



Clothing of Bride and Groom in Eastern Latvian Wedding Traditions of the 19th Century

Ieva PĪGOZNE

University of Latvia

Keywords: *clothing, wedding, 19th century, traditions, Vidzeme, Latgale, Latvia.*

This study is carried out at the Institute of Latvian History at the University of Latvia within the project of the State Research Programme LETONIKA: Research on History, Language and Culture.

Introduction

The clothing of the bride and the groom in the 19th century is still a rather unexplored topic in the history of Latvian traditional clothing. Mainly it is because there is little information about it, but also because none of the few Latvian textile researchers have focused on researching the wedding attire in particular. The main works of Latvian traditional clothing history do not contain more than a few sentences on this subject. However, such historians as Mirdza Slava (Slava 1966), Ilze Ziņģīte (Bremze, Rozenberga, Ziņģīte 1995, 2003), Aija Jansone (Jansone 1999; 2012; 2014; 2016) and Anete Karlsonē (Karlsonē 2013; 2014) have established a good basis for researching it with providing this study with a solid source of references to the general history of Latvian traditional clothing.

Latvian Folklore Archives store a data base of Latvian customs and traditions that also contains descriptions of wedding traditions. These descriptions date back to the 19th century and often mention use of textiles and sometimes describe the clothing of the bride and the groom. This study presents what can be learned from these descriptions and compares the results with the folk dress collection of the National History Museum of Latvia, original drawings of the 18th and 19th century that depict people wearing traditional clothing, and Latvian folk songs. The article focuses on the folk dress of cultural historical regions Vidzeme and Latgale that represent the Latvian-inhabited territories of the Governorate of Livonia and the Vitebsk Governorate of the Russian Empire. During the 19th century clothing of the Latvian peasants went through a transition of a profound change and gradually the traditional clothing was superseded by town fashion characteristic for the entire Western world (Jansone 2016, 169–173, Karlsonē 2013, 15–26).

The aim of the study is to introduce the costume researchers' community with the wedding customs' database and to find out what information it contains about the clothing of the bride and the groom in Vidzeme and Latgale in the 19th century.

This has been done going through all the 421 texts that are stored in the Latvian Folklore Archives of the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia, and filed under 'Wedding customs and traditions' in the customs and traditions database. Further in the article they are referred to as 'texts'.

After examining all these texts it was concluded that 82 texts can be used for this study. There are 69 texts from 53 places in Vidzeme and 13 texts from 11 places in Latgale that contain information about the clothing of the bride and the groom. Texts from Vidzeme constitute more than half of all texts that describe wedding traditions in the archives. Every text has its own archive number starting with LFK and then reflecting the number of the collection and the number(s) of the particular folklore unit. Most of the texts have been written down in the twenties and thirties of the 20th century, however, some date back to the eighties and nineties of the 19th century. They contain information on the wedding traditions of a rather long period – between 1820 and the beginning of the 20th century.

The texts reveal all stages of a wedding: choosing a bride, proposing, and the wedding ceremony and celebration. In addition to the clothing other important topics of the texts are about the decorations of the horses and houses, food and alcoholic drinks, contents of the dowry, and practises and folk beliefs connected to the wedding. According to the texts, the wedding ceremony usually took place in church on Sunday and then the celebration went on for at least one day at the house of the bride and one day at the house of the groom. Most of the texts contain information about the clothing of the bride and only a small part of them mention also the groom's clothing. Not all the texts display vivid descriptions of the clothing, many of them just mention some parts of it in the story about the wedding process, thus the researcher has to extract these small bits of information and connect them in a reconstruction of the clothing.

Vidzeme and Latgale were chosen for this study because they form the right side of the Daugava River which is traditionally the main geographic and cultural divider of the Latvian-inhabited territories. In the 19th century serfdom was abolished in the governorates of the Russian Empire; however, when Protestant Vidzeme experienced it in 1819, people in Catholic Latgale remained serfs until 1861. Therefore, it was a challenge to find out whether religious and political differences could have led to differences in clothing of the bride and the groom.

