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thematic conference

Historical Clothing and Textiles in Northern and Eastern Europe

ABSTRACTS

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TextileBase helps dress history scholars and practitioners by creating a gateway to linked data stored by researchers and memory institutions, and to collect, connect, and share data on material, visual, and textual sources of historical clothing.

INTRODUCTION

This volume brings together the abstracts of papers presented at the thematic conference “Historical Clothing and Textiles in Northern and Eastern Europe”, held by the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia on 20–21 February 2025 as part of the 83rd International Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia. The abstracts reflect the contributions of dress historians, archaeologists, ethnologists, and other scholars from 12 countries, showcasing the latest research on historical clothing and textiles.

The conference programme comprised 22 presentations, covering a broad chronological and thematic spectrum from the Bronze Age to the 21st century. Scholars explored a diverse range of topics, including archaeological textiles, traditional dress, textile production techniques, fashion history, and the role of clothing in social and cultural contexts. By bringing together experts from multiple disciplines and geographical regions, the conference fostered interdisciplinary dialogue and encouraged new perspectives on the study of textiles and dress history in Northern and Eastern Europe.

The abstracts in this volume reflect the diversity and richness of textile and dress history research in Northern and Eastern Europe, highlighting both established methodologies and emerging approaches. We hope that this collection will serve as a valuable resource for scholars, fostering further research and collaboration in this dynamic field.

The idea of organising an international conference dedicated specifically to the study of clothing and textiles in Northern and Eastern Europe has been in development for several years. This thematic conference marks the realisation of that vision, made possible through the collaboration of an international team of organisers. The success of this event demonstrates the relevance and necessity of continued engagement in this field. We aspire to establish this conference as a regular academic forum, taking place annually or biennially, to advance textile and dress history research and strengthen scholarly networks in this region.

This conference was held as a thematic conference of the 83rd International Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia, benefiting from the university’s technical support and online infrastructure. The event was hosted on Zoom and was also livestreamed on the Facebook page of the Institute of Latvian History, ensuring accessibility to a wider academic audience, including researchers, professionals, and members of the general public with an interest in historical textiles and dress.

The success of this conference would not have been possible without the dedication and efforts of the organising team, whose expertise and commitment ensured a high-quality academic programme and a stimulating environment for discussion. The organising team consisted of:

Ieva Pīgozne, University of Latvia
Anete Karlsonē, University of Latvia
Riina Rammo, University of Tartu
Meghan Anne Korten, University of Iceland

We extend our gratitude to all contributors, speakers, and participants who have made this event a success, and we look forward to continuing these important academic discussions in the years to come.

On behalf of the organising team

Ieva Pīgozne

Editor

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Crafting Reconstructions: a Methodological Innovation in Historical Clothing and Textile Research

The reconstruction of dress and textile objects is a burgeoning trend in clothing and textiles history. Scholarly ‘experimental history’ is a research methodology through which the skills of making may be meaningfully integrated into textile research once more. This paper proposes a theoretical framework within which craft expertise is re-established as a central requirement for an understanding of clothing and textiles. One of the benefits of ‘experimental history’ is a shift from a theoretical understanding to a sensory perception of clothing. The physical process of reconstruction recalibrates time as an important dimension in their creation and inspires an appreciation of the tacit knowledge required to achieve it. Gathering fibres, spinning them, forming fabric and creating garments from it are each time-consuming, repetitive actions into which significant human resources must be invested to nurture expertise.

Such craft expertise has long been absent from the scholarly discussion of clothing and textiles from both archaeological and historical perspectives. The loss of craft skills presents the greatest barrier to competent reconstructions for research purposes. Craft is a living tradition - as recognised by UNESCO, which called for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage as long ago as 2003. Despite this, integrating craft expertise into a scientific reconstruction is still a challenge because it does not have a widespread academic presence. ‘Experimental history’ also offers the opportunity for modern technological approaches to the materiality of textiles to be integrated into research projects: dye analysis, proteomics, isotope identification and radiocarbon dating all offer insights into the transformation of raw materials into clothing. Case studies will illustrate how craft and technological expertise may be integrated into reconstruction projects to produce new knowledge about historical clothing and textiles.

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Textile Economies in Transition from Plant Fibres to Wool in Bronze Age Northern Italy: New Evidence from Previously Unpublished Textiles

The transition from plant to wool fibre textile economies in northern Italy during the Bronze Age (c.2200-1200 BCE) is a crucial economic juncture. The adoption of wool affected many aspects of daily life, such as the social organisation of textile production, animal husbandry and forms of breeding. In northern Italy, Bronze Age pile dwellings allowed optimal preservation of plant fibres. These settlements offer a unique opportunity to investigate the final products, the textiles, and the semi-finished products connected to textile activities, such as threads, balls of yarn and bundles of processed fibres, and the tools connected to textile production. However, they are humid alkaline environments, which result in the near complete decay of the protein matter, such as wool. Rare wool fabrics in northern Italy come from a few sites of the Middle-Late Bronze Age, such as Molina di Ledro (Trento, Italy) and Castione dei Marchesi (Parma, Italy).

