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Olga Evangelidou

"Coloured Stones" and Other Sartorial Details on the Eve of the Greek Revolution

Όλγα Ευαγγελίδου

«Χρωματιστά πετράδια» και άλλα ενδυματολογικά στοιχεία κατά τις παραμονές της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης

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“Coloured Stones” and Other Sartorial Details on the Eve of the Greek Revolution*

“They wear a tight, high camisole of red silk and gold, buttoned with coloured stones across the breast.”[1] This sartorial detail is mentioned, among others, by the traveller John B. Sawrey Morritt (1772–1843) of Rokeby Hall in Yorkshire, with reference to the dress of women in the Mani at the end of the 18th century. Even if it is a detail of a sartorial trend of that time, it is one of those elements that, together with other details, may help in painting a picture of customs of dress and relationships between individuals from a time when much evidence about dress is lacking. Indeed, his descriptions are more akin to a cryptic code, referring to the materials, the designs, and the ways of manufacture of the garments, which needs to be decoded. This article will use Morritt’s descriptions of female attire among the Maniot upper classes, comparing their sartorial customs with descriptions given by other travellers, 18th-century dresses preserved in museums, travellers’ engravings, and Maniot dowry papers or marriage contracts from that period. Lastly, the article will present drawings as a hypothesis for analysis and interpretation of the garments described.

Firstly, let us establish the significance of certain terms used in this research. The term “dress” refers—besides clothing—to accessories, hairstyle, make-up, and everything that is connected to a person’s appearance.[2] “Dress” serves both a practical and a symbolic function.[3] It is usually dictated by standards of beauty and interwoven with everyday life. In contrast, “fashion” is a controversial term associated generally with European dress. Some historians of dress have claimed that fashion began in Europe in the middle of the 14th century.[4] Others have claimed that fashion is a phenomenon that only appeared in the second half of the 19th century, when industrially produced clothing was already widespread.[5] On the other hand, certain experts define fashion as a change in the style of dress and appearance adopted by a certain group of people at any time or place.[6] Most scholars agree that there is a distinction between “fashion” as a Western European phenomenon and “dress” as worn in the rest of the world. As a result, 18th- and early 19th-century dress in the Greek world is characterized as being regional or local and linked to tradition.

Nevertheless, there are differing ways in which fashion and traditional dress are perceived. For example, Sandra Niessen and Jennifer Craik consider it to be elitist and Eurocentric to characterize fashion as a Western cultural phenomenon

and to refer to attire that changes at slower paces as "traditional." Niessen points out that "[c]hange occurs in all cultures, so why not consider non-Western dress in terms of fashion as well?" in her article "Re-orienting Fashion Theory."[7] Craik and Niessen's view influenced my own approach to the study of dress of the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary period in the Greek world. The topic will be addressed according to their understanding of fashion, attempting to avoid the terms "tradition" and "traditional costume." As Elizabeth Wilson writes, "our understanding of past fashions or dress, as of the past generally, is filtered through our own preoccupations and ideologies" and, consequently, it is difficult to escape subjectivity completely.[8]

Drawing on Morritt's descriptions of the region of the Mani made in 1795, I will create drawings as hypothetical interpretations. In his descriptions, Morritt refers to sartorial elements such as the "Polonese mantle." This reference is crucial to my own study, as it may reveal Morritt's own views of dress and not the actual dress of women in the Mani at that time. A similar thing happened with engravers at that time who were instructed by the travellers to create images of the people and their dress.[9] Aesthetic criteria and the values of the period were supplemented with the artists' personal views. As a result, the reliability of those artworks in which garments are depicted is disputed. Thus, our ideas of the dress worn by the "Greek Revolutionaries" are mostly second-hand. Beyond visual sources, the written/documented ones are subjective in a way that influences the image we create. Consequently, these sources could themselves be interpretations of this "reality."

The "translation" of the linguistic sources into drawings

The garments Morritt saw worn by the Maniot women were "translated" into words which shape images in our minds. Through this research the words of Morritt can be "transfigured" into drawings depicting the garments. These "interpretations" may reveal some of the elements of the garments described. Each sartorial term will be "translated" into multiple interpretations of drawings based on other visual sources related to the words. The more specific the description is, the more precise the drawing becomes. This procedure of creating diverse images of the garments will give the viewer the opportunity to mentally reconstruct the information given in these drawings and form a more general idea. There might be a difference between the late 18th- and early 19th-century dress and the information that has been preserved: documents, engravings, garments. But, despite this possible discrepancy, they would give a glimpse of "reality" from the past.

