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ISCHIMJI ANA

TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTIC LEATHER AND FUR PROCESSING CRAFTS IN THE MOLDOVAN SSR AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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Scientific supervisor:
CONDRATICOVA Liliana, Dr. Hab. in Arts Studies; Dr. Hab. in History, Associate Professor

Members of the Guidance Committee:
1. COJOCARU Ludmila D., doctor of history, Associate Professor
2. NICOGLO Diana, doctor of history, Associate Professor
3. PROCOP Natalia, doctor in art studies and culturology

Composition of the Doctoral Committee, approved by the decision of the Scientific Council of the State University of Moldova on July 2, 2025, report no. 10

President: TOMULEȚ Valentin, Dr. Hab. in History, University Professor, State University of Moldova

Scientific supervisor: CONDRATICOVA Liliana, Dr. Hab. in Arts Studies; Dr. Hab. in History, Associate Professor, Academy of Sciences of Moldova

Reviewer 1: COJOCARU Ludmila D., Doctor of History, Associate Professor, National Museum of History of Moldova

Reviewer 2: BĂȚ Mihail, Doctor of History, Associate Professor, Moldova State University

Reviewer 3: VORNICU Nicoleta, VORNICU Nicoleta, Dr. habil. in visual arts, Professor, TABOR Metropolitan Center for Scientific Research, Iași, Romania

Scientific Secretary: DEMENTIEVA Diana, Doctor of Philology, State University of Moldova.

The thesis defense will take place at September 17, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., in the public meeting of the Doctoral Commission of the Doctoral School of Humanities and Education of the State University of Moldova, in auditorium 530, „Gh. Brătianu" Hall, central block of USM, Chișinău, str. Alexei Mateevici 60.

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The abstract was sent in August, 13, 2025.

Author
ISCHIMJI Ana

Scientific supervisor:
CONDRATICOVA Liliana, Dr. Hab. in Arts Studies; Dr. Hab. in History

President of the Doctoral Committee
TOMULEȚ Valentin, Dr. Hab. in History, University Professor

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CONCEPTUAL MARKERS OF THE RESEARCH

The topicality and importance of the topic. The impressive repertoire of crafts practiced over time in the current territory of the Republic of Moldova includes the artistic processing of leather and furs - leatherworking, furriery, belting, shoemaking, along with the art of weaving and artistic embroidery, the artistic processing of wood, metal, ceramics. In traditional Romanian culture, these crafts have a special place, with leather or fur items being especially included in folk clothing, as well as footwear, harness pieces, religious book covers or items of applied decorative art. Currently, when the Republic of Moldova applies European standards in the valorization of cultural heritage, aligns the legislation in the field of cultural heritage protection with the European one, research on the uniqueness, originality and promotion of handicrafts is important. Integration into the European, scientific and cultural space allows the inclusion of studies on the value of leather and fur handicrafts in the European circuit to present the skills of craftsmen, technologically and artistically relevant products, which become part of the country's heritage, thanks to its diversity, authenticity and originality. Despite the fact that several traditional crafts have been examined, described by historians and ethnologists in other time limits than those proposed in the present scientific approach, we note that the artistic processing of leather and furs in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova has not become a separate object of study.

The topicality of the targeted topic has theoretical importance through the scientific valorization of leather and fur processing crafts in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova and the presentation of new information about folk crafts from the country, as well as applicative value, with the proposal of new solutions for the development of authentic products with various national ornaments. Examining the specialized literature available at this stage of study, we find that although researchers have addressed the issue of the development of crafts in the Romanian space, they have focused mainly on the medieval or modern periods. The evolution of the artistic processing of hides and furs in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova has been partially neglected by researchers, which offers us considerable opportunities to examine this field in all its complexity, highlighting the main issues related to the determination of raw materials and workshops, the identification of craftsmen who practiced the artistic processing of hides and furs, establishing the place and role of handicrafts in the national cultural heritage, as well as other aspects, the examination of which gives the study we have initiated a pronounced transdisciplinary character.

The research aims to comprehensively examine handicrafts by establishing distinctive features regarding the evolution of artisanal traditions of artistic processing of leather and fur in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova through the impact of modernity.

To achieve the goal, **the following objectives** were formulated**:**

1) Determining the degree of study of the crafts of artistic processing of leather and fur in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova;

2) Identifying the crafts of processing leather and fur by analyzing the typology of handicraft pieces and examining the techniques and processes of processing leather and fur products by craftsmen;

3) Comparative analysis of artisanal products made in the second half of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century documented in localities in the north, center and south of the country;

4) Establishing and highlighting the traditional and innovative characteristics of leather and fur handicrafts; highlighting various types of ornaments as decorative accents;

5) Documenting the artisans who artistically processed leather and fur in the localities of the north, south and center of the current space of the Republic of Moldova with a multilateral examination of their activity;

6) Capitalizing on traditions and innovations for the conservation and museumization of leather and fur items as an integral part of the national cultural heritage; developing, based on case studies, concrete proposals for the revival of handicrafts and the reconstruction of leather and fur heritage items;

7) Highlighting the social, identity and symbolic role of leather and fur products within local communities, by analyzing their functions in traditional costume and in everyday life;

8) Correlating traditions and innovations in the field of artistic leather and fur processing and integrating artisanal products into cultural heritage.

Scientific research methodology. In achieving the proposed objectives, we were guided by scientific concepts, according to which knowledge of the past and the present is an essential condition for the perception of the distinctive characteristics of an era. The work is based on the research of representative historical periods of the Romanian cultural space, the examination and characterization of products. The following research methods were used in the thesis: observation, interview, interpretative, deductive, qualitative, historical-comparative, informative method, etc., which allow highlighting the ethno-cultural aspects specific to the region of origin of leather and fur products. Our field research refers to localities in the northern districts (Soroca city, Cosăuți village, Văleni, the cities of Bălți, Edineț); center (Chisinau, Calarasi) and south (the villages of Colibabovca, Basarabeasca, Tomai in the districts of Leova, Ceadîr-Lunga, Cimișlia, Taraclia and Comrat, the village of Slobozia Mare in the district of Cahul), which are more specialized in sheep breeding and, respectively, the production of leather and fur articles.

Scientific novelty and originality of the study consist of complex and comparative research of the concept of development of artistic crafts of leather and fur processing in the Moldavian SSR and in the Republic of Moldova; approaching the field from a multidisciplinary perspective (ethno-historical, technological, cultural); forming an overview of the activity of artisans, the contribution to the preservation and valorization of traditional methods of leather and fur processing, the creation of items of aesthetic and functional value. Through this study, the specialized terminology was specified; artisans were identified and traditional products made of leather and fur were catalogued within the established chronological framework. By examining traditional manufacturing techniques and processes, a contribution is made to the rediscovery and revaluation of the ethnocultural heritage related to the processing of leather and fur; a new direction of theoretical and applied research is outlined, oriented towards the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage in the field of artistic processing of leather and fur.

Research hypothesis assumes that the crafts of artistic processing of leather and furs in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova have developed in a balance between tradition and modernity, preserving identity elements and inherited artisanal techniques, adapting over time through political, economic and cultural influences, without losing their originality and authenticity.

The scientific problem consists of the theoretical and methodological substantiation and complex analysis, in a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, of the process of evolution and transformation of artistic crafts of leather and fur processing in the Moldavian SSR and in the Republic of Moldova. The study investigates how these traditional practices developed at the intersection of tradition and modernity, under the influence of political, economic, social and cultural factors, aiming to highlight their contribution to the preservation of cultural identity, artisanal heritage and associated aesthetic-functional values.

Research results contributes to the scientific substantiation of the conservation and promotion of traditional crafts of artistic processing of hides and furs, the delimitation of an interdisciplinary methodological framework and the identification of techniques, processes and actors involved in this field, the formulation of applicative directions for the valorization of cultural heritage, through integration into cultural education efforts, conservation policies and sustainable development initiatives.

