

## *Miscellanea*

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**ON THE HISTORY OF LITHUANIAN FASHION:  
WHY THERE WERE NO LOCAL FASHION  
MAGAZINES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY  
LITHUANIA**

**INTRODUCTION**

Fashion in its modern sense is a marker of an affluent society. Perceived as a continuous change of trends and styles, it requires equally continuous investment in always new attire, which is a costly occupation. Since the days of Louis XIV, fashion occurred in the manner that Simmel termed 'trickle-down': trends and innovations appeared at the top of the social structure and filtered down to the lowest levels. Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption established fashion as another marker of social and financial affluence. The fashion magazine, in this context, is the channel of information broadcast as well as the marker of fashion's 'inner circle', those 'in the know', which is what, according to Best, characterises early versions of fashion journalism.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Nelson Best, *The History of Fashion Journalism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 26–27.

The concept of the fashion magazine, born in seventeenth-century France, caught on quite quickly in other European countries. Many European cultures either directly copied the French magazines or produced their own versions. Other cultures, such as Lithuanian, did not produce fashion magazines, either in the early days of female-oriented periodicals or much later. The purpose of the article is to review the historical circumstances that prevented the occurrence of a fashion magazine in nineteenth-century Lithuania and to reflect on the reasons why a national fashion magazine was not established at this time.

Gilles Lipovetsky, discussing the emergence of the concept of modern fashion, disagrees with the majority of sociological fashion theorisation, suggesting his own formula for analysing the phenomenon of fashion in modernity. He claims that the concept of a fashion occurrence should be based on several factors, primarily material and economic, although these are not the only aspects to be taken into consideration. Of equal importance are modern society's quest for novelty, the concept of modernity, conspicuous consumption (i.e. social competition for demonstrating wealth), new relations between self and others, the desire to assert one's own personality, and, finally the pleasure of seduction, the "sex drive".<sup>2</sup> Taken together these factors mean that society's attitude to fashion is perceived as an ontological, philosophical, aesthetic entity rather than a material preoccupation.

Yet, examination of ontological factors would be impossible without an understanding of the overall material environment of the society in question. Therefore, this article will explore the objective material factors of fashion information consumption in Lithuania in the nineteenth century that may have influenced the absence of a national fashion magazine. Analysing these factors can reveal what other, non-material, aspects of fashion information consumption should be further researched in order to better understand Lithuanian society and its characteristics.

The historiographic research method has been used to investigate this problem. Interpreting data collected from various sources has allowed me to formulate an explanation of the possible reasons why

2 Gilles Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, transl. by Catherine Porter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 40–52.

there was no genuine fashion magazine in Lithuania during the nineteenth century.

Nineteenth century Lithuanian history has been rather extensively analysed by several authors, such as Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Antanas Kulakauskas (1996)<sup>3</sup>, Olga Mastianica (2012)<sup>4</sup>, Zita Medišauskienė (2011)<sup>5</sup>, Tamara Bairašauskaitė (2011)<sup>6</sup>, among others. Aelita Ambrulevičiūtė (2017)<sup>7</sup> has thoroughly explored the emergence of consumer society in late nineteenth century Lithuania. Jolanta Širkaitė (2003)<sup>8</sup>, Andrius Skuolis (2012)<sup>9</sup>, Vytautas Petronis (2016, 2018)<sup>10</sup> have studied entertainment culture of the period. Vytas Urbonas (2002)<sup>11</sup> has researched the history of Lithuanian journalism. Jolita Mulevičiūtė's monograph (2012)<sup>12</sup> is useful for understanding the social role and expectations for women in nineteenth century Lithuania. Aspects of popular culture, however, such as communication of fashion information, the contexts around fashion magazines in the nineteenth century, or fashion information consumption habits in Lithuania have not been extensively researched.

3 Egidijus Aleksandravičius, Antanas Kulakauskas, *Carų valdžioje: XIX amžiaus Lietuva* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1996).

4 Olga Mastianica, *Pravėrus namų duris: Moterų švietimas Lietuvoje XVIII a. pabaigoje – XX a. pradžioje* (Vilnius: LII leidykla, 2012).

5 Zita Medišauskienė, *Agrarinė ir industrinė erdvė. Lietuvos istorija XIX amžius: Visuomenė ir valdžia*, VIII tomas, I dalis (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2011).

6 Tamara Bairašauskaitė, *Visuomenė: uždara ir laisvėjanti. Lietuvos istorija XIX amžius: Visuomenė ir valdžia*, VIII tomas, I dalis (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2011).

7 Aelita Ambrulevičiūtė, "Trumpai apie Vilniaus parduotuves XIX a.", *Liaudies kultūra*, 1 (171) (2017), 80–87.

8 Jolanta Širkaitė, "XIX a. Lietuvos dvariškių menai ir pramogos", *Menotyra*, 2 (31) (2003), 32–38.

9 Andrius Skuolis, *Socialinė priežiūra Vilniuje 1795–1831 m.* Unpublished (Vilnius: Šiauliai University, 2012).

10 Vytautas Petronis, "Vilnius ir vilniečiai: miesto ir jo bendruomenių kaitos bruožai XIX a. antrosios pusės oficialiojoje spaudoje", *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis*, 1 (Vilnius, 2016), 21–48; Vytautas Petronis, "Vilniaus metų laikai: Miesto kasdienybė 1868–1869 metais", *Pasakojimai apie Vilnių ir vilniečius*, I, comp. by Zita Medišauskienė (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 2018).

11 Vytas Urbonas, *Lietuvos žurnalistikos istorija* (Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2002).

12 Jolita Mulevičiūtė, *Besotis žvilgsnis: Lietuvos dailė ir vizualioji kultūra 1865–1914* (Vilnius: Lietuvos kultūros tyrimų institutas, 2012).

## SOCIETY AND THE EARLY FASHION MAGAZINE

The beginnings of the fashion magazine are traditionally attributed to the Frenchman Donneau de Vise, who had the idea of inserting image plates depicting the dresses of a high-society couple into the journal he was producing, *Le Mercure Galant*, in January 1678. The supplemental *Extraordinaire* issue, featuring two fashion plates, included details on where such goods could be purchased, as well as a text describing the latest styles of suits, dresses, hats and bonnets, among others.<sup>13</sup> The journal is also credited with establishing the structural template for the modern magazine, as its topics included current events, social gossip, poetry, readers' letters,<sup>14</sup> and the first reports on the fashion world, which at the time was the social circle of the royal court.

This was an ingenious move for two reasons: first, it was a highly successful combination of visual material on the subject of fashion, which was an important element of French social life in the reign of Louis XIV; second, the subject matter of the *Extraordinaire* addressed a new audience, i.e. women, that had not been targeted by the press before.<sup>15</sup> Notably, it was women of the highest social classes, for they were, first, able to read and, second, the society news would be of relevance to them, as was also the case with fashions, which could be copied or imitated. The other reason was the high cost of the magazines, which was due mainly to "expenses of hand-tinting of every plate, as colour printing had not been invented yet".<sup>16</sup>

Notwithstanding this, the concept of the fashion magazine proved extremely successful, and travelled through Europe as far as Russia. It established the dominance of France in the field of fashion, but, more importantly, it turned fashion into a newsworthy subject of public discussion. Purdy claims that in the eighteenth century, fashion was already associated with the Enlightenment concept of social

13 April Calahan, *Fashion plates: 150 Years of Style*, ed. by Karen Trivette Cannell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 3.

14 Calahan, *Fashion plates: 150 Years of Style*, 3.

15 Shire Lyon, "The evolution of fashion journalism from print to digital", *The Fashion Globe* (n.d.), <https://thefashionglobe.com/fashion-journalism> [accessed 23/11/2024].

16 Calahan, *Fashion plates: 150 Years of Style*, 6.

progress,<sup>17</sup> while the number of fashion magazines was steadily increasing along with the number of literate women.

The nineteenth century brought about enormous social changes to the whole of Europe, although they manifested differently in different regions. Western European countries experienced the Industrial Revolution and explosive growth of the sciences, engineering, mass production and the expansion of cities. The feudal castes were replaced with dynamic and mobile social groups related by certain qualifications (or their absence), sources of income or sense of community. The development of capitalism encouraged the growth of civilisation, with a new social group – the intelligentsia – emerging, which would determine the processes of political national movements (for example the French July Monarchy, etc.). In the second half of the century the two dominant social groups – the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie – gradually merged, forming the middle class, a new, and soon the most influential, social layer within capitalism.<sup>18</sup> It expanded rapidly, and, with it, the market for ladies' magazines catering to those with newly disposable income.<sup>19</sup> The fashion magazine industry experienced an explosion; titles become more specialised, differentiating between the super-wealthy members of society proper, and the middle-class housewife.<sup>20</sup>

As the main factors of the rise in fashion magazines, scholars name "the development of railways, growth in female literacy, rising consumer prosperity, technological advances in printing, the development of the lithograph print, and innovation in the magazines themselves"<sup>21</sup>, "the freedom and the modernity of the urban lifestyle"<sup>22</sup>, and "the invention of the department store that transformed the consumption habits".<sup>23</sup> Best maintains that in

17 Daniel Leonhard Purdy, "Introduction", *The Rise of Fashion: A Reader*, ed. by Daniel Leonhard Purdy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 3–4.

18 Bairašauskaitė, *Visuomenė: uždara ir laisvėjanti. Lietuvos istorija XIX amžius: Visuomenė ir valdžia*, 375.

19 Calahan, *Fashion plates: 150 Years of Style*, 9.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., 10.

22 Mica Nava, "Women and the city", *The Shopping Experience*, ed. by Pasi Falk, Colin Campbell (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 59.

