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COSTUME IN BESSARABIA AND THE MOLDAVIAN  
SSR**

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## INTRODUCTION. CONCEPTUAL POINTS OF RESEARCH

“Traditional costume is a complex symbol highly operative within identity strategies.

But it’s not just a beautiful coat.

It’s a symbol. It’s strength, it’s unity.”

Dr. Varvara Buzila

**The topicality and importance of the problem addressed.** Landmark of the identity and spirituality of the ethnicity, the folk costume worn in Bessarabia and in the Moldavian SSR space is the fundamental component of folk art, which most expressively illustrates the principle of unity in diversity, preserving, at different historical stages, the particularities and features of culture and civilization. Folk clothing is the expression of the social and individual characteristics of a person related to gender, age, civil and social status. Moreover, constituted as a result of the creative process, through the system of values accumulated over time, this costume became part of the cultural heritage, an organic part of the Romanian clothing tradition, developed and completed the basic patterns of the Romanian costume and gave it more expressiveness<sup>1</sup>. Product of the activities of the individual and the collectivity, it reflects multidimensional aspects of the utilitarian, aesthetic, symbolic, economic functions, etc., aspects that require an approach from a diachronic and synchronic perspective.

The approach to the subject of types and practices related to peasant costume is current in the context of the course aimed at safeguarding the tangible and intangible heritage of the Republic of Moldova, as well as in that of connecting to European practices of its promotion. The folk costume, through the semantic field it has, the functional and aesthetic typology, has become an important ethno-cultural marker in the globalization process. The study of the ways of formation, the analysis of the historical character and significance, the highlighting of archaic aspects and of a more recent origin in the folk costume of women and men, with all its distinct particularities, will allow the development of models for the reconstruction of its component parts with their implementation in practice. In this context, we note that by UNESCO’s decision of December 1, 2022, the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (altîță), the most representative piece of women’s folk costume, was included in the list of intangible cultural heritage of the world, which will ensure a better awareness of the value of folk art. It is worth noting that the joint file of the Republic of Moldova and Romania comes to emphasize the value of this element of folk costume, which needs to be studied, valued and promoted, and the specific creative practices will be preserved and transmitted from generation to generation.

However, the topicality and major importance of the researched problem derives from the assumed objective of studying the folk costume in its essence. A very important clarification that we would like to make further is that in the 20th century, within the act<sup>2</sup> of cultural and identity communication, the folk costume of Bessarabia and the

<sup>1</sup> BUZILĂ, V. *Costumul popular din Republica Moldova*. Chișinău: Reclama, 2011, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> POP, M. *Obiceiuri tradiționale românești*. București: Institutul de Cercetări Etnologice și Di-

Moldavian SSR was created in a syncretism of contextual plans of a social, economic, political and ideological nature, to which cultural and spiritual landmarks are added. Due to the general aspect of the problem addressed, we analyzed the coordinates of its development, which allowed us to delimit its position in these plans and to target: 1) the conservation segment from the beginning of the century, a stage in our scientific approach, in which we analyzed the folk costume as a coordinate in the formulation of the ethnic identity of the people; 2) the segment of the evolution of the morphological and plastic-decorative structure of popular clothing in the 20th century under the impact of the industrialization process and the fashion phenomenon, that is, of urban clothing but also of the affirmation of national identity, of modernization and adaptation to the new demands of society in the interwar period, a stage in which we aimed to present a multilateral evolutionary picture, based mainly on field research and other accessible sources; 3) the segment of its abandonment and substitution with a synthetic “Moldovan national costume” during the Soviet period, a stage at which, through our research, we intended to analyze the way in which the latter marked the national specificity in the Moldavian SSR, by taking into account other aspects of the metamorphosis phenomenon, namely the mechanisms that were the basis for the establishment of the “Moldovan national costume” of the MSSR, a distorted form of popular dress, through which a “new national identity” was represented<sup>3</sup>.

