Directoire-Empire Fashion: Its Origins and "Life" in the Receiving Literary Cultures of France and Russia

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DIRECTOIRE-EMPIRE FASHION: ITS ORIGINS AND "LIFE" IN THE RECEIVING LITERARY CULTURES OF FRANCE AND RUSSIA

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Abstract
Antique clothing fashion worn in Russia from the late 18th to the first quarter of the 19th centuries has been depicted in essays and memoirs that report on the introduction of this fashion into France, its somewhat idiosyncratic adoption in Russia, and the traces of its cultural impact in later memoirs (Ian'kova, Pyliaev, Vigel') and fiction (the works of Gogol', Tolstoi, and Merezhkovskii assemble material on the fashion's afterlife in Russian letters). This article draws attention to the dual provenance of Russian antique fashion, which simultaneously imitated classical antiquity and post-revolutionary France (Directoire style). Although this fashion marked the post-monarchic dissolution of etiquette and *ancien regime* hierarchies in France, its appeal to classical antiquity in Russia was used to mask its contemporary subversive provenance. In this context, the author discusses the moral and physical risks of "exhibitionist" trends in fashion.
Keywords: *Fashion; Antiquity; Receiving culture; Directoire-Empire dress; Memoirs*

Fashion *à la grecque*[1] is a phenomenon that has been thoroughly discussed by dress historians. The objective of this brief study is to examine French and Russian written sources devoted to the appearance and, especially, the reception of antique revival fashion in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in France and Russia. I will study the reception of classicizing fashion in both countries, although the vagaries of the reception of the Empire fashion in Russia — the focus of this study — will provide a novel parameter: among the contemporaries of this fashion, its neoclassical, political, or Gallomaniac origins relegate to the background its demi-monde beginnings (*demi-mondaine*, that is to say, both a lady and a courtesan).

In France in the 1790s, the world of appearances was turned upside down by the Revolution, while in Russia during the same period, the *gallomania* of the social elite was the only worthy factor. This raises two important questions. What role did neoclassical taste play in the reception of antique fashion? And what importance did the Russian memoirists or journalists writing about antique fashion accord to the events taking place in France from 1793 to 1796? Let me state here that I do not intend to discuss *influences*,[2] especially in relation to the French and Russian aristocracy. The thematic comparison of the *two receptions* of this antique fashion will enable us to focus on the notions of convergence and divergence in greater detail. Indeed, how did Russian and French high society perceive this fashion?

To trace the reception of some work of art or daily trend, it is necessary to analyse pertinent remarks and statements in the press, literature, and private correspondence. Thus, the material presented in this article is of a verbal rather than a visual nature.[3] The article purports to explore the descriptions of Empire fashion in the available sources.

Regarding the visual sources of the Directoire-Empire dress observed in the fashion engravings of French and Russian magazines, Roland Barthes wrote that "Fashion is apprehended in clothing as worn or at least photographed" (1990: X; 1967: 898). Be that as it may, Empire fashion is placed under the "sign" of neoclassical painting, a pictorial reference that remains explicit.

Our Russian corpus mainly comprises *The Moscow Mercury* and three memoirists:[4] Elizaveta Ian'kova, Filipp Vigel', and Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun. Russian researchers of fashion history

occasionally cite the works of Filipp Vigel', and less frequently, Mikhail Pyliaev, while they do not tend to make comparative studies. Mikhail Pyliaev (1842-1899) was not a contemporary of Empire fashion, instead gathering stories about the early 19th century. This source should nevertheless not be excluded, because the writing of memoirs rarely coincides with the era reported by the author: the misrepresentation of "facts" forms part of their reception. Of special interest are memoirs of Elizaveta Ian'kova (written by her grandson), as no other comparable data appear in memoirs or secular novels. The works of publicists such as Filipp Vigel' and Mikhail Pyliaev are also of methodological interest. As everyday life chroniclers, they depicted common tastes and discourses, which inevitably included anecdotal distortions and myths. My approach follows the path paved by Edmond and Jules Goncourt, often cited by fashion historians of Western Europe. Lastly, published and unpublished diaries as well as the correspondence of Russian women aristocrats may provide interesting information, although they are now inaccessible to us.

A collection of *The Moscow Mercury* issues held in the National Library of Russia (St Petersburg) proves to be a most complete source. *Magazin novykh francuzskikh, angliiskikh i nemetskikh mod* (published in Moscow 1791) is of little help, as it is a translation of the German *Journal der Luxus und der Moden*, in turn a loose interpretation of the French *Magasin des modes nouvelles, françaises et anglaises* (1786-1789) (renamed *Le Journal de la mode et du goût*, 1790-1793). E. Gerstenberg's magazine of fashion *Modnyi zhurnal* (*Fashion Magazine*) was published on a monthly basis only in 1795. A single issue of *Damskii zhurnal* (*Ladies' Magazine*) was printed in 1806. In 1823-1833, *Ladies' Magazine* was issued on a regular basis, but the Empire fashion was outmoded by then. *Galatea* was also published in 1829-1830, but it was not a fashion magazine in the proper sense, as it also included essays, short stories, and poems. The publication of fashion magazines improved only in the 1820s.

Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun wrote her memoirs in 1829 upon her return to France. It is quite possible that like all the memoirists of her time, she embellished the facts (*cf.* Kirsanova 2006: 148).

Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun arrived in St Petersburg on 25 July 1795. On the next day, accompanied by Count d'Esterhazy, the Ambassador of France, she had her first audience with the Empress. As the woman artist had no other dress, she wore a tunic to the great astonishment and discontent of the ambassador's wife. On route to the audience with the Empress in Tsarskoe Selo, Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun met Grand Duchess Elisabeth, the future wife of the Emperor Alexander I, who wore a white tunic with a waist belt (dissimilar to the Empire dress): "She was clad in a white tunic, a carelessly knotted girdle surrounding a waist as slender and supple as a nymph's" (Vigée Lebrun 1903: 86) ("Elle était vêtue d'une tunique blanche attachée par une ceinture nouée négligemment *autour d'une taille* fine et souple comme celle d'une nymphe", 1835: vol. 2, 263). The woman artist exclaimed "That is Psyche!". Was Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun aware that Derzhavin depicted Alexander's fiancé as Psyche in his ode "Amor and Psyche"? Probably not, but the comparison accorded with the times. Catherine the Great paid no attention to the tunic of Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun. Sometime later, the woman artist was invited to a gala dinner at the court. What follows is her description of the Empress's attire.

> …son costume était simple et noble; il consistait en une tunique de mousseline brodée en or, que serrait une ceinture de diamants, et dont les manches, très amples, étaient plissées en travers dans le genre asiatique. Par-dessus cette tunique, était un dolman de velours rouge à manches très courtes. (1835: vol. 2, 305)
>
> (Her garb was plain and dignified, consisting of a muslin tunic embroidered with gold and unclasped by a diamond belt, a pair of wide sleeves being turned back in oriental fashion. Over this tunic was a red velvet dolman with very short sleeves. (1903: 98))

In the description of the attire, oriental connotations prevail, and a muslin dress with the waist in its usual place is called a tunic.

Shortly before the gala dinner at the court, Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun attended a ball where the princesses of the imperial family "were all habited in Greek costumes, with tunics attached at the

shoulder with large diamond buckles. I had taken a hand in the Grand Duchess Elisabeth's dress, so that her costume was the most correct".[5] In other words, a famous woman portraitist was not a pioneer of the costume and did not pretend to be one; she simply helped Elisabeth-Psyche to choose its most elegant variant. Since 1775, she had been travelling around Europe and moving in high society, so she was able to learn much about the attire. Regarding her trip to Moscow (October–March 1800), Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun writes:

> Les jeunes femmes étaient presque toutes d'une beauté remarquable. Elles avaient imité le costume antique dont j'avais donné l'idée à la grande-duchesse Élisabeth pour le bal de l'impératrice Catherine; elles portaient des tuniques en cachemire bordées de franges d'or; de superbes diamants attachaient leurs manches courtes et retroussées, et leurs coiffures à la grecque étaient ornées pour la plupart de bandelettes couvertes de brillants. (1837: vol. 3, 60)
>
> (The young women were nearly all of remarkable beauty. They had imitated the antique costume I had suggested to the Grand Duchess Elisabeth for Catherine II's ball. They wore cashmere tunics edged with gold fringes; gorgeous jewels held their short-upturned sleeves in place; their Greek head-dresses were for the most part tied with bands adorned with diamonds. (1903: 146))

Between the ball in St Petersburg ("I had taken a hand"; "je m'étais mêlée de la toilette") and the ball in Moscow ("I had suggested"; "dont j'avais donné l'idée"), an interval of some five years had passed. The second wording certainly gives the impression of the spread of the fashion. The memoirist tries to stress her exquisite taste and valuable advice, giving a detailed description of a specific Directoire dress. By 1800, the Directoire-Empire dress had won the hearts of, if I may say, a wide spectrum of the nobility, and wearing these dresses ceased to be the prerogative of upper aristocrats and audacious dames both in France and Russia.