In this paper, I will present the results of recent analyses of previously unpublished linen and woollen textiles from the Early-Middle Bronze Age pile dwellings of Bande di Cavriana (Mantua, Italy) and Molina di Ledro (Trento, Italy). The textile from Bande di Cavriana is preserved in the Museo Archeologico dell'Alto Mantovano in Bande di Cavriana (Mantua, Italy). The textile corpus from Molina di Ledro is currently on display in the new Museo della Natura e dell'Uomo in Padua (Italy). The textiles were first studied using a portable Dino-Lite digital microscope. When possible, the textiles were also sampled and the samples were analysed with Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM). The results of the analyses are compared to the other finds from Molina di Ledro, previously studied and preserved in the Museo delle Scienze in Trento (Italy), and from the Early Bronze Age site of Lucone di Polpenazze del Garda (Brescia, Italy).

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**A Project Exploring the Senses, Connections and Power of Textiles
in the Early Medieval North Atlantic (450-1100 CE)**

In November 2024 the speaker started the 'Entangled Textiles: Senses, Connections, Power in the early medieval North Atlantic (450-1100 CE)' project. Its aim is to reveal the metaphorical and sensory meanings with which women imbued textiles they made and curated and the power they gained from this practice. In early medieval literature, objects of power such as swords were gifted and passed down the male line. This project argues that textiles were the female equivalent of heirloom swords, giving women a softer, sensory based power within a largely masculine world.

By exploring such ideas, the project aims to show that textiles contained a sensory power that gained resonance over time and connected the past to the present and future through the female line. By doing so, it extends beyond the boundaries of the early medieval material world because it opens up a range of questions about the role of women as curators of textile heritage in societies across the globe and through time. It demonstrates that fabrics bring together cultures, making connections across their known worlds, creating vibrant societies. It challenges traditional views of cloth consumed as a commodity, demonstrating the far reaching, multi-temporal and entangled natures these material objects were imbued with through their multiple life-cycles.

This presentation will give an overview of the project and discuss what has been discovered so far. It is also hoped that through the discussion, and beyond that participants will be able to contribute to the project.

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Remains of a 13th Century Headgear from the Archaeological Site of Szentés-Kaján, Temetőhalom, Grave 33 (Hungary) and the Southeastern European Connection of this Find

In our study we present a 13th century textile fragment with metal threads from the southern part of the Hungarian Great Plain, which was found in 2000 in Grave 33 of the Szentés-Kaján, Temetőhalom churchyard site. The find is known from a rich graveyard dating from the early first half of the 11th century to the second half of the 13th century. The grave what containing the textile find was dated with a high degree of certainty to the end of the middle third of the 13th century – before the Mongol Invasion (1241–1242) of Hungary – at the laboratory of the MTA ATOMKI with 14C analysis of the skeleton. In the Grave 33 the skeleton of an adult female lying on her back in extended position. Her skull was tilted to the right side, the left side and the top of the skull were damaged, probably disturbed by ploughing. On the right side of the skull in line with the height of the skullcap at the bottom of the grave lay a narrow textile fragment woven with gilded silver threads. The fragment can be interpreted as part of a headgear. In the archaeological heritage of the Carpathian Basin the textiles with metal threads are rare.

Besides to the technical analysis of the find, we are the first who argue the Balkan origin of the late period (12th–13th century) of Árpád dynasty-era (12th–13th century) headgear with gilded silver threads, because similar headgear was in fashion in the Balkans during the Second Bulgarian Tsardom (1185–1396). At the same time, we emphasise that the import of metal thread reached the Kingdom of Hungary from several directions and sources. Some of these headgears and other costume element may have Middle and Western European connections, but the example from Szentés-Kaján testifies to a Balkan-Bulgarian origin.

Status, Clothing, Political Power and a *Kenning*: the So-called *dróttningar naufr*

In two of the so-called Icelandic annals (the *Flateyjar annáll* and the *Lögmannna annálar*, in the entries relating to the years 1281-1283), it is stated that Queen Margaret of Norway (Margaret of Scotland, 1261-1283) had presented Bishop Jörundr of Hólar with a mantle of hers. The bishop then had the mantle re-made into a cape, which was officially called *dróttningar naufr* “the queen’s gift”. This piece of information is provided only by the annals, but is perhaps echoed in the *Lárentíus saga*, where it is said that King Eiríkr II had offered some “robes of rich stuff” to St John of Hólar to have good weather during a voyage across the sea. In this case, the mediator had been the Icelander Guðmundr Hallsson, and “of these robes were made dalmatics at Hólar”. Whoever the donor (whether King Eiríkr II or his queen) might have been, exchanges of garments seem to have taken place at the end of the 13th century between the Norwegian crown and Hólar.

