

Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski'

Faculty of History

Department of Ethnology



**DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL BULGARIAN
CLOTHING FROM THE MIDDLE OF XX AND THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI
CENTURY THROUGH THE PRISM OF PERFORMING ARTS**

Executive summary

of

a dissertation

by

ANELIYA SASHEVA OVNARSKA-MILUSHEVA

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Supervisors:

| |
|------------------------------|
| Assoc. Prof. Mirella Decheva |
|------------------------------|

Prof. Mira Markova

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The dissertation is available at the Department of Ethnology in the Faculty of History, Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski'

TOPIC RELEVANCE

The topic of the relationship between clothing and culture is one of the constant research topics in the past and today. If we perceive art as the main way of expressing, communicating and presenting creativity, then clothing is its visual presentation and physical cultural artifact. Like every human creation, the garment changes despite traditions, but it always remains an important part of man's cultural self-expression. Becoming the object of various activities and simultaneously performing its symbolic functions, clothing is included in the cultural space of society and occupies a significant place in it as a single sign system. This circumstance makes it an important source of historical information, and through tracking its development and specific transformation, modern perceptions of its significance are reached. Clothing has always been and still is, an important value - not only because it protects the human body from adverse weather conditions and it requires time and effort to produce, but also because it symbolizes taste and preferences, belonging and position in society, skills and attitudes, culture and spirituality. In our contemporary reality, traditional Bulgarian clothing does not cease to excite artists, researchers and collectors, as well as the entire general public in its capacity as a representative of Bulgarian identity.

It is indisputable that the traditional Bulgarian costume is one of the most noticeable and easy to differentiate parts of our folk culture. This makes it an important component of the performing art seeking Bulgarian identification. The performances of the folklore ensembles in Bulgaria and their impact on the audience are unthinkable without the typical for them "folk" clothing. It is the basis of the vitality and "authenticity" of any folklore stage production.

The processes of increased attention to the old traditional costumes, as well as their stage presentation, have been particularly strengthened over the past 20 years. Their value, put on a pedestal, also affects the demand for collecting, preservation, ethnographic exhibition, etc., and

the use in the stage performances of the numerous folklore groups and formations, both in Bulgaria and abroad, and on the modern production of a stylized version of them.

The topic of this dissertation is also relevant from the point of view of the renewed scientific interest and attitude towards traditional clothing and the possibilities for its modern use in a number of new scientific studies. Updated ways of presenting the old costumes, perceived as a national treasure and cultural value, to a wider audience, are not uncommon among the activities of a number of national cultural institutions.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DISSERTATION

The main objective of this dissertation is to document and analyze the development and changes of the folk costumes used on stage, by periodizing the changes in the old traditional clothes in their stage presentation. The aim is also to define some modern principles in the modeling and production of the new stylized stage folklore costumes. This goal is directly related to the object of the scientific research – Bulgarian traditional clothing and its symbolic intensity in its use as a representative garment, corresponding to the perceptions of “Bulgarian” in the last century. The research revolves around two aspects - on one hand, it traces the formation of folk groups performing musical, song and dance performances on stage, and on the other - establishes the institutional affirmation of folk clothing as a mark of identity that maintains or (re-)produces national consciousness and ethnic identification.

Consistent with the objectives thus formulated, specific tasks facing the researcher are:

- Review and study of scientific literature related to traditional Bulgarian clothing as a starting point for discussing future transformations towards its new use as a stage costume.

- An overview of the first steps of change and modernization of clothing in Bulgaria and the peculiar beginning of its stage presentation.
- Clarification of theoretical formulations regarding stage clothing and requirements of stage space.
- Research and summary of the artistic and constructive features of the stage costume, changing under the influence of various economic and political factors.
- Outlining of time periods regarding the changes of stage garment and the creation of a new kind of stage costume.
- Tracking the history and stage performances of professional and amateur teams and exploring their stage costumes.
- Observation of the opportunities available for obtaining knowledge related to traditional Bulgarian clothing during professional training by choreographers and dancers using it for the stage.
- Generalization, systematization and analysis of the collected field material in order to detect the real state and characterize the functions of the stage use of the costume.
- Drawing conclusions about the change and development of traditional clothing in Bulgaria in the period from the middle of the 20th to the beginning of the 21st century, through its stage use.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The complex and multifaceted nature of traditional Bulgarian clothing requires the use of an interdisciplinary approach to study it. The thesis that the stage equivalent of this clothing is a

lasting trend with potential for future development requires effective methods and approaches from different fields such as history, ethnography, cultural studies, art studies, choreography, musicology, aesthetics, psychology, fashion, etc. For this reason, various analyses of scientific literature and archives, tracking of individual events with the selection of visual materials, etc., all oriented towards the use, changes, new creation, etc., of stage folklore clothing are used in the methodological base of this study. In collecting the materials from the fieldwork of the dissertation, qualitative methods such as autobiographical narratives, semi-structured interviews and ethnographic observations were used. As an additional method, a short survey conducted online and addressed to the users of stage costumes – pupils and students studying in the field of folklore, dancers, singers and musicians from professional and non-professional folklore groups in the country was used.

