



The Journal of Dress History
Volume 3, Issue 1, Spring 2019

journal@dresshistorians.org
www.dresshistorians.org

Copyright © 2019 The Association of Dress Historians
ISSN 2515-0995
Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC) accession #988749854

The Journal of Dress History is the academic publication of The Association of Dress Historians (ADH) through which scholars can articulate original research in a constructive, interdisciplinary, and peer reviewed environment. The ADH supports and promotes the study and professional practice of the history of dress, textiles, and accessories of all cultures and regions of the world, from before classical antiquity to the present day. The ADH is Registered Charity #1014876 of The Charity Commission for England and Wales.

The Journal of Dress History is circulated solely for educational purposes and is non-commercial: journal issues are not for sale or profit. The Journal of Dress History is run by a team of unpaid volunteers and is published on an Open Access platform distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited properly. Complete issues of The Journal of Dress History are freely available on the ADH website www.dresshistorians.org.

The Editorial Board of The Journal of Dress History encourages the unsolicited submission for publication consideration of academic articles on any topic of the history of dress, textiles, and accessories of all cultures and regions of the world, from before classical antiquity to the present day. Articles and book reviews are welcomed from students, early career researchers, independent scholars, and established professionals. If you would like to discuss an idea for an article or book review, please contact Jennifer Daley, editor-in-chief of The Journal of Dress History, at email journal@dresshistorians.org. Consult the most recently published issue for updated submission guidelines for articles and book reviews.

The Journal of Dress History is designed on European standard A4 size paper (8.27 x 11.69 inches) and is intended to be read electronically, in consideration of the environment. The graphic design utilises the font, Baskerville, a serif typeface designed in 1754 by John Baskerville (1706-1775) in Birmingham, England. The logo of the ADH is a monogram of three letters, ADH, interwoven to represent the interdisciplinarity of our membership, committed to scholarship in dress history. The logo was designed in 2017 by Janet Mayo, longstanding ADH member.

Women's Fashion in Zagreb, Croatia, 1900–1918

Katarina Nina Simončič

Abstract

The Zagreb female dress culture before the First World War was marked by the influence of high fashion from abroad, less expensive modes, and with an onset of Orientalist-inspired styles. However, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 generated dramatic changes: a significant development was that foreign fashions were less followed and many of the local fashion houses closed. Additional influences included the absence of the men who were fighting, wartime material shortages, poverty, and a general climate of uncertainty. These factors generated more austere looks, but also a resurgence in domestic sewing, which often used traditional Croatian motifs to express nationalist aspirations for independence. These developments are addressed by utilising evidence from the contemporary Zagreb press and graphics of clothing artefacts to analyse these dress practices.

Introduction

Croatia has had a long, turbulent history, and is one of many small European nations that were incorporated over the centuries into the sprawling Austro-Hungarian Empire (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Croatians were shocked by news of the 28 June 1914 assassination in Sarajevo of the Austro-Hungarian heirs to the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Duchess Sophie of Hohenberg, which initiated the train of events that launched the First World War. The conflagration soon engulfed most of the major—and many of the minor—European powers. After the war ended, the Austro-Hungarian Empire broke up and Croatia became part of the mixed ethnic Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1918–1929), later a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia until 1941. After enemy invasion and occupation during the Second World War, the Federal State of Croatia became part of the mixed state of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (1944–1980), and after the civil war, emerged in 1991 as the sovereign state of Croatia.

Zagreb in 1900 was the capital of the nominally independent Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia under the Austro-Hungarian crown and was smaller than most other regional cities within the empire. But Zagreb was growing. According to the 1910 population census, Zagreb had 79,038 inhabitants¹ and the 1917 census shows a population of 89,073.² The most important wartime papers included *Narodne Novine* [Official Gazette], *Jutarnji List* [Morning Paper], *Obzor* [Horizon] and *Novine* [Newspaper], which apart from printing the daily news, provided much information on social life and fashion trends from Paris and Vienna. The journal *Hrvatska* [Croatia] also published a great deal about Zagreb's social life, and *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper] and *Dom i svijet* [Home and World] featured articles on the Zagreb street scene and wartime photos that showed what was worn.³

¹ Vijoleta Herman Kaurić, “Dobrotvorne akcije Za naše junake i njihove obitelji” [Charity Activities for Our Heroes and Their Families], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice—Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu* [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in the First World War], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015, p. 102.

² Vlatka Dugački and Krešimir Regan, “Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu—ozračje osnivanja Medicinskog fakulteta” [Zagreb in the First World War: The Establishment of the Medical School in Zagreb], *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* [Adriatic Medical and Historical Journal], Volume 13, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 97–120.