Regarding the context or framework, we refer to the environment in which the folk costume developed with the involvement of several concurrent planes of manifestation, and the coordinates used to describe its position in this environment and, thus, we identified three types of status of the costume manifested in three sequences of its development.

Because we are disturbed by the confusing way in which the terms folk costume and “Moldovan national costume” are used, being related, in our opinion, to different types of clothing, this distinct mechanism allowed us to reach an agreement on the content of the “Moldovan national costume”, which, starting with the establishment, but also throughout the period of existence of the USSR and the Moldavian SSR, sought to form a set of characteristics of difference from its prototype, folk costume, by delimiting its own space of action placed on an axis rather ideological than cultural. The popularization of “national costumes” was accompanied by the generalization, in the ex-Soviet space, of its production industry, so that it became an instrument of ideological propaganda closely linked to the idea of forming the “Moldovan nation” to which a “national costume” was also attributed. Most of the forms of popularization of the numerous variants of the “national costume” were operated to organize and structure “correctly” the discussions about ethnic diversity in the USSR, also reflected in the speech of the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Moldova, L. Brezhnev, in 1951. Moreover, such “national costumes” were formed for all the socialist republics of the Soviet Union. The Kremlin speech instantly transformed the “Moldovan national costume”

alectologică, 1976, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> BUJOREAN, T. Considerations regarding the national costume as an object of the soviet propaganda. In: *Brukenthal. Acta Mvsei XIII. 5, Brukenthalia Romanian Cultural History Review*. Editura Muzeului Național Brukenthal, Sibiu/Hermannstadt. 2019, nr. 9, pp. 1027-1035.

(but also the Ukrainian, Estonian, Georgian, etc.) into a hybrid symbol, easily recognizable in the USSR and outside it. Such a “national costume”, in several ornamental and chromatic versions, was promoted within the framework of political rites and national, union and international holidays. We refer, in particular, to the fact that the reality of the USSR, which contributed to the erosion of the peasant clothing ensemble, was dominated by “national costumes” imposed and regulated by the ideological system and their popularization was aimed at demonstrating the “well-being” brought by the Soviet system, including in the MSSR, becoming an instrument for emphasizing the “new value system” and concealing the previous one. The elements of the ethnographic heritage of the ethnic groups in the USSR were seen as a resource for maintaining a high level of patriotism among Soviet citizens, as a result, the folk costume, the most important part of the ethnic identity, turned into a source of aesthetic experience, into a “showcase” of the national culture. Based on the investigated material, we came to the conclusion that the “Moldovan national costume” is an invented concept, which became a symbol of ethnocultural diversity in the USSR, a “new visual image” associated with a “new national identity”. The concept, throughout its existence, was articulated with the formula “the flourishing of the national form with socialist content” in the context of Soviet reality.

Regarding the present research, it should be noted that from this perspective, the popular costume in the current space of the Republic of Moldova has not been examined in all its complexity, which explains the need for this research that will restore it to its important place and restore its specific value as a marker of the people’s identity.

The development of folk costume in the 20th century (reflected on the basis of material from the current space of the Republic of Moldova) is of particular interest, first of all, for researchers through the opportunity to study it within a period that abounds in social, cultural, economic and political events. Secondly, despite the fact that the theme of folk costume has been researched by several historians, ethnographers and ethnologists, the results and conclusions reached are insufficient for the field in question, because the theme was approached within other time limits or under other aspects. We note that this topic has not been reflected from the perspective of examining the transformations to which the folk clothing system was subjected, and the results obtained in this regard are insufficient for achieving an overall vision of the evolution of folk costume from a historical, ethnological and artistic point of view, which conditioned the choice of this research topic, which presents itself as a complex and multidisciplinary study, from which the topicality of the investigated subject also resides. Moreover, we have carried out a process of interconnecting ethnology with other related sciences: history, archaeology, demography, sociology, etc., opening, at the same time, new perspectives for their collaboration, overcoming the strict boundaries of research through methodological and theoretical transformations, emphasizing the fact that ethnology is an interdisciplinary field. Despite the fact that a number of historians and ethnologists have conducted research on the genesis of the folk costume, its forms of manifestation, after 1991 the need for a critical reevaluation of these publications, which were often conformed to party ideology, became imminent.