Let us turn to the rare descriptions of antique fashion made by writers somewhat distanced from the period of 1795 to 1819. For several reasons, the engravings from this period are beyond the scope of this study.[6] Firstly, before 1816-1830 when the Empire style disappears, no Russian periodical dedicated exclusively to fashion is published on a regular basis. Secondly, any intermittent publications are mere copies of German, British, or French sources. Third, the images accompanied by a brief text tell us nothing about the reception of particular dresses and even fail to mention whether the attire in question was actually worn. The only means to assess the real popularity of a given dress is to consult the order books and receipts of costume designers.[7]

Russian fashion historians date the official beginning of Directoire-Empire fashion in Russia to 1801-1802.[8] The vestimentary *anticomania*[9] began earlier (Delpierre 1996: 37): as in France, from 1795, the tunic *à la grecque* was worn by aristocrats close to the Russian imperial court. Here, I refer to neither an allegorical fancy-dress costume nor eccentric home wear but rather to public attire, notably in terms of the way in which people dress, and how it is talked and written about. If it were not for "language", "fashion as a system"[10] would not exist. I do not seek to examine the reception of "Ancient Greece" in Russian art from 1700-1703 onwards: "…the history of the classical tradition is an aspect of the history of Russia's orientation to Western Europe in general", since the Europeanisation of Russia is in effect its *classicisation* (Ves 1992: 4). However, 18th-century Classicism or Pseudo-Classicism in the fine arts and literature, the early translations of Homer in 1758-1760, and even Grigorii Potemkin's learning of Ancient Greek do not imply that antiquity was a fashionable dress style in St Petersburg before 1795. As Ancient Greece was certainly not the only source of this fashion, let us briefly consider the other sources below.

Representations of Directoire-Empire fashion were not the same in Paris as they were in St Petersburg. It is generally accepted that at the beginning of his reign, Paul I opposed French influence, as expressed by Elizaveta Ian'kova:

> При императоре Павле никто не смел и подумать о том, чтобы без пудры носить волосы или надеть то уродливое платье, которое тогда уже начинали носить во Франции. [...] Пудру перестали носить после коронации Александра, когда отменили пудру для солдат... (1989: 166)

(Under Emperor Paul the First no one ever dreamed of wearing their hair unpowdered nor of putting on the ugly dress just coming into vogue in France. [...] Powder was dropped after the coronation of Alexander the First when powder had been abolished for soldiers…)

Perhaps Ian'kova had in mind the manners of old men who generally dressed in the fashion of their youth. It is nevertheless unlikely that these prohibitions applied to the feminine world. According to Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun who arrived in St Petersburg in 1795, one of the daughters of Paul I dressed in this fashion for a ball and Paul I regretted that she removed the Greek tunics from the portrait of his daughters, Alexandra and Elena, after the gossip spread by Platon Zubov, who claimed that these items of clothing displeased the Empress.[11]

В конце прошлого столетия особенно сильно подражали французам: бывшие моды до революции Версаля уже не появлялись у наших щеголей и щеголих; последние из маркиз превратились в Диан, Галатей, Венер, Аврор, Весталок и Омфал. Платья на манер этих древних богинь вывели из употребления фалбалы и палатины на польский и немецкий лад и другие наряды на английский манер. (Pyliaev 1897: 78)

(At the end of the past century, the French were most closely copied: former patterns in vogue before the revolution of Versailles were no longer favoured by our fops and quaintrelles; the last of the marquises turned into Dianas, Galateas, Venuses, Auroras, Vestal Virgins and Omphales. Garments after the idiom of those ancient goddesses made obsolete the furbelows and palatines of Polish and German origin and the English-styled patterns.)

In this passage quoted from Mikhail Pyliaev's *Past Life Style: Sketches and Stories about Ancient Traditions, Habits and Rituals in Domestic and Social Life*, the author draws attention not to the costume as such but rather to its cultural connotations and the cultural and historical context of its emergence. The unfeasible use of Latin and Greek names such as Diana, Galatea, Venus, Aurora, Vestal Virgins, and Omphale may be noted, although they are all figures from famous sculptures (Diane of Versailles, Venus of Milo, Statues at the House of the Vestals, etc.) or innumerable pictures, operas, or ballets.

When Russian ladies of high society dressed in tunics[12] or decorated their foreheads with headbands set with precious stones, they sought to resemble Parisian ladies more than their Athenian counterparts. In a certain way, neoclassical fashion taste reproduced the ways of classicism: Russian *belle société* became familiar with the heroes of Greek tragedy through Racine, Voltaire, and Corneille, as well as Dacier, Brumoy, and Prévost. They fell for Grecian costumes on account of the French *salons dorés*. Let us recall the steps leading up to the birth of this fashion in Europe.

In France, the symbolism of classical antiquity becomes recycled under the Republic (notably for men's attire after 1790). As far as women's dress is concerned, this same antiquity runs counter to the casualness of the *mondain*, and especially, the *demi-mondaine* women struck by terror. In Russia, 19th-century memoirists and writers did not dare to mention the ambivalent origins of these outfits. In the history of European fashion, the taste for antiquity emerged around 1795 and lasted until 1819 (Boucher 2005: 343-347; Eco 2004: 244, 250-251, 254, 264; Ribeiro 1988; Outram 1989). According to the history of clothing, each style is traditionally set in a continuity, being the outcome of slow and gradual change. The Directoire-style dress and then that of the Empire (1795-1799) were undoubtedly no exception to this rule, but certain vestimentary variants were created in a gesture of bravado, making it a sort of avant-garde work of art.[13] The white tunic thus marked the point where art, eccentricity, and politics all converged. This fashion expressed a desire for a revolution of appearances and a divorce from the 18th century, objecting "to any form of borrowing from its older siblings and its sisters" (De Goncourt 1992: 292). Etiquette disappeared with the French monarchy, and novelty became the only motivation of these *élégantes*. *The Moscow Mercury* quoted the Parisian press:

> С тех пор, как не стало у нас этикета, Мода царствует с удивительным самовластием. Не проходит дня, в который бы парижская щеголиха чего-нибудь не переменила. Роскошь и любовь к новому дошли до такой крайности, что женщина, одетая по Римски, стыдится принимать гостей своих в комнате, убранной во вкусе французском: когда хозяйка одета Гречанкою, тогда и мёбли Греческие... (*Moskovskii Merkurii* 1803: 175)
>
> (Since the elimination of etiquette from our court, Fashion has been reigning with an unparalleled and unrestricted authority. Hardly a day goes by that a Parisian woman of fashion does not change something. Luxury and love of novelty run to such extremes that a woman wearing a Roman dress is ashamed to entertain her guests in a living room decorated after the French style: likewise if a hostess is dressed as a Greek woman, the furniture has to be Grecian...)

Like the abovementioned Mikhail Pyliaev, the author of these lines does not provide a specific description of the clothing. The presence of furniture in the pictures is by no means a portrayal of physical objects but rather a sign of luxury and its subordination to the dictates of fashion. Only two expressions are employed to mark the antique style: *à la grecque* (Greek dress, clad in the Greek style, dressed like a Greek woman) and *à la romaine* (Roman dress, clad in the Roman style, dressed like a Roman woman). No attempt is made to explain the difference between the two, as the author is too absorbed in the mainstream discourse about fashion. The reality of fashion dictates is undeniable; fashion is forever inventive and expensive. Radical novelty is a distinctive feature of fashion in general and the Empire style in particular. The author is correct in saying that each clothing style has its own history and cultural context, but as such, "fashion does not evolve, it changes" (Barthes, 1990: 215) (la "mode n'évolue pas, elle change", 1967: 1112). Concerning the cut of the Empire dresses, if there were indeed continuity, it would be plural.