23 Calahan, *Fashion plates: 150 Years of Style*, 9.

addition to the factors noted above, it was also “the mechanization of clothing production and textiles, and the development of ready-to-wear clothing” that brought fashion into middle-class culture.<sup>24</sup> As for fashion periodicals, “they remained fairly elitist in the first half of the nineteenth century, being literary and sartorial at the same time.”<sup>25</sup> Yet with time many high-end magazines transformed to become fashion and lifestyle based.<sup>26</sup>

The subject matter of most fashion magazines, independently of their country of origin, was very similar. The greatest emphasis was made on reports about the latest fashions, predominantly from Paris, the capital of fashion, accompanied, if possible, by fashion plates. Then there were texts describing the life and clothes of social elites, theatre reviews, poetry and fiction, and other themes important to women: educational topics (such as science, history and geography), and parenting advice.<sup>27</sup> Publications intended for lower-class audiences included pieces on hand needlework with drawings, colour embroidery designs and supplements with sewing patterns.<sup>28</sup>

Eastern European publishers were also quick to understand the potential of the fashion magazine. For example, first Russian magazine devoted to fashion, *Modnoe ezhemesyachnoe izdanie, ili Biblioteka dlya damskogo tualeta* (*Monthly Fashion Publication, or the Library for Ladies' Dressing*), came out in 1779 in Moscow<sup>29</sup> – earlier than many Western European fashion magazines<sup>30</sup>. In the late 1850s in Russia there were more than 30 journals targeting the female audience, such as *Merkuriy mod* (*Mercury of Fashion*) or *Vestnik parizhskoy modyi* (*Bulletin of Parisian Fashion*), with supplements featuring current fashions from Paris.<sup>31</sup>

24 Best, *The History of Fashion Journalism*, 28.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., 29.

27 Calahan, *Fashion plates: 150 Years of Style*, 9; Best, *The History of Fashion Journalism*, 28; N. Malysheva, E. Pugina, “Fashion Bulletins. History of fashion magazines published in Russia” (2011), *The National Library of Russia*, [https://nlr.ru/eng\\_old/exib/moda\\_hist](https://nlr.ru/eng_old/exib/moda_hist) [accessed 23/11/2024].

28 Ibid.

29 Malysheva, Pugina, “Fashion Bulletins. History of fashion magazines published in Russia”.

30 For dates see Best, *The History of Fashion Journalism*, 21–25.

31 Malysheva, Pugina, “Fashion Bulletins. History of fashion magazines published in Russia”.

In Poland, fashion magazines appeared in the mid-nineteenth century. The first magazine devoted exclusively to fashion was *Dziennik Mód Paryskich* (*Journal of Parisian Trends*, 1840–1848, a weekly fashion paper with fashion plates), published in Lviv, which was at the time a Polish-speaking city. Other publications followed, such as *Bluszcz* (*The Ivy*, 1865–1936, Warsaw), *Penelope Nowy żurnal deseniowy robót i mód damskich* (*Penelope New Pattern Magazine of Handicrafts and Female Fashions*, 1854–1862, Wrocław). During the nineteenth century, up to 25 magazines in Poland had up to half of their content devoted to fashion.<sup>32</sup> Fashion being a primarily urban phenomenon, the magazines were published and sold in the largest cities, i.e. Warsaw, Krakow, Wrocław, Lviv, St Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, etc.

To sum up, during the nineteenth century (Western) European society managed to develop the capitalist system of industry and production and enjoyed the early stage of consumerism, characterised by the increasing wealth of the middle class, the flourishing of city life, and the establishment of material consumption patterns that were registered and enhanced by the fashion magazines of the time. The ever-increasing popularity of these magazines was due to their adequate connection with their target audience – women – which, in turn, was ensured by an increase in general social wealth. Most middle-class women could now afford servants, which meant that they had enough leisure to be interested in fashion and enough income to practice new fashion trends. Fashion magazines were a signature of consumerism as well as a channel for its promotion.

## THE SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITHUANIA

The societies of traditionally agrarian Middle and Eastern Europe underwent different processes of formation to those of Western Europe. Weak industry and slow urbanisation, the class structure and higher social groups (primarily the nobility) that did not favour newcomers from lower social classes impeded the formation of an

32 Krawcówna [?], „Czasopisma modowe w Polsce w XIX wieku – SPIS“, *kajani-blog* (August 3, 2014), <http://kajani-blog.blogspot.com/2014/08/czasopisma-modowe-w-polsce-w-xix-wieku.html> [accessed 23/11/2023].

intelligentsia. Another obstacle was the flawed education system, a narrow market for qualified professional work that was slow to grow because of backward economic, social, cultural and national policies that denied the possibility of development.<sup>33</sup>

Lithuania's 1795 annexation to the Russian empire stopped the development of Lithuanian society in many respects. While for Western Europe the nineteenth century was a time of economic, technological and social growth, the north-western territories of the Russian empire remained backward and underdeveloped. On the other hand, the nationalistic movements of the nineteenth century that formed most modern European states were very strong in Lithuania (as well as in Poland) and are the dominant signature of the period.<sup>34</sup> The fight for independence should be seen as the most important political marker of the time.

### SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES

Most Western European societies at the turn of the nineteenth century lost the clear and stable structure of feudal classes, inherited from the Middle Ages, and began creating more democratic societies. The social project of the Russian empire, to which Lithuania was joined in 1795, however, did its best to maintain a traditional structure that divided society into four major groups: the nobility, the clergy, the citizenry and the peasantry.<sup>35</sup> During the nineteenth century, Lithuanian culture dealt with two particularly severe blows: the suppression of the 1831 Uprising led to the closure of Vilnius University in 1832, and the suppression of the 1863 Uprising led to the ban on the Lithuanian press and language (1864–1904). The latter date is, according to modern historiography, the critical marker dividing the history of nineteenth-century Lithuania into two periods that need to be discussed separately in terms of the political, social and cultural life of the country. Importantly, the perception of the nineteenth century in this case extends until 1914, i.e. the end of the Russian era in the region.

33 Bairašauskaitė, *Visuomenė: uždara ir laisvėjanti. Lietuvos istorija XIX amžius: Visuomenė ir valdžia*, 375.

34 Aleksandravičius, Kulakauskas, *Carų valdžioje: XIX amžiaus Lietuva*, 14.

35 Bairašauskaitė, *Visuomenė: uždara ir laisvėjanti. Lietuvos istorija XIX amžius: Visuomenė ir valdžia*, 307.

It was only at the very end of the nineteenth century that Lithuania entered the space of the Industrial Revolution and the rapid development of technology.<sup>36</sup> Remaining essentially an agrarian country, Lithuania belonged to the periphery of the great European processes in terms of material civilisation.

### LINGUISTIC ISSUES

The language issue is a general indication of the deeper social complexities that influenced social life in the territory of Lithuania. In the nineteenth century, most of the nobility considered themselves to be of Lithuanian origin but Polish nationality (*gente lituanus, natione polonus*). Although Polish-speaking, they referred to themselves as *Litvins* – the progressive, liberal-minded (i.e., pro-Lithuanian) members of the nobility, thus differentiating themselves from the *Koroniazi*.<sup>37</sup> Yet the concept of Polish culture as more influential prevailed. Very few of the members of the nobility spoke Lithuanian, it was frowned upon as “vulgar”, and very few of the nobility would use it for communication, unless it was with the servants.<sup>38</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century, after the language ban, there were no Lithuanian schools. Lithuanian peasants opposed the Russian state policy of russification and conversion to Orthodoxy and would not allow their children to attend government schools. Children were mainly taught by parents themselves or in secret schools with Lithuanian teachers hired to teach in their mother tongue. According to the 1897 census, only 6.9% of children of school age were enrolled in government schools, while the percentage of people aged 9–49 who could read was 54.2%.<sup>39</sup> This means that a little over than half of the country's population would have been able to read a fashion magazine, were such thing provided, with only about one in ten Lithuanians finding fashion information (of the kind that fashion magazines provided) relevant, as the high-society

36 Aleksandravičius, Kulakauskas, *Carų valdžioje: XIX amžiaus Lietuva*, 14.

37 Ibid., 20.

38 “Lietuva Rusijos imperijos valdymo metais 1795–1914“, *Vle.lt (Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija)*, <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/lietuva-rusijos-imperijos-valdymo-metais-1795-1914/> [accessed 27/02/2024].

39 “Raštingumas“, *Vle.lt (Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija)*, <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/rastingumas/> [accessed 27/02/2024].

reports and information about evening dresses that such magazines published would have been alien concepts for the country's peasant community, who would have perceived this as curious news rather than examples to follow.

### THE URBANISM OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITHUANIA

In 1897 the territory of today's Lithuania (except the Klaipėda region) was inhabited by 2.7 million people, with 87.3% living in villages and towns and only 12.7% in cities. Of the people living in cities, 73.4% were peasants, 20% were city dwellers, and only 5.2% belonged to the nobility.<sup>40</sup>

In 1840, Vilnius was the single Lithuanian city with more than 53,000 inhabitants, and could therefore be called a large city. All other regional centres had fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.<sup>41</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, as industry developed, city populations grew: 58,000 in Vilnius in 1857, 155,000 in 1897; 23,000 in Kaunas in 1857, 71,000 in 1897; and several thousand in other larger towns. Despite this, urbanisation was relatively slow. Peasants would emigrate to the USA or move to the larger industrial cities of the empire such as Riga, Tallinn, St Petersburg or Liepāja, where they could easily find work in factories.<sup>42</sup> In this regard Lithuania was very much behind most Western European countries, where in 1910 the proportion of city dwellers to total population in England and Wales was 78%, in Norway 72%, in Germany 56.1%, in France 41%, and in Denmark 38.2%.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, bearing in mind fashion's preference for the urban environment, only Vilnius could have produced a local fashion magazine at the time. It seemed to have most of the required qualities. It was characterised as an emerging industrial and urban cultural centre<sup>44</sup> – the population rose from 20,000 in 1800 to 35,000 in 1812.