**Cargos of Connection:
How Wool Textiles Shaped Icelandic Society through Medieval Exchange**

Wool fabric played an essential role in the history of Iceland and enabled Icelanders to maintain trade, political, and religious connections with the outside world beyond their island. Using examples from the contemporary sagas and from medieval contracts and inventories, this paper will explore how the export cloth commodity *vaðmál* helped to facilitate this movement of people, goods, and ideas between Iceland and Europe as the main export good from the twelfth to early fifteenth century. Specifically, it will begin with a discussion of how this cloth was an important subsistence clothing source produced domestically by persons of varying social status throughout the country, then it will highlight the important local leaders of the cloth's export—namely chieftains, monasteries, bishoprics, and royal representatives—in this commercial activity, and finally it will reflect how this trade and accumulation of wealth subsequently reinforced the status and authority of the secular and ecclesiastical elite because of the monetary gain and cultural contact that this export trade brought to medieval Iceland—education, honour and prestige, religion, travel opportunities, material goods, and more.

This presentation highlights the transformative role of *vaðmál* in medieval Iceland, revealing how a single export commodity provided interconnections for local production, elite power structures, and international cultural exchange, offering new insights into the island's historical integration into broader European networks of merchants, royal domains, and Church domains.

Footwear in Late Medieval Ireland c. 1100 – c. 1550

While footwear is worn for the purpose of protecting the feet of the wearer, evidence indicates the care that people take in its appearance. This is as true today as it was in the past. Many surviving fragments of historical footwear show signs of repair, as well as decoration and design. Despite being a small component in a person's overall attire, footwear's importance is found in both its practical functionality and how it provides insight into the wearer.

This paper aims to investigate evidence of footwear in Ireland from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries. Research has demonstrated the range of footwear styles that existed in medieval Ireland, but what this paper hopes to explore is the implications of footwear on Irish identity. By the late medieval period, the type of footwear a person wore could be read as an indicator of their status or profession. Footwear could be viewed as a marker of regional identity as well, but through trade and travel, styles of footwear were often shared between one place and another.

In order to delve into the select evidence of footwear, a multidisciplinary approach is taken where sources ranging from archaeology to visual representations to narrative texts are utilised. Furthermore, the paper will assess how footwear in Ireland cannot be fully analysed without the context of the broader material culture in which it is set. By placing Ireland within the wider medieval world, the study of footwear becomes richer as the patterns of influence and shared identity are made apparent.

Imagined Livonians: Dürer's Costume Watercolours of 1521 in Context

In 1521, while in the Netherlands, Albrecht Dürer painted three watercolours depicting the costumes of noble and common Livonian women (long mistakenly thought to be Icelandic). This paper challenges previous claims that Dürer's sources included first-hand observation or existing costume books, arguing instead that his depictions are a synthesis of accounts from merchants, travellers and contemporary texts.

The watercolours are best understood as imaginative constructs rooted in Dürer's engagement with humanist projects aimed at creating a comprehensive history and geography of Germany. Dürer's approach can be traced to the intellectual humanist circles of which he was a part, particularly their interest in defining German identity through works such as Conrad Celtis's unrealised *Germania Illustrata*, Jacobus Cochlaeus's *Brevis Germaniae Descriptio* (1512) and Franz Irenicus's *Germaniae Exegesis* (1518). Drawing parallels with his earlier costume studies of Nuremberg patrician women (1500), this paper situates the Livonian watercolours within this broader context. The imagined elements, such as excessive fur-lined garments, huge collars and towering headdresses, reflect Dürer's attempt to visualise exotic yet familiar people. Dürer uses the costume to construct a hybrid Livonian identity - Christian and pagan, German and Tatarian. Furthermore, the subsequent adaptation of the watercolours in Hans Weigel's *Trachtenbuch* (printed in Nuremberg in 1577) demonstrates their lasting influence in shaping perceptions of the region.

This paper is prepared as part of the project "Constructing Early Modern Identities: Dress in Albrecht Dürer's Works (DFG)".

Different Textiles in the Court of a Jagiellonian Prince: Function, Fashion, Expectation

The account books – recording daily expenses and incomes of the ruler's court – contain an incredible amount of information concerning everyday life and material culture. The Jagiellonian dynasty reigned a prominent part of Europe around 1500, covering the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish, the Bohemian, and also the Hungarian Kingdom. In my presentation, I intend to focus on the accounts of Prince Sigismund Jagiellon. At that time he was the youngest and most mobile male member of the dynasty, whose everyday life was so accurately described in his accounts. These could shed light upon not only his and his household's clothing but also preserved remarkable details of the textiles used (for a decorative or functional reason) in his living place. Plenty of fabrics are mentioned and described according to their use in the household. We can also have a glimpse of how these textiles were changed during funerals and mourning, according to the seasons of the year and also in connection with the frequent journeys of the prince and his court (as wrapping material). Not to mention the fact, that the first papermills in the territories ruled by the Jagiellonians (Silesia and the region around Cracow) were established also in that time and used rag as source material for producing paper.

Where did these materials and clothes come from? Is there any mention of artisans working on clothing and home textiles? How did they clean textiles and how often? Where did they store them? What was the fashion of those days? Was the prince and his home fashionable compared with the contemporary royal and aristocratic courts? In my presentation, I would like to answer these questions based on the ledgers of Prince Sigismund with outlooks to his brother's accounts from the same period.