Originality of the study consists of the multidisciplinary examination of the activity of artisans in the field of leather and fur processing; in obtaining visibility on the market of both the craftsmen and the products and services provided by them; promoting the services and products made, using simple technologies and having a significant manual processing component, especially using traditional technologies. Through the doctoral thesis, it wasmain theoretical and methodological aspects regarding the development of handicrafts have been determined; folk craftsmen from the current space of the Republic of Moldova, who are engaged in the manufacture of various leather and fur objects, have been identified, which will contribute to further scientific investigations in the field of the art of leather and fur processing in the Republic of Moldova. In this regard, the artistic values of leather and fur processing as decorative and representative techniques of cultural valorization are addressed.

The applicative value of the work. The information concentrated in the pages of the thesis can be used to develop an ethno-cultural atlas of folk craftsmen who process leather and fur; organize workshops on the valorization of the cultural potential of artisans in order to perpetuate folk art in the spirit of traditional values. The accumulated information can serve as a basis for radio/TV broadcasts. The field materials circumspect to the thesis constitute models of folk creations integrated into the scientific circuit and in the design of practical prospective studies.

Chronological limits. The research dates back to the second half of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century, with two historical stages being determined that came to our attention in order to carry out a comparative study: for the years 1945–1991 we are talking about the activity of workshops and craftsmen in the Moldavian SSR, later we focused on the activity of artisans in the Republic of Moldova in the more than three

decades of independence. In order to deepen the subject and demonstrate the continuity and preservation of traditions, artistic crafts from previous periods were researched.

From a geographical point of view, the research targeted handicraft products and the activity of craftsmen from localities in the north, center and south of the Republic of Moldova.

The object of research. It consists of various pieces of clothing, harness, and household functionality, made from leather and fur by local artisans.

Approval of scientific results. The results of the research were presented at 18 national and international scientific conferences, held in the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. The research results were reflected in 31 scientific articles published in the specialized literature in the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, of which 1 article in the SCOPUS database, category A (Journal of Ethnology and Culturology), 4 articles in national type B journals; 3 articles in foreign scientific journals, 7 articles in collections of national and international articles, 3 materials of scientific conferences, 11 theses of communications held at national, international scientific conferences, with international participation and 2 scientific-didactic educational works for the field of Leather Garments.

Implementation of research results: The research results were implemented within the theoretical and practical classes in the Personal Development discipline, year 1, 2 and 3 of the College of the Free International University of Moldova, where techniques for processing traditional leather and fur items were discussed and applied.

References include 349 of titles in Romanian, Russian, English, archival files and electronic sources.

Seven annexes reflect list of informants interviewed in order to document the craftsmen and identify the artisanal products; a repertoire of about 200 pieces of leather or fur; archive documents, a glossary. Using own experience in the field of leather processing and to emphasize the applicative value of the present investigative approach, the author's model for developing the pattern of the women's and men's fur coats was presented.

Keywords: ethnology, traditions, field research, modernity, cultural heritage, customs, craft, craftsmen, leather and fur products, cultural valorization, handicrafts, integration into the European cultural space, workshops, profession.

CONTENTS OF THE THESIS

The thesis is structured in three chapters with subchapters, each focused on a separate segment and ending with general conclusions. The INTRODUCTION presents the topicality, chronological and geographical limits of the study, the degree of investigation of the problem; the purpose and objectives of the research are outlined, the research methodology and working hypothesis are presented, the novelty and originality of the research, the implementation of the obtained results, the theoretical and applied value of the thesis.

The first chapter **„The evolution of traditional leather and fur processing crafts in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova: historiographical landmarks**

and research sources" consists of three basic paragraphs. Although the materials presented in the thesis refer mainly to the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, we considered it necessary to highlight in subchapter **1.1. „Development of the crafts of artistic processing of leather and furs until the middle of the 20th century"** some aspects regarding the evolution of the crafts of processing leather and furs. Evidence of the practice of these occupations in the Romanian space are the work tools, which allowed the processing of leather (iron knives, bone spatulas, bone or iron awls), the needles and threads used in the manufacture of clothing. The population made from the skins of hunted and tanned animals, through rudimentary processes, clothing pieces to cover the body, as well as belts, shoes and harness items. In the settlements of Hansca-Căprăria, Branişte-Moţca, Costeşti-Stânca Bălţii, working tools and leather fragments were identified. According to researcher Gh. Postică, in the Middle Ages, leather processing was a household occupation, practiced in all households, to satisfy the requirements in terms of clothing, footwear and other daily necessities[1].

Also reported on the processing of leather and fur from an archaeological perspective I. Hîncu. Based on materials recovered in sites such as Poiana, Gura Bîcului, Ruseni, the author brought archaeological evidence regarding the processing and use of leather[2]. The catalog signed by A. Niculiţă[3] reports on decorative fibulae made of gilded silver applied to fur-lined capes, used as functional and ornamental accessories, pieces from the horse harness category, which reinforce leather belts and fur mounts.

As an organic material, leather retains its properties when appropriate conditions are met for storage and preservation. For these reasons, high humidity, pollution and other factors can contribute to the degradation of leather or fur items over time, making it difficult to preserve them, as well as to identify and enhance leather recovered from archaeological contexts. The processes of conservation, restoration and musealization of leather and fur heritage items are very complexity[4]. The leather items identified during the 2016 exhumation of the remains of Metropolitan Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni from the crypt of the voivodal church dedicated to the Assumption of the Mother of God within the Căpriana Monastery are worthy of researchers' attention[5].

In this way, multidisciplinary research highlights archaeological leather pieces discovered before the 20th century, as well as a series of leather and fur items related to traditional costume. The presence of leather fragments and work tools confirms the existence of craftsmen who processed leather and fur, mastered leather tanning techniques and other working processes, and made various pieces from available raw materials.

Examining the available information regarding the activity of craftsmen who processed leather and fur in Bessarabia leads us to the conclusion that artisans in the field of leather processing had a special weight. In interwar Chisinau, for example, there were all the circumstances for the development of artistic crafts, the favorable climate being suppressed during the years of World War II and during the Soviet period, when traditional fur coats and fur coats were no longer in demand.

Taking into account the degree of research of the problem, in subchapter **1.2. „Historiographic reflections on the evolution of leather and fur processing crafts in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova"** we aimed to systematize publications

on traditional leather and fur processing crafts, to reveal the multidisciplinary nature of the research. The interest of ethnologists, historians and specialists in the field of arts studies for leather and fur processing crafts was reflected in several general and particular studies. The publications were presented in accordance with the two historical periods examined: a) those published in the Soviet period (1944–1991); b) works published after 1991, with the reevaluation of some concepts and statements including with reference to the place and role of handicrafts in the sustainable development of society, the promotion of authentic traditions, the scientific valorization of heritage pieces.

The organization of craftsmen in associations, guilds, corporations is one of the most complex issues, which has attracted the attention of several historians, in this context the studies developed by N. Iorga[6], E. Pavlescu[7], Șt. Pascu[8], Ș. Olteanu and C. Șerban[9], etc., as well as those of historians from Chișinău P. Cocârlă[10], V. Tomuleț[11], I. Chirtoacă[12] etc., which reflected the activity of craftsmen in the Romanian space, their organization into brotherhoods and guilds.

The examination of the specialized literature on leather and fur processing crafts in the current territory of the Republic of Moldova allows us to conclude that so far this topic has not been studied comprehensively. Some works on the description of products and the development of handicrafts have been developed by V. Teslenco[13], S. Kuroglo and M. Marunevici[14], and in Romania we note the publications of researchers V. Butură[15], F.B. Florescu[16], R.O. Maier[17], N. Vornicu[18] etc.

Leather and fur items are most often associated with folk costumes, the activity of artisans being reflected in studies developed in different historical stages of A. Zevin[19], M. Dimitriu[20], L. Turea[21], N. Hadârcă[22], V. Buzilă[23], and in Romania, this important aspect was addressed by G. Oprescu[24], E. Pavel[25] etc.