Clothing of the bride in Vidzeme

Headgear

The most frequently mentioned part of the bride's clothing is her crown. There are, however, 35 texts that only mention a crown but do not specify how it looked like or what it was made of (LFK 2,407–418). One of the crown types that is

described closer is the traditional Latvian crown that is made of cardboard (in one case of birch bark), wrapped with red woollen fabric and embroidered with glass beads (*LFK* 76,1774). Such crowns were in use in all the regions of Latvia till the middle of the 19th century (*Bremze, Rozenberga, Ziņģīte* 1995, 16, 113, 194, 228). These crowns are mentioned eight times and it is emphasized that there were silk bands added at the back of the crown. The length of the bands is said to be just below but (*LFK* 891,2309).

According to the drawings of Johann Christoph Brotze (1742–1823), silk bands of various bright colours were added at the back of the crown or even at the back of the married women's caps in the end of the 18th century (*Brotze* 2002, 215; 2007, 155, 313, 372). This tradition was however disappearing in the 19th century and very few of the crowns and none of the caps that are stored at the National History Museum of Latvia have such bands. The only crowns with attached bands in the museum collection are from Kurzeme and said to be bridal crowns (*Bremze, Rozenberga, Ziņģīte* 1997, 159–160, 287). There is also one drawing by Jānis Krēsliņš (1865–?) of a young girl, not a bride, from Virga in south west of Kurzeme, (*Stinkule* 2015, 229), and she appears to wear a similar crown with bands at the back. The length of the bands of her crown is the same as mentioned in the texts of the wedding customs. Therefore, it might be suggested that the tradition of decorating their headgear with silk bands was kept longest alive in the wedding attire of the bride. It is, however, also indicated in the texts that these crowns were used mostly till the end of the 1860s (*LFK* 891,2001).

Another type of crowns mentioned is a crown made of metal wires and leaves. Such crowns appear in four texts and two of them are described as having silk bands at the back (*LFK* 891, 2010). It is possible that the other two also had the bands, but they were not mentioned. One crown is said to be made of glass beads, metal ornaments and silk bands (*LFK* 76, 1774). Similar crowns from Kurzeme but with no silk bands appear in the collection of the National History Museum of Latvia (*Bremze, Rozenberga, Ziņģīte* 1997, 137, 237). Folklore archives provide evidence that such crowns were used in other regions as well.

There are other types of crowns made of artificial flowers that are mentioned in the texts. Two crowns of paper flowers (*LFK* 891, 2012) and four crowns of textile flowers (*LFK* 20,34) appear in the texts. They all are said to have silk bands on the back, as well as to be bought instead of being self-made. Six texts are specific about that the wedding crowns were either bought or rented, and only the richest brides could afford to buy them, the rest were renting them (*LFK* 10,512; 891,2010). One text even suggests that such a crown could be rented from the tavern next to the church (*LFK* 38,127).

One text contains information that most of the brides' crowns were made of artificial flowers in 1862, only a few of natural flowers (*LFK* 20, 34). It can be argued that self-made crowns were considered of little value as they could not demonstrate the amount of money the bride was able to give for her wedding

attire. It can be concluded that natural flowers from gardens did not cost money and thus were not as prestigious to wear. A bride's crown of artificial flowers is first mentioned by Brotze in 1792 (Brotze 2007, 155) and judging from the texts it seems that the tradition of wearing crowns of artificial flowers made of fabric has been prestigious throughout the 19th century. Texts from the end of the century describe artificial flowers that are attached to people's clothing and often worn together with a white silk band (LFK 137,317). It can also be suggested that wild flowers were of no value as anybody could acquire them and thus they belonged only to midsummer celebration or herdspeople.

Towards the end of the 19th century the traditional clothing was gradually superseded by town fashion. In most parts of Latvia this took place in the end of 1860s (Karlson 2013, 20–22). There is evidence in the texts that starting with 1870s self-made bridal crowns made of myrtle twigs became popular (LFK 17, 3156; 891,2284). Such crowns are mentioned in 10 texts. In five texts it is said that these crowns were worn together with a veil and apparently also a dress or costume of town fashion (LFK 450,268). It can, therefore, be concluded that the tradition of growing a myrtle at home and making a bridal crown of its leaves goes hand in hand with the transition to town fashion and loosing of regional differences in the dress. However, the last decades before that also show purchased crowns of artificial flowers that are similar all over the country and, therefore, lead to a conclusion that the crowns were the first to be bought in town shops or markets and thus introduced the era of uniform clothing.