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**Dress Materials According to Rank and Position:
The Use of Fur at the Swedish Royal Court, c. 1540-1580**

In the 16th century the material of your clothing signalled your rank and position. In Sweden the economy was still primarily based on payment in kind, and material literacy was a vital skill at all levels of society. This included knowledge of the economic value of items as well as the ability to judge and place material quality on a social scale. By studying how the use of dress materials differed between individuals in a shared setting it is possible to discuss what constituted these material and visual signs.

This paper will address how rank and position was signalled by the use of fur in dress at the Swedish royal court during the early Vasa dynasty, c. 1540-1580. Accounts from the court's storerooms for cloth, silk and fur will be used to show what was considered appropriate to individuals of different social standing and to discuss how rank or position would have been visible through dress. This includes the materials and qualities associated with different social levels or positions, as well as how the use of materials in garments differed depending on the rank of the wearer.

This paper is prepared as part of the project "The period eye: Viewing the manufacture and use of textiles in Vasa-era Sweden 1523-1654".

Reusing, Recycling, Disposal: the Life Cycle of Clothing in the Early Modern Period

Each element of clothing in the Early Modern period had its own story. Both textiles and jewellery followed a similar lifecycle: creation, use with associated care (cleaning, washing, repair), and finally, an endpoint where the object exited the historical stage for various reasons. This report will explore the processes by which parts of clothing of the Early Modern period physically disappeared or, on the contrary, were preserved and reached our time in an unchanged form. The practices of transferring things to a new owner during the life of a first owner and the traditions related to the redistribution of belongings after the death of the owner are separately considered.

This microhistory of the Early Modern costume is closely intertwined with social and economic interactions within the community. The aim of our research is to attempt to generalize and structure all the processes of reusing garments and accessories, for different social strata of the 16th-18th centuries. The lifetime practices of transferring garments to a new owner were in many ways similar to posthumous traditions, but there were more variations in them. When transferred to the church, for example, the chain of changing owners for clothes and jewellery seems to have been shorter than outside the church. Belongings that ended up in the church had a better chance of being preserved to the 21st century, albeit in a modified form. The realities of the 16th-18th centuries were such that, due to their cost, textiles were used until they were completely worn out. Intact and unaltered wardrobe items that have survived to our time are therefore a rarity.

**The Costume of the 17th-century Rabivere Bog Body Revisited
- a Witness of Changes in the Textile Tradition and Fashion**

A fully clothed body of a woman was found during peat-cutting in Rabivere bog (North Estonia) in 1936. Based on the Swedish coin from 1667 found with the body, the find dates back to the end of the 17th century. The body was reburied after a brief examination, but well-preserved clothing items (two coats, a skirt and knitted fragments), a coin, and a small brooch have been stored in the Estonian National Museum.

The presentation will focus mainly on researching these worn-out garments, which reveal traces of various life stages. Based on the contextual and technical study, an attempt is made to discuss the biography of these unique textile items from production to disposal. The contact with urban textile technology can be seen, and the garments the Rabivere woman wore are directly parallel to the later folk costumes. In the broader context, the Rabivere costume and textiles exemplify a transformation in Estonia's rural textile production and fashion in the same century.

Tools of the Trade: Early Modern Articulations of Borders Between Professions

The instrumental function of early modern craft guilds was to protect and uphold working standards, market conditions and social networks. But how was this protectionist policy articulated and upheld if two trades with similar output engaged in the same market? This paper presents evidence on how the boundaries between passementerie makers and button makers were perceived and discussed in 17th century Europe. The study is based on the reading of archival sources in relation to contemporary images and artifacts.

By consulting books such as Christoph Weigel's *Book of Trades*, first published in 1698, it becomes clear that craftsmen in both trades were allowed to produce a similar range of goods. To distinguish them, the use of tools and techniques played an important role in the identification, as the passementerie maker worked in the loom while the button maker worked with hand-held tools. To investigate whether and how these distinctions were applied in practice, the study uses written documents such as minutes and letters from the guilds in Stockholm, Sweden, Copenhagen, Denmark and Gdansk, Poland. This is furthermore complemented with a discussion which engages in an analysis of technical solutions and tool requirements in a selection of extant objects.

Silk in 18th Century Hungary and Transylvania

In early modern Europe, wearing the highest quality silk textiles was a privilege reserved for the elites. In Hungary and Transylvania, silk fabrics such as taffeta, atlas, velvet, and damask were also popular among the nobility and urban patricians. Both women's and men's attire featured elaborate embroideries with silk yarn and gold or silver threads. Over time, blended silk materials became accessible to the less wealthy, as improving social and economic conditions allowed peasants to acquire some silk items. In Hungarian folk costumes, silk most often appeared as ribbon, kerchief, or embroidery thread. Silk products were imported from the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe, primarily Italy and France. Local silk production began in 1680. Habsburg rulers promoted sericulture by encouraging the planting of mulberry trees and the cultivation of silkworms from the eighteenth century onwards. Silk processing started in the latter half of the century.