The study of crafts is of particular importance in order to highlight the techniques of working with leather and fur, to identify craftsmen, describe and systematize products, and capitalize on them. The aforementioned occupations serve, first of all, as financial sources for the maintenance of families and then as beauty products, a fact that they mentioned in their works A. Rusu[26], N. Moraru[27], N. Gheorghiţă[28] etc.

A series of publications reflect the symbolism of the ornaments specific to the area that defined certain messages about the wearer. A consistent theoretical support for the formation of the researcher's opinion on traditional ornamentation can be found in the works of the authors, who examined the current space of the Republic of Moldova: M. Livşiţ[29], V. Zelenciuc și M. Bâtcă[30], S. Șaranuța[31], L. Moisei[32] etc. The topic has been extensively developed by Romanian researchers N. Dunăre[33], P. Petrescu[34], T. Bănăţeanu[35], G. Stoica[36], etc., which addresses certain aspects of the evolution and significance of decorative motifs. The authors extensively reveal both the symbolism of decorative motifs, the decorative particularities of fabrics, and their degree of utility within life cycles[37].

In subchapter 1.3. „Research sources on traditional leather and fur processing crafts" the main research sources, published and unpublished, were systematized. The research included studying materials in the custody of museums (National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History);Documentary visits were made to some local museums. In the process of identifying, cataloging and describing leather and fur pieces, the

data collected by the Service for the Registration and Circulation of Movable Cultural Goods was of real use to us[38] (created on July 5, 2023).

Relevant to our study were the documents kept in the funds of the National Archives Agency (especially the Directorate of the Social-Political Archival Fund), where a series of files were identified regarding the activity of the state sector in the field of leather and fur processing, the development of workshops where leather and fur were worked, the number of craftsmen, the items produced, the development of the „Artizana" enterprise, etc. A special place belongs to the Digital Archive of the Institute of Cultural Heritage, where the files for leather and fur were identified and subjected to analysis, formed based on field data, following ethnographic expeditions in the 1980s in the villages of the Dondușeni and Ocnița[39].

During the thesis development process, field research was conducted and documented craftsmen were interviewed in localities in the south, center, and north of the country. The results of the discussions with the interviewed craftsmen were used in the undersigned's publications, contributing to the formation of an overall picture of the development of leather and fur processing in the Moldovan SSR and the Republic of Moldova.

Special attention was paid to the periodical press, consulting newspapers, magazines, and yearbooks that reflect important aspects of rural life and craft traditions. From a chronological and thematic perspective, the periodical press offers a broad and complex picture of how traditional occupations have developed. Similarly, stamps and postmarks are also a source for studying folk costumes and promoting the image of Romanians and their handicrafts, in our case, those made of leather and fur.

1.4. Conclusions to Chapter 1:

1) Artistic crafts involving the processing of leather and fur are of particular interest to researchers in the fields of history, ethnology, anthropology, as well as to folk craftsmen. As a topical subject for national history and art, the study opens up new avenues for research. For these reasons, the issue of the artistic evolution of craftsmanship remains on the agenda, with the relevance and necessity of studying crafts in the context of the national historiography of the techniques and processes used to make leather and fur products being argued.

2) Examining the specialized literature on the evolution of leather and fur crafts, we find that for the 20th century, no publications or studies have been identified that reflect this aspect in a comprehensive manner, with only articles that tangentially record some aspects statistically, some craftsmen who worked in localities in the north, center, and south of the country are documented, and pieces made by local artisans are attested or described. Researchers have focused on the detailed description of crafts such as folk costumes and Moldovan carpets, while traditions and modernity in leather and fur processing have been addressed briefly, in different contexts and chronological limits than those of our study.

3) At the current stage of research, the historiography of the Republic of Moldova with reference to leather and fur processing has not benefited from an interdisciplinary study that would provide a comprehensive response to historical, artistic, technological, and cultural investigations. By reevaluating previous studies in this area and contribut-

ing recent research, we highlight the issue of the evolution of leather and fur processing crafts as part of national history and culture, as well as conducting a comparative study on the development of this craft in the Moldovan SSR and the Republic of Moldova;

4) Several authors have addressed in their works the subject of the use of leather or fur items made by local craftsmen. In this vein, we examined publications that directly or tangentially refer to the activity of craftsmen in the field of leather and fur processing, reflected from an ethno-historical, artistic, and technological perspective.

5) The lack of relevant publications on the subject allows us to mention that our research provides significant information for craftsmen in the field of leather and fur processing, and from this point of view, the development of crafts in the current space of the Republic of Moldova has not yet benefited from a multidisciplinary study;

6) The study of archive files, the information collected on the basis of field research, corroborated with our own experience in the field of leather processing, contributed to a comprehensive description of the activity of craftsmen specializing in the artistic processing of leather and fur in the Moldovan SSR and the Republic of Moldova – two distinct periods in political, ideological, social, economic and cultural terms;

7) The sources analyzed in national and local museums, as well as interviews with craftsmen, allow us to study the issue in a comprehensive manner in line with current requirements, and the information collected in the pages of the thesis will become a main source of data on cultural heritage relevant to integration into the European cultural space, as well as to the harmonization of legislation in the field of craft development;

8) The written sources researched were corroborated with material sources, which are of particular importance in the development of the present scientific approach and have allowed us to outline the general picture of the evolution of the artistic processing of leather and fur crafts in the Moldovan SSR and the Republic of Moldova**.**

Chapter 2 „ Artistic leather and fur processing crafts and „Artisans" activity in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova" it is structured into six subchapters. Based on the results of the investigations in the field of handicrafts, in subchapter 2.1. „**Repertory and typology of leather and fur handicrafts in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova"** the articles made of leather and fur were identified, concentrated in a Repertoire, which can be completed and revised depending on the study of new sources and data collected during ethnographic expeditions. A special place was reserved for the multidisciplinary research of clothing items and especially footwear, which allowed for the creation of an overall picture of the types of footwear attested in the wear of the inhabitants of the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova, describing the raw materials used, the differences in gender and environment (urban or rural), geographical location (north, south, center).

In subchapter 2.2. „Techniques and technologies of artistic processing of skins and furs" we focused on reflecting raw materials for the leather craft (the skins of domestic animals, game animals, marine animals, reptiles and fish). Among the skins of domestic animals, the most important are those of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses, and among the game animals, the skins ofdeer, goats, pigs, canids (foxes). The quality of the skins depends on the living conditions of the animal, gender, age, breed, slaugh-

tering technology, skinning, preservation and storage, experience being useful here own selection of quality leathers.

Obtaining natural leather involves a series of chemical or mechanical treatments. The leather and fur processing treatments that are widely known and used today were obtained in ancient times through trials or observations. There are the following tanning methods: mineral tanning (with chromium, aluminum and zirconium salts), vegetable tanning with vegetable tannins (oak, chestnut, mimosa extracts), fat tanning and combined tanning (chrome - tannin, vegetable tanning and synthetic tannins). Industrial tanning is carried out differently from home tanning. In practice, the leather processing process consists of going through and performing the primary operations of leather tanning, the actual tanning and finishing operations.

In subchapter 2.3. **„Development of the state sector and the artistic (private) sector in the field of leather and fur processing"** we revealed that, compared to the interwar period, for the first post-war decades in the Moldavian SSR there was a significant reduction in the number of workshops and craftsmen specializing in the artistic processing of leather and fur. According to archival documents, in interwar Chișinău there were numerous craftsmen who made leather and fur items, catering both to the demands of the luxury goods market and to everyday consumption[40]. A special place in the development of fur processing and manufacturing is occupied by the Artizana Association, which over the years has established itself as a company where ethnographic expeditions were carried out in search of traditional clothing models, technological innovations and new artistic trends were implemented, and producing a wide range of furs using natural or eco-friendly furs. Currently, SA Artizana is one of the best-known companies manufacturing leather and fur items, offering a fairly wide range of products[41]. The state sector played a special role in the development of leather and fur processing in the Moldavian SSR. Workshops and factories in the Moldavian SSR aimed to mass-produce leather and fur items, often lacking individuality and produced in series, with an emphasis on fulfilling the plan and socialist competition.