The intermediate steps could be composed of the following details of more or less significance: the wide belt sometimes worn with the dresses of the Ancient Regime; the bodice gathered *en rideau*; the simplicity of the clothing of the English who were reticent in the face of the pomp of the French court; the seductive appeal of the East with Turkish-style gowns and the Levite; the *casaquin* jacket pleated at the back as a precursor of the straight lines of the Empire style; the chemise gown made of white muslin worn by the wives of the Bordeaux shipowners; and "long-flapped neckerchiefs, which are crossed over at the bosom in order to then be attached at the waist, or in a triangle and which are knotted at the décolleté" (Delpierre 1989: 12, 14). These are the multiple technical origins, and so to speak, the stitching of the Directoire dress. Concerning the cultural context of neoclassical taste, let us recall the contextual elements favouring the emergence of this stylistic type of dress: the archaeological discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum;[14] the works of Winckelmann (1717-1768) tracing Napoleon I's campaign in Egypt;[15] Rousseau's ideas about simplicity;[16] the imitation of the ancients; and, of course, neoclassical painting. Further, a more specific event led to the development of the neoclassical style: the "*tableaux vivants*" of Emma Hamilton (courtesan and lady) who was repeatedly painted as a maenad and as Sibyl, Ariadne, Circe, Cassandra, Medea (several times), Iphigenia (twice), Thalia, and Muse.[17]

In St Petersburg, the Empire gown did not remind people especially of its original context of the French Revolution or the Republic, even though the first women to dress in this manner were aristocrats, the golden youth of Paris. Antiquity nourished the symbols of the Republic ("the only republican references were those of the ancient world", Devocelle 1989: 89, 92), as much as it inspired the French aristocracy in the period following the Reign of Terror (after 9 Thermidor Year II, or 27 July 1794). The white tunic was donned for republican marches and later for promenades in the Tuileries. It would be simplistic to speak only of the "period of release after the anguishes of the Reign of Terror…" (Delpierre 1989: 16), when wealth ceased to be an offense punishable by death; high society resumed its lifestyle but with a different taste for luxury. No more returning to the past and no more pompous clothing from Versailles. The antique-style gown was luxurious, and some were even extremely expensive, but its reference to social refinement signalled another form

of taste in a society marked by the reorganisation of dignity and rank. After arriving in Russia, this antique-revival fashion alluded to the upper echelons of high society in the new France.

Nevertheless, despite the antecedents and favourable circumstances in place since 1780, the privilege of actually *launching* this antique fashion belongs to Térésa Cabarrus-Tallien (1773-1835), not to mention other women close to the court, the members of the Parisian *beau monde* and *demi-monde* — Térésa Tallien, Joséphine de Beauharnais, and Fortunée Hamelin — and those from artistic milieus such as Juliette Récamier ("The woman who is the reason of fashion and the grace of taste...", De Goncourt 1992: 46). Let us turn to the evidence for the impromptu and politicised birth of the luxury tunic. It takes certain audacity to dress in town as one would pose for a painter, dressed as a maenad. In the second instalment of *The Decade*, the minutes of the sessions of the National Convention, 4-16 Thermidor Year II, which put an end to the tyranny of Robespierre (*Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique*, 1794: vol. 2, 115-122), include Winckelman's descriptions of the clothing of the Ancient Greeks and the report of Amaury Duval (Polyscope), Head Clerk for Sciences and Arts for the Ministry of Interior, which included his observations after walking through the streets of Paris. In his view, this most graceful clothing would be worn by nannies: "A long dress, which thanks to its long pleats, covers the entirety of their bodies, and is attached only by a single belt under the bosom. […] Soon we will see a woman's bosom before distinguishing her face" ("Une longue robe qui de ses longs plis couvre tout leur corps, et n'est attachée que par une seule ceinture au-dessous du sein. [...] Bientôt on verra le sein d'une femme avant de distinguer son visage") ("Lettre de Polyscope au Rédacteur de la Décade. Sur les costumes", *Décade* 1794: vol. 2,142). Despite the great deal of irony in his words, the journalist describes the principal features of this "written clothing": its form, lines, simplicity, sensuality, and especially, its high waist.

This would serve as proof of the date (9 Thermidor) and the appearance of the Directoire-style dress, no more than a chemise attached very high by a scarf. This same depiction emerges in the painting by Jean-Louis Laneuville (1748-1826), *Portrait of Citizen Tallien, in the Dungeon of La Force Prison* (*Portrait de la citoyenne Tallien, dans un cachot à La Force*, 1794, private collection), which represents the dress in tunic form with a pink scarf knotted high at the underbust. Freed from La Force on 9 Thermidor Year II (27 July 1794), Madame Tallien exhibited her short hair in the victim style worn by citizens condemned to the guillotine, being the first to publicly appear in the neo-Grecian style.

The exceptional role played by Térésa Tallien in promoting this fashion is attested in the memoirs of the Deputy Antoine-Claire Thibaudeau and the stories later assembled by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt (1992: 217). "Paris regained the empire of fashion and taste: two women, famous for their beauty, Madame Tallien, and a little later, Madame Récamier, lent it its tone" ("Paris reprit l'empire de la mode et du goût: deux femmes célèbres par leur beauté, madame Tallien, et un peu plus tard madame Récamier, y donnèrent le ton", Thibaudeau 1824: 130).

Térésa Tallien "reigned without having the nuisance of the throne" (Thibaudeau 1824: 131-132), "this new Pompadour who came "after so many Lycurgus" was the "favourite of public opinion" (De Goncourt 1992: 218). Here are a few other descriptions to cite only the references to innovative clothing and antiquity: "she walked triumphantly through the streets […] dressed in a cloud"; during her house parties, this "nymph of the place" turned herself into Calypso, she was Grace, obeyed by all, Circa, or "Sempronia, who rests the weary eyes of Catilina"; "her example was authority"; "the caprice of Madame Tallien saves a factory!"; and her individual initiative reigned over good taste (De Goncourt 1992: 219, 291). One hundred years after the events, it was still asserted that "Madame Tallien reigns without governing over fashion" (Allinson 1910: 188).

The inspiration for this fashion is no less than neoclassical: "…Gowns *à la Flore*, dresses *à la Diane*, tunics *à la Cérès* and *à la Minerve*, coats *à la Galatée*, frocks *au lever de l'Aurore*, costumes *à la Vestale* are all the rage" (Allinson 1910: 190). Women like Térésa Tallien, Juliette Récamier, and Fortunée Hamelin "made of art, in their dress, the most beautiful part than in any other era. With more fearlessness than the women of the sixteenth century had access to, they were under the protection of a Greek and Roman renaissance…" (Renouvier 1863/1996: 472). Auguste-François

Fauveau de Frénilly presented this fashion as a trend that gradually became widespread around 1799 after being the prerogative of actresses, privileged salons, or salons of "average" virtue (1909: 235). Journalists did not miss the opportunity for sarcasm in their description of these clothes:

> La robe de la statue de Flore, qui est si décente, sert de modèle à celles de nos *belles de jour* qui accusent l'embonpoint de leurs formes d'une manière trop visible pour nous donner le plaisir de les deviner. (Mercier 1862: vol. 2, 186-187)
>
> (The dress worn by the statue of Flora, who is so decent, serves as a model to those of our *belles de jour* who emphasize the fleshiness of their forms a little too visibly, in order to give us the pleasure of making them out.)

The fashion magazines of the period do not advise the wearing of tunics but rather record or describe what high-society ladies wore as early as 1796-1797.[18] The press rushed to publish the latest news: the dresses observed in the gardens of Paris. "The illustrators [of fashion magazines] frequented fashionable spots where they drew their inspiration from the clothing of the people they met there" ("Les dessinateurs fréquentaient les endroits mondains où ils s'inspiraient des vêtements de personnes qu'ils y rencontraient", Kleinert 2001: 22). This anticipation of the fashion choices made by *les élégants* persisted in 1803 and 1809. The "quasi-literary" *The Moscow Mercury* provides us with ample descriptions of the attitudes towards the Empire fashion. This frequently published[19] review confirmed this order of things, well-known in Russia, where Parisian magazines and fashions were admired:

> Третьего дня в театре лифы были высокие, рукава короткие и платья с хвостами; а на гулянии видишь на всех лифы низкие, платья без хвоста и рукава длинные. [...] Через несколько дней все наденут коленкоровые туники. (*Moskovskii Merkurii* 1803: 75)[20]
>
> (The day before yesterday, in the theatre, all dresses were high-waisted, short-sleeved and with tails; while at the promenade everybody was wearing no-tail dresses with low waists and long sleeves. [...] In a few days calico tunics will be as universally worn.)

This "written clothing" recapitulates all the essential attributes of the Empire silhouette as well as the gradual spread of this fashion. The theatre, art world, and "high-waisted" *beau monde* stands in contrast to the simple open-air events where people wear completely different clothes. One further juxtaposition should be made with the elegant long-shaped varieties and the roundish ones. Fashion magazines, and more precisely, social chronicles do not prescribe but describe what was worn the day before in a public place.

> *Если судить по гулянию в Тюильри* [emphasis added], лифы носят низкие, платья круглые; в Фраскати, напротив того, видны лифы высокие, и платья с длинными хвостами. (*Moskovskii Merkurii* 1803: 65)[21]
>
> (*Judging by the Tuileries Garden promenade* low-waisted and full-skirt gowns are in; while, the Frascati café, on the contrary, displays high-waisted and long-tailed gowns.)

The Tuileries Garden, situated between the Louvre and the Place de la Concorde and opened to the public in 1672, was a popular place among Parisians from all walks of life, from workers to well-to-do bourgeois. People would go to the park for a leisurely walk or festivities. As for the Café Frascati situated near the Paris Opera, it was a popular place among the dandyish and elegant public who dressed up for the occasion, not less exquisitely than for the opera. Women wore dresses with a train to such places. After 1801-1803, the train remained in the evening (party) variant of the Empire dress (Kybalová 1988: 243).

