001: 830, 915, 937, 1277). Also, the great diversity of chains, necklaces (ghiordane) or "salbe" is no longer found in documents from the middle of the 18th century, most often being mentioned among jewellery, earrings, rings, pearl beads and bracelets, even if among the pieces preserved from the beginning of the 19th century, we will still find necklaces and bracelets. As for the rings, they seem to represent the jewel that dominates the period from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 19th; Andreas Wolf counts no less than 10—12 rings with diamonds on the fingers of the great boyars (*Călători străini* 2001: 1277). In fact, diamond rings appear more and more often among the goods of the 19th century. The wide circulation of rings and the spread of their use to less affluent social groups make rich families either offer a large number of rings as dowries or buy diamond rings, which were more valuable.

So, if in the seventeenth century, the most common ornaments found in dowry sheets were earrings, wreath, necklace ("gherdan") or chain, veil (or money to put on the head) and rings,

to which were sometimes added. pearl strings, chains with golden coins (*salbe*), pendants, bracelets, after the middle of the 18th century, we still find earrings, rings, pearl strings and beads, pendants (left), but the belt clasps (which accompanied oriental fashion dresses, with belts worn over the hips). Recordon said at the beginning of the 19th century that the noblewomen “wore all kinds of the most expensive jewellery, such as earrings, necklaces, medallions and rings” (Călători străini 2004: 680).

In addition, also in the early nineteenth century, we find in dowry records (Iorga 1903: 198—200; Iorga 1909: 91—92)) hairpins or brooches (diamond butterfly, diamond flower and a large emerald), either to catch the dress, or perhaps as a hair accessory, as we see in the portrait of Safta Ypsilanti, from the National Museum of Art of Romania.

The earliest engagement ring mentioned by the studied documents is a diamond ring (white colour refers to purity and diamond to durability) mentioned by the 1678 dowry sheet of Catrina, daughter of Toader Iordachi treasurer (Iorga 1904 b: 177—179). In Europe, the diamond engagement ring is attested from the end of the 15th century.

The number of pearl necklaces (“*șiraguri de mărăgăitare*”) mentioned by the dowry records varies quite a lot, as does the size of the pearls or the shape, but they appear in quite large numbers (beads are a type of ornament frequently used in our space and transmitted in folk costume). The most numerous beads appear in dowry sheets drawn up by the Cantacuzino family, either in Moldavia or in Wallachia (Ghițulescu 2001: 260—261; Iorga 1904 b: 177—179); also, Măriuța, Ancuța Brâncoveanu’s daughter, received 23 pearl necklaces as dowries (Lazăr 2015: 489). Likewise, the pairs of earrings appear in number of 4 or 6 in the rich dowry records (Iorga 2011: 46—48), and the rings appear in number of 8—10—12 in these dowry sheets made up of the princely or boyar families (Iorga 1904 b: 177—179, 189—191, 193—194; Ghițulescu 2001: 260—261). However, at the end of her life, a noblewoman could even hold 24 rings (of which 9 with diamonds), as was the case with Măriuța Argetoianu, Constantin Brâncoveanu’s niece (Lazăr 2015: 489—490).

Sometimes, the documents also mention the origin of the jewellery: in 1728, Ilinca Strâmbeanu’s will from Craiova mentioned a pair of gold earrings made in Venice and a pair of diamond bracelets, also from Venice, while in 1730 (Iorga 1905: 264), the dowry sheet of Bălașa, daughter of Iordachi Cantacuzino vel logofăt (Moldova) included a chain made in Țarigrad

(Iorga 1904b: 189—191). Among Măriuța Argetoianu’s jewels was a diamond necklace (“*ghiordan*”) bought from Țarigrad (Lazăr 2015: 489).

However, the fashion musts also applied in the field of jewellery, so that in the dowry sheet of the daughter of a merchant from Oltenia we find, in 1821, a pair of “fashionable” diamond earrings, two diamond rings, two diamond hairpins and a gold chain “fashionable, thick” (Iorga 1913: 48—49).

On the other hand, the mention in documents from the early nineteenth century of rings that had embedded an “antique” (Iorga N. 1904 a: 15), most likely a cameo, suggests the connection to a predominant European current in the time of Napoleon I, who asked to decorate his crown with cameos leading to a real frenzy of imitation of ancient stones.

Conclusions

In the case of the Wallachian and Moldavian society, the documents of the 17—18th centuries allow us to observe a change of tastes, a cultural translation from Eastern to Western fashion in terms of clothing, ornaments, but also other aspects of everyday life. The change of fashion and the interest for other cultural models led to changes in the typology of jewelleries, which had to correspond to other forms of clothing but also to other forms of expression of ladies from high society. Going out in the public sphere, participating at balls, so a more dynamic lifestyle have also changed the preferences for certain pieces of jewellery. These new models produce emulation among a female population increasingly interested in connecting to the forms of expression of the nineteenth century, so we find valuable jewellery and dowry records made by wealthy townspeople since the second half of the 18th century: Ilinca, daughter of the guild leader Mărgărit from Bucharest, in 1761, or the daughter of a merchant from Muntenia, in 1821 (Potra 1982: 218; Iorga 1913: 48—49).

Regarding the Eastern or Western influences on jewellery, the documents do not provide much information, apart from those — rare — on the place where they were made; the techniques of making adornments do not always carry a local imprint, we can, at most, evaluate the way some norms of implementation, specific to the guilds of goldsmiths or jewellers, were respected.

We can therefore appreciate that jewellery was, along with clothing, a constant element of the of luxury consumption pursuits, manifested by the Muntenian and Moldovan elite throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their

analysis allows the observation of the emergence of cultural models in the Principalities and is an important indicator in understanding the mental-

ity of Romanian society in the various stages of its evolution towards modernization of the nineteenth century.

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