

Natalia Kliashtorna. *Narodne vbrannia zakhidnoi Boikivshchyny: Litovyshchi ta okolysy* [Folk Clothing of the Western Boiko Region: Litovyshchi and Vicinity]. Translated by Adam Stec' et al., Drukarnia "Foliant," 2017. 84 pp. Map. Illustrations. Glossaries. Bibliography. \$34.95, cloth.

This publication, copiously illustrated with photographs and drawings, is eye candy that also makes a welcome scholarly contribution. It shows details of clothing construction and embroidery that are seldom found in studies of folk costume.

The introduction (3-20), given in Ukrainian, English, and Polish, focuses on the westernmost part of the Boiko region, one that is currently outside of Ukraine. Natalia Kliashtorna stresses here that it is the loss of this microculture through war, deportation, and work abroad that has motivated her in her effort to document and preserve the unique Boiko traditions. A general description of men's and women's Boiko garments follows, with the author pointing out special features, such as the use of a mirrored button at the neck, the ubiquity of a felted wool vest, and the tradition for men of knee-length shirts over narrow trousers. She provides a Polish version of her introduction, alongside a Ukrainian one, because the region in question is currently part of Poland. The English translation serves as an acknowledgement of financial support that was received from the Boikivshchyna Society in the United States and Canada and the Peter Jacyk Program for the Study of Modern Ukrainian History and Society at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. Although the three introductory texts are the same (just in different languages), the photos do not repeat. The author has cleverly chosen different images to illustrate the same phenomena, thus allowing for more photographs to be used. Photos of children in folk dress are included, which is a rare occurrence in clothing books.

The body of the book is in Ukrainian. It begins with a discussion of the materials used in the making of garments—woven fabrics, felt, and leather (21). Especially valuable is the description of how each material was processed. Next come embroidery patterns and explanations of embroidery techniques, which are accompanied by informative close-up photos (22-25). A special type of embroidery was done on the gathers used to shape garments, and this, too, is illustrated by photographs and described.

The section on men's clothing (26-33) begins with a general introduction, which is followed by a chapter containing more detailed descriptions of shirts and their construction and of embroidery patterns. There is a similar chapter on pants. Then comes a chapter on belts and one on hats. Each chapter contains a number of pictures that depict construction and decorative features. Seams, like gathers, were often embellished with

embroidery or at least visible stitches executed in coloured thread. Even the bottoms and sides of men's trousers were decorated. In the winter, pants were worn in multiple layers for warmth. The belts of this region were three or even four buckles in width and provided support and a place to store personal items; they were also decorative. Various types of hats were suited for various seasons. Hairstyles were distinctive, and men wore their hair long and oiled.

The section on women's clothing (34-53) starts with a general chapter on clothing. This is followed by chapters on the shirt and its ornamentation; the skirt; the belt; and the apron. All of the chapters are copiously illustrated. Kliashorna has included pictures showing not only the right side of construction techniques and embroidery details but also the reverse side of both. Seeing the underside of a stitch or a seam is very helpful for understanding how a garment was made or embroidery was executed. There is even a photograph showing how skirts were pleated by rolling wet fabric around a stick. Throughout the book, the author provides historical commentary that describes how fashions changed. In keeping with this, there is a chapter on the making of printed fabric, which includes photos of the fabric itself and of the board that was inked to create the print. The chapter on jewellery emphasizes seed-bead necklaces. This is followed by a chapter on the felted vest, which was worn by both women and men; construction details are provided, and there is a close-up of the knot closures characteristic of this region. In more recent times, women also wore velvet vests, either waist length or longer. They were decorated with both embroidery and beading.

Outerwear was the same for both genders (see 54-57). It was heavy and voluminous in order to allow for the layers underneath. There were several types of outerwear: the shorter *kurtka* and the longer *sirak* plus the fluffy *hunia*. Married women covered their hair with a cap, over which a long length of cloth, called a *namitka*, was wrapped in decorative ways. The leather coat, or *kozhukh*, came in two lengths. It was an expensive item because it could not be produced at home and required sending a number of sheepskins to a trained master.

The book ends with a chapter on the clothing worn at weddings (58-59) and a chapter on footwear (60). Wedding wear was distinguished by its quality. Decorative greenery was worn on the heads of both women and men, and a red kerchief was held by members of the wedding party. The chapter on shoes is also a rather unique feature, not typically found in books on clothing. It shows footwear of the European type, wooden clogs, the gathered leather slippers called *khodaky*, and straw shoes with a wooden sole.

Next comes a little section of ditties called *kolomyiky* (61). Similar sayings are also used as epigraphs to each chapter. The book also provides a

glossary (62) because Boiko words for various garments are different from those used elsewhere in Ukraine. English and Polish glossaries are given as well (76-77), and there are English and Polish translations of photo captions (78-83). The bibliography is followed by a list of stitch types, along with instructions for stitch execution. There are patterns, reduced in size, for a woman's shirt, a skirt, the felted vest, an apron, a man's shirt, and both types of men's pants, plus step-by-step assembly instructions (64-75).

Kliashturna's book is valuable in that it provides information about a lost microculture. It is modern in its presentation of construction details and fibre and fabric preparation. The chapters on the various types of stitches that were used to join seams is especially intriguing. The book is a bit repetitive as information given in the introductory chapters is restated in the chapters that follow. The *kolomyiky* seem extraneous. Everything else is as it should be. The multiple translations allow this book to cater to a wide range of potential users.

Natalie Kononenko
University of Alberta