Our scientific approach is also motivated by society’s interest in the components of popular culture and civilization, which has a transdisciplinary character and an import-

ant significance in shaping new directions in ethnological science by researching the successive layers of the evolution of popular costume in the 20th century, classified as a material and spiritual identity marker, within which visual signs and common codes are shared. We thus subscribe to the statement of ethnologist Maria Bătcă that the popular costume “along with language, customs and traditions, constitutes an emblem of recognition, a symbol, a landmark, a fundamental identity constant”<sup>4</sup>.

**Degree of investigation of the problem.** In several publications accessible to our research, the evolution of the folk costume, the stages of development, the ornamental motifs used in the decoration of clothing items, etc. were reflected. We find that the works published with reference to the folk costume of Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR were most often too general, focused on a narrow thematic or chronological segment, the authors approaching the subject tangentially or pursuing objectives other than those that interested us. The problem of the folk costume, analyzed through the prism of the transformations to which it was subjected in the 20th century, was overlooked by ethnologists, historians, anthropologists, a fact that makes the research initiated by us current and imminent, and the sources identified and examined in detail allow determining the changes that the folk costume went through and the elaboration of a special study that is lacking at the current stage of national historiography.

**Theoretical support.** In the cultural space studied, the works devoted to the field are not so numerous, but those that have been edited so far can serve as theoretical support for the approach taken. To carry out the thesis, I turned to the theoretical basis formed by the publications signed by well-known researchers in the field, ethnographers, ethnologists, art critics from Romania, such as Emilia Pavel (with the most relevant descriptions and analyses of folk costumes)<sup>5</sup>, Aurelia Doagă (who described costumes from different areas of Romania, with indications on sewing techniques, with attached pattern sheets)<sup>6</sup>, Angela Paveliuc Olariu<sup>7</sup>, Alexandrina Enăchescu Cantemir<sup>8</sup>, Maria Bătcă (who developed an extensive study on folk costume)<sup>9</sup>, Mihai Pop<sup>10</sup> (folklorist, cultural anthropologist and ethnologist) etc. In the Moldavian SSR and after 1991, the Republic of Moldova, theoretical support was provided by the works developed by Ada Zevin and

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<sup>4</sup> BĂTCĂ, M. *Costumul popular românesc*. București: Centrul Național pentru Conservarea și Promovarea Culturii Tradiționale, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> PAVEL, E. *Portul popular din zona Iași*. București: Meridiane, 1975. 40 p.; PAVEL, E. *Portul popular moldovenesc*. Iași: Junimea, 1976. 208 p.

<sup>6</sup> DOAGĂ, A. *I și cămăși românești*. București: Ed. Tehnică, 1981. 60 p.

<sup>7</sup> PAVELIUC OLARIU, A. *Arta Populara Din Zona Botosanilor. Portul Popular*. Botoșani: Muzeul Județean Botoșani, 1980. 163 p. [online] [citat 17.07.2023]. Disponibil: <https://pdfcoffee.com/paveliuc-olariu-angela-arta-populara-din-zona-botosanilor-portul-popular-pdf-free.html>

<sup>8</sup> ENĂCHESCU-CANTEMIR, A. *Portul popular românesc*. București: Meridiane, 1971. 182 p. [online] [citat 17.07.2023]. Disponibil: <https://ru.scribd.com/document/436763075/1971-Portul-popular-romanesc-Alexandrina-En%C4%83chescu-Cantemir-pdf>

<sup>9</sup> BĂTCĂ, M. *Costumul popular românesc*. București: Centrul Național pentru Conservarea și Promovarea Culturii Tradiționale, 2006. 242 p.

<sup>10</sup> POP, M. *Obiceiuri tradiționale românești*. București: Institutul de Cercetări Etnologice și Dialectologice, 1976. 192 p.