The descriptions

The two extracts from Morritt's letters which refer to the dresses of Maniot women are quoted below. In his letter from Cardamyla, he describes:

> *I left off here to talk with our friends, and resume my letter here, if possible still more pleased with the Mainotes. The lady's castle was really enchantment; her uncle, a hearty, fine old man, dined and supped with us, and we were waited on by beautiful girls, in the true mode of patriarchal times. He lived in one tower with four daughters and his wife. Two of his daughters were children, and visited us – they were beautiful beyond measure; and of his older daughters one was, I think, the handsomest woman I ever saw. To give you some idea of their style of dress: On their heads is a plain small circle, either of shawl worked with gold or, sometimes, a red or green velvet cap embroidered round with gold, forming a coronet. Over this floats a long veil of white embroidered muslin. One end hangs over their right shoulder behind, and the other, hanging loose across their breast, is thrown also over the right shoulder. They wear a tight, high camisole of red silk and gold, buttoned with coloured stones across the breast. A short waistcoat, which is cut quite low, and clasps tight round their waist, is made of muslin and gold, with small globe buttons. A red sash and long flowing robes of white muslin and gold are below. Over these they wear a red, green, or light-blue silk gown, cut straight, and entirely open before, embroidered in the richest manner, the long sleeves sometimes of different colours. In their neck are rows of gold chains in the English mode exactly. They do not wear trousers so low as the women in the other parts of Turkey. This is chiefly the description of the lady of the house; you will suppose the colours are varied for different tastes and different ranks. The contour of the dress is much the same, and as the women are naturally lovely, with complexions you would suppose born in the coldest of climates, you may imagine the place, and will conceive how we regretted leaving our lodging.*[10]

In another extract he describes a woman in Kitries in the Mani:

> *The capitanessa wore a light blue shawl-gown, embroidered with gold; a sash tied loosely round her waist; and a short vest without sleeves of embroidered crimson velvet. Over these was a dark green velvet Polonese mantle, with wide and open sleeves, also richly embroidered with gold, and appearing like a coronet, and a white and gold muslin shawl fixed on the right shoulder, and passed across her bosom under the left arm floated over the coronet and hung to the ground behind her.*[11]

The information given in these descriptions will be analyzed and the clothing of the Maniot women examined with regard to the design of the garments.

Headpiece and shawl

In his two descriptions, Morritt refers to a headpiece and the way a shawl was worn:

> *On their heads is a plain small circle, either of shawl worked with gold or, sometimes, a red or green velvet cap embroidered round with gold, forming a coronet. Over this floats a long veil of white embroidered muslin. One end hangs over their right shoulder behind, and the other, hanging loose across their breast, is thrown also over the right shoulder.*[12]

> [...] *and appearing like a coronet, and a white and gold muslin shawl fixed on the right shoulder, and passed across her bosom under the left arm floated over the coronet and hung to the ground behind her.*[13]

In Stackelberg's engraving, *Femme de la Maina*, from 1828, it seems as if there is a way of binding the head which is reminiscent of Morritt's description, as is the coronet that is mentioned in both extracts.[14] In addition, the way the shawl is "fixed on the right shoulder and passed across her bosom under the left arm" is likewise found in Eastern dress.[15] The engraving of the early 19th century of Castellan, depicts the women of Psara (Spra) wearing the shawl in this peculiar and flamboyant way.[16] In addition, in the drawing from *Zenanname* we can see a woman wearing two shawls, one wrapped around her waist, with the other placed over her shoulder.[17] Furthermore, Ackermann's *Repository* of 1809 depicts an Englishwoman with a shawl.[18] In the image, the distinctive way the woman wears the shawl could be influenced by Eastern fashion, as it has similarities with Morritt's description.

Camisole

Another important element in the description is the camisole, a kind of shirt: "They wear a tight, high camisole of red silk and gold, buttoned with coloured stones across the breast." According to the *Dictionary of Fashion and Fashion Designers*, "camisole is an item of underwear introduced during the early 19th century and based on a loose, sleeveless bodice or chemise."[19] The camisole, chemise or shirt is a characteristic type of dress in many styles and seems to have been worn underneath other garments.[20] The 18th-century shirt which is part of the dress of Kyra-Frosini and belongs to the collection of the Historical and National Museum of Greece, is referred to as being made of silk; it could be similar in shape, except for the buttons, to the red silk camisole.[21] The "coloured stones" used as buttons could

Figure 1. Olga Evangelidou, *Shirt*

be a different kind of gemstone popular in the Ottoman empire, which was known for its jewelry. The closures of the coat in a 16th-century portrait of Sultan Murad III were jeweled buttons.[22] The caftans of Sultan Ibrahim in the 17th century had diamond buttons as well.[23] Therefore, it was very popular after the 16th century for members of the Ottoman court to have gemstones in their buttons. This might mean that the "capitanessa," whose shirt with its bejeweled buttons is mentioned by the traveller, was influenced by the prevailing fashion of that time (**Figure 1**).