The main field surveys were carried out in the period 2018 – 2022 among relatively randomly selected folklore groups, which are accepted as a representative sample of the total number of groups representing Bulgarian folklore on stage both in Bulgaria and abroad. The scope of the study includes specifically the ensembles "Philip Kutev", "Chinari", "Bulgare", "Shevitsa" and "Bistritsa", as well as the folklore group at the community center in the village of Alino, and it is sought to cover a wide variety of categories of professional and amateur folklore organizations. The selection of folklore groups included in the study is not accidental. National Folklore Ensemble "Philip Kutev" is the professional ensemble with the strongest influence on contemporary stage folklore life in the country, including stage costumes, considered the first in many aspects. Ensemble "Bistritsa" is one of the largest and oldest amateur ensembles, of which I have been part for more than 35 years. Ensemble "Chinari" is one of the first professional formations of the "new time". Ensemble "Bulgare" is a specific example of a professional ensemble of a new generation, and ensemble "Shevitsa" is an amateur formation with characteristic vision of stage clothing. The Chitalishte folklore group from the village of

Alino is considered representative of rural folklore groups. Respondents were mainly the leaders (choreographers) of the groups or people close to the management positions, but also individual dancers, singers and musicians. In the process of work, confirmation of the theses and conclusions of the study was sought among other folklore groups left outside the main terrain range. Conversations with other people whose opinion is directly or indirectly related to the stage costumes were also taken into account.

CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, each ending with conclusions, a general conclusion, bibliography of used literature and applications. The main content is available on 178 pages and the exhibition is accompanied by a figure and a table. The list of cited literature includes 223 titles and 19 Internet sources. The apps contain 117 photos.

At the beginning of the dissertation, a terminological introduction was made, which specified common concepts in the text related to its understanding such as: traditional Bulgarian clothing, authentic costume, folklore, folklore clothing, folklore group, folklore ensemble, amateur art, stylized costume, national costume, stage and stage clothing.

CHAPTER ONE: Bulgarian Traditional Clothing and the Stage until the Middle of the 20th Century

Chapter One examines a combined process of historical, economic and cultural events, dating back to the period of the late Renaissance - a period closely linked to, and responsible for, the presenting of rural clothing to the idea of group and national identity. This chapter looks for the initial reasons and conditions for using the costume on stage.

The tracing of the use of Bulgarian traditional clothing to the middle of the 20th century and the various scenes on which it is presented, such as official events, state celebrations, school celebrations, etc., show the direction and development of a trend of dropping out and weakening the utilitarian function of the costume as a casual clothing and turning it into a national symbol, which began during the Renaissance. Presenting to the public helps to a great extent. It is precisely its use as a sign of collective identity that gives the costume a new life towards universalization. The garment, in its festive version, is modified into a new kind of updated traditional clothing, which undergoes additional and further aestheticization and idealization, taking its place in the set of modern national symbols. The factual "putting" of traditional clothing on stage is related to the emergence and the first steps of Bulgarian dramaturgy, which go hand in hand with the most dynamic Revival debate about national identity in the second half of the 19th century. The costume became a semantically loaded item, which achieved the desired stage illustration of the peculiarities and characteristics of the Bulgarian hero. After the Liberation, the costumes gradually acquired an even higher symbolic value. In the newly created modern Bulgarian state, there was a growing interest in tradition, which became the subject of study, preservation and popularization in various forms. Inherited from the past cultural artifacts, such as costumes, are presented as a national value, exhibited in museums and identified as emblematic examples of the past and the people. The later fashion for introducing elements of folk costume into formal or festive clothing does not bypass either society or school, where, except as part of the decoration on modern European clothes and school uniforms, traditional clothing is mostly used on stage during organized celebrations and holidays. Additionally, community centers, as places with the strongest amateur creativity, organize a large part of the cultural activity of the individual settlements precisely by creating various folklore groups, singing and musical groups, which naturally use costumes in their stage performances.

CHAPTER TWO: Traditional Stage Clothing in the Period of Socialism in Bulgaria

Chapter Two introduces the relationship between the political regime in Bulgaria from the middle of the 20th century to the end of its 80s and the emergence of a completely new type of Bulgarian traditional clothing, created in a specific way and used exclusively on stage. It traces the changes specifically in the stage folk art, that requires folk clothing, through the history of professional and amateur formations for folk songs and dances.

