

CULTUAL JEWELRY FROM TRANSILVANIA

Summary

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In the race to conquer the dream of eternity, helped by technology and innovation, man has completely laid down and has shifted away from traditional forms, thus losing his connection with his roots. This trend can be seen in both local and global jewelry.

There is an aggressive tendency towards minimalism, both in form and in structure, the jewelry being thus stripped of the symbolic value it held.

The present work wishes to reintroduce the traditional and symbolic valences of the jewelry, namely to attribute to the everyday woman the sacred and the ancestral spirituality that she is entitled to.

Thus, it is desired to recreate the links with the cultural roots that humanity has detached itself from and without which the complete man can not be founded. Shapeless forms, in this case humanity without culture and tradition, can not exist, being codependent.

The geographic areas covered in this paper are Maramureș, Transylvania, Crișana and Banat.

The Maramureș region is situated at the northern border of Romania, near the meridian $23^{\circ} 55'$ east longitude and the parallel $47^{\circ} 55'$ north latitude, so close to the central geometric point of Europe. As natural

confines, it has the mountain range of Rodnei in the east; in the northeast are the mountains of Maramures, located to the north of the Tisa River, which limits both the county and the country, while in the south it has the Oaş, Gutâi and Țibleș volcanoes. So a multitude of Tisa tributaries, hills, terraces and meadows, mountains with altitudes between 1000m - 2305m cross or border Maramures, making it an impressive landscape.

Maramureș is known, among other things, for its wooden churches, 8 of them being in the patrimony of UNESCO. These are an example of the architectural and artistic craftsmanship of the artisans who managed to raise them with oak logs.

Transylvania is a historical area located in the center of Romania, bordered to the east and south by the Carpathian Mountains and to the west of Banat and Crișana, two other historical regions of great beauty. Transylvania is known not only for the highly publicized vampire stories, but also for the rich history and beauty of the Carpathian Mountains. This region has some of the best preserved medieval cities in Europe, including Sibiu, Sighișoara and Brașov.

The culture encountered in the Transylvanian region is unique, being the result of the geographical area and the historical evolution. Romanians are descendants of the ancient indigenous peoples of the Balkans, mainly from the Dacian people, but also have many elements in common with other ancient cultures, for example with the Armenian one. During the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages the main influence came from Slavic descendants, from Medieval Greeks, the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman

Empire, Hungarians and other neighboring peoples. Modern Romanian culture has taken more inspiration from Western and Central Europe.

Traditions from Romania and Transylvania, the architecture and art are impressive in Europe through the endurance and originality that have been exhibited over the years. Traditional folk costumes worn in Transylvania on bank holidays, various traditions and customs highlight regional ethnographic features. Their common human and artistic sensitivity ensures the unity of the various artistic manifestations.

Romanian culture generally gathers a rich palette of spiritual and material values that have crystallized in Romania. The coverage of the traditional culture in the studied areas includes traditions, habits, a diversity of beliefs, ideas, etc., which have been preserved and passed down from generation to generation through certain social groups, setting specific bases over the years, native to each group. Traditions are instilled to keep real or legendary information about past events, facts or situations that are transmitted from generation to generation, orally.

Arts are a part of the entire culture, just as religion plays an important role. Most Transylvanians are Orthodox, but in this area we find a mosaic with many Roman Catholics, Protestants, Reformed, etc., religious tolerance being one of the features of the Romanian spirit. Another feature encountered by the Romanian people is superstition, especially among people from the countryside. They have a special faith in the inexplicable, in unknown forces. In addition to day-to-day superstitions, there are those from the crucial moments in human life, such as birth, baptism, wedding or

death, in which a variety of habits based on superstitions are practiced and those give birth to traditions that one generation inherits from another.

The historical evolution of Banat follows, in general, the path of other Romanian areas, founded in the Middle Ages and gone through the expansionist pressure of the neighboring countries. Banat is a border region, since its beginning it has been an intersection zone, where populations of different cultures and ethnicities have cooperated, communicated and sometimes confronted, being recognized as a standard of cohabitation. A part of the cultural, confessional and national diversity are the Romanian, Hungarian, Serbian, Roma, Russian, Jewish, etc. communities, which have each left its footprint on the collective cultural heritage. Part of the contribution of different ethnic groups is represented by artistic creations of different shapes as well as landscape or architectural elements, mirroring the cultural identity of each, visible in space and time.