Vest and waistcoat

Ottoman influence in fashion is attested to by the words "vest" or "waistcoat," as used by Morritt. The "short vest without sleeves of embroidered crimson velvet" is probably a kind of short *yelek*, as it is called in Turkish.[24] Examples of vests or waistcoats (*yelek*) are found in the Historical and National Museum of Greece from places such as Psara or Ioannina.[25] Also, the "short waistcoat, which is cut quite low, and clasps tight round their waist, is made of muslin and gold, with small globe buttons," mentioned in other descriptions by Morritt could be seen as another version

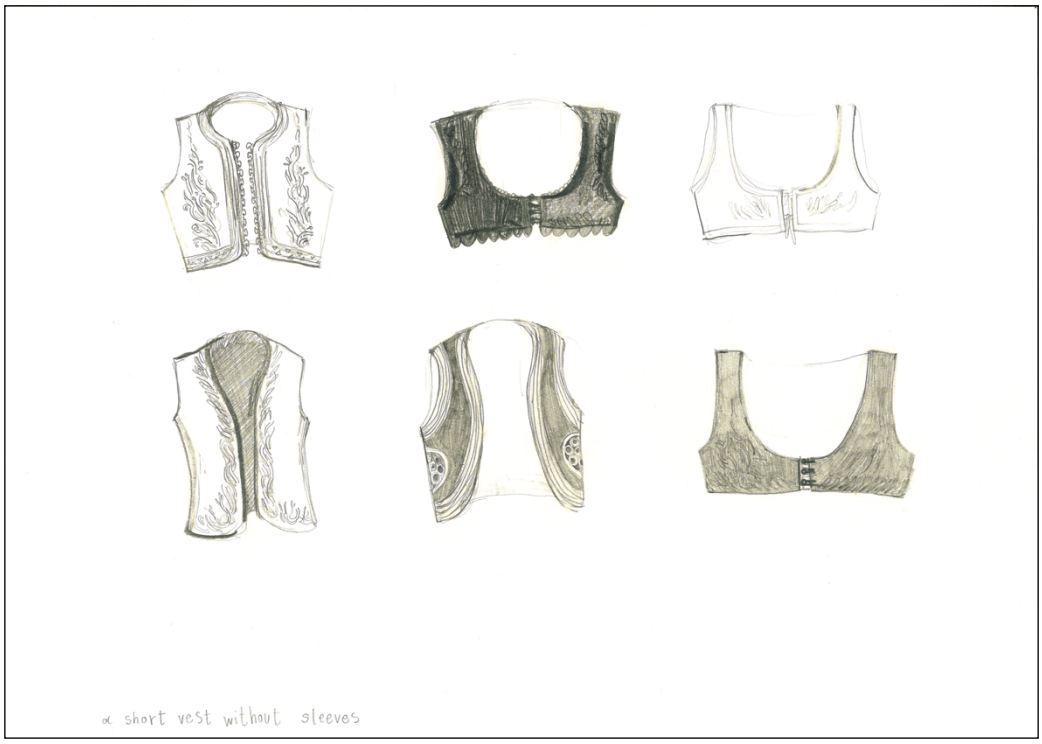

Figure 2. Olga Evangelidou, *Vest*

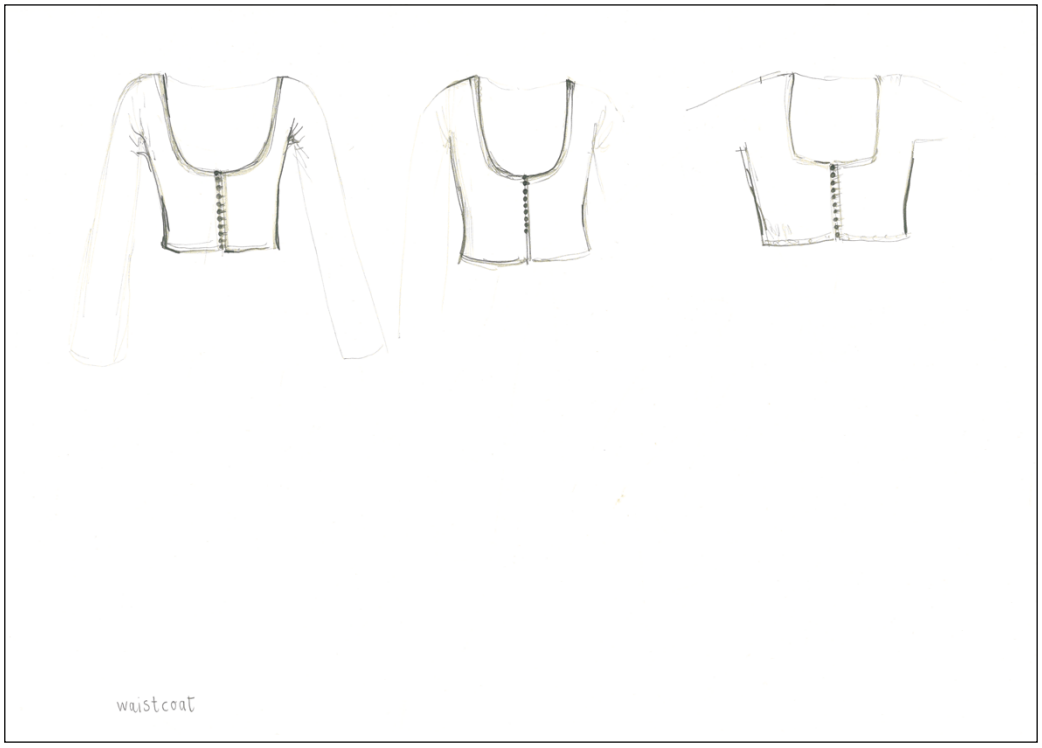

Figure 3. Olga Evangelidou, *Waistcoat*

of a short vest/waistcoat, which is mostly tight around the waist but usually has sleeves, and in Greek is referred to as *kontogouni* (*κοντογούνι*).[26] The *kontogouni* was popular at the end of 18th and in the early 19th centuries. It is mentioned in documents, such as marriage contracts, from some Aegean islands.[27] After the arrival of Queen Amalia in Greece in 1837, a type of *kontogouni* would become a fashionable item in the style of dress that she established.[28] But the vest and waistcoat that are mentioned here, years before 1837, might have had a different design from the *kontogouni* that Amalia made fashionable at the end of the 1830s. They may also have been influenced by the Ottoman *cepken*, which was "a kind of short jacket with long sleeves and open front" (**Figure 2** and **Figure 3**).[29]

Gown and robe

A "light blue shawl-gown, embroidered with gold."[30] The words "shawl" and "gown" have quite distinct meanings when referred to separately, but their combined use here as a single term tells us something about its design. For example, the item in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection in London is described as a gown made of shawls, which was common in the late 1790s.