Matuș Livșiț<sup>11</sup>, M. Dimitriu<sup>12</sup>, V. Zelenciuc<sup>13</sup>, Iulia Paliț-Palade<sup>14</sup>, Viorica Țurcanu<sup>15</sup>, Zinovia Șofranksy<sup>16</sup>, Varvara Buzila<sup>17</sup>, Silvia Șaranuța<sup>18</sup>, and others, as well as the albums created by Silvia Șaranuța and illustrated by the plastic artist Luiza Ianțen.

In this way, **the research problem** is structured from the requirement to reflect the coordinates of the development of the folk costume in Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR in the 20th century, examined in the context of historical evolution, which subsumes others in turn that will be mentioned along the way.

**The object of study** is the popular clothing system from Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR, consisting of the harmonization of elements, motifs, ornamental compositions, into a stylistic whole of uniqueness, according to Romanian grammar<sup>19</sup>, which went through several stages of development during the 20th century.

**The chronological segment** of the study has the lower limit of the 1900s, the period in which we can analyze the aspects that include a large number of facts of economic behavior in rural and urban areas, which left their mark on the folk costume. At the same time, at the beginning of the 20th century, through the ethnographic expeditions of Russian researchers, numerous pieces of clothing were taken from Bessarabia to Russian museums, which were later substituted by pieces specific to the Slavic costume, thus marking the beginning of the erosion of the peasant clothing system in Bessarabia<sup>20</sup>. The upper chronological limit of our research belongs to the end of the 20th century, since with the collapse of the USSR and the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Moldova in 1991, the process of transformation, under the impact of socialist

<sup>11</sup> ЗЕВИНА, А.М.; ЛИВШИЦ, М.Я. *Национальные костюмы Молдавии*. Кишинёв: Карта Молдовеняскэ, 1960. 32 p.

<sup>12</sup> ДИМИТРИУ, М.; ЗЕЛЕНЧУК, В. *Молдавский национальный костюм*. Кишинёв: Тимпул, 1975. 61 p.

<sup>13</sup> ЗЕЛЕНЧУК, В. *Молдавский национальный костюм – Moldavian National Costume*. Кишинёв: Тимпул, 1985. 143 p.

<sup>14</sup> PALIȚ-PALADE, Iu. *Portul popular din Republica Moldova*. Chișinău: Grafema-Libris, 2003. 40 p.

<sup>15</sup> ȚURCANU, V. *Costumul: tradiție și modernitate – valorificări*. Chișinău: Notograf Prim, 2012. 272 p.

<sup>16</sup> ȘOFRANSKY, Z.; ȘOFRANSKY, V. *Cromatică tradițională românească*. București: Editura Etnologică, 2012; ȘOFRANSKY, Z. Aspecte estetice în arta tradițională. In: *Revista de Etnologie și Culturologie*. 2015, nr. 18, pp. 8-14.

<sup>17</sup> BUZILĂ, V. *Costumul popular din Republica Moldova*. Chișinău: Reclama, 2011. 159 p.

<sup>18</sup> ШАРАНУЦА, С. *Costum național moldovenesc de femeie. Молдавский национальный женский костюм. Moldavian women's national costume*. Тирасполь: Тип. г. Тирасполя; ШАРАНУЦА, С. *Costumul național al femeii găgăuze. Гагаузский национальный женский костюм. Gagauz women's national costume*. Тирасполь: Тип. г. Тирасполя; ШАРАНУЦА, С. *Costum național gagauz pentru bărbați. Гагаузский национальный мужской костюм. Gagauz men's national costume*. Тирасполь: Тип. г. Тирасполя; ШАРАНУЦА, С. *Motive naționale. Национальные мотивы*. Тирасполь: Тип. г. Тирасполя.

<sup>19</sup> BUZILĂ, V. *Costumul popular din Republica Moldova*, p. 143.