Culture and Government Policy

The period was characterized by total dictatorship and political subordination of all processes in the state, with cultural institutions being built and imposed as educational organizations in order to raise the self-esteem of the people. Each aspect of culture was under centralized ruling and in a strict structured system of subordination, through institutionalization and administration by the authority of the party and the state. The overall ideologization of society leads to the ideologization of folklore, and in particular of the clothing inherent in its presentation. The ruling Communist Party defined cultural ideologemes in which folklore was given a dominant place and a special representative role for the realization of the "primordial Bulgarian". Events, projection of totalitarian culture in our country, such as demonstrations, cultural meetings, visits, celebrations, etc., included costumes as a particularly important and almost integral part of the official demonstration of the respective event. Gradually, as a tradition, the organization of folklore fairs became necessary, which formed an additional positive attitude towards folklore and again imposed the need to use the already dropped out of everyday life and everyday clothing costumes. Already in the first decade of the communist regime, a state training for folklore artists was organized in Bulgaria, which turned folklore into a profession. Networks of cultural institutes for professional, live art throughout the country

were also being built, producing an artistic and creative product for a stage. The late 1970s and 1980s were a particularly emblematic period in terms of organizational mobilization in the culture of the country and the mass use of traditional clothing as a national representative garment. The grandiose in scale, preparation and celebration most serious cultural events for the period - "1300 Years of Bulgaria" and "Assembly "Banner of Peace" gave a stage for the performances of many folklore groups.

Artistic folk activity

After 1944, along with the previously existing creative collectives, new amateur groups were created en masse in almost all cultural and educational institutions, departments and public organizations, community centers, trade unions, schools, militia, army, etc. The administrative management of amateur art during the socialist period in the country was also a complex multi-layered state structure. The care, organization and control that the party took in the cultural sphere were aimed not only at professional art, but also at the cultural and mass activity of citizens. Amateur activity was defined by the upper party as an important means of educating workers and employees, satisfying political and social requirements. The work in the folklore groups also served as an agitation and supported the implementation of the party tasks. In the middle of the 20th century, the first organized fairs of folk art appeared, the so-called gatherings for authentic folklore, aimed at showing the entire creative work of the collectives, as a reflection on the work they do. This, in turn, led to a rather widespread use of traditional clothing as a prop for a stage and determined its development and change.

Representative and professional folklore groups

Similar to the other socialist countries of the so-called Eastern Bloc and emulating the USSR in 1944, a performing formation was created, later called the Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances of the Bulgarian People's Army. Following the example of Russian choreographers of

that time, who staged large-scale dancing folk compositions, their Bulgarian colleagues took samples of rural folk dances, with the main purpose of presenting the spiritual wealth of the Bulgarian people. In this environment, Philip Kutev's creative personality stood out. He has made a great contribution both to the development of the said ensemble of BNA, where he worked for some time, and to the imposition of a characteristic style for processing and stage presentation of Bulgarian folklore – music, songs, dances and traditional clothing. As a result of his activity followed the establishment of a State Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances in 1951.

National Folklore Ensemble "Philip Kutev"

The State Ensemble (today NFA "Philip Kutev") is an emblematic example from the time of socialism of the formation of the so-called mass culture or construction of a new kind of national culture, and the influence on clothing, considered traditional and equivalent to Bulgarian. It sets the parameters and forms the system for creating the stylized stage folklore costume. Similarly, until 1966, another 14 folklore ensembles emerged, which built the national network of professional folklore ensembles in Bulgaria. This allowed folklore art to be widely available and familiar to a large part of the population, thus setting a model for the stage folklore presentation, including stage costumes. State funding and organization of creative, rehearsal and regular concert activities of the folk singers, musicians and dancers employed in the ensemble turned their activities into a profession and their stage costumes, respectively, into a kind of workwear.

The folk costumes of "Philip Kutev"

Marking the beginning of a new representative for our country folklore formation, in the beginning of 1951, the first competition for the recruitment of performers was organized – singers, dancers, instrumentalists from all over the country, who, however, did not have the

obligation, coming to Sofia, to wear their own costumes. In fact, in the future they never had the opportunity to choose their stage wear by working in and for DANPT. Undoubtedly, the positioning and imposition of the newly created folklore formation as an important cultural institution in the country required building a specific and different style from the one known so far. The ensemble can achieve a new look largely through stage clothing, which is a powerful tool for artistic impact on the viewer. In connection with the preparation and elaboration of costumes for the performances, proven specialists such as Maria Veleva, Venera Naslednikova, Neva Tuzsuzova and others were involved as consultants. The costumes are prototypes of real traditional clothes from different ethnographic areas, but are created by the author's model of an artist and are tailored to the specifics of the stage and performance.

Non-professional and semi-professional folklore groups

The mass amateur folklore groups created in workplaces, community centers, schools, kindergartens, trade unions, units of the army and the militia, regional units of the party, etc. are organized in terms of their stage performances. They have compulsory periodic performances both in the labour collectives themselves and in front of an external audience. There were also "reviews of amateur art" that were held on a city, county or state level. Singing and dancing groups were often included in festivals, party demonstrations and celebrations, even in international events. Their stage expression, in turn, required a corresponding outfit, which was predominantly newly created. Very serious emphasis was placed on the work of the Chitalishtes, where large-scale activity began in the direction of promotion and folklore training, leading to mandatory mass stage performances. Mixing and cooperation between professional and amateur art began. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, professional choreographers headed the amateur ensembles, who prepared a repertoire including productions from all folklore regions of Bulgaria. Along with the preserved traditional clothing, many of the community center groups began to make stage costumes based on a stylized model by an

artist or resemblance to a costume by a professional ensemble, and the costumes were selected according to the requirements of the choreography.

