

## HUTSUL FOLK COSTUMES (EMBROIDERY, LACE, KNITTING) IN THE COLLECTION OF THE SEWERYN UDZIELA ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM IN KRAKOW

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**Abstract:** *The article presents the research on the Hutsul folk costume in the collection of the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow. The collection of the Hutsul folk costumes stored at the museum has been developed in several stages and is related to the history of two museums: the Museum of Technology and Industry (closed in 1950) and the National Museum in Krakow. The main part of the collection dates from the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries (until the outbreak of World War II). This collection includes women's and men's garments and a few children's items. Original ornaments, colors and types of garments and accessories show a local variety of the Hutsul clothing. Nevertheless, a number of objects require a more precise attribution, and the collection in general needs further elaboration – in the context of social, cultural, ethnographic and local factors – in order to define and identify the phenomenon of the traditional Hutsul folk costume.*

**Keywords:** *Hutsul Region; Collections; Folk Costume; Lace; Embroidery; Knitting; Tradition*

## ХУЦУЛСКИ НАРОДНИ НОСИИ (ШЕВИЦИ, ДАНТЕЛИ, ПЛЕТИВА) В КОЛЕКЦИЯТА НА ЕТНОГРАФСКИ МУЗЕЙ „СЕВЕРИН УДЗЕЛЯ“ В КРАКОВ

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**Резюме:** *Статията представя изследването на хуцулската народна носия в колекцията на Етнографския музей “Северин Удзеля” в Краков. Колекцията от хуцулски народни носии, съхранявана в музея, е оформена на няколко етапа и е свързана с историята на два музея: Музея на технологиите и промишлеността (затворен през 1950 г.) и Националния музей в Краков. Основната част от колекцията е от края на 19-ти и първата половина на 20-ти век (до избухването на Втората световна война). Тази колекция включва дамски и мъжки облекла и няколко детски артикула. Оригинални орнаменти, цветове и видове облекла и аксесоари показват местното разнообразие на хуцулското облекло. Въпреки това, редица предмети изискват по-прецизно описание, а колекцията като цяло се нуждае от допълнително разработване – в контекста на социални, културни, етнографски и местни фактори – за да се дефинира и идентифицира феноменът на традиционната хуцулска народна носия.*

*Ключови думи:* Хуцулско; колекции; народна носия; дантела; шевици; плетене; традиция

## Introduction

Polish museums have many collections that demonstrate the multicultural diversity of works of fine and decorative art. It manifests itself to a certain extent through the historical and artistic value of the collections, origin and content, which gives ground for revealing their uniqueness through accurate research perspective. In terms of geographic, ethnic and ethnographic diversity, quite numerous collections of Hutsul art should be distinguished. The creation of museum collections began in the last thirty years of the 19th century when museum activity intensified and museums occupied an important role in the cultural and educational life of the society. Exhibitions showing the achievements of technological progress, art and cultural diversity of the world (London 1851; Paris 1855, 1878; Moscow 1867; Vienna 1873; Prague 1900) played an important role in these processes.



**Figure 1. The building of Ethnographic Museum in Wawel castle (1920-1930)**

In the research on the Hutsul folk costume and different ornaments (embroidery, lace work, knitting, textile) in the collection of the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow, or any other ethnic groups, it is important to take into consideration several important factors. Firstly, the chronological framework determines the Hutsul traditional attire, for example from the mid-19th century and the interwar period, differed in typology, fabrics, materials and ways of decorating, which is related to the historical and socio-cultural changes that took place at that time. Secondly, the territorial boundaries of the

Hutsul region, its neighborhood with other ethnic groups, and the influence of foreign cultures, all of which were vividly manifested in clothing as well. Thirdly, it is also important to understand the issue of multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism of the Hutsul region, as well as a social and professional diversity of the population (peasants, burghers, aristocracy, craftsmen, traders, educational workers, etc.). All these factors had an impact on local artistic and stylistic features of garments.

Among the multidirectional and diverse of Hutsul folk art, special attention must be given to traditional clothes and fabrics – shape, cutting, colors, decorations, lots of jewelry and decorative fabrics (lace making, embroidery, knitting) which were quite unusual for urban culture, especially for foreigners. Deliberate searching for antiques for private and museum collections, gift or purchase of products as travel souvenirs – this is how Hutsul collections were acquired in Polish museums before 1939. During World War II, most museums continued to operate, mainly under German occupation. During the last years of the war, mainly in connection with the evacuation of the Germans, many exhibits were destroyed, taken away or plundered. This adversely affected the integrity of the museum collections (Figure 1; Figure 2).