The artistic/private sector in the field of leather and fur processing had a completely different development, similar to the development of artistic tapestry, ceramics, and metalworking. In this context, we should mention the creations of visual artists who, at certain periods, produced pieces based on leather or fur – Niele Meșchite, Valentina Neceaev, Ioachim Postolachi, Vera Petrovscaia, Ecaterina Peicev, as well as those of the younger generation of creators. At the beginning of the 21st century, we note the growing interest of creators in the artistic processing of leather, the use of leather or fur elements in the manufacture of decorative applied art items, in clothing and interior design.

In subchapter 2.4. **„Processing of hides and furs in the localities of the north of the Republic of Moldova"** we focused our efforts on reflecting the complex the activity of artisans specializing in making various leather and fur items. In order to provide real, truthful data on the techniques and processes for processing leather and fur handicraft products, field research was conducted in localities in the north, south and center. Thus, we documented tanners and furriers in villages in the districts of Bălți, Sângerei, Soroca (Table 1)[42]:

Table 1. Leatherworkers and furriers identified by the author in localities in northern Moldova

First and last name	Occupation	District	Locality
Dumitru Pascari	tanner, furrier, hatter, leatherworker, belter	Bălți	-
Anatol Gogu	tanner, furrier		
Ala Chișlari și Victor Chișlari	tanner, furrier, hatter, belter, shoemaker		
Artur Oleinic și Alexandra Oleinic	tanner, furrier, hatter, leatherworker, belter	Sângerei	Mândrești Noi
Alexandru Tabarcea	shepherd, tanner, furrier		Bilicenii Vechi
Leonid Captari	belt maker, handicrafts, leather goods	Soroca	-
Marcel Ostrovschi	shoemaker, furrier, hatter, belter, shoemaker, chimir	Edineț	Hlinaia

Source: Table compiled by the author based on field research

In subchapter 2.5. **„Creative activity of craftsmen from an ethno-artistic aspect in localities in the center of the Republic of Moldova"** we presented the results of field research in the municipality. Chișinău and the villages in the Ialoveni, Orhei and Călărași districts, with several tanners and furriers documented (Tab. 2). It is worth noting that a comprehensive exhibition entitled The Art of Artistic Leather Processing was held at the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History, which exhibited old objects created by peasants, as well as works by folk craftsmen Tabita Costin from Chisinau municipality, Constantin Frăsescu from Fălești district, Dumitru Dărăban from Ialoveni district, Constantin Cojan from Cahul district, as well as pieces made at the Haberdashery Factory in Chisinau and at the Production Combine near Ministry Culture[43].

Table 2. Leatherworkers and furriers identified by the author in the localities of the central part of the Republic of Moldova

First and last name	Occupation	District	Locality
Valentin Frunze	Shoemaker	Chișinău	
Dumitru Daraban	saddler's	Or. Ialoveni	
Grigorie Sînchetru	Makes instruments from wood, leather and fur	Orhei	Trebujeni
Olesea Răilean	Belts, handicrafts, leather goods, bags-purses	Chișinău	
Petru Cucu	Tanner, furrier, handicrafts, leather goods	Chișinău	

Ieromonah Savatie Baștovoi	Handicrafts, leather goods	Călărași	

Source: Table compiled by the author based on field research

Subchapter 2.6. **„The craft of leather and fur processing in the localities of southern Bessarabia"** is centered on the idea that. The craft of processing leather and furs developed throughout the Republic of Moldova, but was more pronounced in the southern localities, where sheepherding and wool production had a consolidated tradition. The applied methodology consisted of field research and analysis of specialized literature, complemented by empirical data obtained from fairs and exhibitions dedicated to folk crafts. The results obtained come mainly from our own investigations carried out in recent years in multiple localities in the south of the Republic of Moldova (Table 3)[44].

Table 3. Leatherworkers and furriers identified by the author in localities in southern Moldova

First and last name	Occupation	District	Locality
Constantin Cojan and Elena Cojan	tanner, furrier, hatter	Cahul	Colibași
Dumitru Zaporojan	tanner and furrier		Slobozia Mare
Nicolae Mocanu	tanner, furrier, leather-worker		Slobozia Mare
Constantin Olteanu	basket maker and basket maker		Pașcani (com. Manta)
Gheorghe Burcă	harness and harness maker		Manta
Chilioglo Valeri	tanner and furrier	Comrat	
Tudor Cîrlan	drummer	Cahul	Badicul Moldovenesc
Tudor Bejenaru	drummer		Văleni
Igor Volos	saddler's	Leova	Tomai
Sergiu Scripchin	sly	Comrat	
Valeriu Pletescu	sly		
Vasile Popovici	mask maker, traditional pieces		Cenac
Alexei Balov	sly	Ceadâr-Lunga	

Source: Table developed by the author based on field research.

The conclusions of chapter 2 are as follows:

1) Our research led to the documentation in the localities of the Republic of Moldo-

va of artisans who have worked and continue to work artistically with leather and fur. These craftsmen process the available raw materials, preserve ancestral traditions and involve advanced, innovative technologies to create unique things, which are worn at holidays, by members of folklore groups, as well as in everyday life. The artisans are distinguished by their craft individuality, they develop their own working and ornamentation techniques, influenced by family heritage, by customer preferences. Each stage of work on the product, starting with the selection of raw materials, working tools, preparing the leather, working templates, checking the pieces and decorating the items, was passed down from generation to generation within the same family. The process of making leather and fur items is highly complex and involves an extensive process, starting from the selection of raw materials and their preparation, to the application of templates and the final decoration of the product;

2) Leather is a traditional material and due to its ecological and physical-mechanical qualities it remains an essential material for leather goods and footwear, being classified according to the finish into smooth, pressed or suede leathers. Until now, natural leather represents one of the main materials for the manufacture/making of belts, leather goods (bags, purses, gloves) and footwear;

3) Encouraging collaboration between artisans from different regions can lead to exchange of experiences, innovation within the limits of tradition and the formation of a creative community focused on capitalizing on local cultural resources;

4) In the first decades after World War II, a number of workshops and associations of craftsmen operated in the localities of the Moldavian SSR. Based on the files examined in the funds of the National Archives Agency, we identified documents that shed light on the activity of the workshops where craftsmen worked, processing leather and fur, both natural and artificial;

5) Our research in the localities of the Republic of Moldova in order to document the craftsmen in the field of clothing and leather goods manufacturing allows us to conclude that this craft is well developed. A significant number of artisans, grouped according to specialization (cowherds, tanners, furriers, hat makers, belt makers, leather workers, etc.) have been documented, which confirms the diversity of traditional crafts and their importance. There is a balanced distribution of these crafts in the localities of the north, center and south of the country, with a greater concentration in the southern area, where hides and furs represented a well-valued traditional resource.;

6) To determine the specifics of the evolution of handicrafts in the localities of the north, center and south of the Republic of Moldova, each interviewed craftsman described the method and technique of processing hides and furs depending on the product and its destination. Regional differences were identified in terms of working techniques, access to raw materials and final products, the southern area being distinguished by a more pronounced development of leather and fur;

7) Folk craftsmen who process and make leather and fur items promote their works at exhibitions, festivals, fairs, the locality's patron saint, and members of numerous folks or dance ensembles, folk orchestras, have become messengers of traditional costume, wearing leather or fur items;

8) Field research has highlighted the problem of training and improving the skills of craftsmen who practice leather and fur. Although studies in the fields of leather and fur are offered in the Republic of Moldova (Technological College in Chisinau), we emphasize the low interest in continuing or deepening studies in this field;

9) Professional unions and artisan associations in the Republic of Moldova play an essential role in supporting the activity of artisans, both active members of the unions and free creators, providing opportunities for entrepreneurship, affirmation, exchange of experience and access to national and international markets. Traditional handicrafts are not only a vector of heritage conservation, but also a sustainable economic opportunity for the development of rural communities by capitalizing on the creative economy;

10) At the beginning of the 21st century, the field develops in accordance with the artistic trends of the time, and visual artists collaborate with artisans, seeking to integrate artistic creations made of leather and fur into European cultural heritage.