The costumes of Ensemble "Bistritsa"

Ever since the establishment of the Bistritsa Ensemble in 1949, its leaders have relied on the "natural-looking, real-life" scene and therefore the performances include dancers, singers and musicians of different ages, and the stage clothing consists of local traditional costumes collected from the village. In the mid-1960s, the first "national" stage costumes borrowed from the Bistritsa authentic costumes were made for the purposes of the ensemble. To date, the stage wardrobe of ensemble "Bistritsa" is a combination of stylized and authentic costumes, with the stage performances using either one or the other, or both types at the same time, depending on the repertoire performed.

The costumes of the small amateur folklore groups

The dynamics in the change of traditional Bulgarian clothing in its representative function for a stage can also be traced through the stage performances of folklore groups from small settlements, mainly through the activities of the community center institutions there. Such an example in the study is the female singing group from the village of Alino, Sofia region. The decades after 1944 laid a solid foundation and strengthened the modernization of folklore. This process of cultural innovation makes rural music, dance and clothing a value, with the importance of a national tradition (Peycheva 2008:47). The Alin group was created in connection with the participation in a folklore festival. The costumes that singers used changed over the years due to the impact of various factors. Part of the reasons were sufficient availability of identical costumes to ensure visual collective uniformity, costumes with more impressive decoration, difference from neighboring villages, etc.

CHAPTER THREE: Vision and Function of the Stage Costume

Chapter Three examines the problem of the vision and functions of stylized stage clothing, created on the basis of old traditional Bulgarian clothing. It traces the connections, differences and relationships between one type and the other, examines influences on the change of stage costume by the tourism industry and state-organized stage folklore. It raises the question of the ways of stylization and the rules for its implementation. The costume for the stage combines the festive traditional garment, which is rich in colors and decorations, and is worn for a special occasion, with the working such – practical, simple, light. In terms of stage space, many new and specific requirements are added to the stage costume. The garment began to be a particularly important part of the performance because it supports the action of the artist – dancer, singer and musician, and builds the image of the folklore collective. The costumes take into account the dance, so as not to hinder the plasticity of the human body when moving and with the stage. Unlike in the past, when people performed in open spaces, in rural squares, and observers were from all sides, the stage performances of modern times require the performance to be mostly facing the audience, i.e. forward. The stage costume is also subject to the new specific requirements created by the new way of dancing and the new space. In addition to the use of fabrics that do not impede fast, sharp and turbulent movements that last a long time, sometimes a whole spectacle without interruption, details and elements are added, especially in the decoration, radically different from the "real" traditional clothing. In accordance with the principles of designing a theatrical garment, the stage costume acquires a basic requirement to be visible from a greater distance, given the distance of the audience. This implies exaggerating some details of the suit to make them visible, adding glamorous accessories to it, etc. The traditional sequence of placement of the elements of the costume for convenience and adaptation to the stage behavior is also new. In addition, suits should be made so that they are strong enough to withstand repeated use over a long period of time - months and years, by

different people, and their operation is accompanied by repeated unusual cleaning or laundry, treatment with detergents and storage.

Stylization of clothing for its use on stage

Stylized costumes may differ only slightly from the originals, almost duplicating them, repeating the line, volume, fabric and color of the particular style or period, or they may be quite different, almost unrecognizable, as a distorted reflection of visual reality. They may differ from the real ones quite obviously, but at the same time achieve a visual expression of the spirit and meaning of the stage representation for the purpose of which they were made. The styling itself is carried out in two main ways - by simplifying the original and following only its common characteristics or by exaggerating the design, by focusing on the most important details.

Semiotics of the stage costume

The traditional Bulgarian garment in its position as a stage prop is perceived only as Bulgarian clothing, bearing connotations and links with the past, traditional culture and folklore.

General characteristics of the stylized Bulgarian folk costume

The creation of the stylized folk costume in Bulgaria in the middle of the 20th century is based on a foundation of some specific circumstances for our country. First and foremost is the transformation of folk clothing into a national symbol and the presentation of the idea of Bulgarian identity through the garment. A second factor is the permanently imposed line of "Bulgarian style" in the production of new and modern clothes, but with a vision borrowed from traditional clothing without looking for ethnographic accuracy in them. The Western European influence in the making of stage theatrical and ballet costumes from the beginning of the century, as well as the vision of the Soviet dance ensembles, whose uniform appearance is a kind of role model, are other very important circumstances.

Influence of folk art fairs

The dominant stage use of folk clothing from the past is characteristic of the so-called folk art fairs, in which a huge number of amateurs from all over the country take an active part. In particular, at the Festival of Folk Art in Koprivshitsa, the stage clothes of the participants over the years are mostly old traditional clothes, not stylized, especially since the forum does not allow the expression of professional performers in the competition program, which are presumably associated with the stage modernization of the costumes. However, the adaptation of the costumes for the scene is also available there.