It seems that the crown was so important at the wedding and so much attention was paid to it because it was substituted by a cap or a hat under the *mičošana* ceremony during which the bride's crown was removed and a cap was put on (LFK 72, 8899; 1850,1100). This was the final celebration of marriage and often only after that the couple was considered to be really married. There are 29 texts that mention this special cap but the descriptions of it are either not given or unclear (LFK 10,413; 72,884). Therefore, reconstruction of the precise design of the cap is problematic. There is also some information about kerchiefs that can be used in this ceremony instead of a cap. Six texts mention one kerchief and one text mentions two (LFK 790,128; 891, 2309). It is also revealed that the most common way of covering the bride's head with it is the so called 'polish style' when the ends of the triangle are tied around her head and fastened in a small knot on the top of the head (LFK 891,2017; 891,2292a). This is valuable information on how to wear a kerchief as most often there are no other instructions available together with the original 19th century kerchiefs stored at the museums. It is, however, not mentioned what fabric kerchiefs were made of.

Clothing of the body

There is not much information on the shirt. It is mentioned in six texts and five of them emphasize that the shirt was embroidered (LFK 891, 3200). Nothing

is, however, said about the embroidery, its placement or its colour. As there is no information on the cut of the shirt, it can be assumed that the shirts were of traditional tunic-type cut with long sleeves and a collar (J a n s o n e 1999, 5–15). Such shirts constitute the majority of the 19th century shirt collection of the National History Museum of Latvia (B r e m z e, R o z e n b e r g a, Z i ņ ģ ī t e 1995, 16). In one text it is emphasised that the shirt was long (*LFK* 76,1774) and it can be argued that this was a ‘one piece tunic’ not the traditional shirt of three pieces when pieces of coarse fabric are attached to the finer upper part of the shirt. This corresponds to the ‘one piece shirt’ mentioned in folk songs describing the bride’s attire (*LFK* 1838, 808).

There is more information on the skirt of the bride. It is often mentioned that a bride could wear more than one skirt, e.g. two, three or nine (*LFK* 17,1736, 39; 891,2309; 891,3170). This is done in order to ensure prosperous life. 10 texts tell about a striped skirt and one of them mentions that in the earlier decades of the 19th century the stripes were woven on a dark blue background (*LFK* 891,3170; 1400,1292–1298). This corresponds to some of the oldest skirts preserved in the museum collections and depicted in the drawings of the 18th and 19th century (Bremze, Rozenberga, Zinģīte 2003, 110; Brotze 1992, 115). In addition there are three texts that mention monochrome skirt: white, grey, and black (*LFK* 10,413; 568, 1711; 891,3159). It looks that these skirts represent the town fashion of the end of the century that largely consisted of monochrome garments. At the same time the grey skirt could also belong to the earlier tradition of monochrome skirt of the traditional dress that was gradually disappearing in the first half of the 19th century.

Another important aspect of the bride's skirt is its pattern. At the beginning of the 19th century it was still popular to wear wrap-around skirt that is fastened with a textile sash (Karlson 2014). There are two texts that mention sashes (*LFK* 891,2309). There are, however, two other texts that describe a bride fastening her skirt with a metal hook and eye (*LFK* 891, 3159). This type of fastening requires that the skirt is sewn to a waistband and thus represents a later form of traditional skirt.

The latest seem to be those four texts that mention a dress, one of those says it is white and another that it is black (*LFK* 76,796; 891,2292a). There is evidence according to the photos of the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century that the white bridal dresses first appeared before the First World War (Kursīte 2008, 60). Thus these texts provide evidence of the town fashion taking over the traditional costume.