40 "Lietuva Rusijos imperijos valdymo metais 1795–1914", *Vle.lt (Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija)*.

41 Medišauskienė, *Agrarinė ir industrinė erdvė. Lietuvos istorija XIX amžius: Visuomenė ir valdžia*, 142.

42 Tomas Balkelis, *The Making of Modern Lithuania* (London: Routledge, 2009), 1–13.

43 Medišauskienė, *Agrarinė ir industrinė erdvė. Lietuvos istorija XIX amžius: Visuomenė ir valdžia*, 138.

44 Skuolis, *Socialinė priežiūra Vilniuje 1795–1831 m.*, 19.

By 1825 it was one of the largest cities in Eastern Europe, outstripped only by St Petersburg, Moscow and Riga. Czarkowski claims that in 1873, when the first one-day registration of citizens was performed in Vilnius, the result showed 96,000 inhabitants, out of which more than half were Jewish.<sup>45</sup> Skuolis says that "due to the legal provisions in Eastern Europe and the Russian Empire, which prohibited Jews from living in some territories, due to ... the old traditions of tolerance of the state and the attitude of the inhabitants in Vilnius"<sup>46</sup>, the Jewish community had been a significant part of the city's landscape for ages. The population of the city was mixed and multicultural, with three main communities, Polish, Russian and Jewish. Vilnius Lithuanian community was present as well, yet, due to "their small number, low activity and national amorphousness, Lithuanians 'disappeared' in the context of the Polish-speaking Catholics".<sup>47</sup>

The multiculturalism of the city, however, has been referred to as not merely local, but also cosmopolitan with a variety of European languages spoken in its salons and streets. At the beginning of the century many foreigners resided in Vilnius, for example the merchants (Italian haberdasher Fiorentini, highly appreciated by the aristocracy, wine seller Frenchman Bideaux, several German druggists), and most of the professors at Vilnius University. The city was polyglottic: university professors read lectures in Latin, French and German, and those languages could be used for communication. Even Italian was quite widespread among the higher social classes.<sup>48</sup>

So, if a fashion magazine were to be produced in Vilnius, the language issue, in fact, would have been rather pressing, as the publisher would effectively have had to select one city community. Nevertheless, although the largest in the region, Vilnius could hardly match the 'urban volume' of European cities featured in fashion magazines – Paris and London (with 550,000 and 948,000 inhabitants

45 Ludwik Czarkowski, *Vilnius 1867–1875 (atsiminimai)*, transl. by Stanislovas Žvirgždas (Vilnius: Aštuntoji diena, 2020), 62.

46 Skuolis, *Socialinė priežiūra Vilniuje 1795–1831 m.*, 19.

47 Petronis, "Vilnius ir vilniečiai: miesto ir jo bendruomenių kaitos bruožai XIX a. antrosios pusės oficialiojoje spaudoje", 21.

48 Saulius Pivoras, "Bajoriškojo Vilniaus daugiakultūriškumas ir tolerancijos problema", *Kultūros barai*, 5 (2002), 83.

in 1800, respectively<sup>49</sup>), or even Warsaw (with a population of over 230,000 at the beginning of the nineteenth century<sup>50</sup>). Obviously, the proportion of the potential audience would also have been important in the decision to produce a fashion publication.

### SOCIETY AND CONSUMPTION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY VILNIUS

One potential reason why there was never a Vilnius fashion magazine could have been the city environment itself, which is described rather controversially by contemporaries. Professor and medical doctor Joseph Frank, a foreigner who arrived in the city at the beginning of the nineteenth century to teach at Vilnius university, wrote in his memoirs: “Vilnius has a chaotic appearance. At every turn, a beautiful palace is visible amongst the tiny shantytowns. The town hall, in fine Italian style, stands in a beautiful square, which is full of shabby barracks. The street leading to the magnificent cathedral was unpaved, littered with piles of rubbish and impossible to cross in heavy rain.”<sup>51</sup> According to Frank, the city was dirty, with pigs roaming freely in the streets, piles of garbage on the riverbank as soon as you left the city, and mud and sand to wade through to get to the suburbs. It was Governor General Riukman who was the first to clean up Vilnius and ban pigs from the streets.<sup>52</sup> The photographer Jan Bulhak had a similar view of the city at that time, stating that “Vilnius is not a city and never has been. Vilnius is only becoming a city, unsuccessfully trying to be a city, although it always remains a village, regardless of the passage of time and the spirit of the times. Only here and there, a couple of main streets have the appearance of a big city, but underneath this veneer lies a completely different reality”.<sup>53</sup>

49 Statista Research Department [SRD], “Largest cities in western Europe in 1800”, *Statista.com* (May 1, 1992), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1022001/thirty-largest-cities-western-europe-1800/> [accessed 11/04/2024].

50 Marek Kepa, “Here come the waterworks: Warsaw’s nineteenth-century engineering gem”, *Culture.pl* (February 24, 2022), <https://culture.pl/en/article/here-come-the-waterworks-warsaws-nineteenth-century-engineering-gem> [accessed 11/04/2024].

51 Josephas Frankas, *Vilnius XIX amžiuje. Atsiminimai. Pirma knyga*, transl. by Genovaitė Dručkutė (Vilnius: Mintis, 2013), 51–52.

52 Skuolis, *Socialinė priežiūra Vilniuje 1795–1831 m.*, 19.

53 Ibid., 19.

The locals, however, had a different view. An eyewitness of the times, the writer Gabrielė Giunterytė-Puzinienė, remembers a vibrant cultural life, with many lit windows in the streets, carriages all around, and crowds of people going to theatres and concerts. Late visits lasting until midnight were so habitual that there was no need for street lighting, as all the windows were shining with light.<sup>54</sup> Russian authors writing for the local press after 1863 note the attention of the locals to appearance: the main street (Didžioji) was called the “parade sidewalk”. Pedestrian movement here is slow, everyone steps lightly. “To show yourself, to look at others, to observe new fashions – it is most convenient to do it here. The same lady who will appear in other streets dressed in whatever she likes here will show in the best clothes of her wardrobe”.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the fashion tradition continued to be imported from larger European cities such as Warsaw, Krakow, and, of course, Paris. Giunterytė-Puzinienė tells of a famous Vilnius family, the Lubeckiai-Scipijonai: “nomads, forever on wheels.... Once, a large carriage packed with Parisian goods sat unloaded for several years before it was needed for another journey. When it was unloaded, the first thing that had to be removed were the elegant clothes that had gone out of fashion.”<sup>56</sup>

Vilnius high society was famous for its balls, masquerades, fireworks, outings, theatre visits and concerts. Despite the popularity of the masquerade, Müller House, where this event was usually held, could only accommodate about 70 people. So, with 100 or more participants, people were constantly jostling to get through the corridors and into the hall. The opulence of the parties surprised Joseph Frank, himself a native of glitzy Vienna, who marvelled at the splendour of Vilnius salon entertainment.<sup>57</sup>

The city also sported social ‘institutions’ similar to those of other European countries with several nobility clubs surviving until the 1920s. The club (members were only men) was a space for homosocial

54 Pivoras, “Bajoriškojo Vilniaus daugiakultūriškumas ir tolerancijos problema”, 83.

55 Petronis, “Vilniaus metų laikai: Miesto kasdienybė 1868–1869 metais”, 73.

56 Gabrielė Giunterytė-Puzinienė, *Vilniuje ir Lietuvos dvaruose. 1815–1843 metų dienoraštis* (Vilnius: Tyto Alba, 2018), 124.

57 Aistė Bimbirytė-Mackevičienė, “Visuomeninė aristokratės veikla XIX a. pab. – XX a. pr. Vilniuje: Klementinos Potockytės-Tiškevičienės atvejis”, *Acta Academiae Artium Vilnensis*, 68 (2013), 43.

contact where they were provided with everything necessary to establish and maintain it.<sup>58</sup> Surviving documents from the Noblemen's Club (Klub Szlachecki) shows that the organisation, founded in the mid-nineteenth century, was not different from its counterparts in Western Europe and the Russian Empire: it was a space for communicating and discussing ideas. Members could engage in a game of cards, smoke a locally bought cigar (22 varieties were on offer and the total stock was valued at 632,30 roubles), take a stroll in the garden at the foot of the Three Crosses Hill, or even visit the Botanical Garden which was connected to the Club by a wooden bridge over the Vilnelė rivulet.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, for a fashion magazine, a Vilnius publication would have had more than enough events and occasions to report on. Assuming that the majority of high society ladies ordered their dresses from Warsaw or even Paris, there would have been plenty of examples to write, or even produce fashion plates, on.