[31] It was popular in England to wear and manufacture shawls. The gown in the Victoria and Albert Museum consisted of two shawls sewn together in order to form the front and back of the dress. The shape or the details of the construction of the dress might be similar to those referred to by the traveller. He might have been familiar with that fashion from England as he comes from there. Nevertheless, Morritt might have used the word "shawl" to describe the fabric of the gown rather than its design. The "shawl-gown," which was light blue and embroidered with gold, might have been made from a known fabric also used for shawls.

In another passage, he also writes as follows:

> […] *long flowing robes of white muslin and gold are below. Over these they wear a red, green, or light-blue silk gown, cut straight, and entirely open before, embroidered in the richest manner, the long sleeves sometimes of different colours.*[32]

The flowing robes and the open silk gown might have similarities with the dress referred to as a "shawl-gown," given that it was also light blue and embroidered (**Figure 4** and **Figure 5**).

Figure 4. Olga Evangelidou, *Robe or gown*

Figure 5. Olga Evangelidou, *Robe or gown*

Sash

In both passages Morritt uses the term "sash": "A red sash" and "a sash tied loosely round her waist."[33] According to *Fairchild's Dictionary of Fashion*, "sash" refers to "any belt of soft material that loops over knots, or ties in a bow rather than bucking."[34] The description "tied loosely round her waist," could have been inspired by the loose tightening of the sash in Ottoman fashion.[35] Charlotte Jisourek mentions the fundamental elements of Turkish dress and writes, among others, that the sashes were used as closures for garments or as receptacles for personal objects.[36] Although there were sartorial laws that distinguished the dress worn by Turks from other subjects of the Ottoman Empire in public, Christian and Jewish women would dress almost identically to Muslims.[37] Besides, as Zilfi points out, "[a]lthough some elements of Muslim and non-Muslim women's dress had always differed, women had in many ways constituted a single sartorial unit."[38] Thus, we can assume that on the eve of the Greek Revolution there were sartorial customs inspired by Ottoman fashions of that time (**Figure 6**).