At that time, works of Hutsul art were mostly concentrated in private collections, but later these collections became the basis of the collections of newly emerging museums and for a long time were the main source of supplementing them. According to archival documents, works of art were bought, donated, exchanged between collectors and museums, and exhibited in Galicia and abroad. Thus, the history of each collection was created, the main directions of museum activity were outlined, and people who played a leading role in these processes were identified. The collections from the Hutsul region were supplemented particularly intensively in the first decade of the 20th century. Because of the development of tourism in these areas, fascination with Hutsul folk art, promotion of highlander culture outside the region and, to some extent, the mythologization of the Hutsul region (Figure 3).

## **General observations on the Hutsul collection**

The present collection of the Hutsul folk costumes stored at the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum of Krakow (MEK) has been assembled in several stages and is related to the history of two museums: the Museum of Technology and Industry (MTP) (closed in 1950) and the National Museum in Krakow (MNK), where most of the MTP collections were transferred after its liquidation (Udziela, 1905), (Hapanovitch, 2007), (Dolinska, 2019). These collected exhibits were transferred as a deposit from the National Museum to the MEK in 1939 and entered into the MEK Inventory Book in 1989. The origin of the artifacts is evidenced by the metrics on the objects, which to some extent emphasizes the historical value of the collections and provides some data on their approximate age (Bojaska and Homolacs, 1928). The main part of the collection dates from the end of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries (until the outbreak of World War II). The Hutsul collection was assembled thanks to private donors (Seweryn Udziela, Helena Dombchanska, Cecylia S'niegocka, Helena Krasuska and others). It is worth

noting that even today there are cases of donating Hutsul cultural artifacts to the museum by individual collectors (Report of..., 1912), (Report of..., 1913), (Report of..., 1914), (Temporary catalog..., 1904).



**Figure 2. The building The emblem of the Ethnographic Museum in Krakow in the times of functioning at Wawel (Published: Sprawozdanie wydziału Towarzystwa Muzeum etnograficznego w Krakowie za rok 1917, Kraków 1914, 20 s.)**

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the popularization of the cultural heritage of various ethnographic groups increased the Hutsul group, whose heritage became quite popular. Number of temporary thematic exhibitions (based on museum collections or private collections) were organized in Polish museum institutions over the last half century. Exhibitions differed in concept — from presenting Hutsul culture as archaic and mythologized to its presentation as one of the Polish national styles. There are also active trips to the Hutsul region of scientists, professors and students (often as part of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation), resulting at a number of scientific and popular science publications on the Hutsul region. Tourists are buying contemporary souvenirs made by Hutsul craftsmen, look for remains of antiquities, digitize Hutsul types, life and landscapes, admire the colors of Hutsul costumes and textiles, listen to legends about Hutsul life — as well as over a hundred years ago (Kozakevych, 2020).

The Hutsul folk costume is characterized by distinct local features, which are most visible in decoration and, to some extent, typological differentiation — taking into account the interaction of the cultures of neighboring nations and ethnographic groups, border and transition zones, socio-cultural, ethnographic and artistic factors of the 19th - early 21st centuries (Kozakevych, 2014). However, the combination of centuries-old traditions and innovations in the production and decoration of traditional clothing and textiles in the



Hutsul region resulted in a gradual "departure" from the usual and influenced the emergence of new, "different" forms of clothing and fabrics, the development of which was dictated by subsequent times. Given this, we can talk about the variety of Hutsul ornaments. It was the decorativeness of Hutsul clothing and textiles that caused a specific boom in demand for "hutsuliana", which in turn contributed to the creation of unique private and museum collections.



**Figure 3. "Hutsul style" blouse made of georgette; an example of the influence of urban fashion in the Hutsul culture; purchased in the 1930s in the Hutsul region at the market, From the MEK collection, inv. no. 74113. Photo by O. Kozakevych, 2019.**

The MEK collection consists of traditional clothing and accessories that complemented and added an air of uniqueness to the folk costume of the Hutsul region. This collection includes women's and men's garments and a few children's items: shirts, headgear, footwear, leather and woven belts, aprons, trousers, scarves, outerwear made of wool and leather (known as "serdak", "bajbarak", "petek", "gugla", "keptar", "koruszyna"). There are many fragments of shirts embroidered with various patterns, and other accessories such as: women's and men's jewellery made of different materials, decorative bags and various walking sticks ("bartky", "palyci", "kelef"), powder pouches, pipes, etc. These items have characteristic local features and peculiar decorations. It was established that some of the objects classified as "Hutsul", "Hutsul region" or "Ruthenians" are of a different origin. There were incidental cases where the article was named after the place where it was made or purchased from. For example, several male Bukovinian shirts from the beginning of the 20th century (not from the Hutsul Bukowina region) were signed as "Hutsulshchyna". A similar situation took place during the examination of the outfits and fabrics. Museum employees explained that the artifacts were usually labeled with the name of the place from where they had been donated or purchased from by the donors.

