



ETHNOGRAFSKI MUZEJ U BEOGRADU
ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM IN BELGRADE



ICOM COSTUME COMMITTEE ANNUAL MEETING

Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, Serbia, September 25th- 30th 2011.

Paper Presentations

Monday, 26th September 2011.

Bojan Popovic, M.A.
National Museum in Belgrade – Fresco Gallery, Serbia

Serbian Medieval Costume

The Middle Ages were a period of meeting, confrontation and merging of draped and boreal costume. The cultural exchange between the Byzantine and western costume resulted in the appearance of Serbian medieval costume. The simple cut of dresses, similar to shirts used in folk dress, gradually became more complicated with introduction of complex cut, where the costume is formed from pieces of textile that are difficult to fasten together properly without the special training. The waist is pronounced, the lower part of dress is wide, sometimes there is a double fold, the sleeves are ceremonially long and there is a line of buttons used to fasten the opening cut. The lining is often made of fur.

The dress reaching the ground was a right and an obligation of nobles in festive occasions, while in other circumstances the length of dress has varied according to fashion, as shown in the dress of holy warriors. In late 14th and early 15th century it was reaching the middle of thighs, so there are visible *kalce*, leggings decorated with individual geometric ornaments. The main decoration and feature of women's costume is headgear, including partial or complete hair covering with white silk or netting, as well as a golden wreath or crown, combined with earrings or pendants hanging from the wreath or crown. In the second half of 14th century hair is partially visible and hands and neck are exposed.

Color and decoration of costume might bear insigniological, emblematic or just decorative lines. The surface of textile covered in checkered – cross pattern and decoration with zoomorphic and plant motifs indicate various meanings of dress as insignia. The red is the main color of nobles, the purple, ranging from dark blue shades to red, is characteristic of royal costume, while the other colors are generally introduced as alternation or addition while sometimes they may have a special insigniological meaning.

Dr. Mirjana Prosic-Dvornic
Northwood University Midland, Michigan, United States of America

East Meets West Again: The Formation of National Costumes in the 19th Century Balkans

Living in the Balkans means living at the crossroads of the East and the West. While this may seem as a great advantage for the development of cultures that can feed on the creativity of two different civilizations, the relationship has always been very complex, and often conflicting. In this presentation it is viewed from a specific angle: how the two influences affected each other in the process of creating “national costumes”, the symbols of new identities for the people living in (re)emerging nation-states after being for a long period under the Ottoman rule. The changes that ensued were profound and all-encompassing. It was a gradual transition from a conquered to an independent status, from a backward socio-economic system towards a modernized one, from traditional social structure and gender relations to more liberal and individualized forms, from oriental aesthetics, values and world views to occidental ones. The “national costumes”, inspired from “above”, worn, in different variations by both city and village dwellers, reflected that pivotal point in the development of these societies, which were still entrenched in their own oriental and local past, and which, while continuing to honor and/or create tradition, were also striving towards the modern and western, or, to be precise, European. The presentation focuses on the materials from Serbia, but also uses other Balkan societies for comparison in an attempt to reach broader generalizations.

Prof. Cedomir Vasic
Faculty of Fine Arts Belgrade, University of Arts, Serbia

Official Dress of Rulers in Serbia in 19th and 20th Centuries

The expectation that the official rulers' dress represents country sovereignty, national identity, personal authority and partially foreign politics affinity was affirmed in costumes of rulers of Serbia, throughout the two stormy centuries of its recent history: from Vozd Karadjordje who has insisted on folk clothes during the First Uprising and wars, but at the same time used Russian uniform, to Prince Milos who moved from the mimicry of Turkish dress to the first Serbian ruler's costume; from Milos's descendants showing romantic leaning toward the original national dress, combined with various foreign influences in uniform of top military commander, to movement toward the European fashion and special clothes worn by mass international and trade organizations in the newly-formed country of Yugoslavia. After the Second World War, the marshal uniforms and glamorous clothes of global political star Josip Broz Tito have contributed to specific formation of his personality cult, making his descendants grotesque. The rulers' clothes in Serbia, from the standpoint of historical facts and artifacts, express the dynamics of psychological and social relationships of time, place, activities and persons wearing those clothes.