³ Mirjana Jurić, “Zagreb u Prvome svjetskom ratu: povijesne novine kao izvor za istraživanje socijalne povijesti” [Zagreb during World War I: Historic Newspapers as a Source for Social History Research], *Libellarium*, Volume 2, Issue 2, 2009, pp. 121–144.



Figure 1:

Map of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in August 1914, with Zagreb Circled in Red,
© New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Wellington, New Zealand.⁴



Figure 2:

Map of Croatia in April 2019,
© Central Intelligence Agency,
Washington, DC, United States.⁵

⁴ <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/map-austro-hungarian-empire-1914>, Accessed 13 April 2019.

⁵ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/hr.html>, Accessed 13 April 2019.

The Pre-War Fashion Climate in Zagreb

From the early twentieth century, the attitude towards fashion of the elite women of Zagreb was to follow the international trend-setting modes of the major fashion houses in capital cities, such as Vienna and Paris. Stylish Croatian dressmakers mostly followed the lead of Paris (then led by designer Paul Poiret), of which information appeared in the press, especially *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper] and *Jutarnji List* [Morning Paper]. There were also two fashion phenomena in Zagreb which were highlighted in the press: the high-quality, luxurious so-called “big” fashion (Figure 3), which followed the Parisian examples; and the “little” fashion,⁶ which used cheaper materials and was sometimes homemade (Figure 4 and Figure 5).⁷ The upper classes, who pursued “big” fashion, were mostly supplied by Viennese dressmakers and the garment manufacturers of Paris and Budapest. The middle classes, on the other hand, usually purchased cloth at local textile outlets that specialised in assortments of either French, Viennese, or English fabrics in a variety of patterns and colours, which could then be turned over to local dressmakers.



Figure 3:
“Big” Fashion in Zagreb, Ivan Rechnitzer, 1912,
© The Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb, Croatia, MUO 42916.

⁶ While influenced by Paris, the local imitations in Zagreb were only partially authentic due to the usage of cheaper materials.

Zvonimir Pečnjak, ed., *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper], Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu [Shareholders' Printing House of Zagreb], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 1, Issue 2, 1914, p. 39.

⁷ Milka Pogačić, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 2, 1907, p. 10.



Figure 4:
 “Little” Fashion in Zagreb,
 Atelier Brauner, 1907,
 Platinum Print, 139 x 89mm,
 © Zagreb City Museum,
 Zagreb, Croatia, MGZ 47574.



Figure 5:
 Removable Dress Decoration
 Similar to that Featured on the
 Blouse in Figure 4, Manufactured
 by Salamon Berger Industry
 (1885-1911), 1910,
 Cotton and Linen,
 © Ethnographic Museum,
 Zagreb, Croatia, ETN sb1.

The French imports offered rich palettes of colour and often included decorative applications, lightweight fabrics, heavy velvets, and lace. The firms’ advertisements also utilised the fabric names and dressmaking terms of France, Germany, and Italy to indicate their origin, yet the French were the most popular and have been used ever since. Domestic fabrics were also manufactured in Croatian textile factories. Their outlets were located on Zagreb’s fashionable main street, Ilica, and the fashionable dressmakers’ shops were nearby. The preeminent couturiers in Zagreb

were Gjuro Matić, Josip Pest, Ivan Božičević, and Anastazija Mišetić, who created made-to-measure clothing before the First World War.⁸

Amidst the zeal for foreign textiles and modes, a nationalist, independence movement, which was dissatisfied with Croatia's Hungarian connection, had been building, and patriots feared that the increasing influence of foreign urban fashion was eroding the national cultural heritage. They sought out ethnic sartorial traditions to promote a national awakening and this spread to the general population, whose political awareness was growing. Croatian art and dress had a strong and distinctive tradition of local styles that included characteristic colours, ornaments, and garments, which had been worn in the early nineteenth century as sumptuous, festive costumes for dancing and formal occasions. An example of distinctive Croatia dress was the *surka*, which was a traditional northwest Croatian men's coat that was short and brown, white, or gray, richly decorated with red braid and multicoloured embroidery (Figure 6). During the nineteenth century pan-South Slavic Illyrian movement, the *surka* became a national symbol in the fight against Austria-Hungary.

Nationalists adopted distinctive Croatia dress to advertise and promote their struggle. However, these ancestral styles were now combined with the latest international Art Nouveau fashions into a synergy that dramatically fused such seemingly contradictory looks. The first general assembly of The Association of Teachers of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia discussed whether schools should incorporate instruction in traditional women's handiwork to encourage public awareness of these traditional folk arts and to preserve and promote them.⁹ From 1907, following the example of the Hungarian ministry, which financed the domestic production of these styles, the ministry of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia also provided financial support for promoting traditional women's handiwork in the schools and to encourage the efforts of The Association of Teachers.