This paper examines the role of silk in social representation. Beyond fashion, customs, and public opinion, dress was regulated by sumptuary laws, particularly for the lower classes. The relationship between the garment and the wearer, as well as the processes of purchasing materials and making clothes, will be explored. Sources for this paper include written normative sources such as price regulations and sumptuary laws, price lists, and inventories. Memoirs, letters, and travelogues are also considered. Visual sources include paintings, engravings, and printed and hand-painted costume books. Preserved articles of clothing and materials from the period are also examined.

Clothing of the Lower Classes in Riga and Rural Latvia: Variations in Similarity and Difference Within Communities

Analysing examples from the 1770s to 1870s, this paper demonstrates how traditional clothing can provide insights into its wearers—communities that are otherwise poorly documented. The research is based on material sources from the 19th century as well as written and visual records spanning the entire period. Since traditional clothing disappeared in Riga as early as the 1840s and has not survived physically, the lower-class dress of Rigans can only be studied through drawings and written accounts.

In rural Latvia, some regions exhibit smaller, more specific areas of homogeneity in traditional dress, while others display broader areas where clothing transitions more fluidly from parish to parish. In these larger regions, greater variability in clothing becomes evident during the later part of the period under focus. Traditional clothing thus serves as a visible indicator of whether a community is more insular or more open to outsiders, newcomers, change, and innovation.

The clothing of Riga's lower classes reveals that what can be categorized as traditional dress often shows similarities across several ethnic groups within the same social class. Latvian and German lower-class individuals display the most similarities in their clothing, with differences often limited to footwear or headgear. Russians sometimes align with these groups or wear distinct garments, while Jewish communities tend to exhibit more specific styles of dress. Notably, Latvian- and German-speaking Protestants of the same class show the greatest similarity in dress, which sets them apart from Rigans belonging to the Jewish or Russian Orthodox communities. In conclusion, traditional clothing illustrates that in Riga, during the last quarter of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, social class and religion played a more significant role than ethnicity in shaping how people dressed.

This paper is prepared as part of the project 'Contextualization of Traditional Clothing: Reassessing the Connection Between Riga and Latgale' LU-BA-PG-2024/1-0023. The research is financed by the Recovery and Resilience Facility project 'Internal and External Consolidation of the University of Latvia (No.5.2.1.1.i.0/2/24/I/CFLA/007).

Commercially Significant Textile Dyes For Latvian Peasants in the Mid-19th Century

Color has always been an essential component of clothing, so research into the dyes used to dye textiles is vital in studying the history of clothing. One of the factors that influenced the choice of colors used for clothing was the availability of resources and the skills to handle them. In addition to local resources, commercially important textile dyes have always played an essential role in the history of clothing. Their availability was closely linked to trade networks and their development both at the international level and locally. Advertisements by traders published in the press in the 19th century provide a wealth of information to clarify the introduction of commercially important dyes into widespread public use. In the 19th century, in the process of nation-building, many European countries began to publish national press. The press published in Latvian was one of them. Merchants' advertisements, which informed Latvian buyers about the available dyes, are essential in clothing history, as they indicate a particular target audience that used these dyes. In the 19th century, most Latvians lived in the countryside and were peasants who wore traditional clothing until the 1860s-1870s. The offer of dyes in the 1850s-1870s, as well as their content, intensity, and distribution, which were explicitly aimed at Latvian peasants, allows us to outline the process of clothing emancipation. The advertisements precisely dated the spread of new synthetic textile dyes in Latvia, at that time, in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire, and described the chronology and geography of its distribution and the ways of information dissemination.

This paper is prepared as part of the project 'Dyes and Dyeing: from Tradition to Industry' (No. LU-BA-ZG-2024/1-0007).

Materials in Beadwork Belts: Historical Development and Technological Innovations

This presentation investigates the transformative interplay between technological progress and traditional craftsmanship through the lens of beadwork belts (*zīļu jostas*) in Latvia during the mid-19th and early-20th centuries. These intricately crafted accessories, integral to men's attire, reflect the transformative impact of industrialization on textile production, materials, and cultural traditions.

The study examines how the emergence of industrially produced materials, such as fine glass beads and standardized patterns, altered beadwork techniques while broadening access to decorative clothing elements. Based on archival records, museum collections, and periodicals, the research reconstructs the chronological and regional evolution of beadwork belts and their integration into male wardrobes.

A key focus is placed on how industrial advancements democratized access to materials and techniques that were once exclusive to elites, fostering the widespread adoption of these belts across various social strata. The presentation also underscores the symbolic and practical roles these accessories played in expressing social identity, status, and aesthetic preferences. Additionally, it investigates the socio-economic transformations that facilitated the interplay between urban and rural fashion influences during this period.