Katarina Mitrovic, M.A.
Historical Museum of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia

Luxury Dress: Costume and the Politics of Representation in 19th Century Serbia

This paper aims at investigating different forms of luxury clothes that were used during the course of the 19th century and the complex role that expensive garment and accessories played in the Serbian visual culture. By examining a large number of visual examples and literary sources, I analyze diverse ways in which lavish personal display was interconnected with the notions of power, aesthetic taste and respectability, and how it was interpreted within different cultural traditions. As one of the most obvious actors in display of the body, luxury clothes were a very important agent in the construction of personal identity, revealing the differences in contemporary thinking about nationality, civilisation and gender roles.

Judy Rudoë
British Museum, London, United Kingdom

Textiles and Costume from the Balkans in the British Museum

The British Museum's Ethnographic collections from Europe are less well known than other areas, partly because there was very little from Europe prior to the 1970s. Apart from a group of pieces given by the traveller and anthropologist Edith Durham in 1914, very little came in until 1971. In that year the Bulgarian government made a large gift of some 350 objects – costume and jewellery, domestic textiles, ceramics and metalwork, musical instruments, looms, distaffs, etc – and this was the foundation for subsequent acquisitions. Since then much has been acquired, particularly from the area of South-East Europe known as the Balkans (the countries of the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and Northern Greece) either from émigrés living in the UK such as the Serbian poet, philosopher and revolutionary Dimitrije Mitrinovic, or from collectors who had lived or worked in those areas in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of whom were members of folklore groups and bought complete costumes, often with accompanying jewellery. After a brief look at other parts of Europe to give an idea of the range of material, this overview will concentrate on the Balkans in the light of the Museum's current display: 'Traditional Jewellery and Dress from the Balkans' (21 January – 18 September 2011).

Inez Brooks - Myers
Oakland Museum of California, United States of America

Oakland Museum of California, Some Ethnographic Clothing

This PowerPoint presentation will highlight the Ethnographic collections of the Oakland Museum of California. Those collections are varied; they include a lot of material from California's first people (Native American Indians) as well as artifacts from many cultural groups around the Pacific Rim. Since the founding of the Oakland Public Museum in 1910, the predecessor of the History Department of the Oakland Museum of California, the mission of the institution has changed. In recent years we have made efforts to acquire artifacts and stories that relate to the diverse cultural, ethnic and racial groups of people who make up California's population. I will show some of these artifacts, share some of the stories and explain how these items relate to the California story of the present day.

Xenia Politou
Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece

Cultures of Dress Between the East and the West. The Case of the Dodecanese Costumes in Greece

This paper, based on a selection of costumes from the Benaki Museum collection, will attempt to specify the different influences that determined the form of the Dodecanese costumes, as we've known it in the 19th century. The Dodecanese is a group of twelve larger and six smaller islands situated in the southeastern part of Greece. It consists a physical crossroad between the East and the West, because, on the one hand, of its geographical position, and on the other of its historical background: it has been occupied by the Venetians and the Genoese in the 13th century, by the Knights Hospitaller in the 14th and 15th century, by the Ottomans from 1522 to 1912 and finally by Italy from 1912 till the end of World War II, when it has been integrated into Greece. Furthermore, the commercial and marine activity of its inhabitants reinforced this 'in between' orientation of this group of islands, that is also reflected in their dress cultures.

The Dodecanese women's costumes can be classified in two major groups, depending on their composition and on the origin of some specific garments. The first group includes as main garment a pleated dress of European origin, and the second a long open coat, originating in the East.

Dr. Vicki L. Berger & Rebecca Akins
ICOM Costume Committee, Phoenix, Arizona, United States of America
Museum Association of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona, United States of America

Dressed for “A Night in Belgrade”: The Milan Yuncevich Costume in the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum, Bisbee, Arizona, USA

Between 1952 and 1980, the large Serbian-American community of Bisbee, Arizona, celebrated its Balkan heritage by hosting the Labor Day Weekend event “A Night in Belgrade”. The Women’s Auxiliary (also called The Serbian Sisters) of the Saint Stephen Nemanja Serbian Orthodox Church served a banquet of macaroni and meat sauce, stuffed cabbage rolls, roast lamb, salad, cookies and apple strudel to hundreds of guests, some of whom danced and partied until 1:00 AM the next morning. The Yuncevich family participated wholeheartedly. Gregory M. Yuncevich (b. 1946 – d. 2008) is remembered by his mother Dorothy and her friends as wearing his grandfather Milan Yuncevich’s (b. 1876 – d. 1955) traditional Serbian outfit to the festivities. The Yuncevich costume consists of five pieces: (1) a red pillbox hat [kapa] whose crown is embellished in metallic gold braid with the cipher of Nicholas I positioned under an arch of parallel semi-circles of braid; (2) a red double-breasted, sleeved waistcoat embellished with metallic gold braid; (3) a red bolero-style jacket with hanging sleeves, heavily decorated with matching metallic gold braid and beaded tassels; (4) a pair of blue, Turkish-style trousers; and (5) a long warp-stripped sash. The costume was donated to the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum in 2010 by Gregory’s mother, Dorothy Yuncevich.