<sup>20</sup> CONDRATICOVA, L.; BUJOREAN, T.; CERCAȘIN, M.; TOCARCIUC, A.; PINTILEI, E. Expedițiile etnografice și importanța lor în dezvoltarea artizanatului din RSS Moldovenească. In: *Akademios*. 2020, nr. 2(57), pp. 144-154.



society, of the folk costume into a “Moldovan national costume”, a synthetic one, alien to the Romanian population east of the Prut. A period of searches and borrowings in the field of popular wear, often bordering on *kitsch*, followed, which resulted in a perspective of returning to its authentic status.

**Geographic limits:** the folk clothing ensemble studied in this thesis is mainly related to the current space of the Republic of Moldova, with the inclusion in the research area of the part from the northern and southern regions of Bessarabia during the inter-war period.

**The purpose** of the thesis is to provide a theoretical and practical foundation for the development of the folk costume in Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR in the 20th century, to identify the circumstances of the transformations that occurred and to analyze their impact on the contextual frameworks for the manifestation of the costume in the socio-cultural space studied. To achieve the stated goal, several historical-ethnological, artistic and museographic aspects were addressed, with the following **objectives being formulated:**

1) Systematization of data regarding the basic morphological and plastic-decorative structures of the folk costume of Bessarabia, of its forms of manifestation at the beginning of the 20th century;

2) Reflection and interpretation of the main transformations of the contexts and, implicitly, the reference plans that facilitated the reduction of the sphere of action of the analyzed clothing system;

3) Identification and specification of the changes that occurred in the peasant clothing system in the first half of the 20th century, which resulted in its alteration and the messages transmitted with its help;

4) Examination of the main transformations of the contexts and contextual plans that favored the algorithm of the establishment of the “national costume” in the Moldavian SSR;

5) Analysis of the process of substituting the folk costume with the “Moldovan national costume”, placed on an ideological rather than cultural axis in the Moldavian SSR;

6) Reflection of the process of establishing Soviet-style fashion and folk-style clothing, based on the folk costume ensemble in the Moldavian SSR;

7) Presentation of the coordinates of the development of the folk costume in Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR in the 20th century, with recommendations for its reconstruction and return to its basic morphological and plastic-decorative structure.

**The novelty and scientific originality** of the thesis is determined by the fact that the existing information about the status of the folk costume at different historical stages is re-evaluated and supplemented with new, unpublished facts, examined through the prism of the coordinates of the development of the folk costume in Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR in the 20th century, a subject that has reached the researchers’ agenda for the first time. The 20th century was significantly marked by two major political events: the First World War, followed by the unification of the Romanian nation, and the Second World War, with its repercussions of expanding the communist doctrine. In such conditions, the thesis is a first complex scientific investigation, from a historical

and ethnological point of view, of the development of the folk costume in the context of the events that had a substantial impact on the ensemble of morphological and plastic-decorative transformations in the 20th century. An added novelty and originality is attributed to the investigation by the multi-aspect, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches, carried out from the economic, social, and cultural perspective of the problem, through the analysis of a diversity of unpublished materials and documents, introduced for the first time into the scientific circuit through the author's publications and the scientific approach in question.

**The theoretical value** of the thesis lies in emphasizing the complex meanings of the regularities and specifics of the development of folk costume in the 20th century, an extremely important fact, because folk costume, as a phenomenon of culture and civilization, most expressively reflects the way society is organized from an economic, socio-political and cultural point of view, the mentalities and beliefs of people, their customs and rites of passage, as well as the impact of ideology, of any nature, on its evolution.

**Applicative value.** Due to the complexity of the factual material of an ethnographic, ethnological, historical and plastic nature, accumulated mainly as a result of field expeditions, the present thesis can be useful in interdisciplinary studies both in a theoretical and applicative sense. The information concentrated in the thesis and the author's publications on the topic of the thesis will serve as a reference point for specialists in the preparation of bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses, synthesis works on the genesis and affirmation of the folk costume, can be used as a course support in university courses in ethnology, cultural anthropology and history, national decorative arts, etc.