Other types of garments that are mentioned in four texts are bodices that are sewn of grey or dark broadcloth (*LFK* 891,3170; 891,3200), as well as two texts that mention a jacket (*LFK* 891,1986). Only one text tells about a bride wearing a coat (*LFK* 10,413). It is probably obvious why these garments are paid so little attention to. The reason might be that they were not apparent because the upper

part of the bride's body was covered with a woollen shawl. Such rectangular white embroidered shawls were usually the most elaborate and decorative garment of a woman's attire of the first half and middle of the 19th century. In the last three or four decades of the 19th century they were replaced by a square shawl made of dark wool that was diagonally folded in a triangle (J a n s o n e 2012; J a n s o n e 2016, 105–113) and they appear also in the texts (LFK 1400,784–877).

The texts do not describe the ornamentation of the shawls but they mention the tradition that a bride could wear more than one of them, e.g. two, three, four, six, nine or even twelve (LFK 891,2812; 893,280). Two texts also tell funny stories about what problems wearing so many shawls caused the bride (LFK 17,1736, 39). The texts also explain that many shawls were worn because the bride either wanted to show off her wealth or ensure wealthy life after her marriage. One text also tells about a green shawl that is known as *kuča villaine* in Latvian clothing history (LFK 76,1774). It is a felted shawl that is made of green wool. This is quite peculiar as these green shawls are not associated with festive attire. However, there is more information in this text about that there was a silk band wrapped around the brides shoulders. Such a description can help to understand a drawing of Brotze in Latgale where we can see a red band that is tied around a girl's shawl (B r o t z e 2007, 372).

Footwear

There are 10 texts that mention the bride's woollen socks. Three say that the socks are white, another four tell that they are of a white foot and an ornamented top (LFK 568,1711). This second type of socks is called *pāradainas* (LFK 891,2843) and that is a name that the author of this paper has encountered for the first time. It might be a local name of a specific type of socks, characteristic only for Vidzeme. Five texts also tell that a bride or someone of her relatives put coins in her sock in order to ensure wealth (LFK 219,77). Three texts reveal that a bride wore three pairs of socks (LFK 891,3085). It is, however, not explained why she would do that. One text says that it was considered inappropriate to wear leg-wraps for the wedding (LFK 891,3085). This reveals a clear message of that leg-wraps are not prestigious and that people should wear their best clothing for their wedding.

Three types of footwear appear in the texts: one piece leather shoes or *pastalas*, bast shoes, and black leather shoes. Nine texts mention *pastalas* and these seem to be the most popular type of footwear of the bride that was wearing a traditional set of clothing (LFK 1400,1292–1298). *Pastalas* used to be the most commonly used footwear of Latvian peasants in the first half and middle of the 19th century. Frequent use of them for weddings denies the idea of *pastalas* being used only as everyday wear (J a n s o n e, K u p č e 2014, 100, 149–150). Several texts say that *pastalas* were brand new for the wedding and thus it can be understood that they became an integral part of the festive attire (LFK 1400,784–877).

There are texts that talk about bast shoes as the only footwear for the wedding and explain why: according to beliefs bast shoes were considered 'sacred' footwear

but it was dangerous to wear *pastalas* as they could have been made of a dead (no slaughtered) animal and could thus bring bad luck in the family (LFK 891,3162; 891,3170). However, such superstitions may seem strange they reveal how much precaution there was in following all the wedding customs and traditions in order to ensure the best possible outcome.

Three texts mention black leather shoes and one of them points out that such footwear has only recently appeared in use (LFK 891,2309; 891,3188). It seems that black leather shoes were mostly worn together with the modern town fashion clothing. This evidence helps reconsider the commonly accepted practice of combining black leather shoes with a traditional set of clothing.