Andreas Seim
Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe, Germany

Galicnik: Wedding as a Part of National and Migrant Identity

In the Northwest of Macedonia (also: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) lies Galicnik. Today all inhabitants have migrated for economical reasons, but during one weekend in July the village is crowded not only with persons having their roots in Galicnik. Even a greater amount of visitors from all over Europe and overseas joins into a wedding festival of folkloristic character – in the center of attention are lavish old regional costumes. Former historical wedding costumes and customs (around the 1930s most of the male inhabitants of the village worked far away from Galicnik and returned at the July 12th for their own marriage or to attend one) are now transformed into a part of the national identity of young Macedonia – supported by tourism, former Yugoslav minority policy and by the migrants from Galicnik themselves. This report tries to describe the development and the possibilities of the „Galička Svadba“ in near future.

Ksenija Markovic, M.A. & Nenad Radujevic
Fashion Studio CLICK, Belgrade, Serbia

(Un)Explorable Origin of Inspiration of Modern Fashion Activities

This lecture will present the idea of exchange and influences that have been affecting the formation of fashion and fashion scene of Serbia. In order to understand the complexity of fashion eclectics in this region, the selected examples will illustrate the diverse forms of this exchange, as well as the diverse ways in which the cultural heritage and ethnos (in the broadest possible meaning of that word) become the base for design.

The examples used as illustrations in this lecture include the following projects:

“Happy Family” by Dejana Vucicevic – Dress as part of esthetic reality of present moment. Stylistic changes as a product of societal changes and vice versa

Project Zubun – Through its origin and esthetic appeal, this item of women’s folk dress combines Eastern-Asian and Byzantine elements, indicating a constant of a community as well as the layered acculturation processes. At the same time, this project is a good example of ethno-heritage becoming an inspiration to fashion creativity

Collections by various authors from the Belgrade Fashion Week – Selected Works will illustrate the existence of certain heritage base in the authors' work, contributing to formation of modern fashion scene while carrying the information about the past
(All the cited projects will be also presented at the planned exhibition)

Thursday, 27th September 2011.

Efrat Assaf-Shapira
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel

The Outfit of the Jewish Women from Gabès, Tunisia; Local and International Encounters

“Let’s dress up like the girls of Gabès” is an adage that reflects the region’s reputation for rich, colorful clothing. The outfit of Jewish and Moslem women alike consisted of a wrap fastened with fibulae, worn over an embroidered blouse. A belt of woolen yarn accentuates the hips, and the head was covered with a kerchief worn underneath a scarf, adorned with amulet patterns and tassels.

While most of the described outfit is of local origins the embroidered tulle or cotton blouses originated in Europe.

In this context my paper will trace the local Jewish and Moslem collaboration in the making of this outfit together with intertwining European influences.

Vesna Duskovic
Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, Serbia

Symbolics of Bride’s Kerchief in Serbia

The wedding kerchief – the bride’s chaplet – was the main attribute which performed multiple tasks by using colour and flower symbolism, and also by the use of various materials of animal, herbal, or mineral origin. It visually distinguished the bride from the other ritual participants, and at the same time protected her from the evil spirits and demons.

The use of various decorative elements on the brides' kerchieves in fact reflects some survived notion of particular parts of the object, so that every single attribute plays a special role within the ritual or the magical protection of the bride from the evil eye and bewitchment, providing prosperity and fertility in her forthcoming marriage. The most featured among them are peacock feathers, horse-tail tassels, the cross-like amulets, but also the rows of small pearls and jingle-bells, which oust the evil forces the bride is believed to be exposed to, by their moves and sounds.