Banat with its center, Timișoara, were not only advanced civilization spaces, driven by utilitarianism and mercantilism, but they were areas of superior culture and fertile soils for the great artistic creativity of amplitude. The peaks in literature recorded in the interwar period or in other fields such as the neo-avant-garde tendencies in the plastic arts, music, architecture, choreography, or the modern outposts of research in psychology, literature, anthropology, etc. have brought a far from modest contribution that has thrust Timisoara in the top ranks of innovation and dynamics among the towns in the area. In history, often placed in the periphery, Timisoara, has always found sufficient resources for

regeneration through discipline, always attracting potential and highlighting the values found in its multiculturalism of a border city.

Maramureş occupies a leading place as one of Europe's best preserved areas of culture, ethnography and anthropology, and the beauty of this region is recognized throughout the world. The customs here are kept with holiness from generation to generation and occupy a central place in the lives of people here, be it a secular or religious feast.

Maramureş is the area that has preserved the most beautiful customs related to the life, work or holiday cycles for decades.

Through wood, various crafts were born, including the making of worship objects used on various occasions.

The wedding is one of the most outstanding moments of the traditional community, being the most important celebration of young people through which the beginning of a new family is marked. This event takes place in a well-rounded context, with a traditional holiday costume, special props and a special symbolic charge.

In all four studied areas there is a set of objects that actively participates in the fulfillment of traditional ceremonies with symbolic valences.

The flask is one of these objects, differing in decoration and content according to the studied areas. Broadly speaking, it is a round, flattened on the sides, short-necked alcohol bottle of low holding capacity. Originally, it was made of wood, then ceramic or metal, it is adorned with floral or

geometric elements and fastened with leather straps. Of all the recipes that are used to drink or keep the drink, the flask stands out due to its most striking female-anthropomorphic features. In the tradition of the wedding it is especially worn by the governor who calls the wedding guests.

Another element encountered in the wedding ritual of the studied region is the “colac”, a knitted like pastry. The wedding “colac” is a result of the integration of symbolic elements in the art of dough modeling. Among the wedding gifts offered in such situations are the “colac”, which brings a ritually magic significance, becoming an object of social convenience, a component of a system of communication and relationships specific to the traditional rural environment.

Another notable element is the flag, which also has a symbolic significance, being used as a mark of separation from boyhood and parents' house.

The dowry chest is another woodwork cult object that plays an important role in the wedding ceremony.

The dowry chest was an indicator of the wealth and diligence of the bride that was transported on different days, depending on the region. The actual chest, which contained the bride's fabrics, tablecloths, cloth made covertures, bed sheets, wool blankets, wipes, insoles, pillows and clothes, is made of wood and has various ornaments on it. From one county to another there are small variations in appearance, proportion, color, and decoration.

The traditional Romanian folk costume has been subjected to changes in society over time due to commercial transfer, neighboring with other countries, cohabitation with different ethnicities, etc. It is still worn today in some parts of the country, being defined by continuity and the unity given by the raw material used in making it, the line of the tailoring, the types of stitches or the colors encountered.

The chromatic was originally obtained through plant dye, working with warm, non-contrasting colors, and then with the appearance of industrial colors, bold colors and strong contrasts appeared. Regardless of the techniques used, the Romanian folk costume was made aesthetically harmonious, always adapted to the occupation, occasion and age of the wearer. Across the country there are basic stitches that are used in every suit, and then there are variations specific to certain areas. Traditional clothing has been constantly enriched, from basic forms to different occupation, age differences, and social status.

Ethnographic areas are not pure with well-defined boundaries. They intertwine, influencing traditions, clothes aesthetics, customs, etc. The folk costume in the Transylvanian area is the perfect example of diversity in unity with a wide range of shapes and details. The costume in the Maramureş area falls into the typology of the northern and western part of the country, with some Slovak influences, and the costume in the Banat and Crişana area follows in broad terms the traditional folk costume from Transylvania, but in southern Banat there are clothing pieces that are part of the popular female costume and are found only in this area, namely the “ceapsa” (the customised women’s bonnet) and the “opreg” (customised

ladies' apron) both having a decorative role, used only for holidays or special occasions.

Regarding the ornamentation of the costumes, they vary depending on the configuration of the region, the women from the plains, who were closer to the city, had a more complex costume than those living in the mountains that were mostly colored in green tones.

Every special moment in the village life, be it baptism, marriages, funerals or holidays like Christmas and Easter, brings special costume elements or a special colorful and special details of ceremonial value.

The wedding, for example, is a passage from one status to another, indicators of the special part being necessary such as the crown and veil of the bride and groom's feather, as ritual acts. Once the ritual has ended, the young married woman will have to always keep her head covered and the embroidery of the costume will be in softer tones. Changes will also be in the costume of the young man who is forbidden to wear a feather in his hat or other signs of boyhood.