However, after the 1863 Uprising the situation in the city changed. Tsarist Russia began turning Vilnius, like the whole of the north-western region, into an imperial province. Efforts were made to erase even the smallest remnants of the great past.<sup>60</sup> Extravagant parties vanished from the city. It was Countess Klementina Potockytė-Tiškevičienė, a descendant of one of the most influential families of the time and a woman of exceptional upbringing and connections in Europe, who brought back some of Vilnius' glamour in the 1880s, having settled in the city after her marriage to one of the richest men of the country, Count Jonas Tiškevičius. The palace that was built for the newlyweds and their growing family in the very centre of Vilnius quickly became the centre of attraction for local high society and the main place of entertainment.<sup>61</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, cabaret balls and carnivals under the patronage of the countess helped to resurrect the atmosphere of Vilnius to at least some extent.

58 Juozapas Paškauskas, "Vasara Vilniuje prieš šimtmetį", *Naujasis židinys-Aidai*, 5 (2012), 333.

59 Paškauskas, "Vasara Vilniuje prieš šimtmetį", 335.

60 Bimbirytė-Mackevičienė, "Visuomeninė aristokratės veikla XIX a. pab. – XX a. pr. Vilniuje: Klementinos Potockytės-Tiškevičienės atvejis", 42.

61 Ibid., 40.

As for consumption habits, at the end of the nineteenth century Vilnius became the largest trading centre in the north-western part of the Russian Empire. Wool, cashmere, faience, porcelain as well as gold and silverware were in demand, shipped from the industrial areas of Moscow, St Petersburg and Warsaw. Luxury goods, fashionable clothes and haberdashery were shipped from France, England and Prussia<sup>62</sup> and Vilnius became a centre for both shopping and learning about the newest fashions.

In the last decades, the garment trade took a major leap forward, manifesting a sharp increase: in 1857 there were two guild clothing shops, two non-guild shops and nine shops selling second-hand clothes. In 1888, the number of guild shops had risen to seven and the number of non-guild shops had grown to 37. Just three years later, in 1891, there were already 32 guild shops and 31 non-guild shops. The largest department store in the Northwest region, owned by Leiba Zalkind, had 20 departments and 150 clerks (at the beginning of the twentieth century). It offered French, English and Russian outerwear and underwear, along with fur, fabrics, hats, haberdashery, musical instruments, toys, luxury goods (bronzes, chandeliers, vases, etc.), tapestries, lamps, metalwork, manufactures (locally made and imported from England), wallpaper (Russian, French), bicycles from the most famous Western European companies, crockery and cutlery, sporting goods, and footwear from the most fashionable companies (Neider, Wernigk & Co, Triugolnik, etc.). Other large dress shops included the mass-produced clothing shop Parižskij konfeksijon (Parisian Confection), the merchant Barita's shop, and a shop called Konkurencija (Competition).<sup>63</sup>

Certain region-specific goods, such as fur, enjoyed high popularity, and a great variety of it was available: "raccoon, opossum, skunk, nutria, bear for the gentlemen, fox, monkey, rabbit, marten, sheepskin fur for the ladies".<sup>64</sup> In 1893, for example, there were already about ten specialised fur shops in Vilnius, some of which traded with Nizhny Novgorod and Leipzig.

In 1885, a large shoe shop was established by the merchant Jochelis Aronovskis, and more shops followed every year. Another popular

62 Ambrulevičiūtė, "Trumpai apie Vilniaus parduotuves XIX a.", 80.

63 Ibid., 83.

64 Czarkowski, *Vilnius 1867–1875 (atsiminimai)*, 66.

product, socks, was produced in Vilnius by Isaac Bruno's workshop. Initially, Bruno gave knitters raw materials and later collected the production from them, but by 1882 he had a small knitting workshop which he developed into the Imperial hosiery and knitwear factory in 1918.

To sum up, at the end of the nineteenth century, Vilnius had all kinds of shops: luxury goods and everyday household goods, clothing and food, building materials, etc.<sup>65</sup>

In terms of social stratification (assuming that fashion would have been the priority of the upper social class), the high-society of Vilnius included permanent residents (people who had homes in the city or its outskirts) and people who would only come for the so-called carnival period, between Advent and Lent, devoted exceptionally to banquets and their preparations.<sup>66</sup> According to the 1897 census, the total number of the nobility in Vilnius was 11,704,<sup>67</sup> yet most of them were poor and had arrived in the city in search of work. It is possible to assume from the sources available that nobility of Vilnius origin represented the wealthier class – their number in 1897 was 5,301. The total number of Vilnius citizens at the time was, as mentioned, nearly 155,000.

Solely for the sake of comparison, the example of the French fashion publication *Le Cabinet des Modes* (published 1785–1793 in Paris) is provided here. The publication is described as highly successful, as in its first year it already had 846 subscribers – from a population of over 600,000 in Paris. One of the most important fashion magazines of the nineteenth century, and international at that, *Le Journal des Dames et des Modes* (published 1797–1839) had a global circulation of 2,500 at its peak,<sup>68</sup> and was sold from the USA to Britain, Holland, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and Russia.<sup>69</sup> These numbers should explain why, in terms of audience volume, Vilnius was probably unsatisfactory for a national fashion magazine.

65 Ambrulevičiūtė, “Trumpai apie Vilniaus parduotuves XIX a.”, 84.

66 Širkaitė, “XIX a. Lietuvos dvariškių menai ir pramogos”, 32.

67 Jouzas Jurginis, Vytautas Merkys, Adolfas Tautavičius, *Vilniaus miesto istorija* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1968), 303.

68 Best, *The History of Fashion Journalism*, 26.

69 Ibid.

## THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF FASHION CONSUMPTION: THE CITY VERSUS THE MANOR

The structure of Lithuanian society at the turn of the twentieth century was also somewhat different from that of other European countries in that the middle class – the largest consumer group and most important audience for fashion magazines – was practically non-existent. The society consisted of two main classes, the nobility and the peasantry, with merchants making up a small part of the population in cities that were themselves small.

Most of the nobility lived in manor houses (at the beginning of the twentieth century there were about 3,500 manor houses on the territory of present-day Lithuania<sup>70</sup>), the richest families enjoying several residencies in different parts of the country. The manor would be the cultural centre of the area much more often than the town. The aristocracy would engage in various cultural activities, such as reading, discussing literature, and hobbies such as painting, performing music or hunting.<sup>71</sup> Annual Christmas and other seasonal parties were an obligatory element of manor life,<sup>72</sup> during which fashionable clothes made in accordance with the latest news from Paris were a top priority for the entire family, especially women.

The manor was more likely to practice the newest fashion trends because financially they could afford more. The households of poorer estates would make their own clothes, only clothes for banquets and weddings were ordered from professionals. Rich estates would have all their dresses made by dressmakers. For example, Giunterytė-Puzinienė tells the story of her cousin, who was about to get married. The writer's sister volunteered to arrange a dowry for their cousin's wedding in 13 days. “Without any delay, the two young women visited the Steinklers, the Zetes, Madame Adele and all the others, hired dressmakers, shoemakers, milliners, etc. Here they make hats, there they measure cloth, the rooms are filled with swarms of seamstresses.... The work is done with great speed, and every hour there is a new hat, a new dress, a new trinket for the boudoir.”<sup>73</sup>

70 Roman Aftanazy, *Dzieje rezydencji na dawnych Kresach Rzeczypospolitej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991–1997).

71 Širkaitė, “XIX a. Lietuvos dvariškių menai ir pramogos”, 33.

72 Marius Daraškevičius, “Kalėdos dvare”, *Geras skonis*, 4 (2017), 107–108.

73 Giunterytė-Puzinienė, *Vilniuje ir Lietuvos dvaruose. 1815–1843 metų dienoraštis*, 422.

The ladies of the wealthiest estates would have their clothes made not locally, but abroad. Lithuanian writer Marija Lastauskienė (Lazdynų Pelėda) recounts the story of her aunt Jadvyga Svežavskienė, who lived in Warsaw and was very rich. She used to have her clothes made in Herz's sewing shop because there they "made the most ornate and most fashionable clothes for the ladies".<sup>74</sup> Shoes from Warsaw were also highly valued by the society women – manor ladies would order them to be brought in dozens of pairs.<sup>75</sup>

Notably, both before the 1861–1863 Uprising and afterwards, fashion information would be obtained from the Polish press. Giunterytė-Puzinienė remembers that at the house of her uncle Rudolph there would always be a fashion magazine.<sup>76</sup>

Rakutis claims that manor culture is universal, i.e. it is not dependent on the state or national context in which the manor exists as an individual cultural object, a source of high, elite culture (2001, 135). The standard for manor culture was the manor environments of France, Italy, England and the fashions propagated by their nobility. Lithuanian manor culture was poorer than in the above-mentioned countries. This was conditioned by a lack of traditions of elite culture. The differences between high society and the standard were caused by the general economic and political situation, and the characteristics of the Lithuanian mentality. A larger part of the nineteenth century Lithuanian nobility were quite poor with few able to afford the luxury that surrounded many Western European aristocrats. The Lithuanian manor was dominated by Polish culture, through which and through the Russian upper class, Lithuania got the French fashions of the time and habits of salon culture. At that time, Polish fashion in Lithuania had a position equal to that of French fashion in Poland.<sup>77</sup>

The dominance of Polish culture in Lithuanian sociocultural life may be one of the reasons why Lithuania did not produce a fashion magazine in the nineteenth century, yet it is hardly sufficient. Further investigation must inevitably turn to the audience of fashion magazines – women. This is a deviation from Lipovetsky's formula

74 Dainius Rakutis, "Moteriškoji dvaro kultūra lietuvių literačių akimis", *Darbai ir dienos*, 28 (2001), 119.

75 Rakutis, "Moteriškoji dvaro kultūra lietuvių literačių akimis", 121.

76 Giunterytė-Puzinienė, *Vilniuje ir Lietuvos dvaruose. 1815–1843 metų dienoraštis*, 74.

77 Rakutis, "Moteriškoji dvaro kultūra lietuvių literačių akimis", 135.

(material vs. non-material aspects of fashion theorisation), yet it is one that cannot be avoided when presenting a full picture and therefore it will be reviewed, albeit briefly.