"Rules" for making folk costumes under socialism

Given the political regime in Bulgaria in the second half of the 20th century, the stylization and production of stage costumes followed a strictly regulated line and complied with a number of imposed requirements, gradually becoming a manner of work for a long period of time. The production of costumes for dance groups is carried out in a small number of enterprises specializing in this. The Committee for Art and Culture and the Institute of Amateur Art in the 1960s began to publish magazines related to dance art, in particular folk dances, which provided specialized, scientifically validated information about traditional Bulgarian clothing and indicated the "right" way to stylize, produce and use it on stage.

Influence of the tourism industry

Soon after the coming to power of the Communist Party, state-organized tourism was established in Bulgaria. In 1948, the only state-owned monopoly company for a long time was founded – Balkantourist. It is associated with all types of trips to and from the country, and is the official representative of Bulgaria to the world. The promotion of the country as a tourist destination was done precisely through imagery, using and imposing the "folk" and "Bulgarian". Related to tourism was opening up the so-called National - residential

establishments with Bulgarian motifs in the interior, in uniformed clothing, in furniture and with an assortment of dishes from the national cuisine, whose service was accompanied by a specific attraction-thematic entertainment program. These establishments became the stage for the expression of folklore groups, folk singers and musicians, whose clothing for performances was in tune with the environment. In the predominant case, it was quite far from the prototypes left over from traditional culture. Thus, stereotypes about a certain type of folklore clothing, behavior and appearance of performers are built, promoted and reinforced. The fact that this kind of "stage" performances are accessible, mass and frequent influences the pre-attitude and expectations of the "audience" for the clothing for the performances. Thus, the "knowledge" of folk clothing for stage performances is transferred from restaurants and is also used in a family environment.

CHAPTER FOUR: Bulgarian Traditional Clothing in the Period of Post-Socialism and Modernity

The fourth chapter offers a reading of the current trends in the stage use of costumes. The empirical material is based on the history and activity of some new folklore formations – professional and amateur, and the personal preferences of leaders and performers for the garment through the phenomenon of contemporary scene. There is also a parallel between the educational system preparing folklore performers and their knowledge of traditional Bulgarian clothing and stage costume.

Culture and State Policy at the End of the 20th and the Beginning of the 21st Century

The 1990s were distinguished by economic, political and value breakthroughs that had a direct and indirect impact on the social and cultural life of the country. The collapse of socialism introduced real social factors, including a new type of free art market, which led to the

transformation of Bulgarian folklore and changes in the stage clothes for it. The restructuring of the surviving groups that adopted the principle of the club form of dancing for payment of a fee, as well as the creation of many new ones later dictated the subsequent need for clothes for stage folklore performances, as well as producers to make them. To date, there are hundreds of companies, sewing workshops and individuals whose business is the production of costumes. As for the knowledge of the old folk costumes and their transformation into a new stage folklore clothing, it is rather a collection of a free imitation of the costumes from the professional scene and self-introduction to the available scientific literature on the subject. The whole set of cultural phenomena from the first 20 years of the 21st century, in the center of which stands the folklore scene and the folk costume for it, has the character of a new tradition, Hobsbawm, subject to modern requirements and living conditions, to the new cultural and social environment, to market mechanisms, to modern conventions for stage performance.

Folklore groups of a new generation and their stage clothing

The end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century was the time when the first private professional ensembles were founded and started their activity, and their enterprise was rather commercial and aimed at fast and stable financial revenues according to the principles of the new market and business relations for the country. In line with modern times, a completely new type of performances with new stage solutions was created, where folk dance is combined with classical dance, modern ballet, rhythmic gymnastics, martial arts, etc. Interesting examples of both a modern dance structure dealing with dances on a folklore basis of a new type, and respectively as a model of creation, development and change of stage costumes and costumes of modern times are the ensembles "Chinary" and "Bulgare". Chinary Ensemble is one of the first private professional folklore formations in Bulgaria, established in 1993. Initially, the repertoire was positioned not only on dance and song traditions from all folklore regions of Bulgaria, but also relied on contemporary choreography, adapted for stage performances of a

new kind, for example as an accompanying dance background of live performances or shooting TV spots of pop-folk performers or "modern" folklore. The performances are specific both in terms of contemporary staging for the presentation of traditional Bulgarian folklore and in terms of costumes used on stage. Stage clothes are often unusual and bold. Some of them don't even resemble costumes. Ensemble "Bulgare", on the other hand, is a representative of the new successful ensembles in Bulgaria. Established in 2002, its activities so far include the realization of 5 major author's performances, the shooting of a folklore film, the giving of over 2100 concerts in Bulgaria and around the world, etc. This is the first Bulgarian folklore ensemble to tour Broadway in New York (USA). A basic requirement for the stage costumes on the part of the choreographer is to "sell" the show, but despite their very updated and highly stylized appearance, they could only be described as Bulgarian costumes.

"Today's" costumes of the "old" ensembles

The undeniably important role of the costume as part of the performance, supporting the artist's action, is a prerequisite for careful selection of a new stage wardrobe for the emblematic folklore groups that have established themselves over the years. The need for new costumes is a consequence of the depreciation of the stage props. Professional ensembles such as "Philip Kutev", for example, rely only on stylized stage options, which, however, show modern trends and differences compared to the "first" ensemble costumes from the middle of the 20th century. In amateur groups such as "Bistritsa", for example, there is a purposeful return to authentic folk clothing.