**Approval of research results.** The results of our research conducted between 2017 and 2023 were editorially valued in 27 publications, including 5 articles in international journals, 1 article in a category A journal (SCOPUS), 4 articles in national Category B journals, 2 materials in national/international collections, 8 materials of national/international conferences, 7 abstracts of scientific conferences. At the same time, the research results were approved at 15 national and international conferences.

**Implementation of results.** The research results were implemented within the theoretical and practical classes at university courses in the discipline "Fashion Theory" at the Faculty of Design of the Technical University of Moldova and in the discipline "Project", the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design of the Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts. A series of recommendations regarding the reconstruction of the folk costume and its updating were taken into account within the activity related to "Ethnographic Practice" with students of the specialty "Clothing Design", the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design of the Academy of Music, Theater and Fine Arts, within the framework of decorative art exhibitions with the presentation of their own works or the guidance of clothing collections developed by students and master's students. Some clothing collections inspired by folk costumes were presented during the fashion show held at the international scientific conference "Yesterday's Cultural Heritage – Implications in the Development of Tomorrow's Sustainable Society", the first edition (September 23-24, 2019) <sup>21</sup> and

<sup>21</sup> "Patrimoniul cultural de ieri – implicații în dezvoltarea societății durabile de mâine", ediția I [online] [citat 17.07.2023]. Disponibil: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBnCqv3s\\_IY&ab\\_channel=BibliotecaNa%C5%A3ional%C4%83aRepubliciiMoldova](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBnCqv3s_IY&ab_channel=BibliotecaNa%C5%A3ional%C4%83aRepubliciiMoldova)

included in the film promoting material cultural heritage at the second edition of the conference, from September 22-23, 2020<sup>22</sup>, etc.

**Keywords:** folk costume, Bessarabia, Moldavian SSR, ethnology, history, culture, heritage, everyday folk costume, ceremonial folk costume, celebration, rite, ceremony, custom, fashion, style, clothing, accessories, ornaments, jewelry, national costume, “Moldovan national costume”, political rite, Soviet-style fashion, folk style.

## THESIS CONTENT

The thesis consists of an Introduction, which presents the argumentation of the theme, the level of research in historiography, the purpose and objectives, the chronological and geographical framework, the theoretical and applicative value, the novelty and originality. The thesis is composed of four chapters each with conclusions, General conclusions and recommendations. The bibliography includes 484 of titles in Romanian, English, Ukrainian, Russian, electronic sources. The annexes represent the author’s field materials, the list of informants, the list of museums visited, photographic material reflecting the pieces of the folk costume from Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR.

**The first Chapter is entitled “Folk Costume from Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR: Historiographical References and Documentary Sources”** and addresses the subject of folk costume, which has been the subject of research in numerous inter- and transdisciplinary studies, knowledge in the field being complemented by publications in the fields of history, art, technology, culture, sociology, which integrate certain aspects of the problem stated by us, but target smaller segments of the sector. The published works were most often too general, approached the problem tangentially, within other spatial or chronological limits, or pursued other objectives than those outlined by us. We note that the authors of the publications examined focus rarely on studying and describing the process of metamorphosis and the coordinates of the development of the peasant costume in the 20th century in Bessarabia (early 20th century, interwar period) and the Moldavian SSR (1945–1991), which is why the novelty and originality of the study proposed by us results. We have highlighted several basic chronological stages of historiography related to the folk costume and its development: I) Bessarabia during the Tsarist period, the second half of the 19th century – 1917; II) the interwar period, 1918–1944; III) the Soviet period, 1944–1991 and IV) the authors’ publications published after the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Moldova in 1991. The research concerns of folk costume from the second half of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century and those from the Soviet period had a different character, which is why it is necessary to critically and objectively reexamine the conceptions of the authors who approached the issue<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> „Patrimoniul cultural de ieri – implicații în dezvoltarea societății durabile de mâine”, ediția a II-a [online] [citat 17.07.2023]. Disponibil: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_dFrQBbn490&ab\\_channel=IDSITV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dFrQBbn490&ab_channel=IDSITV)

