



ОПИНION

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For the dissertation of Malina Gospodinova Belcheva-Handjieva, free doctoral student in the Department of Press Journalism and Book Publishing at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, on the topic: "INNOVATIVE DESIGN AND EXPERIMENTAL STRUCTURES IN THE VICTORIAN BOOK (1800-1900) - TECHNOLOGY OF RELIEF DESIGN BINDING OF OWEN JOWS FOR THE BOOK "PSALMS OF DAVID. PSALTER OF VICTORIA"
for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.5. Social Communications and Information Sciences (Media and Communications - Visual Communication)
Research adviser: Prof. Dr. Veselina Valkanova

I. Evaluation of the qualities of the dissertation text

The presented dissertation is structured, according to the scientific standard, in a correct volume distribution of the main parts in it. Its structure includes an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a reference to the contributions, a list of references, publications and five appendices. The study has a volume of 360 pages, which include main text, bibliography with 363 sources, of which in Cyrillic - 47, in Latin - 316, as part of the sources used are facsimile editions or with digital addresses for electronic access. The total volume of the appendices to the dissertation is 108 pages, among which are presented 104 photographs from the restoration practice of the PhD student Belcheva, accompanied by additional text references. In the presentation of the dissertation there are 25 diagrams and 43 illustrations and photographs from the restoration of the book "Psalms of David".

Part of the illustrative material is presented in the main text of the dissertation, due to the specifics of the research, and the photo documentation, which presents the study and restoration of the book "Psalms of David" is presented in the five appendices to the dissertation, which further systematize and illustrate the research efforts and methods of the doctoral student.

There is a formulation of the object, the subject; the purpose and tasks of scientific development; the main approaches and methods applied in the course of the research; the working hypothesis, the information base of the research and the functions of the dissertation. The sources are indicated. The presentation is meaningful, logically arranged and relevant to the topic of the dissertation. There is a detailed abstract, in a form entirely meeting the requirements of and the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application in Sofia University and unambiguously reflects the content of the dissertation.

In **Chapter One**, there is a history of the Victorian Book. The structure and the design of the book during the Victorian era are described by the PhD student Malina Belcheva together with the presentation of the library collections in the Chicago Museum emphasizing on the historical aspect and the rightful place of the book "Psalms of David" among them. The doctoral student makes a historical overview of the characteristics of the Victorian era and the Victorian style of the book.



The Victorian book, the inventions from 1800 to 1900, the elements of the Victorian cover are chronologically presented.

In **Chapter Two** "Decoration Technology. Patents associated with the bindings of the Psalms of David" the author analyzes the bindings and patents associated with the book of the "Psalms of David". To this end, Belcheva researched and presented the patent archives of libraries in Europe and America, focusing on three separate patents associated with the book, namely Frederick Lake's patent for relief leather wall panels, William Hancock's rubber binding patent, and Joel Lepretre's patent for stub binding to collate the pages.

In **Chapter Three**, there is a Description, History and Study of the Psalms of David, Belcheva presents summary observations from three consecutive restorations of the book. The restoration of the book "Psalms of David" carried out by the doctoral student introduces into the restoration practice of the Museum of Fine and Applied Arts of Chicago a new binding, which is extremely reliable, created especially for the restoration of folio format books with album orientation.

In **Chapter Four**, the doctoral student presents the results of the research and its contribution to the success of future restoration practice of publications of this kind from this era, which have not been explored so far.

The **Conclusion** of the research work indicates the results achieved and its contributions to the study of the prehistory of the Victorian book up to its preservation today. Segmental conclusions have been made to the individual chapters, as well as to the dissertation as a whole.

II. Contributions of the dissertation research

The scientific work presented by Malina Belcheva shows the exceptional depth of the various aspects of the research tasks studied by her, set in the introduction to the dissertation. The hypothesis was successfully proven in the course of the work. In essence, the dissertation of doctoral student Malina Belcheva is the first comprehensive theoretical study of a complex restoration of the book "Psalms of David". For in-depth research, previous publications, doctoral theses on the work of Owen Jones, unpublished documents, comments, references to the design of the book and references to patents from public and private archives have been studied. The doctoral student analyzes the materials and techniques for building the bindings, considering the technology of paper, leather, decoration and the options for connecting the book body with the covers in the past restoration interventions.

An indisputable contribution is the model created by PhD student Belcheva for the reconstruction of the book body, developed on the basis of previous restoration interventions and historical models for the basis of the album structure.

A particularly valuable contribution is the research made by the author for the modern understanding of the structure of the book, through the presented in detail technology of paper, leather, decoration and options for connecting the book body with the covers in past restoration interventions.

The bibliography to the work is impressive. A huge number of sources have been skilfully studied, analyzed, systematized and presented in an appropriate form.

III. Notes and recommendations



I recommend PhD student Malina Belcheva - Handjieva to publish the dissertation in the form of a monograph, which will be of benefit to interested employees in the cultural institutions in the country and abroad.

IV. Publications and participation in scientific forums

The presented scientific publications published by doctoral student Malina Belcheva - Handjieva meet the requirements of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in their goals of testing and announcing the results of the research

V. Conclusion

In terms of volume and content, results and contributions, the presented dissertation fully meets the requirements of Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor". Based on my arguments about the relevance of the research problem, scientific and applied contributions to the study, I propose to the members of the Scientific Jury to give Malina Gospodinova Belcheva - Handjieva, author of a dissertation on "Innovative design and experimental structures in the Victorian book (1800–1900) - Owen Jones's binding design technology for "Psalms of David. Psalter of Victoria" educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.5. "Public Communications and Information Sciences".

01.02.2021

Reviewer:

Prof. DSc Ivanka Yankova