Choosing the costumes for the stage

Each dance team forms its own characteristic style in making movements, behavior on stage, relations between dancers, acting skills, mood, overall atmosphere that accompanies the performance and last but not least the way of wearing the costumes, alignment of details,

hairstyles, veils, jewelry, makeup, etc. All this is closely and directly related to the taste of the leader, but it is achieved predominantly through stage clothing. Based on the collected field material, it can be argued that the choreographer (the head of the dance formation) is the one who is responsible for the overall vision of the stage performance, and the people who wear the costumes and present them on stage rarely have a decisive voice in the choice.

Acquiring knowledge and experience related to traditional clothing

Professional ensembles and educational institutions dealing with folklore in general dictate "fashion" in the use of stage costumes and, in addition to creating stereotypes, they are in a position to provide knowledge and train in this. Based on research, however, it becomes clear that the knowledge of traditional Bulgarian clothing is not a priority for educational institutions whose main activity is to prepare professional folklore cadres. The programs of the educational institutions emphasize the subjects supporting the improvement of the musical and singing skills of pupils and students, respectively for musicians and singers, or staging and dancing skills for choreographers, but the knowledge related to traditional Bulgarian clothing is insufficient and fragmentary.

Contemporary interest in traditional clothing - market mechanisms and trade

In recent years, there has been renewed and increased interest in old (authentic) traditional Bulgarian clothing by collectors, choreographers, folk dancers, singers and musicians, as well as a progressive increase in its value, measured on the basis of the financial resources needed to purchase it. Its acquisition also leads to a desire to show to the public. In addition to individual stage performances, there are also modern trends for a wider inclusion of this authentic clothing in the stage wardrobe of dance groups. An interesting example of a folklore formation that presents its stage activities over the past 4-5 years exclusively with old traditional clothes bought by collectors from all over the country is the Shevitsa Ensemble, established in 2013.

The activity of "Shevitsa" is an example of modern life and development of traditional Bulgarian clothing, despite its long-lost utilitarian function. Changing the requirements and putting it on stage as a costume for performances only proves the possibilities and the presence of prerequisites for ongoing research in the future.

KEY CONCLUSIONS IN THE DISSERTATION

As a result of the analyzed transformations and the tracked development of traditional Bulgarian clothing through the prism of stage and art in the period from the late Revival to our time, and based on the realized field studies, the following findings, generalizations and conclusions could be made.

Bulgarian traditional clothing is a cultural phenomenon chosen to preserve its character as an important cultural and historical heritage and to remain a projection of the reading of the past, reflecting contemporary messages to the modern nation.

The development and transformation of the costume during the last over a hundred year period, characterized by the dynamic picture of various changes, in no way affects the fact that it is a semantically loaded item of high symbolic value, reflecting national identity. Its role in the cultural space is so great that the very idea of Bulgarian identity could hardly be imagined on stage without its help.

Since the Renaissance, traditional Bulgarian clothing has continued to increase in symbolic value. It becomes part of the ideological use of the familiar traditional heritage and cultural past, which reinforces the collective folk identity of a modern type.

Folk clothing, turned into a national symbol, has a strong presence and a reserved place on state holidays, official events, school and community center celebrations, as well as when presenting Bulgaria abroad throughout the period under review.

The political and economic influence on the cultural sphere during each of the considered historical periods leads to a degree of ideologization of folklore, and in particular of the clothing inherent in its presentation.

The socialist revolution in Bulgaria was not negatively decisive for the decline of authenticity in rural clothing. The government imposes stereotypes for restoration, preservation and adaptation to the modernity of folklore, paying special attention to folklore, its preservation and presentation to the public.

Socialism is the period in which a completely new kind of Bulgarian costume was actually "born", created on the model of an artist on the basis of an old ethnographic prototype, through the help of the scientific community.

The establishment of the State Ensemble for Folk Songs and Dances in 1951, the following many other professional formations in the regions and the organization of state training for folklore artists turned folklore into a profession and the costume for the stage into workwear.

State ensembles are an example of the formation of the so-called mass culture. Through their activity and stage performances, a new kind of national culture was constructed, whose influence on folk clothing for the stage was in the direction of its acceptance as traditional and equivalent to Bulgarian.

The knowledge of the old authentic clothing among the performers of professional and amateur folklore gradually decreases or even completely disappears, because the choice, finding or production of costumes, as a stage prop, no longer depends on them, but is the prerogative of the management.

Today there is a serious lack of knowledge about traditional Bulgarian clothing, based on scientific literature and ethnographic research, both in people who use folklore clothing on stage, i.e. performers – dancers, singers and musicians, as well as in modern producers of stage costumes.

In our time, respect for folklore and the accompanying stage folk clothes does not decrease, on the contrary, it increases, is updated and develops into new forms. The interest in the old authentic folk clothing is revived and escalated to the point of uncontrollable piety on the part of collectors, dancers, choreographers, etc.