Chapter 3 „**Traditions and modernity in the development of leather and fur crafts**" is structured in four subchapters. In order to form an overall picture of the development of leather and fur in the current space of the Republic of Moldova, we decided to examine in detail, to the extent of the availability of research sources, some leather and fur items. They harmoniously combine tradition and innovation, being worn by women, men, children and are part of traditional festive or everyday wear. Thus, case studies were developed on fur coats and fur coats, opinci, cuşme and hats, chimire, relevant from an ethno-historical, technological and artistic point of view, the accumulated materials contributing to the repertory of pieces made from leather and fur and their patrimonialization.

Sub-item 3.1. „Relevant leather and fur handicrafts at the intersection of folk art and innovation" integrates several case studies of relevant pieces made of leather and fur by documented artisans in localities in the south, center and north of the Republic of Moldova. The chimir is an essential element of the traditional clothing of Moldovan men, having not only a functional role, but also a symbolic and aesthetic one. These leather belts were more than a clothing accessory; they were true adornments, being skillfully crafted by local craftsmen, who added elements of craftsmanship and traditional ornamentation[45]. The chimir was made of highly durable bovine or goatskin, with metal loops or clasps that helped secure it around the waist. Depending on the geographical area and the social status of the wearer, the chimir could be simple, made of raw leather, or ornamented with metal elements or fine embroidery. Usually, the chimir had a utilitarian role, aiming to fix and support traditional male clothing – the shirt, trousers or meşini. At the same time, the chimir was also a symbol of the craftsmanship of the craftsman who made it, being often decorated with traditional motifs, which reflected both the balance between functionality and aesthetics, as well as the weight of the spiritual and cultural elements of the region, having apotropaic value. The chimir was ornamented with geometric motifs (lines, rhombuses, circles) that symbolized harmony and balance; floral and animal motifs, which evoked nature and strength; metal elements (target heads, metal loops, silver or gold pieces), which symbolized luxury or prestige, but also symbolic protection. In the 20th century and early 21st century, the chimir continued to be an important clothing item, but its use was more restricted, especially among hunters

or those who had preserved the traditions of rural life. However, the chimir remained a symbol of traditional crafts and folk arts, being presented in ethnographic exhibitions, museums. Chimires were decorated using various techniques: printing, stamping, perforation, retouching, lacing; small leather pieces applied to the chimir by gluing, sewing, decorated by pressing, embroidery with leather threads, metal buttons and buckles-patlets. Metal applications, cutouts and perforations are usually placed on the edges or flaps of the pockets and on some edges of the chimir, as was specific to some localities in the Ștefan Vodă district[46]. In the south of the Republic of Moldova, the chimirs were made of leather called blanc or toval, which was obtained by vegetable tanning of raw hides. On this surface, embroideries decorated with vegetable and floral motifs were applied, using narrow and thin strips of sheepskin, called ihra. It also had a flap pocket that was decorated with staples and rosettes, as is typical of the localities of the Taraclia district[47].

Coats, jackets, and vests made of leather are traditional elements of Romanian folk clothing. There are two basic types: the pieptar and the cojoc. These are not mutually exclusive, but complement each other and, depending on climatic conditions or use, can even be worn together. The cojoc is a leather garment with sleeves, offering superior thermal protection and typically worn in winter. The pieptar, on the other hand, is a sleeveless garment, designed mainly to protect the torso and worn in periods of lower, but not extreme, temperatures. The first decorations applied to sheepskin coats and vests were remarkably simple, consisting of straight lines, dots, and zigzag patterns, usually rendered in black and white. In an evolutionary process, these decorative elements were replaced or supplemented with geometric, plant, and floral ornaments, mainly arranged in the chest, hem, and hip areas. The dominant color palette included bright shades such as red, blue, yellow, and green. In certain localities, breastplates also had ceremonial functions, being worn at weddings by grooms and brides – a custom found in northern Moldavia and Bukovina, where these garments were mandatory in wedding customs[48].

The bundița is similar to the cojoc, but is often lighter and shorter. Sheepskin vests are called bundă, bundiță, or bundiță and pieptar. It is made of sheepskin, but especially goat or cowhide, and the inside can be lined with wool or thick fabric. It is a garment intended more for men, often worn by shepherds, hunters, or craftsmen[49]. The bundița is a sleeveless vest-like garment worn over a shirt. The bundița is part of the traditional Romanian costume and is made from sheep or lambskin in various colors and patterns. The bundița and the breastplate are richly decorated, especially those for women. The white field of the sheepskin is embroidered with colored *muline* threads, colored glass beads, or decorated with appliqués made of pieces of colored leather, as specified by informants in central Moldova[50]. The jackets are also beautifully decorated in the south of the republic, in the villages of the Prut floodplain: Manta, Crihana Veche, and Colibași[51]. The southern bundița is decorated with pastoral motifs specific to the area and is tailored straight, with a closure system up to the top for men and women with an angular neckline[52]. In the Bălți district, there is a folk craftsman named Dumitru Pascari, who makes sheepskin coats from Caracul sheepskin. Based on my own experience, I have presented in this thesis the stages of the jacket-making process, information that can be used in the manufacture of this garment, as a teaching aid.

The **opinca** is a symbol of Romanian folk tradition and is part of the traditional everyday footwear worn especially in rural areas. In the past, opincas were made from raw leather, wood, and bark. There were also iron opincas in the mountainous and sub-Carpathian regions. Opincas were considered traditional footwear and were handmade in regions where leather was processed at home and were worn year-round[53]. The components of an opinci are: the sole – made of thick leather to provide durability, sometimes the sole was reinforced with nails or ropes to increase resistance and grip on the ground; the toe – pointed or round depending on the region. The opinci is made with a leather strap that wraps around the ankle, providing stability and comfort. Motifs that symbolized the peasant's status were often embroidered or sewn on the opinci. Women and girls wore opinci made of cattle or pigskin when they went to work in the hills. They necessarily wore woolen stockings with the opinci, and men – obi. The stockings reached below the knee, at the top they had a woolen thread with which they tightened them to the foot[54]. The wealthiest wore opinci made from the skins of animals that were hunted, but those with more modest incomes wore opinci made from the skins of cattle or pigs[55]. In the summer, pigskin slippers were worn because they were lighter and molded well to the feet, following the shape of the foot. In the winter, heavy cattleskin slippers were worn because this leather does not allow moisture to pass through and retains heat well. Currently, only a few opinci craftsmen are active, most of them being elderly[56]. According to their morphological structure, the opinci are divided into two types: opinci without gurgui – uniformly constricted (wrinkled) in the anterior part and opinci with gurgui – constricted in the anterior part, forming a sharp tip. On the territory of the Republic of Moldova, in the southern and northern localities, the opinci with tongue and with straight gurgui are found. In the southern parts of the country, they are called Bulgarian opinci, because they were also influenced by the region of their location[57]. Tongue-tied shoes are of two types: the first method of making consists of narrowing over the edge and creasing in the anterior third: the second consists of narrowing over the edge or on one side and creasing in the anterior third through cuts, a fact reported by the folk craftsman Dumitru Pascaru[58]. At the beginning of the 21st century, the opinca began to be reinterpreted. Fashion designers from Romania and the Republic of Moldova tend to adopt the opinca as a contemporary element, creating stylized versions of it for urban fashion collections. These updated opinca are made of lighter materials and are decorated with modern embroidery and details, while preserving their traditional shape and motifs.