These quoted extracts show that dresses *à la grecque* coexisted with more common clothing. This fashion of such simplicity had even influenced the high-society *élégants* in Paris, like those

who frequented the Café Frascati and its garden. A curious succession may be observed here: from the neoclassical portrait to the *mondain* clothing and then the attire shown in an engraved fashion plate. In St Petersburg and Moscow, the instructions noted on these plates were followed.

When Parisian fashion crosses borders, it would appear to lose its political connotations, perhaps only referring to the Royalist *jeunesse* without derision. Only in the works of the writer Mikhail Pyliaev do we find a reminder of the link between the fashion of the Directoire and the Jacobine dictatorship. Pyliaev collected, compiled, and transcribed anecdotes and stories about everyday life between the 17th and 19th centuries. Regarding hairstyles and footwear, he made the following observation:

> Прическа мужчин и женщин состояла из коротко подстриженных на шее волос, так, как стригли волосы тем, которых гильотинировали. Такая прическа называлась *à la Titus*[22] и *à la гильотен*. Вместо башмаков женщины носили сандалии на босую ногу, и на пальцы ног надевали брильянтовые кольца. (Pyliaev 1897: 78)
>
> (Both men and women wore their hair cut short on the neck in the manner of short-cut hair of people sentenced to decapitation. This hairstyle was called *à la Titus* and *à la guillotine*. Women wore sandals without stockings rather than shoes, and their toes were decorated with diamond rings.)

Mikhail Pyliaev's tone is neutral or perhaps a little playful, because the haircuts and jewellery are in disaccord with the national drama. Adopting the look of those sentenced to the guillotine meant assuming the *appearance* of the French high nobility but not post-revolutionary France. Of all the sartorial experiments, this stylistic response to "the dramatic events of 9 Thermidor" (Roche 1989: 126) had a very strong impact on the Russian imperial court and its milieu. In Russia, Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun painted ladies from these circles: Princess Eudoxia Galitsin as Flora (1799, The Val A. Browning Collection of the Utah Museum of Fine Arts) and Princess Ekaterina Tiufiakina as Iris (1801, Chi Mei Museum in Tainan, Taiwan). Regarding the latter portrait: "I painted her as Iris, seated on some clouds, with a billowy scarf about her" (Vigée Lebrun 1903: 147).

So the origins of the Parisian fashion and the circumstances of its creation, as outlined above, are at odds with the so-called roots and usages criticised by Karamzin. In his invectives against the offences to the virtue of modesty, he confuses the "artisans" of the French revolution (i.e., the bourgeoisie) with the initiators of the Empire dress (i.e., the aristocrats). Indeed, those targeted by this feminine fashion were neither part of the revolutionary bourgeoisie nor "the opulent wives of bankers and purveyors enriched by the popular treasury, the women of low origin with no idea of the friendliness of French aristocrats of the past" (Mulatov [Karamzin] 1802 : 250).[23]

A common feature of all the Russian memoirists is their lingering impression of Empire-style fashion and the sad fate of Ekaterina Tiufiakina, born Khorvat, who fell victim to the fashion of antiquity and died from cold at the age of twenty-five. This fashion did little to protect its wearers from the cold, as also observed on the banks of the Seine: in his *souvenirs*, François-Auguste Fauveau de Frénilly deplored the fashion:

> On ne peut compter le nombre de ces Athéniennes qui moururent de phtisie en peu d'années pour avoir dansé à Paris au mois de janvier, comme on dansait au mois d'août sur les bords de l'Eurotas. (1909: 235)
>
> (Countless is the number of Athenians that died of consumption within the space of a few years, for having danced in Paris in January, as one dances in August on the banks of the Eurotas.)

French journalists frequently expressed their reticence regarding the compatibility of the diaphanous tunic with the Parisian climate, pointing to the increase in the number of cases of consumption on the banks of the Neva and the Seine. In *Paris during the Revolution* (*Paris pendant la Révolution*, 1789-1798) and *The New Paris* (*Le Nouveau Paris*, 1798), Louis Sébastien Mercier wrote: "The serene sky of Greece, the equal and mild temperature of its climate, the cleanliness of the streets of its opulent cities, justify the form and the wearing of Athenian robes; but in Paris, a

city of mud and smoke, especially in winter, to sensible minds such dresses can only appear ridiculous" (1862: vol. 2, 292). The reason why Tiufiakina's death became the centre of public attention was probably linked to the situation in Paris, where ladies were catching cold and even dying because of the lightweight clothing.

The discussion of the health dangers relating to the minimal coverage afforded by this fashion is a well-known aspect of the attire's reception. Journalistic and memoir evidence exists on the subject:

> Любопытно знать, до какой чрезвычайности Мода обнажать себя ещё дойдёт — Мода, которая с постоянством необыкновенным, чудесным, продолжается уже столько лет, не слушается журналистов, и торжествует даже над стихиями, не страшась ни морозов, ни лучей солнечных! (*Moskovskii Merkurii* 1803: 135)
>
> (It is curious to see to what extremes the trend of undressing oneself will lead; this fashion which, with an exceptional and miraculous persistency, has been in for so many years, not heeding the reporters and superseding the very elements, dreading neither frosts nor rays of sunshine.)

Besides mentioning the weather and season, which was common practice, the "joie de vivre" discourse was typical of fashion descriptions.

Journalistic scoffs and jeers draw on mythological onomastics, which was later closely linked to their usage in memoirs or literary works set in the early 19th century. The engravings of *The General Table of the Taste, Fashion, and Costumes from Paris* (*Tableau général du goût, des modes et des costumes de Paris*) show the early types of "tunics *à la Flore*, dresses *à la Diane* and redingotes *à la Galatée*...".[24] Confronted with this extremely daring fashion, Russian journalists were more tolerant than French or later memoirists (who could well have been inspired by the criticisms of French journalists and writers).

> С некоторого времени молодая дама хорошего тона принимает не только приятелей (то есть коротко знакомых людей), но даже целое собрание мужчин, лёжа на постели, как будто она ещё не вставала. Три или четыре прекрасных девушки служат ей в присутствии двадцати Адонисов. Как скоро Богиня сделает движение, чтобы переворотиться, тонкая ткань, обтягиваясь около тела, рисует все его выпуклости, показывает явственно все его формы. Сверх того, костюм требует, чтобы груди были совершенно наруже, и чтобы руки, голые до самых плеч, никогда не прятались. Словом сказать: видишь настоящую Венеру, окружённую Купидонами и Грациями! Что может быть прелестнее такой картины? (*Moskovskii Merkurii* 1803: 177-178)
>
> (It has been for quite some time that a young lady of fashion would receive not only friends (that is, intimates) but an entire gathering of men, lying in bed as if she has not been up yet. Three or four beautiful maidens attend on her in presence of twenty Adonises. Whenever the Goddess moves to shift, the delicate fabric clinging to her body expressly outlines all of its curves and forms. What is more, this costume requires that the breasts should be completely exposed and that the bare forearms should remain in full view. In a word, here is a true Venus surrounded by Cupids and Graces! Is there a better delight for an eye?)

The syntactic structure of the sentences gives us ample reason to conclude that the passage is a translation from French. As for the clothing descriptions, the author merely mentions the texture, a low-cut gown, and the lack of sleeves. The gist of the passage is to sketch a lovely picture, a life scene from high society, even if the picture appears low-browed, deliberately exaggerated, and naively theatrical.

As one of the most sarcastic writers of his time, Filipp Vigel' compared women dressed in tunics to Aspasia:

> Что касается до женщин, то все они хотели казаться древними статуями, с пьедестала сошедшими: которая оделась Корнелией, которая Аспазией... (1928: 176-180)

(As for women, they all wanted to appear as ancient statues descended from their pedestals: some represented Cornelia, others — Aspasia.)[25]

The source of this comparison could be artistic and literary.[26] In *The New Lame Devil* (*Nouveau diable boiteux)*, Pierre-Jean-Baptiste Chaussard reiterates the parallel between Greek art and *la nouvelle mode* in Paris: "Our housewives are clad in a costume of Dancers of Herculaneum,[27] and our girls are clothed as Pryne and Lais" ("Nos mères de famille ont adopté le costume des danseuses d'Herculanum, et nos jeunes filles ont revêtu celui des Phryné et des Laïs", 1798-1799: vol. 2, 228); "diurnal deities, Aspasias and Corinnes, were smiling at them" ("les déités du jour, les Aspasies, les Corinnes leur souriaient...", 1798-1799: vol. 1, 25). The following is a typical comparison:

...cet homme [...] qu'entourent et caressent vingt Hébés, et qui s'ennuie; qui rassemble dans un salon, pareil à celui d'Apollon, la meilleure société de Paris, nos Saphos, nos Corinnes, nos beaux esprits, et qui s'ennuie; [...] qui vole à l'Opéra dans un char superbe, traîné par des coursiers aussi légers que les zéphyrs, entend Œdipe ou Alceste, assiste à Psyché, et s'ennuie... (Chaussard 1798-1799: vol. 1, 30-31)