## WOMEN'S ISSUES

The eighteenth-century European trend of women's journals did not come to the territory of Lithuania.

In terms of literacy, the situation of women was fairly good – by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 54.2% of Lithuanians were literate, and among them was a considerable number of women, including those from the lower social classes. In 1873, there were only 575 girls in state primary schools, while in 1900 the number of students was 4,313.<sup>78</sup>

Yet literacy was not, most probably, the main reason for the absence of a national fashion magazine (or a ladies' journal). The issue is more of having a reading audience who could afford to buy such a magazine on a regular basis. According to the population census of 1858, in the governorates of Vilnius, Kaunas and Grodno there were 5,248 people registered as landowners, out of these nearly 22% could be considered wealthy or well-off<sup>79</sup> enough to regularly acquire periodicals for the females of their families, which makes around 1,150. How many of these would have bought a women's – or fashion – magazine were it published locally is a question that is impossible to answer today, yet the volume of the audience would have been very small in any respect.

The language issue was also relevant. As mentioned earlier, the larger part of the nobility regarded Lithuanian as lowly, the languages of the aristocracy were Polish or French. The press that circulated in the territory of Lithuania would mainly arrive from Poland (except for the *Kurier Litewsky* newspaper, which reviewed local news but operated in Polish as well). The females of small (and therefore poor) landowners' households as well as the women of the peasantry who were literate enough to deal with a fashion magazine, would not have been able to afford such a purchase even if they were highly interested in fashion.

78 Virginija Jurėnienė, *Lietuvių moterų judėjimas XIX amžiaus pabaigoje – XX a. pirmojoje pusėje* (Vilnius, Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2006), 31.

79 Bairašauskaitė, *Visuomenė: uždara ir laisvėjanti. Lietuvos istorija XIX amžius: Visuomenė ir valdžia*, 309.

In terms of fashion itself, as a sphere of interest it was regarded controversially. The writer Giunterytė-Puzinienė speaks quite a lot about various society women and their fashionable outfits, their interest in fashion, dresses that were being brought from Warsaw or Krakow or even Paris, the fabrics that were bought to make new dresses back home (in the manor of Dabraulėnai), testifying to the general interest of society ladies in the latest trends and their willingness as well as ability to follow them. Yet at the turn of the century, after the concept of an independent modern Lithuania enters the public mind, the frivolity of fashion caused it to be pushed away from public discussion. The dominant target of public discourse (expressed, due to the language ban, in illegal publications, though) was to “construct the national and cultural identity, to summon the differentiated society into a unanimous imaginary community, to define mutual duties and rights of various social groups, to devote lots of attention to the awakening of the awareness, of social activity of various social groups. Therefore, the illegal press discussed first the inclusion of the woman, her role in the processes of the formation of the modern nation”.<sup>80</sup> One of the most important discussions in that regard was the content of women’s education and an increasing awareness that it must be aimed at women’s intellectual growth rather than at training their abilities to take care of the family and educate the children.

Certain socio-cultural observations made by Mulevičiūtė in this regard are also worth mentioning. In her study of Lithuanian art and visual culture, Mulevičiūtė claims that until the mid-nineteenth century, a Lithuanian woman’s world was limited to her private home. As in other traditional societies, only the man was perceived as an active individual, independently forming his own views and consciously choosing his actions. The woman had to be content with the passive role of ‘mirror’ reflecting the opinions of others.<sup>81</sup> However, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, these conservative gender relations began to erode. It should be noted that in Lithuania as well as Poland, unlike in the West, the family crisis coincided with a political crisis, and this political transformation

80 Mastianica, *Pravėrus namų duris: Moterų švietimas Lietuvoje XVIII a. pabaigoje – XX a. pradžioje*, 67.

81 Mulevičiūtė, *Besotis žvilgsnis: Lietuvos dailė ir vizualioji kultūra 1865–1914*, 163.

had a direct impact on psychological, symbolic and material gender relationships.<sup>82</sup> The loss of political rights and civil liberties for the local nobility after the 1863–1864 Uprising led to the politicisation of the private sphere. The family became a substitute for the lost state. However, it was precisely the private space of family life that was the dominion of women. Therefore, with the politicisation of the domestic world, women’s existence inevitably acquired a political dimension.<sup>83</sup> On the eve of the Uprising, women of the nobility were involved in anti-war actions, prompted by the tragedy of the death of five demonstrators in Warsaw in early 1861. In response, a wave of passive political resistance swept through Poland and Lithuania. “Nowadays in Vilnius, everyone is dressed in black”, wrote an eyewitness of those days, “and if anyone wears a coloured dress, they are immediately doused with sulphuric acid or pelted with mud. All the hats, dresses and coats of all are black, and in the street and in the churches they all look as if they were in terrible mourning.”<sup>84</sup> The fashion spread after the archbishop of Warsaw Antoni Fijałkowski officially declared the beginning of the people’s mourning: “Across all the parts of Poland people should wear black for an unlimited time. Ladies should wear white only on the day of their wedding”.<sup>85</sup> From then on, the citizens of the Polish lands, especially those of the nobility, started wearing modest long-sleeved and high-collared black clothes. Yet because of the hastily introduced punishment men had to refrain from this fashion, thus wearing ‘opposition dress’ became the female duty of protest.<sup>86</sup>

In Lithuania, following the fashion of wearing black was entrusted to what contemporary historians have referred to as “a fashion bureau”.<sup>87</sup> During 1863–1864 Vilnius women would order the Polish fashion magazine *Tygodnik Mód* (Weekly Fashion, published 1862–1890), which contained models as well as sewing patterns for black dresses. The garments were then made at several dressmakers’

82 Mulevičiūtė, *Besotis žvilgsnis: Lietuvos dailė ir vizualioji kultūra 1865–1914*, 164.

83 Ibid., 164.

84 Ibid.

85 Anna Novikov, “Black patriotic fashion in Central Europe: Warsaw, 1861–1866”, *Journal of East Central European Studies*, 72 (2) (2023), 170.

86 Novikov, “Black patriotic fashion in Central Europe: Warsaw, 1861–1866”, 170.

87 Lithuanian State Historical Archives [Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas, LVIA], F. 438, ap. 1, b. 143.

ateliers, a certain secret association that also made clothes for the male participants of the Uprising. However, this set-up was discovered by the authorities and the dressmakers' ateliers all received fines for their activities.

### THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE LITHUANIAN PRESS

The general situation of the printed press is another material factor to be taken into consideration when discussing fashion information channels. While the printed press was experiencing rather extensive growth in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, and publications for women were increasing, the territory of Lithuania launched its first periodical, the newspaper *Kurjer Litewski*, in 1760 only (nearly a hundred years after the first fashion magazine *Le Mercure Galant*).

Calendars, the very first publications of periodical type, were first printed in Vilnius in 1607 (book-type calendars had appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>88</sup>), announcing the news of church, lay life and astronomy. The founder and editor of these calendars was Fr. Jan Poszowski, a Jesuit from Vilnius.<sup>89</sup> All the calendars published later, in addition to the usual calendar data, contained history, literature, astronomy, natural sciences, news, reviews and information about events in political, economic, cultural and social life.<sup>90</sup>

Poszowski's calendars, as a periodical publication, issued regularly every year, gave rise to the Vilnius press and, above all, prepared and educated readers of subsequent daily newspapers. Poszowski published three types of calendar: *Polityczny* (Political), *Kalendarz Młodych* (Calendar for the Young) and a third, intended especially for women, entitled *Calendar of illustrious ladies for the year of our Lord 1741, the first after the leap year, the second after the holy year, containing, apart from the revolution of the sun and the moon, the day of departure from this world of noble and distinguished ladies of birth, holiness and miracles, who are holy or blessed empresses, queens and princesses, duchesses and princesses, countesses and marquesses, also ladies*

88 Urbonas, *Lietuvos žurnalistikos istorija*, 18.

89 Aleksander Śnieżko, "Materiały do historii prasy na Litwie w XVIII i XIX w.", *Rocznik Historii Czasopiśmiennictwa Polskiego*, 11 (4) (1972), 502.

90 Urbonas, *Lietuvos žurnalistikos istorija*, 18.

and maidens of the senatorial family, for distinguished Polish ladies to follow as an example, for the benefactors of the Company of Jesus, for a declaration of gratitude for the carol presented by the priest Jan Poszowski from Vilnius 1741.<sup>91</sup> This was only issued once; later, all trace of women's publications disappears.