<sup>23</sup> BUJOREAN, T.P. Coordonatele dezvoltării costumului popular din Basarabia și RSS Moldovenească: repere istoriografice și surse de documentare. In: *Patrimoniul cultural de ieri – implicații în*

The subject of sources in ethnology at the current stage is widely debated, seeking effective ways of developing and approaching problems, starting with expanding the research object to diversifying the methodology, emphasizing the specificity of ethnographic knowledge and determining the value of research in the field of ethnology, based on a certain type of sources and focused, depending on scientific schools, on synthesis, strategies, categories and models of knowledge, with the dominance of concrete or conceptual data, as the case may be<sup>24</sup>. Based on these studies and field investigations, our research related to the coordinates of the development of folk costume relies on epistemological data of knowledge and facts-concepts that were addressed in the pages of the thesis.

To reconstruct the stages of costume development in the Moldavian SSR, we appealed to the mass media from that time, namely the magazines of the Soviet period: “Femeia Moldovei”, “Moldova”, “Cultura Moldovei”<sup>25</sup>, the newspaper “Tinerimea Moldovei”.

Based on archival sources (National Archives Agency) we identified a series of workshops where clothing and the “Moldovan national costume” were made, a synthetic product, created in contrast to the folk costume, used as a propaganda tool during the USSR to demonstrate the existence of two unrelated peoples: Romanians and Moldovans.

The central place in our study belongs to the folk costume pieces from the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History in Chisinau, the museographic files consulted substantially expanding the data referring to the pieces kept in the custody of the Museum, which were verified with the results of our field research and led to the systematization of information and the development of a complex typology of folk costume. The field research carried out in several localities in the current space of the Republic of Moldova to geographically cover the villages in the north, south and center of the country, with the involvement of some localities on the left bank of the Dniester, allowed us to form a consistent base of field materials of the author. The documentary sources allow us to demonstrate that the “Moldovan national costume” synthetically created on the basis of folk costume, became an element of ideological propaganda during the Soviet period.

The development of the folk costume and the transformations it underwent throughout the investigated period – from the beginning of the 20th century to 1991, but also the period up to the end of the 20th century – which was the object of our research, represents an integral coded system, a social phenomenon and an expressive indicator of the status of the possessor. It most clearly emphasizes the issues of ethnic affiliation, of iden-

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*dezvoltarea societății durabile de mâine*. Vol. 7, Iași-Chișinău-Lviv: 2024, pp. 559-573.

<sup>24</sup> ПРИГАРИН, А.А. Вариативность этнографического знания: потенциал источников и разнообразие подходов, In: *Интеграция археологических и этнографических исследований: сборник научных трудов*. Часть 1. Казань: Институт истории им. Ш. Марджани АН РТ, 2010, pp. 29-35; ГЛУШКО, М.С. *Методика польового этнографічного дослідження: Навч. посібник*. Львів: Видавничий центр ЛНУ ім. Івана Франка, 2008. 288 p.; РЭДКЛИФФ-БРАУН, А.Р. *Структура и функция в примитивном обществе*. Очерки и лекции. М.: Вост. лит., 2001. 304 p.

<sup>25</sup> Modele de costume naționale din Moldova. In: *Cultura Moldovei*. 1957. 26 sept., p. 3.

tification at the interpersonal and collective levels, of demographic and societal order, of civil and social differentiation through the quality and value of the fabrics and ornaments used, highlighting, under the impact of modernity and fashion, the Eastern and Western European influences in terms of textile material, cuts, patterns, and colors used.

By examining publications in the field and analyzing research sources, we reached the following conclusions, imminent to Chapter I:

1) Despite the attention of researchers to this subject, the issue of the coordinates of the development of the costume in has not been addressed in historiography, which results in the novelty and originality of the research undertaken by us. The publications available at this stage of research provide the theoretical support necessary to evaluate objectively the way in which the folk costume evolved during this period.

2) The research sources allowed us to determine the degree of investigation of the issue of the development of folk costume and were classified into written ones (archive files, official documents, exhibition catalogs, period photographs, sketches of costumes and clothing pieces, museum files) and material ones (pieces identified in the collections of museums of different status, as well as those offered by some people interviewed during field research).