(…this man […] surrounded by and caressed by twenty Hebes, and who is bored; who gathers together, in a salon the same as Apollo's, the best society in Paris, our Sapphos, our Corinnes, our *beaux esprits*, and who is bored; […] who flies to the Opéra in a superb carriage drawn by steeds as light as zephyrs, hears Oedipus or Alcestis, attends Psyche, and who is bored…)

Here, the reference to antiquity serves to denote the "spheres of life" of a jaded fop — a young man surrounded by young women or a young man in a company of art lovers, poets, or women-writers — who is bored wherever he goes. Hebe, who stays forever young, is an allusion to painting; Oedipus, Alcestis, and Psyche evoke operas and ballets; and Sappho suggests the genre of love poetry or artistic sensibility in women. Corinne, however, is not just any character from antiquity. Here, I will concentrate further on Psyche[28] and Corinne. We commit to memory the great satisfaction felt by Chartkov's client in Gogol's *The Portrait* "What a good thought to drape her in a Grecian costume. [...] This is Psyche" ("Как хорошо вы вздумали, что одели её в греческий костюм! [...] Это Психея"). And further: "Should the ladies wish to be Corinna, Undina or Aspasia, he accepted anything with great willingness..." ("Коринной ли, Ундиной, Аспазией желали быть дамы, он с большой охотой соглашался на все...", 1976: vol. 3, 86, 88). These quotations are well known, but in the context of the history of fashion, they acquire a new meaning. The first version of *The Portrait* was penned between 1832 and 1834. The death of the usurer dates to 1782 and the auction at the end of the book to 1832. Among the chronological reference points in the story, let us cite *Corinne, or Italy* (*Corinne, ou l'Italie*, 1807), translated into Russian in 1809, and *Ondine* by La Motte-Fouqué, published in 1811. From 1812 onwards, an ostensible and very patriotic "Russification" of clothing had no effect on the "goddess" or "nymph" style (Vereshchagin 1914: 47). Between 1797 and 1820, people dressed *à la grecque* when posing for portraits or going around town. Even though Corinne is not a heroine of antiquity, in *Corinne, or Italy* by Madame de Staël, we read:

Elle était vêtue comme la sibylle du Dominiquin, [...] sa robe était blanche, une draperie bleue se rattachant au-dessus de son sein [...]. Sa taille grande, mais un peu forte à la manière des statues grecques, caractérisait énergiquement la jeunesse. [...] Elle donnait à la fois l'idée d'une prêtresse d'Apollon, qui s'avançait vers le temple du Soleil, et d'une femme parfaitement simple... (1830: vol. 8, 30-31)

(She was habited as a *Sibylle du Dominiquin*, [...] her robe was white — a fine blue sash was twisted round, just below her bosom [...]. Her shape <was> majestic; but rather inclining to fullness — the general air that of Grecian statue, strongly expressive of youth and happiness. [...] She reminded you

at once of a priestness of Apollo, entering the temple of the sun, and of a female inured to the utmost simplicity of life... (1807: vol. 1, 58-59))

Germaine de Staël herself was painted as Corinne-Sibyl by Vigée Lebrun (*Germaine de Staël as Corinne*, 1807-1808, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva) and by Firmin Massot (Firmin Massot (1766-1849) (*Madame de Staël as Corinne*, 1807, Collection of the Château de Coppet, Switzerland).

According to the conventional schema applied to the 17th and 19th century literary school by Iu. M. Lotman, classicism applies exclusively to conventions and places "an impassable border" "between the canvas and the viewer, between the stage and the audience" (1997: 181), artistic and non-artistic spaces that do not intermingle, contrary to romanticism (where art influences life) and realism (where life influences art). As for painting, scenic arts,[29] and fashion, classicism in its renewed form found its way into everyday life through Empire-style dresses, hairstyles, and jewellery. The Directoire-Empire dress, hairstyles, and accessories were stylisations that made reference to Greek, Roman, Turkish (i.e., turban), and Egyptian (i.e., stole) elements. In the following passage, Mikhail Pyliaev records the arrival of Directoire fashion, that is to say, transparent, airy, and wafting fabrics, and narrow dresses with train:

Греческие моды, подобно Франции, у нас держались довольно долго и женщины носили сперва обтянутые батистовые платья, надевали на обыкновенные рубашки, потом вместо таких прозрачных носили кисейные на батистовых рубашках и после совершенно уничтожили рубашки и надевали трико, украшая ноги и руки золотыми обручами, которые надевали даже выше колен. [...] С 1800 года модные женские платья не были особенно красивы: платья носили очень узенькие, пояс под мышками, спереди нога видна по щиколотку, а сзади у платья хвост; вскоре платья совсем окургузили и вся нога стала видна. [...] Только у пожилых дам туалеты были ещё хороши и несравненно богаче; тогда замужние женщины носили материи, затканные серебром, золотом и цельные глазетные. Роскошь в нарядах после коронации Александра I; с этого времени современники стали замечать большое великолепие особенно в бальных платьях... (1897: 78-79)

(Grecian fashions, likewise in France, endured long with us; women initially used to wear tight cambric gowns put over plain chemises and later the transparent gowns were replaced by the muslin ones worn over cambric undergarments and finally the undergarments were utterly banished with tights coming into fashion; hands and feet were adorned by golden bracelets sometimes placed as high as the knees. […] In the early nineteenth century, fashionable gowns did not delight the eye: gowns were very tight with the waist-band coming up to the armpits, ankle-short out-front and a dock-tailed behind; finally the gowns were further dock-tailed exposing the leg lengthwise. […] Elderly ladies alone were still clothed beautifully and gorgeously; in those days married women used to wear gowns made of gold and silver embroided tissues or even wholly brocaded ones. Luxurious finery came in after the coronation of Alexander the First; since that time the contemporaries became aware of great splendour and especially of ballgowns…)

This description of an Empire costume as a material object leaves aside its cultural connotations or eccentricity and "spectacularity". Our examples show that the memoirists stress further elements of the Empire dresses in terms of its material nature: form (skin tight, very tight), length (ankle-length, visible or covered feet), front and back (uneven length, train), fabric (cambric, brocade), colour (gold and silver embroidery), wearing style (over undergarments, over muslin or cambric chemise, with tights), accessories (golden bracelets), waistband, and so on.

Mikhail Pyliaev expresses the same opinion regarding the richness of feminine *toilettes* and the ugliness of dresses in *My Grandmother's Stories* (1878). The criticism of the Directoire-Empire dress in the works of Elizaveta Ian'kova (1768-1861) becomes almost obsessive, and a few episodes were the subject of this sort of prattle. Above all, this dress put women with imperfect figures at a disadvantage; regarding her son's fiancée, Princess Mariia Petrovna Dolgorukova (1775-1849), Elizaveta Ian'kova says: "The then skimpy, dock-tailed and short-waisted gowns

made the princess' clumsiness more visible" ("При тогдашних коротеньких и общёлкнутых платьях с коротенькою талией нескладность княжны была ещё заметнее") (1989: 112). European writers did not spare the belt of the high-waisted Empire dress, despite forgetting its origins (a simple neckerchief tied at the throat). Set in 1814, *The Woman of Thirty* (1829-1830) describes "a still-gracious bust, despite the belt thus placed under the bosom" (Balzac 1976: vol. 2, 1040).

Detailed descriptions of the acquisition of Empire fashion are very rare. For this reason, let us now cite the rather long extract from the memoirs of Elizaveta Ian'kova's grandson:

> ...говорили, что мода уродливая, а следовали ей. Платья были самые некрасивые: очень узенькие, пояс под мышками, спереди нога видна по щиколотку, а сзади у платья хвост. Потом платья совсем окургузили, и вся нога стала видна, а на голове начали носить какие-то картузы. Много я видела этих дурачеств; застала фижмы, les paniers: носили под юбками нечто вроде кринолина, мушки, и пережила отвратительные моды 1800 и 1815 годов, когда все подражали французам, а французы старались на свой лад переиначить одежды римлян, туники, то есть, с позволения сказать, чуть не просто рубашки. Разумеется, порядочные люди не доходили до таких крайностей, держались середины, а все же дурачились. (1989: 167)
>
> (…the fashion was proclaimed ugly and still followed. Gowns were particularly unsightly: too tight with waist coming up to the armpits, ankle-short out front and with a dock tail behind. Finally the gowns were further dock-tailed exposing the leg lengthwise and the head was adorned by caps of a sort. I saw enough of suchlike tomfoolery being eyewitness to hoops, les panniers: hoops worn under the skirts; patches, and have also outlived the abominable fashions of 1805 and 1815 when the whole world copied the French, with the French themselves striving to turn up to hand Roman raiment, tunics — that is to say none but common undergarments. Of course, decent people never stooped to such extremities, keeping to the middle, but still were not averse to tomfoolery.)