By situating the history of beadwork belts within the broader context of industrial and cultural shifts, this study reveals the dynamic relationship between technological innovation and cultural heritage. It emphasizes the importance of preserving these artifacts as enduring markers of a transitional era in which tradition and modernity converged in textile artistry.

Who is the Worker? Silkworms or Women Workers?
The Contribution of Women's Labor in Soufli in Silk Production.
Representations in Silk Museum

The small town of Soufli in Northern Greece is still known today for its silks. During the mid-19th to mid-20th century, however, Soufli was one of Greece's most important sericulture centers, with women and girls from the town and the surrounding areas being the main workers. The work of the silk workers was completely intertwined with their everyday lives and was tested by the political and economic conditions of the time. From the division of roles of domestic sericulture and silk-making to the industrialization of the means of production of the textile industry, a new female working class emerged, which flooded the factories in the textile and hence silk-making sector. Two World Wars, the pebrine in France and Italy, the particular climatic conditions of Soufli and finally the emergence of artificial silk determined the course of silk and the lives of the women workers.

This paper, which is based on my thesis on how the Silk Museum approaches the issue of women's labor, examines the distribution of gendered roles in the production and processing of silk, the transition from home to the factory (*Jivre*), the gendered differentiation of working conditions, the labor struggles, and finally, a small hint at the curatorial practices. For the research, I used the bibliography on women silk workers and as a methodological tool the comparison with other Greek workers, as well as foreign silk workers. I carried out *in situ* inspection in Soufli, the Jivre factory, the Silk Museum and interviewed former women workers and contributors to the Museum's exhibition. Communication with museums abroad illuminated not only the museological aspects, but also the historical events and conditions of the women workers there, distinguishing the case of Soufli, but also identifying the common elements in terms of women's labor.

Icelandic *Lopapeysa*, a Protected Designation of Origin

In March 2020 the name „Íslensk *lopapeysa* / Icelandic *Lopapeysa*“ was registered as a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) by Icelandic Authorities. The registration was based on the academic writings and a peer reviewed publication in 2017, *The Icelandic lopi sweater, its origins, history and design*, by the author Ásdís Jóelsdóttir. Today the Icelandic *lopi* sweater is held in respect and is regarded as a valuable part of Iceland’s design and textile history, heritage and tradition.

There are many factors that have influenced the history of the sweater and there are many reasons why Icelandic women started knitting sweaters from *lopi* and how the sweater came into existence. It takes the artist's eye to design patterns and color combinations from sheep colors so that an elegant product is created. Turning a sweater into a hand-knitted “mass-produced” from cheap *lopi* gives the sweater its unique status.

Knitting reached Iceland in the 16th century. Everyone learned to knit, both adults and children, and as a result, knitting knowledge was passed down from one generation to the next. Knitted products were an important source of income for Icelandic households, which is the primary reason that knowledge of knitting was maintained throughout the 20th century. The study shows that its origins is lying further back in the nation’s knitting history than was previously thought. It is also clear that many sources of influence came together to create its form and manner of production.

Handicrafts in Liturgical Textiles

The evolution of handicrafts in the territory of modern Latvia has been significantly shaped by European culture over many centuries. This cultural influence reached the general populace through urban centers, manorial estates, and the church. This paper explores the history of handicrafts, focusing on the acquisition of skills and craftsmanship, while also examining the role of the Catholic Church in fostering the aesthetic sensibilities of the people. It is well-documented that congregants in churches did not solely engage with the priest, the organ music, and the choir, but also derived aesthetic pleasure from the church's architecture, interior design, and liturgical textiles. These textiles were not only luxurious and visually appealing but also served as significant conveyors of information, from which worshippers could learn. Since churches have traditionally embraced contemporary design trends, it can be asserted that the incorporation of modern needlework techniques and decorative elements into liturgical textiles was a natural progression. Local artisans drew upon these innovations, further enriching their craft.

The study is based on liturgical textiles collected during ethnographic expeditions (2017–2024) to Catholic churches in Latgale and Sēlija, as well as ethnographic materials from various Latvia museums. This diverse set of sources enables the tracing of mutual influences and changes in the composition of textile materials, colors, needlework techniques, and craftsmanship. Based on the raw materials used in the needlework, the textiles can be categorized into two main types: white and colored. White textiles refer to embroidery executed with white threads on a white base fabric, such as net and tulle embroidery, broderie and Richelieu embroidery, and crochet. In contrast, colorful textiles involve embroidery on a colored base fabric, using threads made of wool, silk, or cotton. These are typically worked with techniques such as basting stitches, stripes, stem stitches, cross stitches, cover stitches, and bead embroidery.

Given the extensive and varied nature of the collected material, this paper will focus on two types of colorful works: bead embroidery and cross-stitch embroidery. The spread and interplay of these two needlework techniques in Latvia, both in Catholic churches and rural households, coincided with the rise of the so-called "Berlin wool-work" in Europe. This style reached Latvia in the mid- to late 19th century, facilitated by the availability of needlework literature published in Europe and the abundant supply of needlework materials in specialized stores.