This indicates a need for a detailed study of the items in the MEK collections, because only a proper analysis of artistic features can reliably determine their local origin and age (Kozakevych, 2014), (Pobiegly, 2009).

The original artifacts also include samples of embroidery patterns from Jaremca, located in the north-eastern part of the Hutsul region. In contrast to numerous fragments of embroidery mostly on collars, cuffs, and sleeves inserts of Hutsul shirts which are quite difficult to identify more precisely, these samples are well marked and aesthetically presented. On the oblong towel-shaped canvas, stripes of various embroidery patterns from a specific locality are arranged laterally. The high quality of embroidery and the variety of patterns suggests that such a patterned canvas was made intentionally, with a view to showing it in public. Perhaps this way of embroidering was done during needlework lessons at school, at special handicraft courses popular in the interwar years, and by local artisans to present at exhibitions (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. A fragment of the template with Hutsul embroidery patterns, Jaremca, the 1920s–1930s, inv. no. 1956, collection of the Ethnographic Museum in Krakow. Photo by O. Kozakevych, 2021.**

It can be presumed that such woven ribbons, straps and belts were also used for women's handbags (called “dziobenka”, ‘dziubenska”, or “dziubecka”). The handbags were usually small, square-shaped, and very practical for carrying necessary things and food to “peck” on the way (hence the name). They were manufactured by professional weavers and differed in decorative features (Kozakevych, 2014), (Pobiegly, 2009). Everyday



handbags had hardly any ornaments and were sewn from a piece of checkered fabric or in the carpets technique from pieces of fabrics, without a lapel (Figure 5).



**Figure 5. Woven bag (dziobenka), Kosiv region, late 19th–early 20th century, inv. no. 11228, collection of the Ethnographic Museum in Krakow. Photo by O. Kozakevych, 2021.**

## Conclusions

From the second half of the 19th century, Hutsul folk art became an ethnic rotor promoting the Hutsul region far beyond its borders. This popularization resulted in an increased interest in collecting Hutsul artifacts and researching the material and spiritual culture of the Eastern Carpathian highlanders. To some extent, this is the reason why there are numerous and valuable collections in museums in other countries, including in Poland. In Polish museums there are valuable collections of decorative art of the Hutsul region, among which clothing and textiles deserve special attention. In fact, the variety of shapes, colors, decorations and manufacturing techniques reflects this unique Hutsul color, which has fascinated connoisseurs of traditional highlander culture for over a century. This is evidenced by the large collection of the Hutsul Region at the MEK and the NMK, whose history is related to the history of another Krakow museum – Technical and Industrial.



**Figure 6. Seweryn Udziela – dyrektor of Ethnographic Museum in Krakow (Sto i pół. Opowieści z Muzeum Etnograficznego w Krakowie. Kraków, 2011, c.6)**

Items from these three museums "migrated" through the collections, were deposited, so tracing the origin of the product is a kind of search into history. In fact, due to the fact that the signatures of the product's origin are not always reliable, it is very difficult to precisely indicate their final number in Hutsul collections. Sometimes absolutely "non-Hutsul" products are included in the Hutsul region, or Hutsul products are among other ethnographic groups. The issue of borders, or rather borderlands, is controversial.

Particularly interesting are the issues of multiculturalism, the influence of urban fashion and the promotion of female handicrafts, the interaction of tradition and profession, which was to some extent manifested in Hutsul clothing and textiles.

The collections are of historical value - most of the items come from the last quarter of the 19th – the first thirty years of the 20th century. Valuable products, especially from an artistic point of view: original ancient ornaments or colors, which at the modern stage are practically unusual for the Hutsul region. For example, the uniqueness of the Hutsul Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Krakow collection is evidenced by the active use of objects at various thematic exhibitions in Poland.

Each Hutsul product is a separate story, part of a slightly mythologized, but still mysterious culture of the Carpathian highlanders. The possibility of touching an over a



hundred-year-old monument through the prism of a modern worldview opens up new ways of understanding the uninterrupted tradition of the unique Hutsul art.

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