Mirjana Menkovic, M.A.
Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, Serbia

The Neglected West – Change of Traditional Dress Pattern of Central Balkan Region in the First Half of the 20th Century

The researchers of dress culture in Balkan region in the second half of 20th century have determined the important periods of changes and defined the main factors, causes and trends in changes of the traditional dress pattern. The relationship between the natural conditions on one side and historical-political changes on the other has determined the speed and form in which these changes were to be manifested. In spite of more or less well defined causes of changes in the traditional dress, the change in dress pattern in the central Balkan areas and particularly in Kosovo and Metohija in the first half of 20th century attracts attention due to the radical formal-esthetic procedures. The dress pattern from the period between the two world wars seems to share no common ground with the preserved museum collections from the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century. This fact is the main reason why the author chose to discuss this observed situation.

Wednesday, 28th September 2011.

**Yvonne Broutin
Caumont, France**

What Do Our Clothes Tell?

Costume, being a mirror of a society, undergoes its shifts, its technical and economical transformations. It brings to light the ideological currents, the contacts established between human groups that were formerly apart, the trends in fashion. All these elements go towards shaping one's appearance.

Between the words that tell about them, and the behaviors that express them, the costume refers to some organized systems whose modes of installing and of communicating are similar to speeches. Each individual in a particular social group is more or less aware of that, and uses this language with varied skill and success.

We are going to go through those systems of communication in the light of both social linguistics and ethnology. For this purpose we will use the methods of sociolinguistics, which offer a good means of studying the costume within its social context, whether in traditional societies considered as stable, or in changing societies. We will thus try to clarify the process of expression at work in this essentially visual language. This language is universal, whatever the human group, even if the syntax and vocabulary differ, according to mentalities, climates, levels of techniques and materials available for clothing.

But clothing also includes hairstyle or tattoo, and the language of signs in skin is no less complex, no less codified, no less explicit than the other.

Today, in our societies, the signs conveyed by the costume are very clear, easily understood from one social class to another, and are deliberately used for political purposes.

**Nicoleta Sirbu
Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Bucharest, Romania**

The Dress, Unity in Variety

If in the past the clothes and the way they have been worn meant a language of the forms, decorations and taste, a necessary language in the ethnic image of Romania and not only, today they remained just as memories. Being a rare piece in the structure of the popular costume, the dress could be found both in the structure of the Romanian popular costume and the Romanian ethnics costumes (Aromanian, Germans, Hungarian, Tatars, Macedonians, Turks and Lipovans). By its own materials, cut and decorations the dress may be considered an element that makes us different, but also a connection element - so it is about unity in variety. And in this way, the dress becomes a reason and also a direct way to give women sobriety and an elegant touch (either talking about the dress worn on holidays or the wedding dress).

**Dr. Vesna Marjanovic
Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, Serbia**

Communication Aspect of Traditional Dress of Romanians in Banat and its Application in Modern Dress Design

This paper has originated as a presentation plan for lecture presented at the Technology Faculty in Zrenjanin, at the Department of Textile Technology and Design, in December 2010. This lecture was a part of international expert meeting at the topic of Modern Dress, inspired by Romanian folk dress, organized for the event of closure of regional international project on cross-border cooperation between the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Romania. The fashion show of student works, inspired by

traditional dress of Romanians in the Serbian part of Banat, had confirmed the importance of certain dress items and ornaments even in the modern times. The continuous interaction on symbolic level in service of transferring the traditional types of dress culture contributes to introduction of new generations into the known, outside, public, but also creates the social space for common actions. The return of traditional values and reminiscence of past times through special forms of communication at the symbolic level is presently reviving all the forms of traditional culture, including culture of dress, with strong support for finding new areas for its application in modern society. The elements of traditional costume of Romanians are finding their way to the modern fashion.

Anne Kjellberg

The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, Norway

Oleana. Norwegian Knitwear with International Success

The focus of this paper is on the Norwegian knitwear factory Oleana and its products. Founded in 1992, at a time when most Norwegian knitwear factories had gone out of production, Oleana managed not only to survive, but to flourish. The reasons why the factory became a success will be discussed. One of the most important factors was that the fashion designer Solveig Hisdal was engaged to design Oleana's collections. Hisdal draws her inspiration not only from Norwegian sources but from Moorish designs in Spain, old tiles from Istanbul or textile patterns from along the Silk Road. While Oleana's first designs were sweaters for skiing with traditional geometrical patterns, Solveig Hisdal designed jackets with abundant floral designs. In doing so she was in accordance with the international designers who at the same time started to distance themselves from the ruling minimalism and dared to use flowers and talk about beauty. Today Oleana not only produces knitwear but skirts, coats, belts etc. made of woven fabrics. Their customers in Norway and elsewhere can consequently buy a total look. What will happen to that look when Solveig Hisdal retires? This ought to be a question of concern for the management of Oleana.