***Koshula*: a Foundational Element of Macedonian Folk Costume**

This study explores the *koshula*/shirt/chemise as a fundamental component of folk costume in Macedonia, tracing its transformation from the 19th to the mid-20th century. Within this chronological framework, the *koshula*, as an essential element of both women's and men's attire, serves as a rich repository of cultural transformation, reflecting shifts in aesthetic, social, and ritual practices. The study focuses on the tunic-shaped *koshula*, whose aesthetic significance is most evident in its intricate traditional Macedonian embroidery and ornamental motifs. Particularly noteworthy are women's bridal and festive costumes, which stand out for their decorativeness, ritual function, and role as carriers of intangible cultural heritage. The ornamentation and color schemes of the *koshula* not only underscore its ritualistic purpose but also convey critical social information, such as the wearer's age, marital status, and socio-economic position. The *koshula*'s role as a marker of personal and social identity is especially prominent in transitional life stages, such as marriage, and initiation into new roles within the community.

Moreover, the study delves into the symbolic and spiritual dimensions of the *koshula* in Macedonian traditional culture. Beliefs about its protective and healing properties, as well as its connection to funerary customs, reveal its enduring significance in both life and death. For example, the practice of burying the deceased in a wedding costume shows the belief that individuals (particularly spouses) are recognized in the afterlife through it, especially from the *koshula*. Using selected examples, this study will illustrate the transformations of the *koshula* across time, revealing the complex interplay between material culture, social structure, and spiritual belief systems in Macedonia during the specified period, with the help of ethnological and anthropological methodology.

Embroidered Shirts of Nīca Parish: Materials and Their Analysis 1924–2024

In summer 1924, the newly established Monument Board organized their first expedition to the South-Western part of Latvia – Nīca Parish (historical name in German – *Niederbartau*). Currently, the unpublished expedition notes are in the depositary of the Latvian National Museum of History. The methodology of acknowledgement and keeping records (documentation) of the traditional culture had taken its first steps.

Regardless the first steps taken in this respect, even now, in the 21st century, thanks to the materials, we are allowed to obtain this unique information about the cultural values of Nīca Parish that was under the extension even back then, in 19th century. During the 1930-ies, the Monument Board stoked up the depositary by purchasing authentic collection of the artefacts – Nīca shirt – from private persons in the parish and from Mērija Grīnberga's (*Mary Grünberg*, 1881–1973, the expert of traditional crafts and traditional costume craftsman) boutique in Riga. As a result, the Latvian National Museum of History has the largest collection of Nīca shirts.

Parallely to the activities carried out by the Monument Board, a similar concern in the matter, a detailed research of shirt patterns was carried out by Jānis Sudmalis (1887–1984), who was a teacher of Liepāja School of Decorative and Applied Arts, the founder and director of Liepāja Museum. His collected artefacts and pattern drawings in detail are in the permanent collection of the Museum, and some of the samples are deposited in the Latvian National Museum of History.

The 21st century is a new golden age of the acknowledgement and research of traditional culture of Nīca Parish. Thanks to the locals and initiatives carried out by the municipality, the depositaries of antiquities in Nīca and Otanči are opened to visitors, a photo fixation of Nīca shirt from private belongings and museums takes place in creating a digital collection of all the artefacts acknowledged from Nīca Parish. These activities are carried out with an aim to educate people and to demonstrate rich and unique variety of Nīca shirts and the abundance of shirt patterns, thus, giving people the opportunity to be inspired to create their own traditional costumes. In collaboration with the depositaries of antiquities in Nīca and Otanči, within the framework of State research programme CERS, a scientific research (2023/2026) of Nīca shirt takes place, examining typological versions of pattern, as well as looking for samples and analogies of the 19th century. The first year of the scientific research has proved to be successful.

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Crafting Sustainability: Umbria's Hand Knitting Tradition

This paper explores the ecological implications of textile production, from its creation to its eventual disposal, with a particular focus on the traditional hand knitting practices of Umbria, an Italian region renowned for its artisanal craftsmanship. By examining the life cycle of textiles, the study highlights the environmental impact of materials used, production methods, and the often-overlooked phase of disposal, offering a comprehensive view of sustainability within the fashion and textile industries. Umbria's long-standing tradition of hand knitting represents a distinct, labor-intensive approach to textile production, rooted in local history and cultural practices. Artisans in this region have long relied on natural fibers such as wool and hemp, employing age-old techniques passed down through generations. This focus on manual production not only reduces the ecological footprint compared to mass-produced textiles but also fosters a deep social connection between the artisan, the community, and the environment.

The paper also addresses the socio-economic and artisanal implications of this tradition, emphasizing how it sustains local economies and promotes cultural heritage. However, the study does not overlook the challenges these artisans face in a modern, globalized market, where *fast fashion* and synthetic materials dominate. Ultimately, it advocates for a more sustainable approach to textile production and disposal, inspired by the ecological wisdom embedded in traditional practices such as those found in Umbria's hand knitting culture, proposing a model of circularity that minimizes waste and maximizes the value of craftsmanship and natural resources.



