SOFIA UNIVERSITY"ST.ST. KL. OHRID"

FACULTY OF HISTORY

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY

**OPINION**

on a dissertation on the topic: “***Development and transformation of Bulgarian traditional clothing from the middle of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century through the prism of performing arts”***

For awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

Scientific direction 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences

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Prepared the opinion: Associate Professor Dr. Ekaterina Keremidarska

Anelia Sasheva Ovnarska-Milusheva has submitted all the necessary documents required for the dissertation defense procedure. I have not detected plagiarism in her text. The doctoral student has the required number of publications on the topic of the dissertation – five publications published in scientific forums.

**General characteristics of the dissertation work**:

The dissertation consists of an introduction, four main chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography of the literature used and appendices. The total volume is 258 pages.

References include as follows:

- 223 titles of scientific literature and 19 Internet sources

- The text in the dissertation is illustrated by a table and 1 figure.

- The application is composed of 117 items. photographic material

In the Introduction, the structure of the dissertation, the object and subject of the research, and the set goals and objectives are discussed. The goals and tasks and the theoretical foundations of the research are formulated and argued clearly and concretely. A correlation is established between the set goals, tasks and the text of the scientific research.

The aim of the present dissertation research is to document and analyze the development and change of the folk costume used on stage and its stage presentation by modeling and making the new stylized folk costumes.

The doctoral student sets herself the following research tasks:

- To review the first steps for change and modernization of clothing in Bulgaria and the peculiar beginning of its stage presentation

- To make a detailed analysis of the theoretical productions in terms of stage clothing and the requirements of the stage space.

- To study and summarize the artistic and constructive features of the stage costume, changing under the influence of economic and political factors.

- To delineate time periods in relation to stage dress changes and the creation of a new type of stage costume.

- To trace the history of stage performances of professional and amateur groups with the development of their stage costumes.

The methodological basis of the study is based on an interdisciplinary approach to the study of traditional Bulgarian clothing. The collected rich field material aims to prove the real state of use and functions of the stage costume in the period from the middle of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century. At the same time, this material is accompanied by a detailed description of the stage costume used during the research period.

The conducted field ethnological research includes: surveys and interviews with participant observation, autobiographical interviews and a survey conducted in the virtual space and addressed to all users of the stage costumes - students, students studying in the field of folklore, dancers, singers and musicians from professional and non-professional folk groups in the country.

The main field studies were carried out by the doctoral student in the period 2018 - 2022 with participants from the ensembles of "Filip Kutev", "Chinari", "Bulgare", "Shevitsa", "Bistritsa" and a folk group from the community center in the village of Alino / Sofiysko /.

**The first chapter** of the dissertation examines in detail the development of Bulgarian traditional clothing and the stage up to the middle of the 20th century. The initial reasons and conditions for the use of traditional costumes in the stage performances of various professional and non-professional folklore formations are indicated.

In **the second chapter** – “Traditional clothing on stage during the period of socialism in Bulgaria” is discussed the emergence of a new type of traditional clothing, created in a certain specific way for use on stage. The cultural institutions built during this period, in their capacity as educational organizations, aim to raise the self-confidence of the Bulgarian people as a nation worthy of respect. They develop a rich artistic folk self-activity, create representative and professional folk groups - National Folk Ensemble "Filip Kutev"/1951/. Latter, semi-professional and non-professional folk ensembles appeared. In this chapter, a thorough review and analysis of the costumes of the Ensemble "Bistritsa"/1949/ and of the singing group from the village of Alina - Sofia is made.

**Third chapter** – “Vision and function of stage costumes, created on the basis of the old traditional Bulgarian clothing”. It states that the costume for the stage is a combination of the festive traditional garment, rich in colors and decorations for a special occasion, with the everyday work garment - which is distinguished by lightness, simplicity of decoration and practical orientation when used on stage.

Stage clothing is an important part of the performance and supports the action of the artist - dancer, singer and musician. It builds and recreates the appearance of the folklore collective. This chapter describes the stylized Bulgarian folk costume. The "rules" for making folk stage costumes in the period of "socialism" are also indicated, which are applied in a small number of specialized enterprises for the production of costumes intended for folklore ensembles.

**Fourth chapter** – “Bulgarian traditional clothing in the post-socialist period and modern times”. In this chapter, the contemporary trends in the stage use of costume, which is seen as a transformation of Bulgarian folk art and the changes that occur in stage clothing, are indicated. A comprehensive review of the folklore collectives of the new generation and their stage clothing has been made. The new modern dance structure, based on folklore dances, but of a new type, is indicated as a model for the creation, development and modification of stage costumes and costumes of the new age. As an example, the ensembles: "Chinare",/1993/, "Bulgare"/2002/, "Shevitsa"/2013", etc.

**The conclusions of the main chapters of the dissertation generally reflect the main results of the research.**

**Evaluation of the publications related to the dissertation work:**

There are five scientific publications on the subject of the dissertation.

**Correspondence of the abstract with the dissertation:**

The structure of the abstract meets the requirements and correctly reflects the results of the dissertation work.

**Research contributions of the dissertation:**

The dissertation is a serious study in the field of ethnology, in which the traditional Bulgarian clothing is used on stage and its transformation into a stage costume is made during a long historical period in the cultural development of the Bulgarian people.

A distinction is made between the name and the function of: traditional folk costume and folk costume. The latter is introduced into circulation as new ethnological information.

The traditional Bulgarian clothing as a stage prop is presented as a non-verbal form of communication and a carrier of symbolism.

A new perspective on the change of traditional Bulgarian clothing from the middle of the 20th century to the present day is shown.

**Notes, questions and recommendations:**

I recommend that the PhD student publish her dissertation work, which will be useful with the collected extensive empirical material related to stage folklore clothing. My recommendation to the doctoral student is the following: When publishing the dissertation, a special place should be given to the interviews taken by the designers of the traditional folk costumes, in which they should indicate: which elements of the tradition are widely used in the creation of the new, contemporary folk costumes?

**Conclusion**

The presented dissertation is an original study of the development and transformation of Bulgarian traditional clothing from the middle of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century through the prism of stage art. The work shows that the goal and set tasks have been achieved. The doctoral student has a thorough knowledge of the research problem.

She has the necessary knowledge and skills for independent scientific work, which is why I give a positive assessment of Anelia Sasheva Ovnarska-Milusheva's work and propose to the scientific jury to vote on awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in professional and scientific direction 3.1 "Sociology, anthropology and cultural sciences”.

April 18, 2023, Associate professor Dr. Ekaterina Keremidarska