The bride and groom's wedding costumes resemble the holiday suits, keeping the old elements of tradition, but they are enriched with more decorative elements.

The traditional costume, especially the holidays one, is a good opportunity to showcase the creative potential, reflecting its originality and authenticity. Among oldest pieces of clothing are the "ciupag" and the "cămașa" (shirt) originally made of hemp and then of cotton, being made of a single piece to be subsequently woven separately.

The raw material used to make traditional folk costume was hemp, cotton, wool, linen and gossamer. For women's and men's shirts, cotton cloth, hemp or linen cloth was woven into two strands, and two or four wool woven cloths were used for men's tights and ladies' decorative aprons. In Transylvania, the sewn decorative motifs were richer and more robust, for this reason the weave cloth was used in two strings creating thicker thread.

Besides the traditional folk costume, which is a source of inspiration due to its wide variety, I chose to stop on the religious painting, for the decorative details that are found in it.

The religious painting in this region has a long and rich history, the most appreciated of the icons being the ones painted on wood. Although they mainly follow the Byzantine canons, the Romanian religious paintings in this area calls for a more realistic and humanistic treatment of the characters. The entire set of icons is dominated by bright, harmonious, open and clean colors, creating an atmosphere.

It is certified that besides the Nicula center, located in Cluj, the first icons on glass appeared in Maramureș, in the middle of the 18th century. The technique of glass painting developed in close connection with the art of pouring glass, Romanian peasants becoming thus painters, and with the help of minimal knowledge, gave rise to works of special artistic value that remained exhibited in private collections from abroad / Romania, but also in the countries' museums.

The Center in Transylvania, which will always be a point of reference for the history of icons painted on glass, is Nicula. More than half of the

bibliography on this subject refers to this place. From Nicula started a migration to other centers due to over-saturation in time. Each center brings something new, a change from the base received at Nicula, such as the silver background, a technique from the center of Laz that reduces execution time and has been specific to a period of time.

In the area of Transylvania there is a creation with a national, individual specificity, which occupies an important place in the religious painting of Byzantine Orthodox tradition.

Numerous values have been lost over time, with Timiș County losing more than 300 wooden churches, most of them located in old Saxon cemeteries. An attempt to stop this worrying phenomenon is being made, in order to preserve the remaining churches not only from Banat but from all over the country.

Unlike other regions of the country, Maramureș has placed a great emphasis on the art of woodworking, which is used in all sectors of life, from the plates used to eat, the roof, to the construction of the churches, marking the coming into the world through wooden swings and leaving in the coffin. Thus wood has taken different shapes and has been molded to all the needs of man, being also easy to process and being sufficient as a raw material in the area.

The decorative potential of the gates of Maramureș is an inspirational center for the ornaments proposed by me, accumulating spectacular decorative motifs in harmonious proportions with underlying metaphorical substance. The construction of these gates has strong roots in tradition,

culture, art and socio-political history. The making of the gates, their decoration with various motifs and the act of walking under the threshold had a specific ritual, based on profound mythical beliefs.

Most of the decorative elements used at the gates had a magical underlying substance, and decoding them with the help of popular craftsmen, allows us to enter the ante-Christian, mythological universe.

The craftsmanship of traditional costume fabrics also applies to indoor fabrics present in each household and a display of artisan craftsmanship. Living in a world where the natural economy has its foundation in capitalizing on all natural resources in order to meet the demands of humanity, the processing of textile fibers and wool occupies a vital place.

Alongside the traditional port, the Romanian has dressed the interior of the home with indoor fabrics designed to give identity, warmth and color to the household.

We find in Maramureș as well as on the entire surface of Romania, the art of weaving to be of great economic importance within the household. Interior fabrics define the decorative style of the interiors of the dwellings in each area, being pieces with an important decorative role, made of textile fibers.

The beauty and refinement of the bark and the rest of the fabrics has captured the attention of many strangers whose written testimonies have been preserved. In addition, the variety of working techniques, chromaticity, ornamental compositions, the wide range of fabrics, and the use of textiles

indoors demonstrate the longevity of this craft, which is a rich source for taking over and improving the decorative motifs used.

The decorative compositions of the interior fabrics are made up of decorative motifs taking into account the specific alternation and rhythm of the Romanian folk art. The way of organizing the ornamental motifs is to arrange them in strips alternating with empty, white or colored spaces.

This game of full and empty spots alternates across the fabric surface or in groups, thus putting the decorative side more in focus.