Clothing of the groom in Vidzeme

There is much less information on the groom's attire. The most frequently mentioned garment of the groom is his hat (LFK 781,985). It is mentioned eight times and mostly in connection with the *mičošana* ceremony. However, this ceremony is mainly about the status of the bride, it includes also the groom. According to the texts, the groom is often presented with an old or torn hat at this ceremony and only after that he can wear his own festive hat again (LFK 137,317; 891, 3170). This might be interpreted as a remnant of an initiation rite when first chaos is made and then the new status is pronounced. Looking at the texts it is also clear that the groom and thus all the other men do not wear a hat indoors. The *mičošana* ceremony takes place indoors and the groom is bareheaded. One text also mentions that the groom's hat is tied with a pink silk ribbon (LFK 20, 34). In another text it is also described that the favourite colours of the time include green, red, brown, and pink (LFK 891, 3298). That probably explains why a pink ribbon was acceptable for decorating a man's hat.

As to other garments, the texts mention a white linen shirt and in all five cases it is mentioned that the shirt was given to the groom from the bride during or after the proposing ceremony (LFK 10,413). It seems that the shirt for her future husband was one of the first items a girl would sew when starting to think about getting married. This process is often sung about in the Latvian folk songs (LD 7355-1,3, 7358-0, 25506-0). And the texts of customs also suggest that this is not only a present to the groom, it is also a sign that everything is fine and she has agreed to marry (LFK 891,2292a). The texts suggest that this is the shirt that the groom is then wearing for his wedding (LFK 1400,784-877). It is also mentioned that there is a silk kerchief tied around the collar of the groom's shirt (LFK 891, 3298). In one case it is also described that the kerchief was put on by crossing the ends behind the neck and tying a small knot in front of the neck (LFK 891,3200).

The groom is said to wear a jacket made of broadcloth and a long coat – white or grey – that was the main presentation of his wealth (LFK 891,3162; 891,3298). He is wearing knitted woollen socks, often white (LFK 568, 1711). Three texts say that socks knitted by the bride are also among the presents that she gives to the

groom on agreeing to marry him (LFK 10,413). One text indicates that the groom would also wear two pairs of socks for the wedding (LFK 145,315a). As to the footwear, two texts mention one piece leather shoes *pastalas*, one – bast shoes (LFK 891,3298) and one tells that lately grooms are wearing black leather boots (LFK 891,1986). The last type of footwear seems to be part of the festive attire in the last couple of decades of the 19th century.

Clothing of the bride in Latgale

There is much less information about the wedding attire in Latgale in the 19th century as only 13 texts in the customs database tell about it. This is why it is helpful for the researcher to compare their contents to that of the texts from Vidzeme. In such a way they become complimentary to each other and help understand information provided rather than show many differences.

Most of the texts tell about the crown of the bride. Four texts do not specify what the crown looks like, and five texts mention myrtle crown and in two cases – also a veil (LFK 928,441; 880,2284; 255,122). This is apparently the last stage of traditional crown of the bride and it could be worn together with town fashion clothing. At the same time one text provides very precious information for dating the myrtle crown: it tells that all the crowns before 1870 were made of artificial flowers and were bought in a shop in town (LFK 253,38). This reminds of over a hundred folk songs that originated in Latgale and are stored at the Latvian Folklore Archives. They tell about the week before the wedding and the activities that were carried out during this week. One of the days – usually Thursday or Friday – is said to be spent by going to town and buying a crown of flowers or flowers for the crown (LFK 197,717; 221,183). If these were natural flowers they would not need to be bought in town and even less it should be done two or three days before the wedding. If these are textile flowers they have to be bought as peasants do not have other access to them but in town and such flowers can last not only for several days but even for multiple use.

Texts from Latgale also indicate that if a woman was a widow, she was not allowed to wear a crown and had to wear a kerchief instead. If the woman was pregnant she was wearing a crown covered with a kerchief (LFK 1400,1309). Four texts mention the cap that was put on bride's head during the *mičošana* ceremony but they do not specify what it looked like (LFK 91,182). Two texts reveal that the bride could get a wife's kerchief instead of the cap. These kerchiefs are said to be of silk (LFK 1400,1309).