Thursday, 29th September 2011.

Dr. Bernard Berthod

Musée de Fourvière, Lyon, France

Papal Red – Byzantine Heritage

The high admiration for red paint was established long before the onset of Roman civilization, and it seems to have originated in prehistory. The red color was very important at the time of Eastern Roman Empire. The tsar used to write and sign documents in red ink. Very soon this color started to rule the tsar dress and the Byzantine tsar and his family were called Porphyrogenites. The red color, which used to be the privilege of tsars, was adopted by Popes already in the early Christian times, in order to advance the authority of church rulers of Rome. At the beginning it included only the mantum, but red footwear and headdress were added soon.

Johannes Pietsch

The Bavarian National Museum, Munich, Germany

Robes à la Polonoise, à la Turque, à la Circassienne: Eastern Influences on French Fashion in the Late 18th Century

In the final years of the Ancien Régime influences from the East entered the French fashion world, which is expressed by the names of fashionable dresses of the time: robe à la Polonoise, à la Turque, à la Circassienne, and others. But what did these garments look like? This lecture tries to give some definitions of women's dress types in the late 18th century.

Alexandra Kim
Historic Royal Palaces, London, United Kingdom

Elegant and Exotic - Indian Influences on Fashionable Dress in Britain 1770-1830

During the late 18th and early 19th century fabrics from India and the East were highly fashionable in Britain, being used for both day and evening dresses.

This brief paper explores their popularity by concentrating on one dress in the Royal Ceremonial Dress Collection at Kensington Palace: a 1820s court dress worn by Lady Bute. Its rich jewel like colours and hint of the exotic speak eloquently of the allure of Indian textiles for the British market and in doing so reveal much about the economic, social and cultural relationships between the two countries.

Jillian (Xiaojun) Li
Shanghai Museum of Textile and Costume, Donghua University, Shanghai, China

Costume Culture Integration between East and West in China: late 19th Century to early 20th Century

In Chinese costume history, the late 19th to early 20th century was a special period during which many complex changes occurred. The last imperial government (Qing Dynasty) had collapsed, a new society was emerging. The dress code changed, Western styles and techniques were brought in, mixed with Chinese traditional customs. New rules were materializing and Chinese costume history was moving towards the modern style.

May Khuen Chung
National Heritage Board/National Museum of Singapore

The Impact of Western Fashion on Singapore Women's Wardrobe from the 1950s to the 1970s

This paper seeks to explore the impact of Western fashion on Singapore women's wardrobe after the Second World War in the context of the nation's changing social, economic and political conditions. The call for rapid economic development and industrialisation by the government during the 1950s saw a tremendous increase in the number of women participating in the work force. Women were no longer restricted to their traditional homemaker roles but instead, had a job and a career. They also began to enjoy political rights as voters and were encouraged to study, amongst the many changes introduced. This shift in identity and an increasing public role were reflected in the changing wardrobe of Singapore women. One of the major fashion changes that were observed during this period was the influence of the tight fitting silhouette popularised in the West. Not only did Singapore women embraced western frocks with wasp waistline, the tigh fitting silhouette also made its way into their traditional garments such as the *cheongsam*, the *sarong kebaya* and the *sari*. Interestingly, women in Singapore exercised their creativity as consumers of fashion by appropriating elements which they thought were relevant to their new roles. As a consequence, many of their traditional ethnic garments were given an updated look which was deemed modern in a fast developing Singapore. This paper will provide examples from the Museum's own collection of garments and its Fashion Gallery.

Tina Chanielaki
Museum of Greek Folk Art, Athens, Greece

Urban Tradition: The Revival of the Greek Folk Art in Greece in the 60's and the Re-use of Traditional Textiles on New Clothes. A Preliminary Examination

At the end of the 1960s and until the late 1970s a fashion phenomenon appeared mainly among the urban population of the big cities of Greece: Young women turned their interest to the traditional Greek folk art not only for artistic and decorative purposes, but also for their clothing.

The women approached the phenomenon in three different ways:

- The production of new clothes and accessories influenced by traditional forms and motifs

- The use of authentic traditional objects as part of their attire
- The reuse of objects or parts cut from authentic objects and added on new garments.