The birds representations specific to the Maramureş area are highly stylized, made on fine fabrics. Another decorative motif, outside the solar symbol, the most used astral motif is the star, multiplied and scattered across the surface of the fabric.

Although they have a different denomination from region to region, we find the same forms inspired by household and stylized tools such as fork, little fork, plow iron, wheel or shuttle.

The vegetal motifs present in the interior of the fabric are incarnated in the form of fir trees, trees, garlands, flowers, ornaments, etc.

From the chromatic point of view, red is the one that predominates in all chromatic arrangements, in the decoration of cotton and hemp fabrics, followed by the use of blue and black in harmony with the dominant color. The most common composition of the Maramureş rug is that in which the decorative motifs are disposed on the whole surface in a unitary way, embossed with a monochrome.

From the decorative point of view, in the case of the Maramures blankets the rhombus mentioned earlier, the rosettes, the spirals, the solar symbols, the zigzag, the fir tree and the stars are pre-eminent.

Centers known for the traditional folk art are still present in the Transylvanian region at Sâncrăieni in Harghita, Bârgău where we meet carpets thoroughly and very attentively worked, or in Bistrița-Bârgăului situated in the Năsăud area where there are stitches and fabrics with a varied color scheme.

At first, in decorative motifs, geometry with rhombus', crosses, straight lines or broken lines predominates to then develop new vegetal, zoomorphic or anthropomorphic motifs, edged by various borders. The oriental influences in the decorations felt in this area were introduced through the aristocratic courts.

In all the studied regions, the interior fabrics differ as decoration depending on how and where they are thought. Thus, we have decorative fabrics that are part of the interior design, strictly aesthetic, also household ones, frequently used; these have mainly the important practical function and are the ones that are used at various ceremonies. All of these categories differ as features according to the ethnographic area, thus discussing motifs, chromatic exposure and different dimensions. Decorating plays a very important role in all these fabric elements, removing them from anonymity of functionality.

The most widespread fabrics, belonging to a rich and varied category, are towels, which occupy 60% of the total number of indoor fabrics. When

found in any household, they have a practical function, but there are also some of them serving as a decorative role being displayed in various ways. They also play an important role in several ceremonies, such as the funeral or the wedding.

The geometric decorations, the style, the predominantly used motifs, the techniques of realization, the beliefs, the myths and the habits behind them all attest to the importance of fabrics and their elevation to the rank of ethnic documents.

In the Banat area, the towels also had a different use in addition to those known in the other areas, being used by women placed on the head in the form of a curl that facilitated the transport of baskets or pots on the head.

Another spectacular element of the Romanian culture is the craft of ceramics, a fascinating world that starts from the level of extraction of the deposits and embraces the most noble and elegant forms in the final state.

The craft of ceramics is not only old but also uninterrupted from the Dacians. Crockery is one of the leading crafts in our country, with an old tradition and similar techniques from one region to another. In the Maramureş area there are all types of ceramic, from a formal point of view, of the technique and the decoration systems.

The Romanian peasants have diversified their forms according to the culinary habits, so in the household there is the inventory of pots for boiling marmalade, chicken pots, steak pots, milk pots, cake and jugs of different

sizes each with an established clear function and with a modest decoration being household items.

Traditional folk ceramics does not only have a practical role, meeting the most diverse needs and facilitating life, but it's decorative role also has to be taken into account. The beauty and spectacle of the pottery is also enlightened through the burned and gleaming pots that are displayed inside the houses and vary according to the ethnographic areas.

In view of the ornamentation, the Dacian motifs painted with paint brushes are preserved in Maramureş, in another part of the county the horn is used to enrich the surface of the vessels with various decorative motifs, or on the Iza Valley, and the ceramics decorated by zgrafito.

In Transylvania there are several Saxon centers of ceramics that produce a series of impressive achievements. Stove tiles, the jugs and mugs of Chirpăr stand out in the context of the Saxon ceramics through their Oriental inspiration, their straight and long neck and the spherical womb. The same inspiration applies to decorative motifs that take forms of palms, fantastic flowers and hearts, outlined in blue, to which horizontal striped strips of yellow color are added. In parallel with the Saxon centers, the Hungarian centers where a multitude of faience tiles and dishes made in the "Györ type" technique are born. They are decorated with specific motifs, predominantly floral and vegetal, over a white background.

The pottery of Banat is distinguished by the reddish color, because it is not enamelled and by the Roman shapes and decoration.

In Bihor, more specifically in Vadu Crișului, the pottery acquires new valences, specific features that remove this area's ceramics from anonymity by using a raw material from which the most special objects are made. This notoriety center is unique in Europe due to the white color of ceramics due to modeling and burning of clay.