The hat is a men's garment, made of white or black lamb fur[59]. It is an essential element of the Romanian winter folk costume, having both a functional role (protection against the cold) and a symbolic, aesthetic one. The hat marks the social status and geographical affiliation of the wearer, its style and shape varying depending on the area, age and occasion. The hat was worn almost exclusively by men. The shape, size and quality of the material reflected the wearer's social status. A larger hat, made of quality fur, showed that the wearer was wealthy. In some areas, the hat was worn only by married men, and young men wore simpler versions or left it at home on working days. Older hats, made of unwashed lambskin, were handmade and passed down from generation to generation, becoming true pieces of heritage. Currently, they are found as elements of

folklore props, in museums or at traditional events.

In subchapter 3.2. „**The diversity and significance of the ornaments of leather and fur articles"** we focused on reflecting the ornamental motifs used in the decoration of pieces made of leather or fur. This aspect of ornamentation is at the intersection of ethnological studies and those in the field of visual arts, but also technological, if we focus on the possibility of transposing ornamental motifs onto leather, which differs from their transposition onto wood, metal or textiles. Romanian folk ornamentation has two major modes of expression: geometrization and styling[60]. The clear demarcation between them is often difficult, given that a wavy line can function both as a geometric shape determined by rhythm and movement, and as a stylized representation of the snake. Following the examination of the sources, we presented in the form of comparative tables the description of the motifs for the ornamentation of leather and fur products – bundițe, chimire, opinci –, depending on the localities identified in the north, south or center of the Republic of Moldova, as well as depending on the application of the ornament, the working techniques, the ornamental motifs used and other criteria. In the context of Romanian folk art, leather embroidery constitutes a specialized extension of textile embroidery, using adapted techniques such as the "before the needle" stitch, "cross" and "hub", but also applications of wool or decorative threads. Geometric, phytomorphic and symbolic motifs obtain a particular emphasis due to the texture and volume offered by the leather support. Embroidery has an aesthetic as well as a symbolic, functional function, with geometric motifs being attributed apotropaic roles, and vegetal motifs – meanings related to fertility and regeneration. The contemporary bundița from the Republic of Moldova represents a clothing creation of identity and aesthetic value, located at the intersection of innovation and tradition. The decoration is frequently organized in well-defined horizontal registers, accompanied by colored ribbons (red, blue, yellow, green) that delimited the motifs and created contrasting visual rhythms. The chromatic palette was dominated by vivid shades – especially red, blue, yellow and green –, applied to the natural background of the skin, using pigments obtained from local plant and mineral sources.

Starting from the revival of interest in traditions, in artistic crafts in general, and especially the interest of some craftsmen in preserved and updated traditions in the field of leather and fur processing, in subchapter 3.3. „**Leather and fur articles – ways to reconstruct and valorize heritage pieces"** we focused on aspects related to the valorization and patrimonialization of leather and fur articles. In the strategic agenda for 2025–2028, the European Council committed to investing in culture and our cultural heritage, which is at the heart of our European identity[61]. Currently, handicrafts represent the integration of cultural and social values and have a priority function of preserving and transmitting national heritage.

In order to meet the objectives of the study on the integration of the craft by highlighting the traditional and innovative characteristics of leather and fur handicraft products, by developing case studies, valorizing and reconstructing cultural heritage by integrating traditions and innovations on the evolution of the craft of artistic processing of leather and fur, scientific investigations were carried out and the following **conclusions were reached in chapter 3**:

1) The chimir as an emblematic piece combines functionality, symbolism and aesthetics in an object of great cultural and historical value. The traditional craft of making chimir continues to be practiced by craftsmen in rural areas. Currently, chimir is valued in museums, exhibitions and heritage collections, and its making continues to be a living practice in some rural areas, which supports the preservation and transmission of the craft;

2) Tthe making of the traditional fur coat and the traditional bundița, which represent strong cultural symbols, reflect the craft traditions of rural communities. The documentation of the process of making and obtaining clothing products from skins and furs gave us the opportunity to propose a new method of designing these products, which included specific requirements from an ethnological point of view (color, size, texture, ornament, region). Fur coats and bundița are often used to revive traditions and promote folk crafts;

3) It has been shown that the opinca has diversified over time, evolving from work footwear to that currently used by ethno-folk ensembles. The opinca craftsmen continued to improve the techniques of making the pieces, and the decorative leather or embroidery motifs became more varied and often personalized, reflecting the identity of the localities in the north, center or south of the Republic of Moldova. The opinca craftsmen of the Republic of Moldova continue to make opinca from natural leather, preserving and promoting the inherited traditions and techniques;

4) The skill and craftsmanship of craftsmen are visible at various national/international fairs and exhibitions, where artisanal products are exhibited. Leather and fur products made by craftsmen are unique, difficult to reproduce industrially, and carry a strong cultural and ethnic charge, being used in traditional clothing, folklore performances and ethnographic collections. Currently, emphasis is placed on the valorization of cultural heritage through various cultural events;

5) Ornamental motifs are fundamental components of cultural heritage, playing a significant role in expressing the identity and symbolic values of communities. In addition to their aesthetic function, these motifs function as vectors for transmitting traditions and contribute to maintaining cultural cohesion and intergenerational continuity;

6) Artistic processing consists of decorating or embellishing leather and fur and is carried out through various basic techniques and processes represented by seams with an ornamental or decorative role, embroidery, piping, as well as ornamental processes specific to natural leather: decorative perforation, braiding, tracing, weaving, various applications, printing/stamping and engraving, spirography (by burning), folding, mosaic, decorative painting, finishing;

7) Contemporary craftsmen use an impressive variety of artistic techniques such as embroidery, perforation, weaving, printing, engraving or decorative painting, contributing to the uniqueness of each handmade piece. The study of traditional techniques is essential for preserving cultural identity in the face of the challenges of modernization and automation, providing a solid basis for the revalorization of traditional craftsmanship;

8) The evaluation and knowledge of techniques and processes for artistic leather processing are important for returning to authentic values, preserving traditions in the field of leather and fur processing, a craft under the impact of automation of work processes, industrialization, and globalization.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The complex examination of the evolution of the artisanal traditions of artistic processing of leather and fur in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova led to the development of an overall vision of craftsmanship through the lens of the impact of modernity, which allowed us to draw the following final conclusions:

1) the crafts of processing leather and fur are of particular interest to researchers in the field of history, ethnology, as well as to folk craftsmen. The artistic processing of leather and fur has ancient traditions in the current territory of the Republic of Moldova, as evidenced by the tools and implements discovered by archaeologists, as well as a number of pieces despite the perishable nature of leather and fur;

2) at the current stage of research, historiography has not benefited from an interdisciplinary study, which would contain a complex response to the historical, artistic, technological and culturological investigation regarding leather and fur within the stated chronological limits. Through this thesis, the issue of the evolution of leather and fur processing crafts as a component part of national history and culture is highlighted, a comparative study being carried out regarding the development of this craft in the Moldavian SSR and in the Republic of Moldova;

3) the sources examined, data from archives, national and local museums, interviews conducted with contemporary craftsmen, allow us to study the problem in a complex way, and the information obtained has become essential providers of data with reference to this segment of cultural heritage;

4) after World War II, workshops and artisan associations operated in the localities of the MSSR. Based on archival documents, the activity of the workshops where craftsmen worked, processing leather and furs, whether natural or synthetic, was reflected;

5) craftsmen from different localities preserve and implement techniques for processing leather and furs passed down from generation to generation. The working techniques and processes are best represented by ornamental or decorative stitches, embroidery, piping, as well as specific ornamental processes, such as: decorative perforation, braiding, tracing, weaving, applying various applications, printing/stamping and engraving, spirography (by burning), folding, mosaic, decorative painting, finishing. The techniques and working technologies used by craftsmen allow the creation of unique and original handcrafted products with personalized elements, which are presented at specialized exhibitions, sent to national museums or sold;