Programme

Thursday, February 20, 2025, 10.00 AM EET

Chair: Ieva Pīgozne		
10.00–10.05	Ieva Pīgozne <i>University of Latvia</i>	Opening of the conference
10.05–10.30	Jane Anne Malcolm-Davies <i>Uppsala University</i>	Crafting reconstructions: a methodological innovation in historical clothing and textile research
10.30–10.55	Maria Elena Bertoli <i>School of Humanities, University of Glasgow</i>	Textile economies in transition from plant fibres to wool in Bronze Age Northern Italy: new evidence from previously unpublished textiles
10.55–11.20	Alexandra Makin <i>Manchester Metropolitan University</i>	A project exploring the senses, connections and power of textiles in the Early Medieval North Atlantic (450-1100 CE)
11.20–11.45	Flórián Harangi Attila Türk <i>Hungarian National Museum National Institute of Archaeology</i>	Remains of a 13th century headgear from the archaeological site of Szentes-Kaján, Temetőhalom, grave 33 (Hungary) and the southeastern European connection of this find
11.45–12.00	Coffee break	
Chair: Anete Karlson		
12.00–12.25	Valeria Di Clemente <i>University of Catania</i>	Status, clothing, political power and a kenning: the so-called <i>dróttningar naufr</i>
12.25–12.50	Meghan Kortén <i>University of Iceland</i>	Cargos of connection: how wool textiles shaped Icelandic society through Medieval exchange
12.50–13.15	Mairéad Finnegan <i>Maynooth University</i>	Footwear in Late Medieval Ireland c. 1100 – c. 1550
13.15–13.40	Dilshat Harman <i>Georg-August-Universität Göttingen</i>	Imagined Livonians: Dürer's costume watercolours of 1521 in context
13.40–14.00	Coffee break	

Chair: Meghan Korten		
14.00–14.25	Krisztina Rábai <i>University of Szeged</i>	Different textiles in the court of a Jagiellonian prince: function, fashion, expectation
14.25–14.50	Cecilia Aneer <i>Department of Art History, Uppsala University</i>	Dress materials according to rank and position: The use of fur at the Swedish royal court, c. 1540-1580
14.50–15.15	Natalya Skornyakova <i>National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute"</i>	Reusing, recycling, disposal: the life cycle of clothing in the Early Modern period
15.15–15.40	Riina Rammo <i>University of Tartu</i>	The costume of the 17th-century Rabivere bog body revisited - a witness of changes in the textile tradition and fashion
15.40–15.45	Conclusion of Day 1	

Friday, February 21, 2025, 10.00 AM EET

Chair: Meghan Korten		
10.00–10.05	Meghan Korten <i>University of Iceland</i>	Opening of Day 2
10.05–10.30	Cecilia Candréus <i>Uppsala University</i>	Tools of the trade: Early Modern articulations of borders between professions
10.30–10.55	Éva Deák <i>ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Institute of History</i>	Silk in 18th century Hungary and Transylvania
10.55–11.20	Ieva Pīgozne <i>University of Latvia</i>	Clothing of the lower classes in Riga and rural Latvia: variations in similarity and difference within communities
11.20–11.45	Anete Karlson <i>University of Latvia</i>	Commercially significant textile dyes for Latvian peasants in the mid-19th century
11.45-12.00	Coffee break	
Chair: Riina Rammo		
12.00–12.25	Una Valtere <i>Art Academy of Latvia</i>	Technological advancements in textile production and their historical impact: a case study of embroidered belts
12.25–12.50	Eleftheria Rigopoulou <i>National & Kapodistrian University of Athens</i>	Who is the worker? Silkworms or women workers? The contribution of women's labor in Soufli in silk production. Representations in Silk Museum

12.50–13.15	Ásdís Jóelsdóttir <i>University of Iceland</i>	Icelandic <i>Lopapeysa</i> , a protected designation of origin
13.15–13.40	Aija Jansone <i>Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of Latvia</i>	Handicrafts in liturgical textiles
13.40–14.00	Coffee break	
Chair: Ieva Piņozne		
14.00–14.25	Dushica Brachikj Nade Genevska Brachikj <i>Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology - Skopje</i>	"Koshula": a foundational element of Macedonian folk costume
14.25–14.50	Daina Lāce <i>Art Academy of Latvia, Institute of Art History</i>	Embroidered shirts of Nīca parish: materials and their analysis 1924–2024
14.50–15.15	Isabella Cascianelli	Crafting sustainability: Umbria's hand knitting tradition
15.15–15.30	Conclusion of the Conference	



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TextileBase helps dress history scholars and practitioners by creating a gateway to linked data stored by researchers and memory institutions, and to collect, connect, and share data on material, visual, and textual sources of historical clothing.

Please consider adding your conference presentations, earlier publications' catalogue records, or other historical clothing and textiles related research material to our pilot database at https://reprexbase.eu/textilebase/index.php?title=Main_Page

Would you like to share your research datasets as linked open data, but you do not know how? Please contact the editor, Ieva Piņozne.