*Kurjer Litewski* came out once a week. The four-page publication was the only newspaper in Lithuania to run for the whole of the eighteenth century and was published in Polish until 1839. Other publications in Polish at the time were *Gazeta Litewska*, *Dziennik Wilenski*, *Gazeta Literacka Wilenska* (*Dziennik Wilenski* ran for 15 years [1815–1830]) the other two were published for a year or two) and the satirical newspaper *Wiadomości brukowe* (*Street News*) from 1816 to 1822.<sup>92</sup> The latter was the enterprise of the Shubravtsy circle (a society of liberal intellectuals active in Vilnius), who also influenced culture through fashion, setting certain cultural requirements for dress, at least in terms of what should not be worn in public. At one point, suits with many shrinking collars became popular, a fashion which, apart from its original ridiculousness, put many of the poor at risk of unnecessary extra expense. Thus, one of the Shubravtsy announced in *Wiadomości brukowe* that such a coat was called a *fanfaronometer*, and that its smallest collar was zero. From then on, no one dared to wear such a coat for fear of being publicly ridiculed; ultimately the lame fashion went into oblivion.<sup>93</sup> *Kurjer Litewski* was a political newspaper, publishing the most important world news and chronicling life in Poland and Lithuania: wars, changes of government in other countries, natural disasters, court proceedings, etc. From 1765 onwards, there was an increase of economic information along with news of the marriages, banquets, official receptions, etc. of Lithuanian public figures. The supplement *Wiadomości Literackie* (*Literary News*) published educational articles on physics, medicine and hygiene, the upbringing of young people, the importance of school and science in life, etc. However, there was little information about books, almost no articles on literary criticism, and no works of fiction.<sup>94</sup>

91 Śnieżko, "Materiały do historii prasy na Litwie w XVIII i XIX w.", 502.

92 Urbonas, *Lietuvos žurnalistikos istorija*, 20.

93 Adomas Honoris Kirkoras, *Pasivaikščiojimai po Vilnių ir jo apylinkes* (Vilnius: Mintis, 2012), 157.

94 Urbonas, *Lietuvos žurnalistikos istorija*, 21.

After the suppression of the 1831 Uprising, *Kurjer Litewski* was published in both Polish and Russian, in 1840 the title was changed – the Polish version became *Kurjer Wilenski* and the Russian *Vilenskij vestnik*. After the 1863 Uprising, the Polish edition was closed down and the Russian version supported the Russian government.<sup>95</sup>

The first Lithuanian-language newspaper was conceived by educator Laurynas Ivinskis, who designed *Aitvaras* at the end of 1857. However, he failed to obtain permission for it. After the ban on the Lithuanian alphabet, attempts were made to obtain permission to publish the periodical in the neighbouring territories of Riga, Liepaja and Moscow, but without success.<sup>96</sup> Thus, the illegal printing of Lithuanian books and periodicals began. Unsurprisingly, the most important message in these publications was the restoration of the state, the preservation of Lithuanian identity and language and the enhancement of patriotism. Fashion news was too alien for these manifestations of spirituality to have been included in the illegal periodicals.

Observations made by the most influential publisher in the region at the time, Juozapas Zavadzki, are interesting in this regard. As key factors for successful publishing he notes state support (legal norms and institutions of regulation), local suitability (a sufficient number of enterprises, crafts and professions contributing to the creation and production of the print product), and proper organisation of book distribution (a network of booksellers).<sup>97</sup> Interestingly, Zavadzki does not speak about such aspects of business as the demand and the supply. Being a man of the Enlightenment era, he emphasises education, which, returning to the subject of fashion magazines, was a rather prominent feature. Readers of European fashion magazines were educated in the latest fashions as well as in various subjects of science, history and geography.<sup>98</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, European fashion magazines had become platforms for the education of middle-class women, teaching them independence, encouraging self-maintenance, and spreading feminist ideas.

95 Urbonas, *Lietuvos žurnalistikos istorija*, 21.

96 Ibid. 24–25.

97 Aušra Navickienė, “Leidybos verslo modelis XIX A. Lietuvoje: profesionalaus leidėjo požiūris”, *Knygotyra*, 62 (2014), 238.

98 Best, *The History of Fashion Journalism*, 28.

Nevertheless, the factor of volume must have been important as well, for production of a fashion magazine was a costly endeavour, especially due to the expensive fashion plates that had become an indispensable part of fashion publications towards the end of the nineteenth century. In addition, starting a press publication in the Russian Empire required permission, which could have been an additional obstacle. However, the example of St Petersburg residents demonstrates that permission could be granted, were a substantial justification provided.<sup>99</sup>

### FASHION DISCOURSE WITHOUT FASHION MAGAZINES

There is historical evidence that the need for a local fashion publication definitely existed. The bibliography of 1760–1918 Vilnius periodicals<sup>100</sup> notes three publications that had, most probably, some interest in fashion. *Journal de Babel Dédié à Madame Concordia* (1808) and *Amusements pour les Dames* (1840) were published presumably in French and were potentially intended for the women of the local nobility. Yet the bibliography does not provide any other information about the magazines, except that neither passed issue Number 1 (the editor of *Amusements* is indicated as F. Tiebe, with typography by Zavadzki). The third publication was titled *Moda*, issued in two languages, Russian and Yiddish. It was an illustrated weekly on fashion and family edited by A. Grodzinski. The only known issue is dated 20 March, 1906.

Two other publications that have reached the present day confirm that fashion was a hot topic for Lithuanian society. In the first half of the nineteenth century fashion information was found in *Tygodnik Wilenski* (Vilnius Weekly), a newspaper established and edited by Vilnius University professor Joachim Lelewel. It had begun publication in 1815 (discontinued in 1822) and was devoted to literature and education. Published in Polish by Aleksander Żółkowski, bi-weekly from 1818, it served as the debut for many famous writers of the time, including the likes of Adam Mickiewicz, Józef Korzeniowski, A. E. Odyniec, Leon Borowski, Teodor Narbutt

99 See: Christine Ruane, *The Empire's New Clothes: A History of the Russian Fashion Industry, 1700–1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 89–101.

100 Jadvyga Kazlauskaitė, *Vilniaus periodiniai leidiniai: 1760–1918* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1988).

and Lelewel himself.<sup>101</sup> The newspaper published poetry, pieces of prose, historical narrations, translations of foreign literature and, from 1819, the writings of the Shubravtsy circle.<sup>102</sup> In 1821, with new editor Michał Olszewski, *Tygodnik Wilenski* turned into a lifestyle periodical, which was announced in the very first issue of the year, on January 15: the newspaper was now to aim at a “lighter and more down-to-earth content”, thus it will focus on the discussion of mores, historical narratives, travel stories, moral tales, poetry, entertainment, and “fashions for men and women reported from foreign daily papers, with coloured images added” (*Tygodnik Wilenski* 1821, 1/16). In the 1821–1822 period the bi-weekly published 18 articles on fashion, each in the second issue of the month, plus four fashion history texts in the first volume of 1821. Each issue containing fashion information was illustrated with six colour plates of the latest Parisian styles. The annual subscription price for the entire volume was five silver roubles (seven with post expenses). The last issue of 1821 revealed that “all fashion information of the year had been provided by Klara Żółkowska” (*Tygodnik Wilenski* 1821, 24/288), most probably the wife of Aleksander Żółkowski, the publisher.

The theme of fashion was introduced with delicacy. The first article of 1821 dives into the “History of Fashion”, presenting its concept as something that had been with humanity since the times of Adam and Eve. The magazine’s current fashion reports are always titled the same, “Parisian Fashions” (*Mody parizkie*) and comprehensively review what fashionable people (usually ladies) wear in Paris. Direct ‘how to’ instructions are avoided, as is advice. Rather, the author seems to believe that a faithfully detailed report from the capital of fashion will be sufficiently convincing. On several occasions, though, other countries’ fashions have also been reviewed (Greek, German).

The discourse of *Tygodnik Wilenski*, especially its ideas on women, deserves a separate study. For the purposes of this article, it will suffice to note that the frequency of fashion news in the publication suggests that transforming into a lifestyle periodical was an insightful move that should have had reflected favourably in the sales. However,

101 Dagmara Binkowska, “Wileńskie czasopisma literackie pierwszej połowy XIX wieku w zbiorach biblioteki Gdańskiej”, *Libri Gedanenses*, Tom XXXI/XXXII za lata 2013–2014 (Gdańsk: Polska Akademia Nauk Biblioteka Gdańska, 2015), 85.