6) our field research allowed us to document artisans, grouped according to their specialization (cowherds, tanners, furriers, hat makers, belt makers, shoemakers, etc.), which attests to the diversity of traditional crafts. In the southern localities, the craft of processing leather and fur is more comprehensive, being an area where the raw material was more developed. Association in professional unions, such as the Union of Folk Craftsmen of the Republic of Moldova, offers opportunities for entrepreneurial activity;

7) field research has highlighted the problem of training and improving the skills of craftsmen who practice leather and fur. The craftsmen report that they inherited the profession from their predecessors, often being largely self-taught. Although in the Re-

public of Moldova studies in the fields of leather and fur are offered at the Technological College in Chisinau or within specialized courses at higher education institutions, we note the low interest in this craft, for continuing or deepening studies, the possibility of making a career in the field;

8) at the beginning of the 21st century, the interest of creators in the artistic processing of leather, the use of leather or fur elements in the manufacture of various decorative applied art items, in clothing design, in interior design, the field of this craft oscillating between tradition and innovation, is noticeable;

9) leather and fur products made by craftsmen are unique, cannot be industrially reproduced, carry a strong cultural and ethnic charge, being used in traditional wear, ethno-folklore shows and museum collections. Case studies on the chimir, bundița and opinca emphasize the interest of artisans and society in these decorative items. The chimir is an emblematic piece of Moldovan craftsmanship, with cultural and historical value, which combines functionality with symbolism. The process of making the traditional fur coat and bundița reflects ancestral craft traditions. The complex stages of making the fur coat and bundița involve craftsmanship, professionalism, attention to detail, knowledge of the specifics of these pieces. The opinca, as a work piece, remains a symbol of folk wear, currently found in various cultural events and traditional celebrations. We attest to the diversification of techniques and decorative elements, which reflects the identity and creativity of the opincari.

The promotion of folk artistic crafts in the Republic of Moldova contributes to the preservation of traditions and cultural values, but can also generate opportunities for economic, scientific, touristic, and educational exploitation for the crafts and the communities involved. Traditional crafts of artistic processing of leather and furs, balancing harmoniously between tradition and modernity, constitute an essential element of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova, having a profound significance in defining the cultural and spiritual identity of society.

Scientific and applied recommendations:

Developing a national register of traditional crafts, which will present detailed passport sheets of leather and fur pieces of historical, artistic and ethnological importance. These sheets will integrate information about the origin, production techniques, state of conservation and cultural significance of each object, in order to facilitate the protection and promotion of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Moldova.

Strengthening collaboration between local and central authorities and other relevant actors will contribute to intensifying dialogue and cooperation between local and central authorities, tourism agencies, museums, educational institutions, civil society, NGOs and the media.

Integrating craft heritage into education and research. The use of information material collected in field research and the recording of traditional techniques for processing hides and furs deserves to be included in the curriculum of specialized artistic and technological educational institutions, in order to encourage youth to appreciate and learn these crafts. Given the importance of preserving and transmitting traditional tech-

niques, it is necessary to develop continuous professional training programs for artisans.

Promoting the restoration and conservation of leather and fur products. It is important that authorities and specialized institutions encourage and support initiatives to restore and preserve leather and fur products.

Developing international promotion strategies. Promoting traditional leather and fur crafts on foreign markets is essential to support artisans from the Republic of Moldova and to valorize these products as part of the cultural heritage. It is recommended to organize specialized fairs and exhibitions, including at European/international level, in collaboration with tourism agencies and international organizations, to draw attention to traditional crafts and create new economic opportunities for local craftsmen.

Documenting and preserving traditional leather and fur processing techniques. Continuing research and documentation of traditional crafts, through the production of scientific publications of various types, documentary films or best practice guides, will contribute to the preservation of old techniques and methods of processing leather and fur.

Documentation and digitization of craft heritage to ensure an archive accessible to researchers, craftsmen and the general public.

Encouraging multidisciplinary research to support interdisciplinary research that examines not only the techniques of processing hides and furs, but also their impact on the economy and culture, as well as their integration into economic and tourism development strategies.

Encouraging collaboration between local craftsmen and contemporary designers it is appropriate and necessary for craftsmen to collaborate with designers to create innovative products that combine tradition with modernity.

Development of online platforms for the promotion of traditional crafts. The creation of websites and online platforms dedicated to folk crafts will facilitate access to artisans' products for consumers and international visitors. These platforms could include information on the history and production techniques, as well as direct purchasing options.

Supporting craftsmen through funding programs and grants. The government and non-governmental organizations can create financial support programs for artisans, allowing them to improve their equipment and access foreign markets. These funds will help modernize workshops and promote artisans' products in international markets.

Encouraging cultural tourism centered on crafts. Promoting cultural tourism in traditional areas where crafts are practiced can bring significant economic benefits to local communities.

Formation of a center of excellence in traditional crafts, which would function as a hub for professional training, promotion and research. This center would be able to organize training sessions for craftsmen and facilitate interaction between craftsmen and specialists in related fields, such as marketing and design.

Improving regulations and supporting legislation in the field of folk crafts, which includes reviewing and aligning with European legislation, improving the existing legislative framework to support craftsmen through more effective measures to protect their rights and to encourage the development of crafts as a creative industry.

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ADNOTARE

ISCHIMJI Ana, „Tradiție și modernitate în dezvoltarea meșteșugurilor de prelucrare artistică a pielii și blănurilor în RSS Moldovenească și Republica Moldova”, teză de doctor în istorie, specialitatea 612.01 *Etnologie*, Universitatea de Stat din Moldova. Volum total: 310 de pagini, dintre care 150 text de bază; 7 anexe, glosar; bibliografie din 349 de titluri în limba română, engleză, rusă, surse electronice; 7 de tabele și cca 200 de materiale grafice.

Cuvinte-cheie: etnologie, tradiții, cercetare de teren, modernitate, patrimoniu cultural, obiceiuri, meșteșug, artizani, produse din pieile și blană, valorificare culturală, integrare.

Scopul tezei: examinarea complexă a artizanatului prin stabilirea particularităților distinctive privind evoluția tradițiilor meșteșugărești de prelucrare artistică a pieilor și blănurilor în RSS Moldovenească și Republica Moldova prin prisma impactului modernității.

Obiective: determinarea gradului de studiere a meșteșugurilor de prelucrare artistică a pieilor și blănurilor în RSSM și Republica Moldova; identificarea meșteșugurilor de prelucrare a pieilor și blănurilor prin analiza tipologiei pieselor de artizanat și prezentarea tehnicilor și procedeelor de prelucrare a produselor din piei și blănuri de meșteșugari; analiza comparată a produselor meșteșugărești realizate în a doua jumătate a sec. XX și primele decenii ale sec. XXI documentate în localitățile din nordul, centrul și sudul țării; stabilirea și evidențierea caracteristicilor tradiționale și inovative ale produselor meșteșugărești din piei și blănuri; documentarea artizanilor care au prelucrat artistic pieile și blănurile; valorificarea tradițiilor și inovațiilor pentru conservarea și muzeificarea pieselor din piele și blănuri ca parte integrantă a patrimoniului cultural material al țării; elaborarea unor propuneri concrete privind reconstituirea articolelor de patrimoniu din piei și blănuri; evidențierea rolului social, identitar și simbolic al produselor din piei și blănuri în cadrul comunităților locale, prin analiza funcțiilor acestora în costumul tradițional și în viața cotidiană; corelarea tradițiilor și inovațiilor în domeniul meșteșugului de prelucrare artistică a pieilor și blănurilor și integrarea produselor artizanale în patrimoniul cultural.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică: examinarea complexă a conceptului de dezvoltare a meșteșugurilor artistice de prelucrare a pielii și blănurilor în RSSM și în Republica Moldova, în perspectivă comparativă; abordarea multidisciplinară a domeniului; formarea unui tablou de ansamblu privind activitatea artizanilor și contribuția în păstrarea și valorificarea metodelor tradiționale de prelucrare a pieilor și blănurilor, realizarea articolelor de valoare.