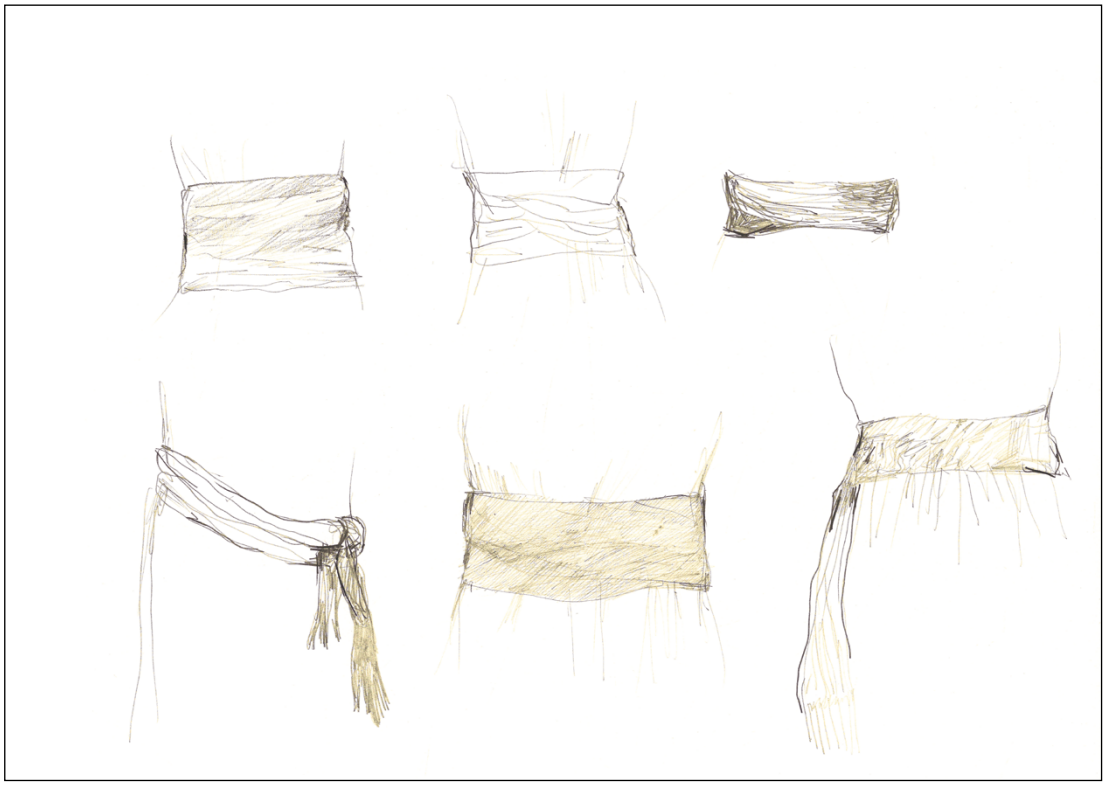

Figure 6. Olga Evangelidou, *Sash*

Mantle

Maybe the most interesting part of this description is the reference to the "Polonese mantle": "[O]ver these was a dark green velvet Polonese mantle, with wide and open sleeves, also richly embroidered with gold."[39] The term "Polonese mantle" may be interpreted in different ways. Firstly, "Polonese" might mean the *robe à la polonaise* which was a very popular type of dress in Western Europe in the late 18th century.[40] The *robe à la polonaise*

> *was distinguished by the robe cut without waist seam and inverted "V" front opening. It was probably derived from the Polish robe called "kontusz", as well as the looped-up skirts of the* robe à la française. *Contemporaries regarded it as a more "natural" style of dress in line with the Enlightenment, and it was thought to be most appropriate for wear by middle and upper-class women* […] *The style featured revivals in the 1790s and late nineteenth century.*[41]

The *kontusz* was a popular item of male attire worn by Polish noblemen in the 17th century, which had its origins in Turkey.[42] In England, the *robe à la polonaise* was developed in a simpler style with the name "mantua," worn open in front.[43] At that time, dress took its name from particular regions or places; for example, the *robe à la française*, the English manteau, etc.[44] Although in France, after the marriage of Louis XV to the Polish Marie Leczinska, there was a new interest in, and adoption of, Polish fashions, it is believed that the *polonaise* itself did not originate from Poland.[45] The main inspiration for the *polonaise* was the *kontusz*, a coat that was inspired by the Turkish caftan. From as early as the 17th century, Ottoman fashion was very popular among the Polish nobility, whose attire was believed by other Europeans to have a mixture of those European and Asian styles which impressed them.[46] The noblemen were generally influenced by designs in the eastern style. Even though in the second half of the 18th century the *zupan* tunic and *kontusz* were not so popular, women would wear feminized versions of these items of dress.[47] Variations of the *polonaise*, such as the *robe à la turque* came into fashion in Western Europe at the end of the 1780s.[48] In addition, as Van Cleave and Welborn claim: "Eighteenth-century sources generally used the terms vest/waistcoat or stomacher when referring to the bodice layer worn underneath the polonaise."[49] There is similar information about an undervest given in Morritt's descriptions (**Figure 7** and **Figure 8**).