102 Binkowska, “Wileńskie czasopisma literackie pierwszej połowy XIX wieku w zbiorach biblioteki Gdańskiej”, 86.

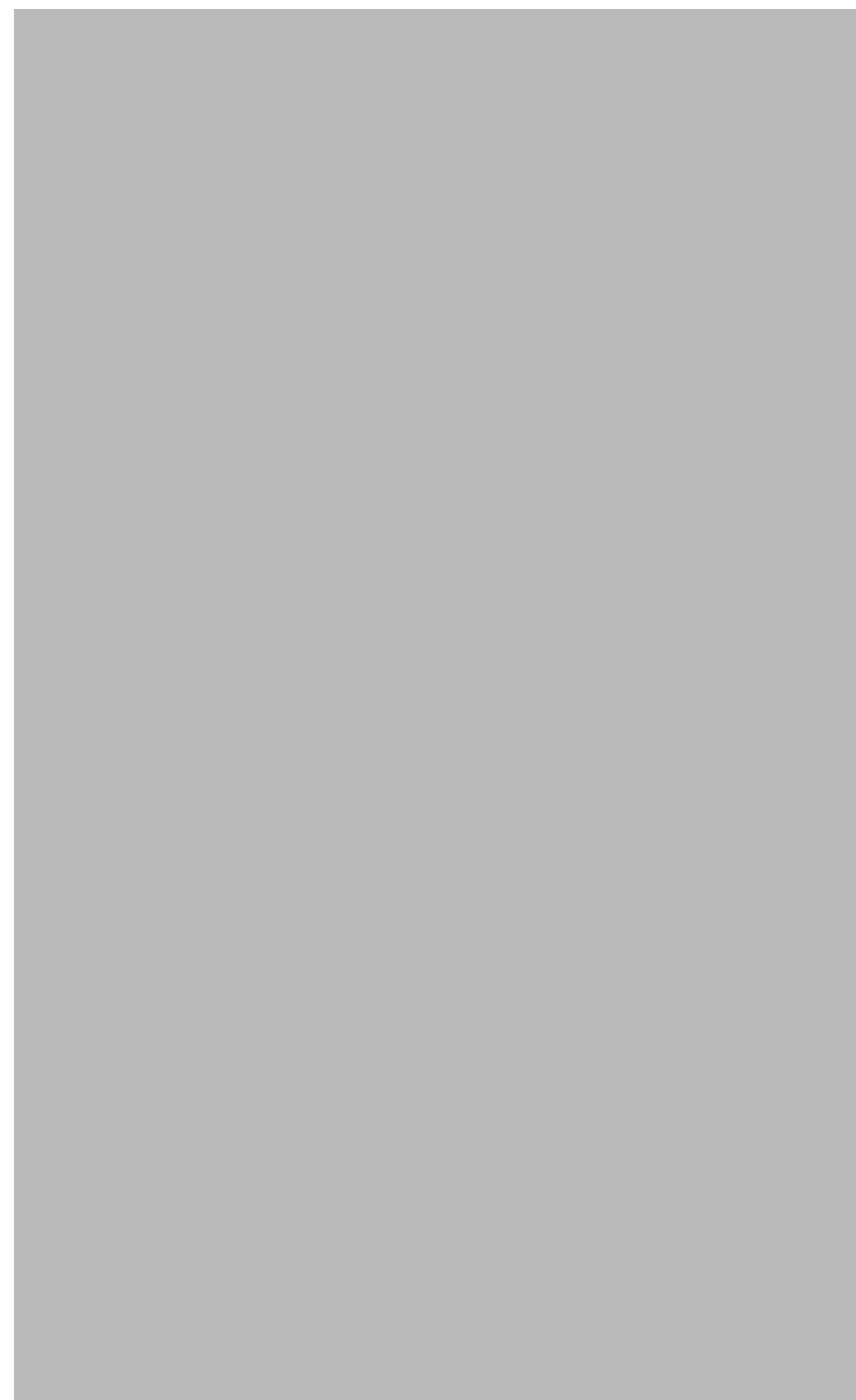


FIG.1. TYGODNYK WILENSKI FIRST PAGE, VOL. 3, NO. 8 (1822).



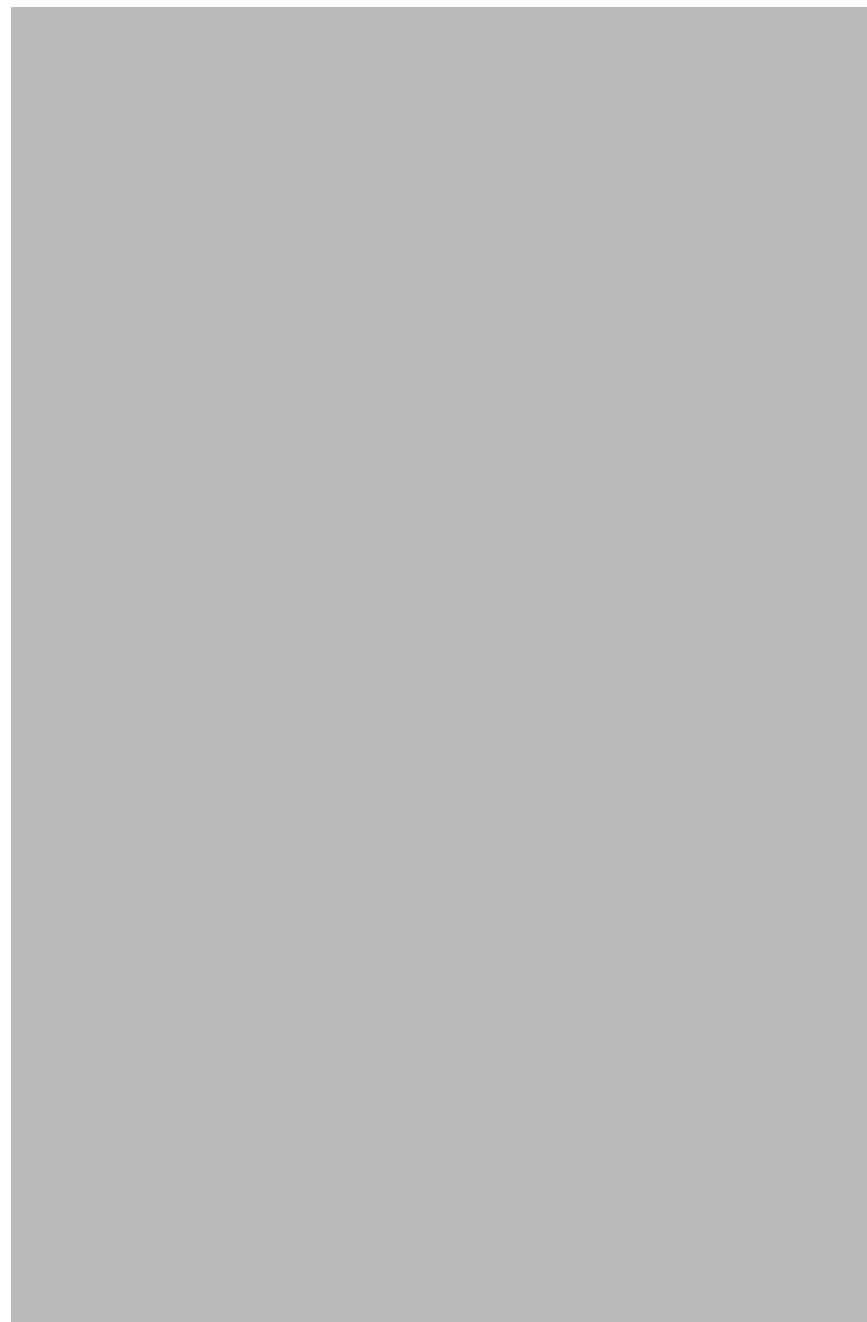
FIG. 2. TYGODNYK WILENSKI COLOUR PLATE, VOL. 3, NO. 8 (1822).

more research is needed to provide an evaluation of the newspaper on the aesthetic and cultural views of Vilnius society as well as the publication's reach beyond the borders of the city. In general terms, the fashion discourse observed in *Tygodnik Wilenski* is similar to its European counterparts: it is a combination of society news (without any names) and reports on clothing, dresses, accessories, hairdos, colours, changes in trends, etc. The style of writing is rather business-like, the author Klara Żółkowska refrains from providing judgement or praise, despite occasional impulses of picturesqueness, such as comparing a peculiar manner of wearing feathers on a fashionable turban to a "sitting bird of paradise".

The other type of publication that involved fashion information was the social gazette. An interesting attempt at this appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century in the town of Palanga, a seaside resort that hosted one of the most prominent families of the Lithuanian–Polish nobility, the family of Count Tiškevičius. The handwritten publication *La Limande* (The Flounder) was the first newspaper in Palanga, published during the summer season of 1886. It was a humorous weekly newspaper of four or six pages, all hand-written and without illustrations (except for a tiny drawing of a human head in No. 2) with sections titled "Official Part", "Unofficial Part", "Local Chronicle", "Financial Bulletin", "Manor News", "Theatre and Music", "Trade Review", and others. Four issues are known to have been published on 22 and 29 June 1886 and on 6 and 13 July 1886 (Sundays). The editor of the newspaper is indicated as M. Monstre (French for monster, M. standing for Monsieur). The gazette was published in French, as the nobility in Palanga (as in the rest of the country) spoke French and Polish. It was reproduced by lithography and was distributed in the churchyard of the old Palanga church after Sunday Mass. It is likely that *La Limande* was advertised and distributed among wealthy holidaymakers, providing various details about the holidaymakers and the resort's events, as well as cultural, economic and financial news.<sup>103</sup>

The *La Limande* issue of July 6, 1886, contains a section titled "Fashion Bulletin" that generously shares fashion advice with its readers. The review of the fashions of the moment, as demonstrated

103 Bronislava Spevakovienė, "Minimas pirmojo Palangos laikraščio „La Limande“ jubiliejus", *Palangostiltas.lt* (June 20, 2016), <https://www.palangostiltas.lt/minimas+pirmojo+palangos+laikrascio+la+limande+jubiliejus,7,2,6832.html> [accessed 23/11/2024].



FIGS. 3–4. *LA LIMANDE GAZETTE*, 6 JULY 1886.

at “the latest balls”, mingles in the text with the author’s fashion recommendations for ladies: “The most visible during the last ball was a wonderful dress of innocent white decorated with black velour knots composed into a crowd of butterflies over the front. For young girls nothing is more charming than a plain faience-blue skirt with village style black jacket from baize, as it makes it easy to dance and looks very delicate”. Monsieur Monstre does not forget to note the best dressmaker in town as well as other important elements of appearance: “Such indescribable creations can only be made at the atelier of Mrs Treu. Yet toilette alone won’t make an elegant dame, the hairdo is equally important. Short-hair owners are recommended the charming ‘Mauricaude’ hair style, worn by Miss X during the last ball.” The author does not shy away from criticising fashion as well, mainly for its inventions against good taste and originality, claiming that “fashion is created to be adapted to everybody’s appearance” (*La Limande*, 1886, July 6). The text clearly applies the writing style noted by Best<sup>104</sup>, i.e. that of the ‘fashion insider’: they will know the atelier of Mrs Treu and would very likely recognize Miss X.