After mentioning the dowry attributed to each of the two girls:

> В то время платья были пребезобразные: узки как дудки, коротки, вся нога видна, и оттого под цвет каждого платья были шелковые башмаки из той же материи, а талия так коротка, что пояс приходился чуть не под мышками. А на голове носили токи и береты, точно лукошки какие, с целым ворохом перьев и цветов, перепутанных блондами. Уродливее ничего и быть не могло... (*Babushkiny rasskazy* 1989: 288)
>
> (In those days, the gowns were absolutely abominable: tight as a pipe, skimpy, exposing the length of a leg and necessitating silk shoes of the right colour to be worn, the waist was so short that it came up nearly to the armpits. The heads were adorned by toques and berets in the form of the baskets topped with a gamut of feathers and flowers entangled with blonds. One could hardly imagine anything uglier…)

Elizaveta Ian'kova's striking language is lost in the English translation. She makes the same complaint twice about the narrow high-waisted silhouette and the visible shoes (previously, only the toes were perceptible). The wide baroque and rococo dress is in striking contrast with this new style of fashion. The high-waisted filiform "columnal" dress radically changed the silhouette for the first time in a hundred years. There were also intermediate or "soft" versions of this antique style ("decent people never stooped to such extremities, keeping to the middle"). In addition to the fabric, vertical lines, tightness, length, and waistline (the high waist is the main "sign" of the Empire dress in most passages [30]), Elizaveta Ian'kova's description mentions headwear and footwear. Her depiction reflects the evolution of the costume (dress, outfit) in two main stages — 1795-1799 and 1799-1820 —, even though there were four political periods: Directoire (1795-1799), Consulate (1799-1804), Empire (1804-1815), and Restauration (1815-1820). After 1799, the sleeves became longer with different shapes, the décolletage was less pronounced to reveal minimal cleavage, the train almost disappeared, and the headwear evolved. The fabric also became thicker with the use of brocade, velour, and taffeta. As the muslin tunic was unsuited to the European climate, Napoleon

imposed a ban on the importation of muslin in 1804. Elizaveta Ian'kova especially noted the modified length of the robes, since after 1810, the ankle-length dress no longer hid the silk flat shoes (*cf*. Kybalová 1988: 243).

The accounts of Elizaveta Ian'kova and Mikhail Pyliaev are quite interchangeable: either Pyliaev borrowed the description from Ian'kova or both reproduced what everyone was saying.

Although the partiality of Filipp Vigel' is often contested, his abridged notes published in 1864 and then in 1928 without editing or censor provide a precious account of the mores of Russian high society between 1797 and 1850. Regarding the theme addressed here, only this memoirist includes a complete account of the fashion transformations that took place in France and their later transfer to Russia, although his conclusions are not always correct.

> Теперь несколько слов о тогдашних нарядах мужских и женских. Мода, которой престол в Париже и которая, по-видимому, так своенравно властвует над людьми, сама в свою очередь слепо повинуется господствующему мнению в отчизне своей, Франции, и служит, так сказать, ему выражением. При Людовике XIV, когда он Францию поставил с собой на ходули, необъятные парики покрывали головы, люди как бы росли на высоких каблуках, и огромные банты с длинными, как полотенца из кружева, висящими концами прикреплялись к галстукам; женщины тонули в обширных вертюгаденах, с тяжелыми накладками, с фижмами и шлейфами; везде было преувеличение, все топорщилось, гигантствовало, фанфаронило. При Людовике XV, когда забавы и амуры сменили славу, платья начали коротеть и суживаться, парики понижаться и наконец исчезать; их заменили чопорные тупеи, головы осенились голубиными крылышками, *ailes de pigeon*. При несчастном Людовике XVI, когда философизм и американская война заставили мечтать о свободе, Франция от свободной соседки своей Англии перенесла к себе фраки, панталоны и круглые шляпы; между женщинами появились шпенцеры. Вспыхнула революция, престол и церковь пошатнулись и рухнули, все прежние власти ниспровергнуты, сама мода некоторое время потеряла свое могущество, ничего не умела изобретать, кроме красных колпаков и бесштанства, и террористы должны были в одежде придерживаться старины, причесываться и пудриться. Но новые Бруты и Тимолеоны захотели, наконец, восстановить у себя образцовую для них древность: пудра брошена с презрением, головы завились а-ла-Титюс и а-ла-Каракала [...], и если бы республика не скоро начала дохнуть в руках Бонапарте, то показались бы тоги, сандалии и латиклавы. [...] Итак, французы одеваются, как думают; но зачем же другим нациям, особливо же нашей отдаленной России, не понимая значения их нарядов, бессмысленно подражать им, носить на себе их бредни и, так сказать, их ливрею? Как бы то ни было, но костюмы, коих память одно ваяние сохранило на берегах Егейского моря и Тибра, возобновлены на Сене и переняты на Неве. Если бы не мундиры и не фраки, то на балы можно было бы тогда глядеть как на древние барельефы и на этрусские вазы. И право, было недурно: на молодых женщинах и девицах все было бы так чисто, просто и свежо; собранные в виде диадемы волосы так украшали их молодое чело. Не страшась ужасов зимы, они были в полупрозрачных платьях, кои плотно обхватывали гибкий стан и верно обрисовывали прелестные формы; поистине казалось, что легкокрылые Психеи порхают на паркете. Но каково же было пожилым и дородным женщинам? Им не так выгодно было выказывать формы; ну, что ж, и они также из русских Матрен перешли в римские матроны. (1928: vol.1 176-180)

> (And now to the fashions for men and women in those days. The fashion reigning from Paris and to all appearances so wilfully dominating the people is itself subject to the opinion prevailing in its homeland, France, and serves its manifestation. […] The revolution broke out, the throne and Church reeled and collapsed, all the former authorities got subverted, and the fashion itself had temporarily lost its power incapable of offering anything save red hoods and 'breechlessness', and the terrorists themselves had to stick to old fashions in clothes, using old hair styles and face-powder. But new Brutuses and Timoleons finally aspired to restore the paragon antiquity in their dominion: the face-powder was scornfully rejected, the hair was dressed *à la Titus* and *à la Caracalla* [...], and but for the early sickening of the republic under the rule of Bonaparte, the togas, sandals and laticlaves would not have been long in coming. [...] Thus, let the French follow their thoughts in garments; but why should other nations, our own out-of-the-way Russia for one, lacking the true understanding of their fashion, copy them witlessly, why wrap into their fabrications and their liveries so to say? Be that as it may,

but the garments lingering as mere statues on the shores of the Aegean Sea and the Tiber, were reinstalled on the Seine and adopted on the Neva. But for the uniforms and tailcoats the balls in those days would have reminded of some ancient bas-reliefs and Etruscan vases. It was quite charming indeed: young women and maidens seemed so pure, simple and fresh; their young brows adorned with the hair done up in the likeness of diadems. Heedless of the atrocities of winter they wore diaphanous garments tightly embracing their lithe bodies and sharply delineating their exquisite curves; indeed, they seemed light-winged Psyches hovering above the parqueterie.[31] But were the elderly and copious ladies not in a predicament? Their forms did not benefit much from exposure; so what, it did not stop Russian Matrionas evolving into the Roman matrons.)

Drawing a parallel between the last lines of Filipp Vigel' and Elizaveta Ian'kova, the displeasure of the latter may be partly explained: the Empire style flattered slender women or young girls. Commentators (Pyliaev, Vigel') willingly regard the tunic as resonating with classicism, existing in symbiosis with art; rare are those who establish a direct relationship between Directoire-Empire fashion and politics like Filipp Vigel' does.

Aside from the transparency of the dresses, Filipp Vigel' says nothing about the material object. His rhetoric is caused not by the object as such but by the spectacular show — the mise-en-scene of places, eras, and costumes. Mikhail Pyliaev and Elizaveta Ian'kova provide "transitive descriptions" about the qualities of the object, while Filipp Vigel' provides an "intransitive description" of fashion, implying erudition and imagination (*cf*. Barthes 1967: 1153).