All of the above indicate that the *polonaise* dress/mantle originated chiefly from Polish male attire, which was in turn inspired by Ottoman and Turkish dress. In addition, the once-fashionable *robe à la turque* may also have been a variation of

Figure 7. Olga Evangelidou, *Mantle*

Figure 8. Olga Evangelidou, *Mantle*

the "Polonese mantle." Consequently, Morritt might have recognized the garment he saw in the Mani as the *polonaise*. The mantle in the description is made of velvet and embroidered with gold, a popular fashion in the Ottoman Empire.[50] Moreover, the fabrics reveal the social status of the wearer, the gold embroidered velvet was a very expensive fabric from Bursa, already since the 15th century.[51] And as Tezcan points out when referring to the furs, "[a]way from Istanbul, in the depth of the provinces, notables both Muslim and non-Muslim probably displayed wealth and status in a similar fashion."[52] Thus, "fashion," as referred to below, relates not only to the design, but also to the fabrics, styles, embroideries and other sartorial details. Lastly, the *polonaise* mantle might have similarities with the pelisse from Patras, worn over the vest and made of richly embroidered white silk, as Williams observed in 1820.[53]

Jewel

Last but not least, Morritt describes the jewels he witnessed on his travels: "In their neck are rows of gold chains in the English mode exactly." The Maniot women may have worn chains similar to those worn in Georgian England. It is indeed possible that the jewel worn by the "capitanessa" in the Mani might have had its origins in English fashion or else it might have been a different version of a chain similar to those found in England.

Stackelberg's engraving and the costume from the Historical and National Museum

Stackelberg's engraving of the women of Mani (Maina) and the costume in the museum seem to have many characteristics in common.[54] At first the garments in Morritt's description seem to differ, but in fact one can detect common features among them. The museum collection catalogue states that it is a rare item of 18th-century dress.[55] It consists of a white cotton shirt, made on a loom and embroidered. Stackelberg's engraving and the 18th-century Maniot dress have similarities in the design of the dress and the volume of the sleeves, as well as other details, such as the reddish fabric in the lower part of the dress.[56]

It is quite obvious, as Morritt mentioned, that his descriptions refer to upper-class women from the region, which explains why they used expensive fabrics such

as velvet, embroidered with gold, silk, or other materials. Both the engraving and the dress in the museum include a shawl. The description also includes a shawl, which is mentioned above and appears to have been a common fashion item in the Ottoman empire. In addition, the shirt in the museum, which was made on a loom, was probably the product of a cottage industry, and the wearer might also have been its maker. Nevertheless, the attire of the "capitanessa" seems to have been inspired by fashions that were popular in many different parts of the Ottoman Empire. It is also possible that there were some similarities with the dress of Kyra-Frosini, as regards the fabric and the embroidered golden thread.[57] In the case of the "capitanessa" the fabrics were probably not produced by a cottage industry but must have been made by experts. Turner refers to the poor Makri sisters in Athens in 1820, who did embroidery work.[58]

Furthermore, an examination of a small sample of marriage contracts / dowry papers from the Mani suggests that the colours mentioned in comparison to the engraving, the attire in the museum, and Morritt's description have similarities.[59] The following colours are mentioned in a sample of five marriage contracts in the Mani between 1783 and 1826: red (*άλικο*) and crimson, different kinds of