⁸ Stjepan Kugli, ed., *Dom i svijet: ilustrovani list za zabavu, pouku i vijesti o dnevnih događajih, javnom i društvenom životu, umjetnosti i znanosti, trgovini i obrtu, glasbi, kazalištu i modi* [Home and World: Illustrated Newspaper for Entertainment, Education, Current Events, Public and Social Life, Art, Science, Trade and Crafts, Music, Theater, and Fashion], Jugoslavenske akademije i Kr. Sveučilišta, Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Issue 14, 1896, p. 279.

⁹ Milka Pogačić, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 3, 1909, p. 12.



Figure 6:

Surka, a Traditional Northwest Croatian Men's Coat, circa 1850,
Made of Stout Peasant Cloth and Wool,
© Croatian History Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, HPM/PMH-958.

This pre-war ethnic dress revitalisation occurred just when Parisian fashion designers were embracing Orientalism, which had been generated by the enthusiastic reception of Serge Diaghilev's *Les Ballets Russes* performances in Paris. The Orientalist styles of its ballet costumes had a major impact on Paris fashion trends, and included lightweight permeable textiles, intense colour, geometrical ornaments, and such innovations as harem pants, tunics, caftans, and turbans. This trend soon came to encompass the unique Croatian folk styles, since the foreign press viewed its culture as being peripheral to Europe and thus a version of Orientalism, which had influenced its culture and dress via the Ottoman Turks.¹¹ This style caught on internationally and the zeal for these designs became so strong that even the less popular styles were widely adopted abroad. One of the most successful contributions to this trend were the products (Figure 7) manufactured by Salamon Berger Industry (1885-1911), which broke into the global market.

¹¹Katarina Nina Simončič, *Kultura odijevanja u Zagrebu na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće* [The Culture of Dress in Zagreb at the End of the Nineteenth and at the Beginning of Twentieth Century], Plejada, Zagreb, Croatia, 2012.



Figure 7:
Woven Dress Decoration,
Manufactured by Salamon Berger Industry (1885–1911),
1910, Linen and Cotton, Ethnographic Museum,
Zagreb, Croatia, ETN sb2, sb3, sb4.

Although Zagreb was on the fringe of the Western and Central European cultural circle, Berger's firm and his textile and clothing products won a worldwide market, but became especially popular in Paris. The fabrics were made with the traditional Croatian *vutlak* [decorative weaving techniques that create porous fabric] and *na zijev* [weaving with applied decorative thread in geometrical shapes], combined together with Art Nouveau styles, which were eagerly purchased by the prestigious Parisian fashion salons of Madame Paquin and Paul Poiret.¹² Ironically, these designs that so appealed to foreign consumers were not received with enthusiasm at home by the elite Zagreb women who pursued high fashion. They believed that the true, authentically exotic modes were the Russian ballet versions, and they dismissed the old Croatian styles as merely archaic, provincial peasant dress.

Yet a small number of female nationalist patriots, especially those who pursued cultural goals to promote independence, adopted this autochthonous clothing in their own dress. In 1909, journalist Fran Milan Gjukić described an example from a Zagreb woman whose “dress had a French cut, but it was embroidered with Croatian folk

¹² Vladimir Lunaček, ed., *Obzor* [Horizon], Dionička tiskara, Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], 9 May 1909, p. 14.

motifs.”¹³ Local periodicals such as the magazine *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity] heartily embraced these domestic designs, which appeared in the illustrations of Maša Janković, Zenaida Bandur la Stoda, and Melanija Rossi (of Zagreb), as well as Anka Hozman (of Konavle), who also adopted them for their own clothing (Figure 8). They had previously published German and French fashions, but now began to feature Croatian fashion illustrations and designs that depicted the traditional motifs as constituting “big fashion.”¹⁴ These were faithfully reproduced in illustrations that provided creative solutions on how to combine the old motifs with the latest styles, and the editorial board of *Domaće ognjište* even posted paper clothing patterns to their readers on request.



Figure 8:
Fashionable Blouse
with Croatian
Folk Motifs, 1910.¹⁵

¹³ Milka Pogačić, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia], Volume 12, 1909, p. 328.

¹⁴ Lunaček, op cit., p. 328.

Milka Pogačić, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 3, 1907, p. 4.

¹⁵ Milka Pogačić, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 1, 1910, p. 25.