Two texts from Latgale contain information on that the groom bought the wedding attire for the bride (LFK 15,62,18). It is also indicated that he had to buy the rings for the wedding while the bride presented him with a linen shirt and white gloves for the wedding (LFK 679,2004). It can be argued that texts from Latgale reveal more of the full procedure of exchanging gifts as the evidence from the folksongs reveals that the groom was coming to the bride's home with gifts

not only for her but also for her family members (*LFK* 599,971; *LD* 25759-0). Exchange of gifts during the proposal and agreement ceremony could be of an old origin and date back to the times when the tradition of steeling wives was eradicated. There is evidence that steeling wives was still observed in the 16th and 17th century but this practise was gradually disappearing (S p e k k e 1995, 196, 201). Apparently proposing could have become popular after that.

Clothing of the groom in Latgale

There is very little information about the groom's wedding attire in Latgale. As mentioned before, he was wearing a linen shirt that could be a gift from the bride (*LFK* 679,2004). One text tells about putting money in the groom's boot (*LFK* 520,1095) thus pointing to that the groom was wearing black leather boots. There is, however, no reference to the time when it was commonly practiced. But this text can be linked to a folk song from Latgale that tells about the same practice: putting money in a young man's boot for showing off (*LFK* 1950,2637). Another text mentions that the hat of the groom was decorated by attaching textile flowers (*LFK* 929,31107). This seems to be a modern form of the ancient tradition of decorating men's hats with flowers for special occasions: going to war and getting married. Such a practice is mentioned in many folk songs (*LD* 13909-0; 31933-24). At the same time there is plenty of photographed evidence that Latvian volunteers entering the army during the WW I still honoured this tradition: their hats were decorated with flowers. It can, therefore, be argued that this one text from Latgale reveals just a small part of a custom that existed for a long time.

One text from Latgale also informs that there was a tradition of wearing all the garments for a short meal right after the arrival from church and only then taking off the outer garments for the rest of the evening (*LFK* 263,1372). This might explain some of the folk songs from Kurzeme that contain an encouragement from the relatives of the bride or the groom to sit on the other party's shawl or coat in order to secure leadership within the new family (*LFK* 23,1588; 1773,3379). If the outer garments had been taken off before sitting by the table, such an encouragement would not have taken place.

Conclusion

Comparing the two regions it can be concluded that there is no contradicting information about wedding dress from Vidzeme and Latgale. However, there are many more texts from Vidzeme than there are from Latgale they all fall into their place of understanding what the wedding attire of the bride and the groom might have looked like in the 19th century.

So far there was scarce information on what exactly people used to wear for weddings and, therefore, the data base of wedding traditions is a valuable source of information. It also reveals that there are two types of wedding traditions: some are characteristic for many parishes and some are peculiar local traditions that appear

nowhere else. Popular traditions, for instance, include the bride wearing many shawls or skirts for the ceremony or a crown of artificial flowers. A local tradition of the belief about the bast shoes being the only sacred shoes and, therefore, suitable for the wedding is typical only for a couple of parishes in the northern part of central Vidzeme. The data base also contains information on when people used to change clothing for the wedding ceremony, what was considered appropriate or stylish, and explains why certain traditions were practiced. According to the provided information, it is also possible to follow some chronological development of the clothing worn by the bride and the groom and obtain practical advice of what certain garments looked like or how they were worn. All this knowledge is very valuable because it usually does not accompany the drawings and the original pieces of clothing on which the general history of traditional Latvian folk dress is based.

This database of wedding traditions also helps to link the history of clothing with the information preserved in the Latvian folk songs. It can, therefore, be argued that the history of Latvian wedding costumes can be best researched if it gathers and cross-examines data not only from the traditional historical sources – artefacts stored at the museums, written records, and drawings – but also takes into account folklore texts that reveal a great deal of information. Not all the genres of folklore contain as much evidence as others and among them descriptions of wedding customs and traditions are the richest source of data.