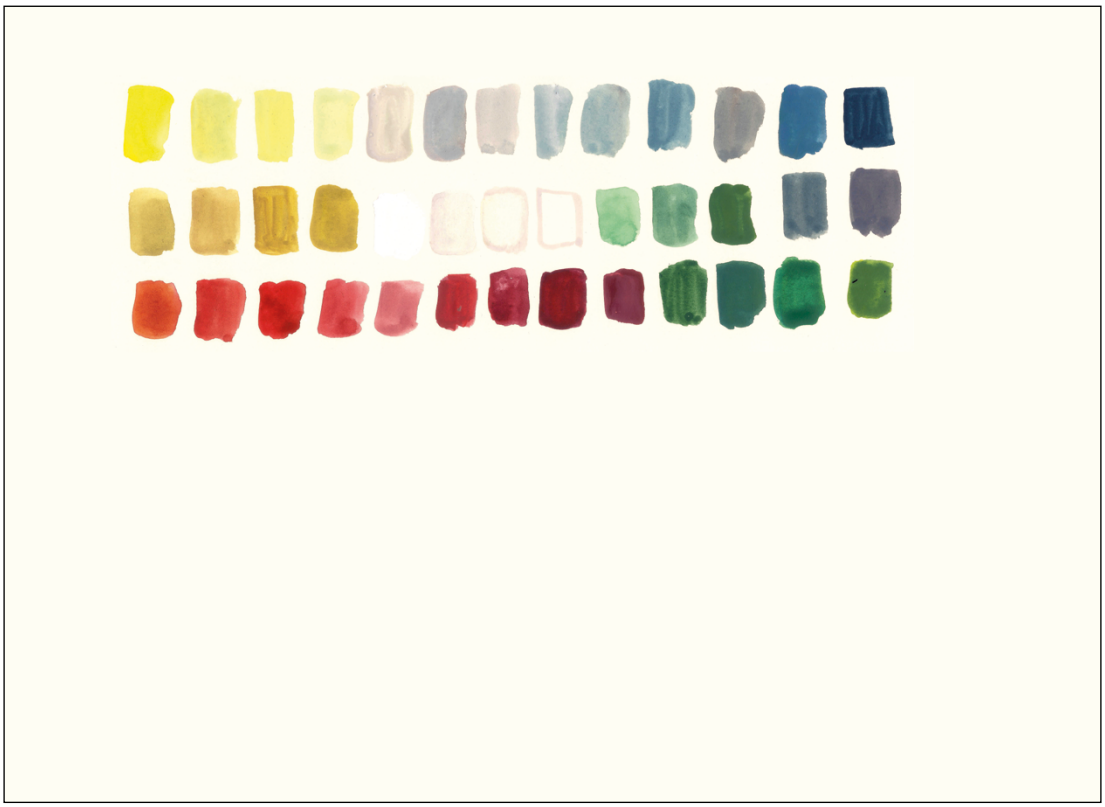

Figure 9. Olga Evangelidou, *Colour Palette*

green (clear, dark), white, multicoloured (*διάνινο*), yellow, light blue and darker blue (light blue mixed with black/grey-blue).[60] In Morritt's description the colours mentioned are almost all the same, however, there are references to gold colour which constitute the details, the buttons or the jewels. Lastly, the colours of the real garment of the 18th century from the Historical and Ethnological Museum of Mani are dark blue, red and white, while the embroideries are made of red thread (**Figure 9**).

Thus, while there are some common colours, there are also differences which are probably due to social status or changes that might have taken place over time. In addition, the selection of clothing and colours of the fabrics might have been influenced by personal taste. As Faroqhi points out, Neumann observed in his research differences between the clothing of two 18th-century viziers which might have been the result of personal preference or taste.[61] Selecting clothes according to personal taste might have been the privilege of the Ottoman upper classes, but it could also have been an option for other social groups. According to Faroqhi, the appearance of Christian and Jewish women was quite similar to that of Muslims and the sartorial regulations in the Ottoman empire were only imposed in public places.[62]

In Morritt's descriptions the dresses of women are indoor wear; it seems that these women did "not wear trousers as in the other parts of Turkey." They might have worn trousers outdoors and some might even have had the opportunity to choose their attire according to their personal taste. Morritt writes: "[Y]ou will suppose the colours are varied for different tastes and different ranks," which might support this hypothesis. They might have chosen what they wanted to wear according to social status. The "trickle-down theory," which states that fashions are "spread from upper to lower classes," could possibly explain many aspects of life at that time.[63] As far as the colours of fabrics in the Ottoman Empire are concerned, the most vivid were used by the 18th-century elite, while more subdued colours were for the less well-off customers.[64] The colour green, which was mentioned both in dowry papers and in Morritt's description, was, according to sartorial regulations, to be worn exclusively by Muslims.[65] Consequently, colours and fabrics were related to the wearer's social status. Morritt, referring to the men in the Mani, observes that "[t]he dress of the lower orders is in the same form, with the necessary variations in the quality of the materials and absence of the ornaments." From another point of view, since it was forbidden to wear green outdoors, women might have chosen to wear it indoors, as the sartorial regulations only applied in public.[66] Thus, the garment exhibited in the museum could have been worn by a woman who was not necessarily part of the Maniot upper class.