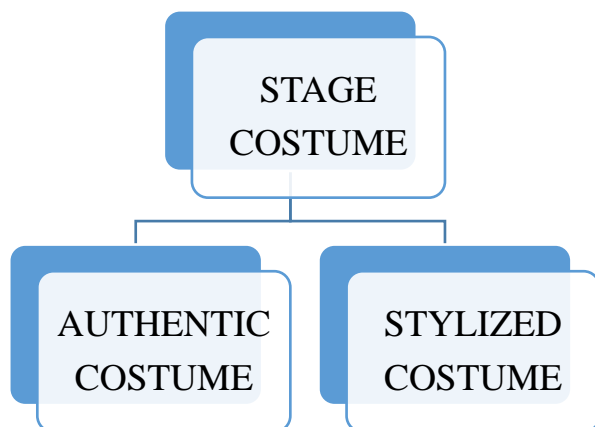
The stage costume obeys specific requirements of the stage.

The communicative role of the costume began to prevail over its other functions and made it impossible to compare it with other stage clothing. The traditional Bulgarian garment in its position as a stage prop is perceived only as Bulgarian clothing, bearing connotations and links with the past, traditional culture and folklore.

The stylized folk clothing and the use of traditional clothing on stage as a whole have been influenced enormously by the tourism industry since the 1970s. In the field of tourism, the promotion of Bulgaria as a tourist destination is quite often done precisely through imagery, using and imposing the "folk" and "Bulgarian".

The presentation and analysis of the development and change of traditional Bulgarian clothing used as a stage costume in the chronological framework from the Renaissance to the first decades of the 21st century formed several more important conclusions. First of all, despite the dropped in the scientific literature of the costume in its utilitarian function of a daily used garment at the beginning of the 20th century and its replacement with modern and modern outfits, it continues to exist and show enviable vitality even a century later in our time. Naturally, its functions today are quite different, but its rationalization as a great value proves

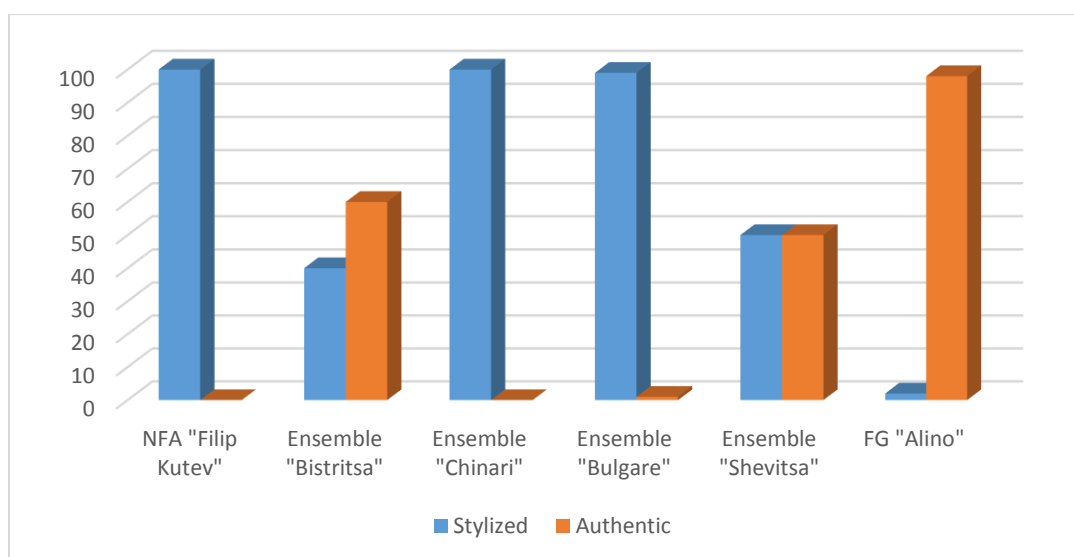
its vital importance for modern Bulgarians. Secondly, the development of traditional clothing shows two main trends. On the one hand, Bulgarian folk clothing and its symbolic intensity in its use as a representative stage garment corresponds to the perceptions of the Bulgarian in the last century. The transformation of the functionality of the folk costume leads to a change in its perception, reflecting both its attitude towards it and its use. Hence a different impact on others and sending specific new messages. On the other hand, the development and change of the traditional Bulgarian garment in the period set in the topic of scientific work, from the middle of the 20th to the beginning of the 21st century, took place only through its stage use. In this regard, there is a differentiation of two different modern types of costume for the stage, but with the same meaningfulness of a stage costume, namely an authentic traditional garment and a stylized folk costume. The secondary practicality of traditional Bulgarian clothing in performing arts is its contemporary version for development and transformation. The newly created stylized costume, in turn, is firmly positioned on the folklore scene, at times almost completely crowding out and replacing the old traditional garment as a specially created stage costume. Both variations of the stage garment recreating Bulgarian folklore on stage have strengths and weaknesses in terms of both the stage itself as a specific space and the people who use them – performers and audiences. When comparing the advantages and negatives, it can be argued that depending on the effect sought or the specific conditional situation, each of the types of stage costume could be used, as well as combining them in one spectacle.