The magazines advised readers to sew traditional embroidery designs onto the borders of nightgowns, camisoles and curtains, towels, linens, blouses, dresses, handbags and especially children's clothing. They also suggested using the traditional colours, including vivid hues of red, blue, green, brown, black, and white. But after 1910, with a switch in taste, the colour palette changed and pastels prevailed for a time, with the traditional motifs now being confined to separate ribbons that could be sewn onto hems, necklines, cuffs, sleeves, and the hemline borders of skirts. A harmonious blend of three silk colours (known as *krstački vez* [embroidery with cross ornament], *opačica* [specific geometrical embroidery], or *zašarak* [multicolored embroidery]) or a simplified floral ornament in white (*pečki našav u bijelom*¹⁷-*peč* embroidery) were also applied onto fine linen cloth (Figure 9). But the geometric *konavle* or *pag* embroidery, known in Paris was as "Dalmatian embroidery,"¹⁸ was especially popular.



Figure 9:
Krstački vez and *opačica* [Dalmatian Embroidery], Designed by Maša Janković,
1908.¹⁹

¹⁷ Pogačić, op cit., 1907, p. 22.

¹⁸ Milka Pogačić, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 1, 1908, p. 21.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

War, Everyday life and Dress in Zagreb, 1914–1918

As the international crisis deepened in late July 1914, tensions between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Serbia intensified. The former broke off all diplomatic relations with the latter, started a partial mobilisation, and then invaded. As a dependent of Austro-Hungary, Croatia was also mobilised, and military recruitment brought many significant problems; in addition to the personal tragedies of their men being killed and crippled in battle, many families were left without breadwinners and the state was obliged to financially support them amidst the ongoing crisis. Yet, the cultural and social life of Zagreb now intensified with an increase in theatre, concert and cinema attendance, while cafeterias and taverns were also full.²⁰ During the summer its citizens visited beaches on the Sava River while in wintertime took to ice skating. The wartime conditions and the intensified social life made for an unusual contrast; the daily newspapers described caravans of soldiers who were both “sad and happy as they were going to death,” yet also noted “modern girls in winter attire, with cat pelts, fur coats, [and] gloves of various colours.”²¹ Zagreb also experienced a large influx of soldiers, foreigners, fugitives, and the wounded, as well as more beggars and impoverished people, as wartime both disrupted, and took a toll on, peoples’ lives.

Fashionable dressmakers remained active for a while in Zagreb’s clothing culture during the early war years, but the scene changed as textiles and dress became subject to wartime austerity measures and materials became drastically limited, since production had to prioritize military uniforms. But along with this decrease in civilian clothing inventories, the economic blockade and transportation difficulties also caused a decline in quality. These developments generated a crisis in the textile market and restricted the scope for sartorial creativity, so the fashion salons closed down and the tailors, milliners, haberdashers, and shoemakers were also impacted,²² as austerity affected the entire dress market but especially clothing and textiles. Dress advertisements now emphasised sturdier products in order to attract customers and promoted textiles for being resilient, durable, and cheap. Linen also became increasingly popular together with cheap hemp and knitwear (jersey), which had been

²⁰Mirjana Jurić, “Slika zagrebačkih ulica u ratno vrijeme” [Image of Zagreb Streets during the War], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice—Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in World War I], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015, p. 78.

²¹ Ibid.

²²Maja Arčabić, “Tekstil kao dragocjena sirovina: potreba za lijepim i skromnim prilikama” [Textiles as a Valuable Raw Material: The Need for Beauty in Modest Circumstances], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice - Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in World War I], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015, pp. 88–90.

launched for daily wear by the French designer, Coco Chanel. Silk had been restricted to military production, but jersey was still available.

By 1915 social conditions had considerably worsened²³ and wartime austerity measures also intensified. Amidst this era of crisis and deepening shortages, women now increasingly began to sew at home by using the foreign patterns that had appeared in the pre-war domestic periodicals, and this became an increasingly important part of their everyday lives. This trend was further reinforced and promoted by the government at various levels, as orders from the City of Zagreb, the Ban (Viceroy) Iván Skerlecz, and departments of local government advised teachers and students on how to sew homemade clothing that would be suitable for the wartime conditions. The pre-war, public school embroidery-making courses were expanded to include sewing, tailoring, and how to use alternative dressmaking materials, as well as how to make caps, gloves, scarves, underwear, socks, dresses from old clothes, and straw hats. The need for handmade items by soldiers on the front lines was so great that the students, who made items for the troops, were even exempt from attending school. Orphanages, shelters, and women's penitentiaries also participated. But this transformation required adjustments as some of the initial efforts were unsuccessful. Journalists in December 1914 learned from returning wounded soldiers that the winter caps, which students had made according to military specifications, were inadequate, since the soldiers' ears froze in the cold. It was therefore recommended to add ear flaps.²⁴