This brings to attention two types of Russian texts devoted to Empire fashion. In some cases, they were devoted to the illustration of the material object, but most often they described its "connotations", that is to say, its eccentric novelty, antiquity, neoclassical plots, the French Revolution and terror, dandyism, seasons, and weather. In other words, "communication" on the theme of fashion and reality was the main subject of their attention. These connotations omit the *demi-monde* origins of the Directoire-Empire dress, although they were often discussed in the French press and literature. Two novels written much later have negative connotations: the Greek dress is said to define the beauties of an unvirtuous lady of society, while it is said to be the favourite fashion of the mistress of the Russian Emperor, a lady whose turbulent lifestyle resembles that of Joséphine de Beauharnais or Ida Saint-Elme[32]. During one of her public appearances, the beautiful Helen Kuragin wore a white dress adorned with ivy and green moss (a picturesque means to reinforce the ancient pagan style of the dress), and her shoulder and her back were revealed according to the fashion chronicles of the time: "the privilege of admiring her beautiful figure and shapely shoulders, back, and bosom — which in the fashion of those days were very much exposed" (Tolstoy 2009, 6, XIV)[33] ("право любоваться красотою своего стана, полных плеч, очень открытой, по тогдашней моде, груди и спины", Tolstoi 2004: 18). Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace* set in the early 19th century alludes discreetly to fashion. The following passage describes the Rostov family preparing for the first ball of the character Natasha:

На графине должно было быть масака бархатное платье, на них двух [Наташа и Соня] белые дымковые платья на розовых шелковых чехлах, с розанами в корсаже. Волоса должны были быть причесаны *à la grecque*. (2004: 553)

(The countess was to wear a claret-coloured velvet dress, and the two girls [Natasha and Sonia] white gauze over pink silk slips, with roses on their bodices and their hair dressed *à la grecque*. (Tolstoy 2009, 1, III))

Not until the early 20th century do we find a prose reference to an Empire dress that alludes to its real *demi-monde* origins. This is the intent of the Directoire-style dress according to Dmitrii Merezhkovskii in his novel *Alexander I* (1922), all the more so as he chooses to clothe Mariia Naryshkina in an out-of-fashion dress, thus exploiting the *demi-mondain* side to this fashion.

Но перестал думать, увидя на другом конце залы Марью Антоновну с графом Шуваловым. На ней — всегдашнее простое, белое платье, туника с прямыми складками, как на древних

изваяниях; старая мода, а на ней — новая, вечная; никаких украшений, только вместо пряжки на плече — камея-хризолит, подарок императрицы Жозефины, да гирлянда незабудок в черных волосах. Лет за сорок, а все еще пленительна. Сегодня — особенно. Не вторая, а двадцатая молодость. Глубокая ясность осенних закатов, душистая зрелость осенних плодов.

Всех Аспазия милей
Черными очей огнями.[34]

Сегодня — чернее, огненнее, чем когда-либо. "Минерва в час похоти" назвал ее кто-то. Ресницы стыдливо опущены, и во всех движениях — тоже стыдливость, опущенность, как в томном трепете плакучих ив. (1991: 78)

(But I left all thought seeing Mariia Antonovna with Count Shuvalov at the far end of the hall.

She was dressed in her habitual plain white dress, a tunic with the upright folds as worn by the ancient statues; old-fashioned as may be, but forever new and fresh with her; not a single ornament save the clasp on her shoulder—a chrysolite cameo, a gift from Empress Josephine, and a garland of forget-me-nots in her black hair. Should be at least forty and still glamorous. All the more so today. Not an Indian summer but her twentieth revirescence. Deep serenity of the autumn sunsets, fragrant maturity of the autumn fruit.

Aspasia surpasses all in charm
Black fires sparkling in her eyes.

Today they are still darker, still more fiery than ever. "Minerva in the hour of lust"—someone called her once. Eyelashes bashfully down-dropped, and all her movements full of graceful modesty, recline as visible in the languid flutter of the weeping willows.)

The conversation between the characters in this chapter refers to Mikhail Magnitskii's plans at the University of Kazan, where he was appointed tutor in 1819. This in turn allows us to date the evening to 1779, as confirmed by the mention of his age: "he must be forty or so" ("лет за сорок", she was born in 1779). However, the relevance of this "retrospective" dress is explained by the association made between antiquity (tunic, cameo, Aspasia, Minerva, ancient statue) and one of the *Merveilleuses* (Josephine de Beauharnais). Although Naryshkina was aged at least forty, her outfit was quite outdated.

Not only did Josephine de Beauharnais and Mariia Naryshkina hold similar positions in court, but they were also the mistress and wife of the French Emperor, and the mistress of the Russian Emperor, respectively, with a comparable importance in the emotional life of these two great men. Their family background and the voluptuous attraction that they inspired are rendered by this doubly "retrospective" clothing: Ancient Greek and Directoire-Empire style.

To conclude, our material yielded several transitional conclusions. The most salient ones are as follows: the true connotations of the Directoire-Empire style appear veiled, or at least obscured, by the neoclassical references and the well-known imitation of French tradition for the memoirists recording the recent past. By contrast, one hundred years later, in 1922, a *demi-monde* "cognitive model" of the Empire tunic, this "excellent poetic object" (Barthes 1967: 1154), emerged in the description of the clothing of a literary character living in the days of Alexander I.

NOTES

[1] By "antiquity", we mean a particular cognitive pattern of fashion, with connotations of "antiquity" in terms of the fashion styles. It is rather a "stylized antiquity", as seen in the Greek reliefs and statues. Any attempt to use Graeco-Roman antiquity leads to the appearance of a new stylised "antiquity" and — needless to say — the stylised version speaks more of the period in question than of "antiquity".

[2] Among others, Michel Espagne (1964: 615-618) and Roland Barthes (1999: 267-268) questioned the notion of influence.

[3] The illustrated literature on costume history is vast. I examined all French fashion magazines available at the BNF, Gallica, the MAD and the INHA Library as well as several encyclopaedias and Delpierre (1993). The illustrated album entitled *Russkii kostium 1750-1917* (1960: 56, 58, 92-102) contains many reproductions of images and is intended for costume designers working in the theatre. A great diversity of origins for Empire fashion is found in the description of the collection at the Hermitage: *Kostium v Rossii XVII — nachala XX veka* (1979: 9, 13-15, 18). For a full and reliable description of the tunic *à la victime* in the Russian language, see Vainshtein (2006: 124-131); the author does not discuss the reception of the antique dress in Russia.

[4] I studied around thirty memoirists, including Andrei Bolotov, Gavriil Dobrynin, Grigorii Vinskii, Gavriil Derzhavin, Mariia Rostovskaia, Dmitrii Akhsharumov, Ivan Dmitriev, Anna Labzina, Lev Engelgardt, Adam Czartoryski, Evgraf Komarovskii, and Faddei Bulgarin. A few writers describe dresses, especially dresses of a particular style and their reception. Only one feature of the Empire dress is mentioned more than once in Komarovskii's memoirs of Napoleon's court: the long train that restricted the wearer's movement (1914: 165-166).

[5] The original text reads: "Toutes les quatre étaient habillées à la grecque, avec des tuniques qu'attachaient sur leurs épaules des agrafes en gros diamants. Je m'étais mêlée de la toilette de la grande-duchesse Élisabeth, en sorte que son costume était le plus correct" (1835: vol. 2, 304). Descriptions of outfits made by Vigée Lebrun provide clear guidance for the Directoire dress. It is not simply a *robe chemise*, but a high-waisted white tunic, sleeveless or with very short sleeves, and with brooch shoulders, which is worn with appropriate footwear, accessories, and a matching hairdo.

[6] On the art of engraving the Empire dress, see Lapik 2013: 114-121.

[7] The orders placed by the Russian clients of Rose Bertin are discussed by Khomyakova-Borderioux 2013: 279-313.

[8] For example, Kirsanova (1995: 282); Kaminskaia also mentions the "beginning of the 19th century" (1977, 114-115).

[9] The term *anticomania* was coined by Edmond and Jules Goncourt (1855/1992: 292, 409) following the example of *anglomania.* The Goncourt brothers believed that Greek fashion was predated by neoclassical painting: owing to David, ladies were happy to appear as Greek women.

[10] "...dès qu'on observe la Mode, l'écriture apparaît constitutive [...] hors de la parole, il n'y a point de Mode totale" (Barthes 1967: 898).

[11] A recent X-ray examination revealed that the painting was never the subject of repainting. This supports the "myth" about the Empire dress.

[12] According to Winckelmann's description, "...the tunic which was used instead of our chemise, is visible on undressed or sleeping figures, such as the Farnese Flora, the statues of Amazons on the Campidoglio and in the Villa Mattei… The Greeks called it a χιτών… As the cited figures show, the garment was made of linen or a very light fabric, without sleeves, so that it fastened at the shoulders with a button and covered the whole breast, as long as it was not stripped from the shoulder". The art historian continues: "Both virgins and matrons tried the rode just below the breasts, as is seen even now in some places in Greece…" (Winckelmann 2006: 218, 219).

[13] A parallel exists between the young artists at David's studio, clad in costumes of classical heroes, and the provocative garments worn by the artists of the Russian avant-garde (1913-1920): "Perrié and Quay, David's students from the so-called movement of *Primitifs*, walked through the city clothed as Agamemnon and Pâris; but those were the only eccentricities..." (Delécluze 1855: 91).

[14] The first architectural elements were discovered in Herculaneum in the 1730s when Charles IV of Naples and Sicily chose Portici for the construction of his spring residence, although it was only in 1775 that artists were allowed to make sketches under the supervision of a watchman; in 1827, Countess Potocka was granted authorisation to paint (Praz 1989: 97).