Rezultatele cercetării contribuie la soluționarea deficitului de fundamentare științifică privind conservarea și promovarea meșteșugurilor tradiționale de prelucrare artistică a pieilor și blănurilor, prin delimitarea unui cadru metodologic interdisciplinar și identificarea tehnicilor, procedeelor și actorilor implicați în acest domeniu.

Semnificația teoretică: valorificarea științifică a meșteșugurilor de prelucrare a pieilor și blănurilor în RSS Moldovenească și Republica Moldova. Materialele acumulate vor fi utile la elaborarea studiilor de sinteză, notelor de curs, a unor ghiduri turistice, repertorii meșteșugărești.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării. Informațiile concentrate în paginile tezei pot fi folosite la elaborarea unui atlas cultural al meșterilor populari care prelucrează pielea și blana pe teritoriul Republicii Moldova; organizarea workshop-urilor pentru valorificarea potențialului cultural al meșterilor în scopul perpetuării artei populare în spiritul valorilor tradiționale; pot servi ca bază pentru diferite emisiuni radio/TV, utilizarea în procesul de instruire a studenților.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice. Rezultatele cercetării au fost implementate în cadrul orelor teoretice și practice la disciplina „Educația tehnologică” clasa a VIII-a conform curriculumului din cadrul Instituției Publice Liceului Teoretic „Ion Creangă” și la disciplina „Dezvoltarea Personală” anul I, II și III, Colegiul „ULIM”, unde s-au discutat și aplicat tehnici de prelucrare a articolelor din piele și blană.

ANNOTATION

ISCHIMJI Ana, „Tradition and modernity in the development of crafts of artistic processing of leather and fur in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova”, doctoral thesis in history, specialty 612.01 *Ethnology*, Moldova State University. The thesis has a total volume of 310 pages, of which 150 pages are basic text; 7 annexes, glosar; the bibliography includes 349 titles in Romanian, English, Russian, electronic sources; 7 tables and about 200 materials.

Keywords: ethnology, traditions, field research, modernity, cultural heritage, customs, craft, artisans, products from leather and fur, cultural valorization, integration.

The purpose of the thesis: a comprehensive examination of handicrafts by establishing distinctive features regarding the evolution of artisanal traditions of artistic processing of skins and furs in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova through the impact of modernity.

Objectives: determining the degree of study of the crafts of artistic processing of skins and furs in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova; identifying the crafts of processing skins and furs by analyzing the typology of handicraft pieces and presenting the techniques and processes of processing leather and fur products by craftsmen; comparative analysis of handicraft products made in the second half of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century documented in localities in the north, center and south of the country; establishing and highlighting the traditional and innovative characteristics of leather and fur handicraft products; documenting the craftsmen who artistically processed leather and furs; capitalizing on traditions and innovations for the preservation and museumization of leather and fur pieces as an integral part of the country's material cultural heritage; developing concrete proposals for the reconstruction of heritage items made of leather and fur; highlighting the social, identity and symbolic role of leather and fur products within local communities, by analyzing their functions in traditional costume and in everyday life.

Scientific novelty and originality: a comprehensive examination of the concept of the development of artistic crafts of leather and fur processing in the MSSR and the Republic of Moldova, in a comparative perspective; multidisciplinary approach to the field; formation of an overall picture of the activity of artisans and their contribution to the preservation and valorization of traditional methods of leather and fur processing, the creation of valuable items.

The research results contribute to solving the deficit of scientific substantiation regarding the preservation and promotion of traditional crafts of artistic processing of hides and furs, by defining an interdisciplinary methodological framework and identifying the techniques, processes and actors involved in this field.

Theoretical significance: scientific valorization of leather and fur processing crafts in the Moldavian SSR and the Republic of Moldova. The accumulated materials will be useful in the development of synthesis studies, course notes, tourist and craft guides.

Applicative value of the work. The information concentrated in the pages of the thesis can be used to develop a cultural atlas of folk craftsmen who process leather and fur on the territory of the Republic of Moldova; organizing workshops to capitalize on the cultural potential of craftsmen in order to perpetuate folk art in the spirit of traditional values; can serve as a basis for various radio/TV broadcasts, use in the process of training students.

Implementation of scientific results. The research results were implemented in the theoretical and practical classes of the „Technological Education” discipline, grade VIII, according to the curriculum of the Public Institution of the „Ion Creangă” Theoretical High School, and in the „Personal Development” discipline, year I, II and III, „ULIM” College, where techniques for processing traditional leather and fur items were discussed and applied.

АННОТАЦИЯ

ИСКИМЖИ Анна, «Традиции и современность в развитии художественных промыслов обработки кожи и меха в Молдавской ССР и Республике Молдова», докторская диссертация по истории, специальность 612.01 *Этнология*, Государственный университет Молдовы. Общий объем: 310 страниц, из них 150 страниц основного текста; 7 приложений, словарь; библиография из 349 наименований на румынском, английском, русском языках, электронные источники; 7 таблицы и около 200 рисунков.

Ключевые слова: этнология, традиции, полевые исследования, современность, культурное наследие, обычаи, ремесло, ремесленники, изделия из кожи и меха, культурная валоризация, интеграция.

Цель диссертации: комплексное исследование ремесел путем установления особенностей эволюции ремесленных традиций художественной обработки кожи и меха в Молдавской ССР и Республике Молдова через призму влияния современности.

Задачи: определение степени изученности промыслов художественной обработки кожи и меха в МССР и Республике Молдова; выявление ремесел по обработке кожи и меха путем анализа типологии изделий ручной работы и представления приемов и процессов обработки изделий из кожи и меха мастерами; сравнительный анализ изделий народных промыслов второй половины XX века – начало XXI века, зафиксированых в селах на севере, в центре и на юге страны; установление и подчеркивание традиционных и инновационных особенностей изделий ручной работы из кожи и меха; документирование ремесленников, искусно обрабатывавших шкуры и меха; использование традиций и инноваций для сохранения и музеефикации изделий из кожи и меха как неотъемлемой части материального культурного наследия страны; разработка конкретных предложений по реконструкции предметов культурного наследия из кожи и меха; подчеркивание социальной, идентификационной и символической роли изделий из кожи и меха в местных сообществах путем анализа их функций в традиционном костюме и повседневной жизни.

Научная новизна и оригинальность: комплексное рассмотрение концепции развития художественных промыслов обработки кожи и меха в МССР и Республике Молдова в сравнительной перспективе; междисциплинарный подход к области; формирование общей картины деятельности ремесленников и их вклада в сохранение и валоризацию традиционных методов обработки кожи и меха, создание ценных изделий.

Результаты исследования способствуют решению дефицита научного обоснования вопросов сохранения и популяризации традиционных ремесел художественной обработки шкур и меха путем определения междисциплинарной методологической базы и выявления методов, процессов и участников этой сферы.

Теоретическая значимость: научная оценка промыслов по обработке кожи и меха в Молдавской ССР и Республике Молдова. Накопленные материалы будут полезны при разработке обобщающих исследований, курсовых конспектов, туристических и ремесленных путеводителей.

Практическая ценность работы. Информация, сосредоточенная на страницах диссертации, может быть использована для разработки культурного атласа народных мастеров по обработке кожи и меха на территории Республики Молдова; организация мастер-классов по использованию культурного потенциала мастеров с целью сохранения народного искусства в духе традиционных ценностей; может служить основой для различных радио/телепередач, использоваться в процессе обучения студентов.

Внедрение научных результатов. Результаты исследования внедрены на теоретических и практических занятиях по дисциплине «Технологическое образование» VIII класса согласно учебной программе Государственного учреждения Теоретический лицей им. Иона Крянгэ и на дисциплине «Развитие личности» I, II и III курсов колледжа «ULIM», где обсуждались и применялись приемы обработки традиционных изделий из кожи и меха.

ISCHIMJI Ana

TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTIC LEATHER AND FUR PROCESSING CRAFTS IN THE MOLDOVAN SSR AND THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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