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Ieva Pigozne

Nuotakos ir jaunikio apranga – XIX a. rytų latvių vestuvių tradicijos

S a n t r a u k a

Pagrindinės sąvokos: *apranga, vestuvės, XIX amžius, tradicijos, Vidžemė, Latgala, Latvija.*

Latvijos folkloro archyvuose saugomi duomenys apie latvių papročius ir tradicijas, vestuvių tradicijų aprašymai. Šie aprašymai siekia XIX a., juose dažnai minimas audinių panaudojimas, nuotakos ir jaunikio aprangos apibūdinimai. Straipsnyje analizuojami šių drabužių aprašymai, gauti tyrimo rezultatai lyginami su Latvijos nacionalinio istorijos muziejaus liaudies drabužių kolekcija, su originaliais XVIII a. ir XIX a. piešiniais, vaiz-

duojančiais žmones, dėvinčius tradicinius drabužius. Straipsnyje analizuojami liaudiški drabužiai, kurie buvo dėvimi Vidžemėje ir Latgaloje. Latvijos valstiečių apranga gerokai pakito, o tradiciniai drabužiai kito, veikiami miesto mados, atėjusios iš Vakarų.

Lyginant šiuos du regionus galima daryti išvadą, kad informacija apie vestuvinius drabužius, dėvėtus Vidžemėje ir Latgaloje, yra iš esmės ta pati. Tačiau randama daugiau tekstų apie Vidžemę nei apie Latgalą, liudijančių, kokia galėjo būti XIX a. jaunosios ir jaunikio vestuvių apranga.

Iki šiol trūko informacijos apie tai, ką tiksliai žmonės dėvėdavo vestuvių metu, todėl vestuvių tradicijų duomenų bazė yra vertingas informacijos šaltinis. Remiantis pateikta medžiaga galima stebėti nuotakos ir jaunikio vestuvinių drabužių chronologinę raidą, jų dėvėjimo būdus. Ši vestuvių tradicijų duomenų bazė padeda susieti drabužių istoriją su Latvijos liaudies dainomis. Latvijos vestuvinių drabužių istorija gali būti geriausiai ištirta ne tik sukaupus, palyginus ir išanalizavus duomenis iš tradicinių istorinių šaltinių, eksponatų, įvairių įrašų, piešinių, bet ir analizuojant tekstus apie liaudies papročius, atskleidžiančius nemažai informacijos.

Ieva Pīgozne

Clothing of Bride and Groom in Eastern Latvian Wedding Traditions of the 19th Century

S u m m a r y

Keywords: *clothing, wedding, 19th century, traditions, Vidzeme, Latgale, Latvia.*

Latvian Folklore Archives store a data base of Latvian customs and traditions that also contains descriptions of wedding traditions. These descriptions date back to the 19th century and often mention use of textiles and sometimes describe the clothing of the bride and the groom. This study presents what can be learned from these descriptions and compares the results with the folk dress collection of the National History Museum of Latvia, original drawings of the 18th and 19th century that depict people wearing traditional clothing, and Latvian folk songs. The article focuses on the folk dress of cultural historical regions Vidzeme and Latgale. During the 19th century clothing of the Latvian peasants went through a transition of a profound change and gradually the traditional clothing was superseded by town fashion characteristic for the entire Western world.

Comparing the two regions it can be concluded that there is no contradicting information about wedding dress from Vidzeme and Latgale. However, there are many more texts from Vidzeme than there are from Latgale: they all fall into their place of understanding what the wedding attire of the bride and the groom might have looked like in the 19th century.

So far there was scarce information on what exactly people used to wear for weddings and, therefore, the data base of wedding traditions is a valuable source of information. According to the provided information, it is possible to follow some chronological development of the clothing worn by the bride and the groom and obtain practical advice of what certain garments looked like or how they were worn. This database of wedding

traditions also helps to link the history of clothing with the information preserved in the Latvian folk songs. History of Latvian wedding costumes can be best researched if it gathers and cross-examines data not only from the traditional historical sources – artefacts stored at the museums, written records, and drawings – but also takes into account folklore texts that reveal a great deal of information.

Ieva PĪGOZNE
*Institute of Latvian History
University of Latvia
Kalpaka bulvāris 4
LV-1050 Rīga
Latvija
[pigozne@inbox.lv]*

*Straipsnis gautas 2017 m. liepos 11 d., priimta 2017 m. rugsėjo 27 d.
Received 11 July 2017, accepted 27 September 2017.*

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