The fabrics

The fabrics in Morritt's descriptions are velvet, a fabric embroidered with gold, a fabric embroidered in the richest manner, silk, and muslin. Velvet was already very popular in the Ottoman court from the 15th century, when different kinds of velvet were available.[67] This also provides further evidence for the high social status of the woman in the description, since fabrics such as cotton were probably used by the lower classes. Sibthorp mentions, in relation to the raw materials of the fabrics, that cotton was cultivated in the Mani and silkworms were fed on the leaves of mulberry trees.[68]

Lastly, regarding standards of beauty, Williams refers to the dyed hair of a woman in Patras, observing that red hair was very popular at that time.[69] Morritt also states that the most common colour of women's hair was brown or auburn, which might have been influenced by prevailing ideas of beauty.[70] In every period fashion has always been linked to concepts of beauty. Morritt describes the women of the Mani as "beautiful beyond measure and among them was the handsomest woman I ever saw." This description provides subjectivity but at the same time discloses the values related to beauty standards of that period and romantic ideas as recorded by the European travellers (**Figure 10**).[71]

Figure 10. Olga Evangelidou, *Hair*

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be affirmed that the dress of the late 18th and early 19th century was related to the cultural environment of its time. The sartorial elements mentioned above seem to have been influenced by prevailing Ottoman fashions as well as Western trends, for the fashions of the Ottoman court in the 18th century were influenced by European textiles and clothing.[72] In addition, the idea of beauty presented by the travellers might have been shaped by their own perspectives. Morritt describes the clothing of the beautiful women of the Maniot upper class in great detail. They might have shared elements similar to those of the upper classes in other regions of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, their dresses might have been different from those of women belonging to the lower classes of the region of Mani. The view of beauty, as stated by the traveller, could be a matter of subjectivity but at the same time it might have indicated the standards of beauty prevailing in Western Europe. In a letter written to his sister in 1794, Morritt described the dress of a Wallachian lady with many details which suggest that he was well-informed about the fashions of that time in both the West and the East.[73]

Moreover, it seems as if Western influence on Eastern fashions of the time was a precursor of the later dominance of European fashion in the Ottoman empire, not only in Greek areas. In any case, distinctions between the classes seem to have existed in the Mani, given that fashion was linked to the social strata.[74] These distinctions can be observed in the colours, the fabrics and the designs of the garments. At the same time, there were similarities that might have been related to the phenomenon of imitation or mimicry which can be detected in many social groups.[75] Regarding the Ottoman *firmans*, non-Muslims had always tried to evade the sartorial regulations. That was probably a result of people's desire to belong to another social group by imitating its sartorial customs.[76] Mimicry is an inevitable aspect of fashion, which is itself a phenomenon that involves cultural exchange. There are various ideas about how women dressed in the end of the 18th and early 19th century in the Mani, based on actual dresses that have been preserved, engravings, records, descriptions, and marriage contracts, along with multiple versions in drawings. All these sartorial elements and details, such as coloured stones, with their infinite variations, cannot give us a definitive image of the entirety of the female dress. Nevertheless, they do indicate the sartorial habits of the women in the Mani on the eve of the Greek Revolution (**Figure 11**).

Figure 11. Olga Evangelidou, *Coloured Stones*

Endnotes

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«Χρωματιστά πετράδια» και άλλα ενδυματολογικά στοιχεία κατά τις παραμονές της Ελληνικής Επανάστασης

Το παρόν κείμενο πραγματεύεται τις γυναικείες ενδυματολογικές τάσεις στην προεπαναστατική Ελλάδα, όπως αυτές παρατηρήθηκαν από τον άγγλο ταξιδιώτη και πολιτικό John Bacon Sawrey Morrit, καθώς και τη σύνδεσή τους με τους ευρύτερους κοινωνικούς συσχετισμούς της εποχής. Η παρούσα έρευνα βασίστηκε στην εκτενή ανάλυση της αλληλογραφίας του Morrit, μουσειακών εκθεμάτων μόνιμων και ειδικών εκθέσεων, έργων τέχνης, και περιοδικών έντυπων ενδυματολογικών εκδόσεων της περιόδου. Παρατηρώντας και αναλύοντας τις ιδιαίτερες επιρροές των ενδυματολογικών τάσεων της Ανατολής και της Δύσης στην παραδοσιακή γυναικεία φορεσιά της ευρύτερης περιοχής της Μάνης, η συγγραφέας επιχειρεί να ανασυνθέσει και να αναλύσει την ενδυματολογική πραγματικότητα των αρχών του 19ου αιώνα, όπως αυτή βιώθηκε από τους κατοίκους και τους ταξιδιώτες της περιοχής.