The press also provided suggestions on how to turn old clothing into wearable dress, which was fabricated by utilising alternative materials and reworking secondhand clothing into new garments.²⁵ Cotton filling for jackets was replaced with paper, and instead of expensive fox and reindeer pelts, wolf and beaver now became common substitutes. Additional advice showed how to refresh hats, bags, and gloves, and to make homemade textile dyes. Maja Arčabić noted how such alterations had become inevitable in the section she curated on everyday life as part of the exhibition, *Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in World War I*, that was featured at the Zagreb City Museum in 2015. Arčabić demonstrated in the exhibition that from early in the war, most of the altered clothing consisted of garments previously worn by older family

²³Ibid., p. 80.

²⁴Boris Kukić, "Škole u ratnim uvjetima," [Schools during Wartime], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice—Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in World War I], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015, p. 111.

²⁵Zvonimir Pečnjak, ed., *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper], Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu [Shareholders' Printing House of Zagreb], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 5, Issue 5, 1918, p. 74.

members. These clothes were initially utilised to make children's clothes; however, over time the clothes were primarily used to make women's dress.

The press also promoted efforts to awaken a patriotic sense of responsibility in clothing consumption as a wartime necessity, and, in particular, encouraged industry to produce and market indigenously produced textiles, clothing, and related goods. The overall effects of these developments reinvigorated the pre-war, nationalist trend of combining contemporary modes with the traditional folk traditions in embroidery, ornaments, and styles of tailoring. This became popular with female consumers and was reenforced by the organisation of public exhibitions on traditional dress. This trend was further reenforced by sheer necessity, since due to the shortages the only possible way for many women to decorate their dresses and blouses was to apply the traditional Croatian motifs and embroidery techniques, which require minimal fabric (Figure 10).



Figure 10:
Ljerka Biškupec and a Friend, Wearing Wartime Fashions,
Photographer Unknown, 1916, Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, MGZ 57238.

The sartorial nationalist folk revival was further promoted by the press with its increasing condemnations of international fashion as an enemy that subverted the Croatian national identity, and that it was the duty of every patriotic lady to avoid Parisian fashions.²⁶ The press dismissed Parisian fashions as a “seduction” that promoted vanity, superficiality, and foolishness, and which destroyed the national spirit and especially subverted the cultural attitudes of young people. Women were urged to instead display strength and endurance in their attitude and appearance. Fashion magazines were even accused of being the main culprits for an alleged decrease in literacy,²⁷ and the press held up the traditional national dress as the authentic, alternative ideal to these corrupting influences.

These denunciations helped to stimulate the older nationalist discourse. Nineteenth century Croatian writer, journalist, and historian, Bogoslav Šulek (1816–1895), wrote in 1842 that folk costume should be worn as an “external sign or symbol that would manifest one’s inner sentiment,”²⁸ and harshly—and even luridly—condemned high fashion as “a wicked and malevolent distinctiveness of the Black Ghost, the initiator of all evil, sin and misfortune.”²⁹ But some went even further, such as the publicist and businessman, Milan Krešić (1844–1929), who in 1861 demanded that wearing folk costume become mandatory, arguing that people should be like birds; just as feathers are their natural covering, so Croats should likewise wear the nation’s folk costumes to express their ethnic and national affiliation.³⁰

The nationalist folk revival was not the only wartime dress trend. International fashion continued its appeal to an extent. Parisian designers revived the old crinoline silhouette with a wider, longer skirt, which was adopted by at least some Croatian women (Figure 11). While the so-called “war crinolines” were promoted by the press, the women of Zagreb also wore simple skirts that were designed without gussets. Some dresses were decorated only at the belt, and with significantly more functional pockets, a development that might have echoed the wartime trend towards greater physical functionality.

²⁶ Zvonimir Pečnjak, ed., *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper], Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu [Shareholders’ Printing House of Zagreb], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 22, Issue 49, 1915, p. 1167.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 324.

²⁸ Ljudevit Gaj, ed., *Danica horvatska, slavonska i dalmatinska* [Danica Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Zagreb, Austrian Empire, 1842, p. 203.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 205.

³⁰ Milan Krešić, “Moda i narodna nošnja” [Fashion and Folk Costume], *Naše gore list* [Our Neck of the Woods], Zagreb, Austrian Empire, 1861, p. 30.



Figure 11:
Wartime Crinolines, Artist Unknown, 1918.³¹

³¹ Zvonimir Pećnjak, ed., *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper], Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu [Shareholders' Printing House of Zagreb], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 20, Issue 18, 1918, p. 521.