The present paper will attempt to demonstrate

- what urged the women towards this trend within an urban environment
- which is the social profile of the women who followed the trend
- which were the techniques adopted for the production of objects, new or reused.

The paper will try to reveal if this trend was a regional expression of the fashion that occurred within an international context or whether it was a statement affected by the social and political situation of Greece at that time. The research was based on interviews, on objects found in museums or private collections and on women's magazines of that period.

Pamela Inder Boylan
Leicester, United Kingdom

Who was Marie Schild?

c. 1873 Marie Schild, 'artiste in paper modelling', and her partner (husband?) Samuel Miller established a business in London's Covent Garden supplying dressmakers' paper patterns ('cut to the client's own measurements' if required) designs for fancy dress and amateur theatricals, all sorts of patent devices for dressmakers (measuring tapes, a pickpocket-proof pocket closer, an early form of Velcro, 'Oxygen water' hair bleach, etc, etc). They were agents for various sewing machine manufacturers and ran competitions. They also produced dozens of fashion magazines, catalogues, dressmaking manuals and (a few) cookery books. They established a branch in Melbourne, Australia. The firm survived until 1940 under Samuel Miller's daughter. Yet despite establishing what must have been a veritable empire (judging from the number of their publications which survive) they are comparatively unknown. 'Marie Schild' was a pseudonym and we can only guess who she really was.

June Swann
Northampton, United Kingdom

How a Men's Boots became Children's Shoes, 1842

This is based on a humorous article with a sad ending in George Cruikshank's Omnibus. A smart gentleman spent a happy day displaying and admiring his immaculate, glossy new pair of hessian boots, only to have them stolen during the night. Not long after, he sees them in a coffee house on a person with indifferently padded calves, followed them to a Billiard room, and in disgust put it out of his mind. Near three months later he saw them again, now with a small crack and only one of the formerly magnificent tassels left. And so it continued: they acquired iron tips, a clumsy tassel, went to prison and the pawnbroker, drove a hackney-coach (which cost him a vast sum of money following them), were used as a weapon which broke them down even more, re-soled and re-sold, given new fronts, they became one patch, cut down to become shoes, and then slippers, until finally all that remained were the soles, sold to a poor man with many children who made shoes for them himself.

I have stressed over many years, we must be aware of alterations to shoes, just as we expect to find with dresses. This should help us to recognise the changes in old worn shoes in our collections, and to see their significance in illustrating the poor but thrifty past.

Dr. Karin Thoennissen
Krefeld, Germany

The Culture of Dress in East-Germany, 1945-1989

Just as today many people like to drive the small DDR-car "Trabant" you can still buy "DDR-Fashion": clothes made from specific material like Dederon and "Boxer" jeans. There was a lively scene at East Berlin with small boutiques, a fashion institute and fashion magazines like *Pramo* and *Sibylle*. What were the differences between East- and West-Germany fashion?

Friday, 30th September 2011.

Helen Margaret Walter
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom

Staging Difference: Orientalising “Othello” in Late Victorian Theatre

As a play centred around themes of interracial marriage and uxoricide, the staging of *Othello* has often courted controversy. Nowhere was this more true than in Victorian Britain, where a fierce debate raged over Othello’s racial status, and the relative merits of the Sub-Saharan Negro and the North African Moor. This critical debate manifested itself in a highly specific change in the costuming used for Othello. From being a Negro dressed in everyday fashion and Venetian military uniform, Othello became an Oriental nobleman, a ‘magnificent Emir’. Using reviews, images, and costumes from the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, this paper reconstructs and examines the costumes worn to play Othello in Late Victorian London. Dressed in ‘robes of Oriental magnificence’, actors such as Henry Irving, Edwin Booth, and Herbert Beerbohm Tree attempted to redeem Othello as a noble Moor for their audiences. Their motivations, influences, and designs, and the way they expressed a Western understanding of Oriental culture, are the subjects of this paper.

Jean L. Druessedow
Kent State University Museum, Kent, Ohio, United States of America

Transforming the Queen of the Nile into the Queen of Hollywood: Fashion and the Theatrical Interpretation of the East

There have been five 20th century film interpretations of Cleopatra and innumerable stage productions. Each has interpreted the Queen of the Nile in terms of the fashion of the time of production, and each has claimed ‘authenticity’. This presentation will explore the designs influences behind each interpretation.