*La Limande*’s fashion bulletin is unique within the national context. Though gazette writing for in-house purposes or entertaining guests was rather popular at Lithuanian manors (Giunterytė-Puzinienė mentions the practice within her household)<sup>105</sup>, distribution to citizens outside the walls of the house was not habitual and elevates *La Limande* to the level of a public newspaper.

#### ARTISTIC CONSIDERATIONS OR GUIDELINES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As far as fashion’s artistic connections are concerned within the context of this article, it is possible to maintain that, similarly to the nineteenth century Lithuanian fashion magazine, they should probably be seen as characterised by absence. For the social and cultural reasons discussed above, fashion did not become a socially acceptable topic for serious debate in nineteenth-century Lithuania. Lack of visual material in the existing publications on fashion matters (i.e. in *La Limande*) or its specificity (i.e. in *Tygodnik*

104 Best, *The History of Fashion Journalism*, 26–27.

105 Širkaitė, “XIX a. Lietuvos dvariškių menai ir pramogos”, 37.

*Wilenski*, see below) makes today’s discussion of possible artistic influence complicated. Speculation on the potential reasons for this issue could make an interesting, though not necessarily rewarding, theme for further investigation, yet these reasons are beyond the scope of the present text. The shortage of visual representations of fashion in the Lithuanian press remained one of its dominant characteristics throughout its later development and is noticeable in the publications of the first half of twentieth century as well, although more investigation into this theme is necessary to provide any adequate conclusions.

As for the subject of the nineteenth century fashion press, it is possible to infer that local attempts to compete with the French and Polish magazines that were available in Vilnius at the beginning of the nineteenth century<sup>106</sup> did not turn out to be successful. It is not known whether fashion texts, introduced for the purpose of increasing interest and widening the circle of readership, managed to popularise *Tygodnik Wilenski*. This publication was accused of immorality and closed in the middle of 1822. The reason behind its closure was, in fact, related to other themes, not those of fashion. It was the change in Russian censorship policy, grounded in the change of attitude to Vilnius University, the primary context of the social circle around *Tygodnik Wilenski*.<sup>107</sup> The local fashion press scene remained empty, and it is possible to claim that Lithuanian – primarily Vilnensian – fashion discourse of the nineteenth century remained occasional, failing to establish itself as a regular practice.

It is important to note that the present article is the first attempt to look into the history of nineteenth-century Lithuanian fashion discourse and one of the few to reflect on Lithuanian popular culture of that period. It creates other fascinating research possibilities for future investigation, such as, for example, the artistic value and/or authorship of the fashion plates of *Tygodnik Wilenski*. Out of the six illustrations that have survived from 1822 and are available online through the website of the digital library of Warsaw University, none had been signed or indicated by the publication itself, therefore the names of their authors are not readily known. An attempt to

106 Aistė Bimbirytė-Mackevičienė, *XIX a. vilnietės – mados provincialės. TV show Vilniaus mitų griovėjai* (2021), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EunZ\\_n7bkkk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EunZ_n7bkkk) [accessed 26/02/2025].

107 Wiktor Czernianin, Halina Czernianin, *Wokół “Tygodnika Wilenskiego” 1815–1822: studia i szkice* (Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza ATUT Wrocławskie Wydawnictwo Oświatowe, 2011), 41.

search electronically using GoogleLens image search has shown that at least one of the illustrations, issued with Volume 8 of *Tygodnik Wilenski* on April 30, 1822 (Fig. 2), had been published by the *Journal des Dames et des Modes* Frankfurt edition of March 24, 1822 (search performed on February 25, 2025). This implies that the publishers of *Tygodnik Wilenski* copied or re-published from Parisian magazines, and investigation into the artistic aspect of this process suggests a very interesting archive search.

Another research possibility could be the impact and reception of either *Tygodnik Wilenski* or *La Limande* on their audiences, although the potential of findings is relatively small considered the general attitude to fashion subjects that prevailed in Lithuanian society of the nineteenth century (this theme on its own presents another fascinating, though quite complex, potential for investigation). As noted previously, public discussion of the superficial theme of fashion was not a priority for the Lithuanian society of the time. Though it is perhaps worth noting that the readers of *Tygodnik Wilenski*, for example, did complain about the magazine's complexity of subjects. A letter from a female reader published in Volume 1, issue No. 21, 1816 suggested that the editor "transfer somewhere else your scientific and wise materials, or avoid putting them at the beginning, as you often do, so that we did not have to start reading *Tygodnik* from the end".<sup>108</sup>

A third possibility, among others, could be investigating the role of the two magazines in the overall fashion history of Lithuania. This task would perhaps be the most challenging as Lithuanian fashion history has not yet been extensively documented. Academic attention to fashion has been rather scarce until recently (this does not concern the history of costume or clothing, which has been written about rather broadly) and although the field of local fashion design is strong and prospective, its cultural reflection and history have been rather neglected. There are few scholarly publications on the subject; the main activity in the field is limited to public lectures and journalistic texts (published on their own or accompanying art or fashion exhibitions, such as, for example, the exhibition organised by the fashion historian and collector Aleksandr Vasiljev). In the context of nineteenth-century fashion, the names of art historians

<sup>108</sup> Czernianin, Halina Czernianin, *Wokół "Tygodnika Wilenskiego" 1815–1822: studia i szkice*, 37.

Aistė Bimbirytė-Mackevičienė and Dalia Tarandaitė should be mentioned. The latter curated the Portraits in Manor Collections exhibition that was followed by the publication of an album-style catalogue in 2016; she has also written on the social meanings of Lithuanian portraiture, discussing the issue of clothing, among others.<sup>109</sup> The former is known as an expert on nineteenth-century fashion matters, giving occasional public lectures on the theme, such as, for example, *Reflections of Nineteenth-Century Fashion in the Writings of Stanislaus Moravski*,<sup>110</sup> and *Nineteenth-century Vilnius Women: Fashionistas of the Periphery*.<sup>111</sup> The work of art historian Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Cemnolonskė, exploring the imagery of noblemen in nineteenth-century Lithuanian art, could be also mentioned as relevant to the theme.<sup>112</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

When summarising the material factors that determined the absence of a national fashion magazine in nineteenth-century Lithuania, it is possible to note that the most important reasons were the following:

Fashion was the privilege of the upper class; in Lithuania, the upper class in the nineteenth-century read Polish fashion magazines. Though they perceived themselves as a different nation, Polish culture was looked up to as more influential in matters of aesthetics and taste, especially in the field of fashion.

The lower classes, for whom fashion could be interesting, would not have been able to afford a fashion publication, even if it were published in their native Lithuanian language.

There were no large, cosmopolitan cities in Lithuania where fashion was already becoming an industry at the end of the nineteenth century, and where the audience regularly read fashion publications.

<sup>109</sup> Dalia Tarandaitė, "Portretinio atvaizdo socialinės funkcijos ir reikšmės", *Lietuvos dailės muziejaus metraštis*, 11 (2008), 32–46.

<sup>110</sup> Ramutė Šimukauskaitė, "XIX a. mados atspindžiai Stanislovo Moravskio raštuose", *Etaplius.lt* (July 29, 2021), <https://www.etaplius.lt/xix-a-mados-atspindžiai-stanislovo-moravskio-raštuose> [accessed 26/02/2025].

<sup>111</sup> Bimbirytė-Mackevičienė, *XIX a. vilnietės – mados provincialės*.

<sup>112</sup> Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Cemnolonskė, 2015, 2016. "Bajoro įvaizdis XIX a. Lietuvos dailėje", *Logos*, 85 (2015), 101–107; *Logos*, 86 (2016), 123–130.

Society was generally underdeveloped from the point of view of consumerism.

The number of the readership that could have been interested in a local fashion magazine was too small to consider a publication launch – i.e., it would have been unprofitable.

Attempts to produce local publications potentially directed towards a female readership were registered before the 1863 Uprising. During the Uprising fashion (as apparel) was used for the purposes of resistance. After the Uprising, suppressed women, especially of the higher social classes, to whom fashion news would primarily have been directed, became occupied with higher goals such as working for the idea of state independence.

The need for a local fashion publication definitely existed, yet the attempts were spontaneous and did not result in regular production.

**KRISTINA STANKEVIČIŪTĖ: ON THE HISTORY OF LITHUANIAN FASHION: WHY THERE WERE NO LOCAL FASHION MAGAZINES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITHUANIA**

**KEYWORDS:** LITHUANIAN FASHION HISTORY; NINETEENTH CENTURY FASHION MAGAZINES; LITHUANIAN–POLISH SOCIAL HISTORY; NINETEENTH-CENTURY CULTURAL HISTORY; LITHUANIAN FASHION MAGAZINES

### SUMMARY

The concept of a fashion magazine, born in seventeenth-century France, caught on quite quickly in other European countries. Many European cultures either directly copied the French magazines or produced their own versions. Lithuanian culture, however, produced a fashion magazine neither in the early days of female-oriented fashion periodicals, nor later. The purpose of the article is to review the historical circumstances that prevented the occurrence of a fashion magazine in nineteenth-century Lithuania and reflect on the reasons why. The text explores the objective material and factors around fashion information consumption in the Lithuania of the

nineteenth century, such as socio-political, linguistic issues, the urban environment, and the context of the printed press. Surviving examples of nineteenth-century fashion discourse in the periodicals *Tygodnik Wilenski* and *La Limande* are introduced as the solitary cases of fashion publication in the territory of nineteenth-century Lithuania. The underdevelopment of consumerism, lack of urbanisation and absence of explicit national self-identification are suggested as the main reasons that there was no national fashion magazine.

### CV

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