After studying the various crafts in the delimited territories, which are a source of inspiration in the creation process, based on the multitude of decorative motives, I also debated the theme of the ornaments already existing in Maramureș, Transilvania, Crișana and Banat.

Originally, the ornaments had a symbolic-magical function, being part of the archaic community's holdings as talismans, believing that they provide people with luck, health and abundance. Over time, the ornaments have lost their mythical symbols due to changing people's concepts, and so the ornaments have come to be strictly appreciated for the aesthetic appearance.

Inspired by nature and perfecting the elements offered by it, the Romanian peasant created through the ornaments an infinite world of color and diversity. The processing of jewelries from the simplest shapes brought to the complex from rudimentary to thoroughness is done through various processing techniques and a vast palette of materials.

The collar is the reference adornment in the Maramureș region, being part of the traditional folk costume and being processed in different techniques and different materials. Other adornments in this area are expensive collar, dowry collar, saber, money collar and earrings and rings

that complement the collar accessory. The collars made of hundreds of polychrome beads, earrings, sapphires, and rings have besides aesthetic value indisputable and ritual value.

The pomp of the ceremony is given by the involvement of the whole community at the ceremony of the wedding, but also by the excessive, sometimes exaggerated and ostentatious ornamentation.

The preparation of the bride marks its breaking away from the girls' world, playing the same role as the game of the flag indicating the conclusion of the groom of the boyhood with his friends. The bride's head grooming is paramount, in terms of importance, the costume she wears on the second level. In preparing the adornments many techniques possessed by women specialized in this are used, having not only aesthetic connotations but also having the ritual valence. The whole composition combines the two distinct elements, the bride's hair and the crown, each of which is based on dozens of working hours.

The beaded ornaments have an aesthetic role in both women's and men's role. At the adornments encountered in Transylvania but not only, the first differentiation was made from the perspective of age, and then the social, magical and economic condition was considered.

Over time, the symbolic function of the ornaments changed, moving from the symbolic and magic element they held to the economy status indicator, placing a precious emphasis on the composition of the popular costume.

One of the most widespread ornaments in the order of the jewels was a necklace made of copper, gold or silver coins worn by generations along with traditional folk costumes. Although in most areas their length was up to the base of the neck, they can reach the waist in the Transylvanian region, being worn by wealthy women as an indicator of the generous wealth they possessed.

Ancient craft in the villages of Banat and Crişana, the manual execution of the beads of beads is practiced more by women in order to wear them for special occasions or celebrations.

The making of these was a ritual in itself and took place at the dancing party of the village, to show their skills in front of the boys. Besides the ornaments of the beads created for the girls, there were also the beaded ornaments that were caught on the boys' hats.

The traditional beauties in Bihor are collars made of black, white, red and green beads, with various geometric motifs. In some areas, there was also a „barşonl” which consisted of a plank of wire anchored coins or a "zgarda de drot" made of beads and brass wire.

The bead and Venetian glass beads collar was another necklace worn in Bihor, which consisted of six or seven beads of Venetian origin, with a darkened color alternating with light colors.

Many of the ornaments made in Bihor are rich in metal, but there are also “lătiţare” which are made of polychrome beads, mounted with rosette or hook pieces arranged on several rows, thus covering the chest with a rich network of great decorative impact.

In the old days, it was a beautiful tradition to make jewelry and accessories by women for personal use, applying beads to worn girdles or stripes of material that they later wore on their wrists. But today we have the possibility to choose from a wide variety of necklaces. The beads are not only glass but also plastic, and the collars are no longer just based on symmetries. There are now extravagant pendants, irregular and out of the ordinary shapes.

Maramureș, Transylvania, Banat and Crișana are regions where a show of handicraft is put on display, passed down from one generation to the next / from one set of skilled hands to the other, with the honor and the emblematic pride of the traditional port and cultures on these territories.

The profoundly human values are encoded in motifs on ceramic pots or in women's fabrics, taking zoomorphic, geometric, vegetal shapes with the rigors and chromaticity specific to each region.

By gathering a fragment from the culture of the four fascinating areas, Maramureș, Transylvania, Banat and Crișana, in this thesis we have made clear the discrepancy between the monumentality of values and culture and the brutal secularization of our days more evident. The devalorization of oneself is a consequence of removing the form from the context, of stylizing the forms in the race to minimalism. Not given the importance it deserves, the essence of a valuable culture built over time is scattered and this phenomenon I have tried to stop using this paper.