The shape of the upper bodice became more tightly fitted and the overall tailoring was also simplified (Figure 12). Except for the traditional folk motifs, the use of decoration was in general reduced, though military uniform ornaments might be added.³² The consumption of formal gowns made of expensive fabric declined and the press even advised brides to adopt simple day dresses to wear at their weddings.³³



Figure 12:
Autumn Fashion, Artist Unknown, 1918.³⁴

³² Horizontal lines of braid echoed the full-dress hussar uniform and ornamental buttons had much military symbolism.

Author's Private Correspondence with Dr. Scott Hughes Myerly, regarding military dress, United States, 10 March 2019.

³³ Krešić, op cit.

³⁴ Pećnjak, op cit., Volume 12, Issue 8, 1918, p. 353.

This simplification of dress was part of a larger wartime evolution in the female appearance. As the First World War progressed, women shortened their hair, and the once-fashionable pre-war hats—oversized and decorated with ostrich feathers and artificial flowers—gave way to smaller hats with only minimal decoration (Figure 13).



Figure 13:
Small Wartime Hat,
Jean Patou, 1915–1918,
Paris, France,
Paper, Plastic, Cotton,
Museum of Arts and
Crafts, Zagreb, Croatia,
MUO 44344.

This trend of simplification of dress and smaller hats also reflected changes in Croatian women's roles under the pressures of war. Arčabić shows on the exhibition, *Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in World War I* (2015) that women of Zagreb, as well as women throughout Europe, now carried a greater burden. Once the war began and the men departed for the battlefield, women were forced to bear greater responsibilities for their families and in the workplace. The labour shortages encouraged women to assume jobs in both industry and the public services that had previously been reserved for men. The press noted that women also became increasingly active in teaching and working for humanitarian causes. All this occurred

amidst intensive artistic, theatrical, literary, and social ferment in Zagreb, all of which tended to promote change. Like the earlier pre-war revival of folk dress, women now built on the foundation of the earlier, pre-war women's clubs that had emerged to advocate for the female pursuit of more political and economic rights. During the First World War, an initiative was launched to legally enable women to obtain the right to vote, yet it was only adopted after the Second World War on 11 August 1945.

Clothing Artefact: A Material Witness of Time

Surviving First World War women's garments from Zagreb reveal the effect of wartime on fashion. The following circa 1915 dress (Figure 14) is made of unbleached linen, sewn with cotton thread. Long and with a simple cut, this dress features long sleeves, ornamental buttons and a square neckline with a sailor's collar, the sailor suit having been very popular since before the First World War.



Figure 14:
Wartime Dress with Traditional
Decoration, Maker Unknown, 1915,
Linen and Cotton,
Museum of Arts and Crafts,
Zagreb, Croatia, MUO 23990.

The dress thus shows wartime simplicity in its limited number of gussets and a military influence in the decorative buttons; this style also appears in contemporary Zagreb studio and street photographs. But a significant addition is the use of Croatian traditional decoration, which required minimal fabric and thus adheres to the strict wartime austerity rules and the limited supplies. The *Peč* embroidery motifs utilised in the dress were adopted from Croatian folk costume. When comparing the decoration in Figure 13 to Maša Janković's 1907 design that appeared in the magazine *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], there is a similarity (Figure 15 and Figure 16). But unlike the white colour recommended by *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity] in 1907, *Peč* embroidery displays vivid colours, which had revived after the earlier short-lived period of pastel decorations on wartime dress.

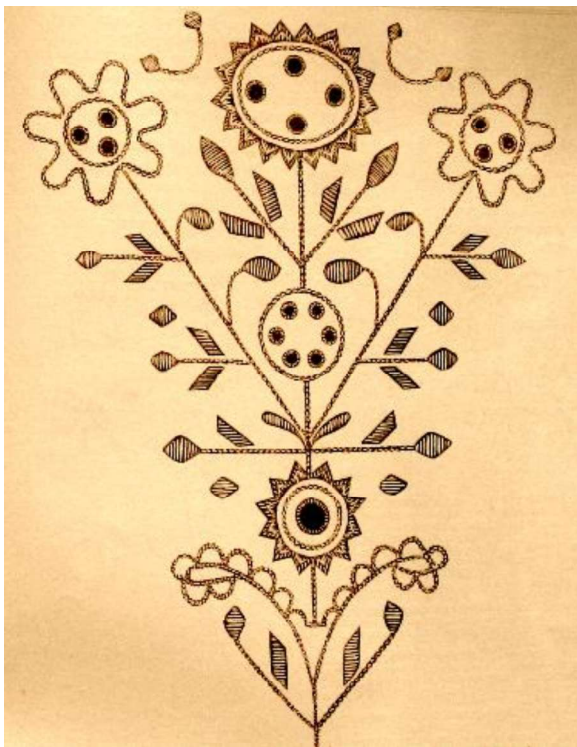


Figure 15:
Peč Embroidery Design
for a Fashion Blouse,
Designed by Maša Janković, 1907.³⁵



Figure 16:
Detail, Wartime Dress with Traditional
Decoration, Maker Unknown, 1915,
Linen and Cotton, Museum of Arts and
Crafts, Zagreb, Croatia, MUO 23990.