[15] "After Bonaparte's campaign of 1798-1801, the interest in Egyptian motifs experienced a revival, although it can hardly be claimed that the real style 'has come back from Egypt', because it existed before the military and scientific expedition" (Huchet de Quénetain 2005: 60).

[16] The *natural* appearance resulted from deliberate imitation that does not deserve such acclaim: firstly, aside from frightful eccentricities (lasting but for a week) of the brazen *Merveilleuses*, the wearers of transparent muslin put on flesh-coloured underwear to imitate nakedness (also a short-lived trend); secondly, the false hair was worn to imitate Grecian coiffures, while wigs represented short haircuts; thirdly, the corsets worn under the Empire dress explicitly shaped waists and hips. The reign of simplicity expedited the disappearance of rococo dress, although the simplicity of Directoire and Empire dresses was feigned and

refined. “The well-studied garb of these ladies and the *nec plus ultra* of this art was meant to exhibit the greatest possible nudity without being naked” (Fauveau de Frénilly 1909: 235). Finally, “the easy virtues and clothing extravagances of the Directoire, disliked by the First Consul, were quickly forgotten” (Delpierre 1989: 34).

[17] William Hamilton (1730-1803) took part in the early excavations of Herculaneum and Pompeii and studied the Vesuvius eruption and Grecian vases (cf. Hamilton’s vase collection in the Lady Lever Art Gallery). At Hamilton’s house in 1787, his future spouse Emma, standing inside a cubicle with its walls draped in black, imitated the “Attitudes” of Portici’s artists. “Dressed in the old style tunic and shawls, she struck postures and changed expressions, bringing to mind the antique statues and faces painted on the recently dug up walls of Herculaneum and Pompeii... […] Iphigenia, Medea, Niobe, Athena, Sibyl, Bacchante, a dancing Muse, Emma’s dance reminded of a mural discovered in Pompeii” (Contogouris 2010: 35). Emma Hamilton’s “Attitudes” were drawn by Frederick Rehberg and etched by Thomas Piroli in 1794. Pietro Antonio Novelli also drew them (1791, National Gallery of Art, Washington). Hayley, a poet and friend of the painter Romeney, described his impressions as follows: “Her features, like the language of Shakespeare, could exhibit all the feelings of nature and all the gradations of every passion with a most fascinating truth and felicity of expression.” (Gamlin 1891: 20)

[18] From Year II (1793-1794), fashion magazines suspended their publications until 1797.

[19] “*The Moscow Mercury* volumes will be released monthly; we do not fix a day: it will depend on foreign magazines. We will arrange it so that the readers of *The Mercury* had access to fashion only a week after the readers of *The Journal de Paris*, and therefore, thirty-five or thirty-six days later than those fashion trends make their appearance in France.” (“Каждый месяц выйдет одна книжка *Меркурия*; дня не назначаем: это будет зависеть от иностранных журналов. Мы расположим так, чтобы читатели *Меркурия* узнавали об Модах одной только неделею позже читателей *Парижского журнала* — и следственно, 35 или 36 дней после того, как Моды в первый раз покажутся во Франции”, *Moskovskii Merkurii* 1803: 73).

[20] The April issue of *The Moscow Mercury* publishes the news of Paris from 19 March 1803.

[21] Parisian commentary dated 27 April 1803 and shared by *The Moscow Mercury* in July 1803.

[22] Aside from the association with prisoners sentenced to the guillotine, the exact origin of this daringly short hairstyle is unknown: “it may have been inspired by either very short haircuts of children or by the tradition of shaving babies’ heads to make the hair grow thicker and stronger. This is regarded as the origin of the Titus haircut worn by ‘Anglomaniacs in Paris and Francomaniacs in London’. Such hairstyle remains until around 1809, with variations: the hair shaved on the sides, with airy curly locks all over the head, for the Caracalla haircut” (Vittu 1989: 51). The new haircut was less laborious, which lowered the earnings of hairdressers. So entrepreneurial beauticians (hairdressers, *friseurs*) started to make wigs *à la Titus*. This made it possible for the most coquettish (and well-to-do) ladies to change the colour of their short hair several times a day. *Cf.* “O ravishing women, you who play daily with your wigs and faces” (“О вы, прелестницы, играющие всякий день париками и лицами своими”, n. a, “Zhenskie pariki”, *Vestnik Evropy*, izd. N. Karamzin, n° 1, 1802, 38).

[23] Karamzin’s article on the Empire fashion published in *The Herald of Europe* (1802) was examined by Iurii Lotman (2010: 83-84). See also: Kiseleva, Potasheva 2017, :113-121.

[24] The first issue of *The General Table of the Taste, Fashion and Costumes from Paris* (*Tableau Général du Goût, des Modes et Costumes de Paris, par une société d’artistes et de gens de lettres*, ed. Pierre Roux) was published on 1 Vendémiaire Year II and then appears twice a month, illustrated with fashion plates: Dujardin-Sailly, *Journal typographique et bibliographique: ou Annonce de tous les Ouvrages*, 30 Fructidor Year VII (16 September 1798): 28 (quoted in Renouvier and de Montaiglon 1996: 475).

[25] First edition: *Vospominaniia F. F. Vigel’ia*. Chast’ 1. M., univ. tipogr. Katkov i K°, 1864: 35-37.

[26] For a substantial study on Aspasia in all arts, see Jouanna 2005.

[27] There are five statues of women wearing the Doric peplos.

[28] On Psyche in Russian literature, see Niqueux 2011: 85-103.

[29] Before 1780, actresses and actors performing classical roles wore Rococo dress. “In 1788, Talma was the first actor to wear a true Roman toga when playing the role of Proculus in Voltaire's tragedy *Brutus*. In 1790, the revival of theatrical costume was sustained by the publications of Levacher de Charnois...” (Renouvier and de Montaiglon 1996: 468).

[30] On the waistline as a very important element of fashion descriptions, see Barthes 1967: 1008.

[31] There Vigel’ adds this footnote: “Many then fell prey to the discordance of climate and fashion. Incidentally, the charming Countess Tiufiakina perished in the prime of her youth and beauty” (“Многие сделались тогда

жертвами несогласия климата с одеждой. Между прочим прелестная княгиня Тюфякина погибла в цвете лет и красоты").

[32] *Memoirs of a Contemporary* (*Les souvenirs de la contemporaine*, 1827) — Ida Saint-Elme was known under that name — sang the praises of the muslin tunics and attested to the rapid spread of this fashion in the provinces (*Mémoires d'une contemporaine* 1828: vol. 8, 57). Indeed, this fashion seduced ladies of the *demi-monde* with a penchant for adventure. "The dress worn at the close of the Directoire was usually a very long muslin or cotton tunic, trimmed with bands of embroidered cloth — silk being then quite out of favour, — and secured by a girdle at the bosom. This tunic, which covered the form without concealing it, showed its every perfection at the slightest movement of the body. A shawl thrown loosely about the neck completed this costume, — this most graceful costume I may add, — which I have never heard criticised by any well-shaped woman, and which was only called indecent by those whose objections to it were founded on motives having nothing to do with modesty. The headdress and foot-gear were imitations of the fashion in vogue during the Augustan era. A purple net supported the hair at the back; in front it was kept in place by a golden circlet adorned with cameos. On the feet were sandals bound by purple ligatures, between the spaces of which the leg — clad in flesh-coloured tights — was visible; rings were worn on the toes; the shoulders were partly covered by short, divided sleeves, whence the arm protruded at three-quarters length; above the elbow the arm was set off by a broad, gold bracelet, richly bejewelled. Over the tunic, which bore a cameo brooch upon the bosom, the wearers of this dress had a purple robe, which they sometimes let flow in the manner of a queen of tragedy, or which they otherwise wrapped about them in statue-like folds. Thus did Madame Tallien and her fashionable friends exhibit themselves in the drawing-rooms and at the theatres, in costumes almost identical with those in which Madame Vestris and Mademoiselle Raucourt appeared on the stage. After the performance, crowds would gather at the door of the theatre to see these modem Aspasias come out, or 'wonderful women' as they were called, and of whom I was one" (Saint-Elme 1902: 88-89).

[33] *Cf.* "Lise, who with hair curled *à la grecque* looked tenderly..." (Tolstoy 2009, 6, III).

[34] See the first stanza of *Aspasia*, the poem by Derzhavin (1809): "Women are the pride of Attica / Aspasia is first in beauty: / With her black eyes like fire / With her breasts like a white sea froth. / Making Athens amazed / She surpasses everyone; / Her beauty, like the sunshine, burns / Eagle's gazes, Lions' souls". ("Блещет Аттика женами, / Всех Аспазия милей: / Черными очей огнями / Грудью пенною своей. / Удивляючи Афины, / Превосходит всех собой; / Взоры орли, души львины / Жжет, как солнце").

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