- | | |
|--|---|
| - Heavy and uncomfortable to dance | - Lightweight and adapted for dance moves |
| - Rough fabrics | - Pleasant to wear new fabrics |
| - Difficult maintenance | - Easy cleaning and storage |
| - Small, invisible from afar decorations | - Enlarged elements (embroidery, braids etc.) |
| - Darker colors | - Bright colors |
| - Truthfulness | - Creative interpretation |
| - Historical and ethnographic | - Possible credibility information |
| - Scenography complies with the garment | - The garment complies with the scenography |

Another reality and almost unchanged factor regarding the use of a particular costume in a particular stage folklore performance is the personal preference and decision of the leader of the folklore formation. The choreographer is the one who is responsible for the overall vision of the stage performance. Each dance team forms its own characteristic style in the making of movements, the behavior on stage, the relations between the dancers, the acting skills, the mood, the overall atmosphere that accompanies the performance and last but not least the costume – the way of wearing the costumes, the alignment of details, the hairstyles, the veils,

the jewelry, the makeup, etc. All this is closely related to the taste of the leader, but it is achieved predominantly through the stage clothes he chooses, usually single-handed. Naturally, there are some conditions that directly affect decision-making such as welded from the past stage costumes in the wardrobe of the ensemble, imperative requirements for the use of an authentic or stylized suit, etc. Based on the field studies made, the percentage of the use of one or the other type of stage costume can be visually presented in the folklore groups included in the study, proving almost complete equality of the general presence of authentic and stylized costume in modern stage performances, but with a clear predominance of the stylized version stage clothing. Indisputable, however, is the fact that the newly created stylized stage costumes are used mainly by professional formations, and authentic costumes - by amateur and non-professional folklore groups.



Stage costume, whether stylized or authentic, is used to construct the image of the group that uses it. The garment is a participant in the processes of building this image. The semiotic workload of folklore clothing in stage performances such as visual unification and strong

recognizability make it an informant and an object of discussion. Its modern function to be a sign of belonging to the stage folklore group leads to opportunities to demonstrate this belonging, recognize it and increase personal pride. Often, by idealizing the visual representation of the group through costumes, emotions are inspired, and attention to the scene is literally and figuratively required. In conclusion, the summary can be made that the development and change of traditional Bulgarian clothing through the prism of performing art is a broad topic with many diverse directions, which makes it an appropriate starting point for future additional ethnological studies. This study does not address interesting topics such as the use of the costume in personal and family celebrations, so relevant in our modernity, the impact on the audience and the impact on the presentation of the participation of the choreographer and group leader in the stage performance, necessarily dressed in a costume or the topic of the connection of the popularity of traditional clothing with the media. etc.

Despite the definite distortion of the historical reality and the modern trends for a new ethnonationalism, the Bulgarian costume continues to possess as well as to consolidate the connotations of national value and is part of the industrial production of generalized signs of the Bulgarian spirit. It is an important element of popular stage culture with multiple opportunities to influence people, which activates the mechanisms of national solidarity and maintains a sense of identity, community, loyalty and pride. Despite the occurring, at times, fouling of folklore and its inevitable profanation and banalization through the mass taste, based on a lack of knowledge and desire for ostentation, there is no denying the representative function of this type of clothing in the painting of Bulgaria to the world. It is a well-known fact that in the international diplomatic protocol the national garment of each country has the status of the most formal dress for the most solemn occasions equal to a tailcoat or parade military uniform. A positive subsequent renewal of such a study could provide new facts and points of view, as well as new field material for cultural and anthropological analysis and conclusions.

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The dissertation is a serious experience in the field of Bulgarian ethnology for purposeful study of the use of traditional Bulgarian clothing on stage and its transformation into a stage costume in a long historical period.

Models from previous historical periods are analyzed and compared with contemporary examples of the national meaningfulness of the costume by introducing new ethnological information.

The development of folk clothing up to its transformation into a stage costume through the prism of contemporary understanding of the importance of traditional clothing as an element of national culture is traced and analyzed.

Traditional Bulgarian clothing as a stage prop is presented as a non-verbal form of communication and bearer of signs, and its effectiveness in this direction has been proven.

For the purpose of research, through conversations, interviews and personal observation, extensive empirical material related to stage folklore clothing was collected.

In the dissertation, through a vast and diverse source base, the indisputable superiority of the modern communication role of the stage costume over its other functions is proved.

Each of the chapters of the dissertation works is an overview of the changes (historical, functional and aesthetic) in traditional clothing through the prism of stage art. The text thoroughly analyzes the social, economic, political and cultural factors that influence the aesthetic criteria and respectively the type of clothing for a scene and could be used as a successful guide to the use of traditional costumes on stage.

The dissertation represents a new perspective on the change of traditional Bulgarian clothing from the middle of the 20th century to our modernity.

This study can serve as a basis for future studies in the field of clothing, and the conclusions made in it can find practical application in the formulation of tasks among scientific and educational circles, among consumers and producers of stage clothing and among other stakeholders.

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