³⁵ Pogačić, op cit., 1907, p. 23.

This artefact (Figure 16) raises some questions that are based upon conclusions made by Giorgio Riello, who wrote:

Material culture is not the object itself (which as we saw is at the centre of dress history), but neither is it a theoretical form (which dominates the approach of fashion studies). Material culture is instead about the modalities and dynamics through which objects take on meaning (and one of these is that of fashion) in human lives.³⁶

This artefact (Figure 14 and Figure 16) is not only a beautiful dress worn by a woman, but is a key object in a specific social practice during the First World War. The question is raised: does the dress symbolise the maker's creative expression of an unwavering spirit of patriotism in a time of crisis? Any answer to this is difficult to confirm and must remain conjectural due to the current absence (to date) of such primary sources as letters, photographs, archival records, and oral traditions. The dress is of a high quality, which is shown by its well-formed and shapely cut, the precisely even seam stitches, and the harmonious decoration. It could thus be assumed that the maker was a fashionable dressmaker, though the decoration could have been applied later by the customer.

The Zagreb Museum of Arts and Crafts inventory states that the dress was donated by L. Sabljak, but unfortunately, the record does not indicate any definitive information about the owner. However, the Sabljak family was important in Croatian cultural life during the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, so the owner might well have been Vlasta Sabljak-Lisac, the daughter of Ida Sabljak (1882-1915). Ida was an amateur painter who was active in war work, so it could be speculated that the simplicity of the dress reflects a wartime vocation, since it is unlike the dresses of pre-war noble and wealthy bourgeois women, whose dresses were richly decorated with lace, silk braid, or other ornaments, while working girls wore undecorated dresses. Both noble and wealthy bourgeois women were very active in wartime charity work and Arčabić's analysis of the social role of women during the

³⁶ Giorgio Riello, "The Object of Fashion: Methodological Approaches to the History of Fashion," *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, Volume 3, Issue 1, 2011, p. 6.

First World War in Zagreb³⁷ indicates that their increasingly active political and social roles, reinforced by efforts to obtain the vote, made clothing (such as in Figure 15) appealing, and this specimen appears to be an example of that trend. This dress thus likely symbolises the owners' commitment to victory and perhaps her feelings of solidarity with the war's victims.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted the significant factors that preceded and conditioned fashion, clothing, and textile production before and during the First World War in the capital city of Zagreb in the Austro-Hungarian dominated Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia. The period of crisis generated by the First World War displaced the previously dominant, trend-setting foreign fashion houses of Paris and other European cities; however, the period also generated new roles for Croatian women, including wartime charity work, together with a new level of participation in economic life. The handiwork of women in making their own clothes included the utilisation of secondhand, substitute, and inferior materials due to the wartime shortages of textiles. These developments also helped to foster more austere and simpler styles that were more suitable to the conditions of the ongoing wartime crisis. Additionally, these women adopted and intensified the pre-war trend of using traditional, symbolic Croatian motifs as decorative ornaments to reflect their sense of nationalism and patriotism.

³⁷ Maja Arčabić, "Položaj žena u Zagrebu tijekom rata" [Women in the First World War], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice—Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in the First World War], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015, p. 174.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Gaj, Ljudevit, ed., *Danica horvatska, slavonska i dalmatinska* [Danica Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Zagreb, Austrian Empire, 1842.

Krešić, Milan, "Moda i narodna nošnja" [Fashion and Folk Costume], *Naše gore list* [Our Neck of the Woods], Zagreb, Austrian Empire, 1861.

Kugli, Stjepan, ed., *Dom i svijet: ilustrovani list za zabavu, pouku i viesti o dnevnih događajih, javnom i društvenom životu, umjetnosti i znanosti, trgovini i obrtu, glasbi, kazalištu i modi* [Home and World: Illustrated Newspaper for Entertainment, Education, Current Events, Public and Social Life, Art, Science, Trade and Crafts, Music, Theater, and Fashion], Jugoslavenske akademije i Kr. Sveučilišta, Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Issue 14, 1896.

Lunaček, Vladimir, ed., *Obzor* [Horizon], Dionička tiskara, Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], 9 May 1909.

Pećnjak, Zvonimir, ed., *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper], Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu [Shareholders' Printing House of Zagreb], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 1, Issue 2, 1914.

Pećnjak, Zvonimir, ed., *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper], Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu [Shareholders' Printing House of Zagreb], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 22, Issue 49, 1915.

Pećnjak, Zvonimir, ed., *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper], Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu [Shareholders' Printing House of Zagreb], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 5, Issue 5, 1918.

Pećnjak, Zvonimir, ed., *Ilustrovani list* [Illustrated Paper], Dionička tiskara u Zagrebu [Shareholders' Printing House of Zagreb], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 20, Issue 18, 1918.

Pogačić, Milka, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 2, 1907.

Pogačić, Milka, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 3, 1907.

Pogačić, Milka, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 1, 1908.

Pogačić, Milka, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 3, 1909.

Pogačić, Milka, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia], Volume 12, 1909.

Pogačić, Milka, ed., *Domaće ognjište* [Domesticity], Udruga učiteljica [The Association of Teachers], Zagreb, Trojedna Kraljevina Hrvatska, Slavonija i Dalmacija [Three Kingdoms of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia], Volume 1, 1910.

Secondary Sources: Articles

Dugački, Vlatka and Regan, Krešimir, "Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu—ozračje osnivanja Medicinskog fakulteta" [Zagreb in the First World War: The Establishment of the Medical School in Zagreb], *Acta Medico-Historica Adriatica* [Adriatic Medical and Historical Journal], Volume 13, Issue 1, 2015, pp. 97–120.

Jurić, Mirjana, "Zagreb u Prvome svjetskom ratu: povijesne novine kao izvor za istraživanje socijalne povijesti" [Zagreb during World War I: Historic Newspapers as a Source for Social History Research], *Libellarium*, Volume 2, Issue 2, 2009, pp. 121–144.

Riello, Giorgio, "The Object of Fashion: Methodological Approaches to the History of Fashion," *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*, Volume 3, Issue 1, Published Online 19 October 2011, pp. 1–9.

Secondary Sources: Books

Arčabić, Maja, "Položaj žena u Zagrebu tijekom rata" [Women in the First World War], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice—Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in the First World War], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015.

Arčabić, Maja, "Tekstil kao dragocjena sirovina: potreba za lijepim i skromnim prilikama" [Textiles as a Valuable Raw Material: The Need for Beauty in Modest Circumstances], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice - Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in World War I], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015.

Jurić, Mirjana, "Slika zagrebačkih ulica u ratno vrijeme" [Image of Zagreb Streets during the War], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice—Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in World War I], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015.

Kaurić, Vijoleta Herman, "Dobrotvorne akcije Za naše junake i njihove obitelji" [Charity Activities for Our Heroes and Their Families], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice—Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu* [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in the First World War], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015.

Kukić, Boris, "Škole u ratnim uvjetima," [Schools during Wartime], in Kristian Strukić, ed., *Odjeci s bojišnice—Zagreb u Prvom svjetskom ratu*, [Echoes from the Battlefield: Zagreb in World War I], Zagreb City Museum, Zagreb, Croatia, 2015.

Simončić, Katarina Nina, *Kultura odijevanja u Zagrebu na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće* [The Culture of Dress in Zagreb at the End of the Nineteenth and the Beginning of Twentieth Century], Plejada, Zagreb, Croatia, 2012.

Private Correspondence

Author's Private Correspondence with Dr. Scott Hughes Myerly, regarding military dress, United States, 10 March 2019.

Internet Sources

Map of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in August 1914, New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Wellington, New Zealand.

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/map-austro-hungarian-empire-1914>, Accessed 13 April 2019.

Map of Croatia in April 2019, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, DC, United States.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/hr.html>, Accessed 13 April 2019.

Copyright © 2019 Katarina Nina Simončič
Email: katarina.nina.simoncic@ttf.hr

Dr. Katarina Nina Simončič earned her doctorate from The Department of Art History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, The University of Zagreb, Croatia, with the thesis, titled, *Kultura odijevanja u Zagrebu na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće* [The Culture of Dress in Zagreb at the End of the Nineteenth and the Beginning of Twentieth Century]. Dr. Simončič is currently an Associate Professor of Fashion History at The Department of Textile and Clothing Design, Faculty of Textile Technology, The University of Zagreb. Her teaching areas include fashion and design history, with research strengths that address the relationships between the genres of portrait painting, printmaking, photography, and fashion artefacts, circa 1500–2000. She is the author of several publications related to the cultural history of fashion and its connection with tradition.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my editor, Dr. Scott Hughes Myerly, for his advice and support in the writing of this article.