3) The analyzed sources offered the opportunity to develop a complex typology of folk costume pieces and to follow the dynamics of its development during the period in question.

4) The large-scale ethnographic expeditions undertaken by ethnographers and their notes are very important and had several functions: material inventory, photo-fixing and documenting, transmitting it to museums, using it as a source for creating new models of clothing and textile items. Thanks to these ethnographic expeditions, several original pieces were cataloged and preserved, later transferred to the custody of central or local museums, depending on their value.

5) By identifying authentic pieces, preserved in local museum collections, as well as in private collections, we try to reconstruct the true folk costume from rural and urban areas, which was distinct through several particularities, namely the civil and socio-economic status of the owner, the financial possibilities, the craftsmanship of the craftsman, etc.

6) In the process of studying folk costume, an investigation algorithm was developed, which consisted of three basic components: the object of study, the researcher himself, the resources and research tools that led to the development of a certain system, research program, the choice of the necessary tools and scientific working methods.

The examination of publications targeting folk costume, as well as research sources, most of which are being introduced for the first time into the scientific circuit, strengthens our intention to identify the coordinates of its development in order to bring heritage costume back to the attention of researchers, civil society, and decision-makers.

The second chapter “**Configurations of the popular costume from Bessarabia at the beginning of the 20th century**” is focused on the description of the folk costume at the beginning of the 20th century, and our field documentation and interviewing a large number of respondents, the study of specialized literature supported with the data

of museum collections, come to affirm the unity and diversity of the costume rather at a local and regional level, without transposing a strict clothing model onto an artificial area proposed by V. Zelenciuc<sup>26</sup>.

For a better understanding of the stated issue, the data was systematized based on the primary relationship that governs society, the man/woman relationship, from which the fundamental classification of each clothing results: women's wear and men's wear. Following this classification, the popular clothing was listed according to the parts of the body it covers, attributing to them signs related to the social status or the moral and aesthetic values of the wearer. In addition to these classifications, two basic components of the popular clothing were followed, historically constituted – one everyday and the other festive, in interdependent relationships<sup>27</sup>. The clothing, in general, was created in a syncretism of contextual plans concomitants with a specific hierarchical structure, such as socio-economic, behavioral, sacred, ceremonial, artistic<sup>28</sup>.

The equidistant identification of the folk costume for women was based on the typology developed by the Romanian ethnologists Georgeta Stoica and Paul Petrescu<sup>29</sup>, also embraced by Emilia Pavel<sup>30</sup>. Thus, the folk costume for women at the beginning of the 20th century appears crystallized in the form of: 1) the costume with one catrință – a rectangular fabric that covers the hem of the shirt from the waist down; 2) the costume with two catrință – rectangular fabrics worn in pairs in front and behind over the hem; 3) the costume with fotă – a rectangular fabric wrapped around the hips, of old tradition, with the decoration grouped at the ends and on the edges in the form of stripes and patterns, worn over the hem of the shirt; the costume with a fotă – rectangular fabric in two different chromatic registers that divides the sheet into two halves on the horizontal line, of a later tradition<sup>31</sup>. In the typology of folk costume pieces, the multiple functions that the shirt had – emblem of belonging and sign of ethnic unity, criterion that marked the age and social status of the wearer, the occasions, but also the symbolic and ritual function, etc. – emphasizes the

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<sup>26</sup> ЗЕЛЕНЧУК, В.С. *Costumul scenic moldovenesc. Raioanele de nord ale Moldovei. Молдавский сценический костюм. Северные районы Молдавии*. Кишинёв: Тимпул, 1985, р. 5; ЗЕЛЕНЧУК, В.С. *Costumul scenic moldovenesc. Raioanele de nord ale Moldovei. Молдавский сценический костюм. Северные районы Молдавии*. Кишинёв: Тимпул, 1985, р. 8; ЗЕЛЕНЧУК, В.С. *Costitul scenic moldovenesc. Raioanele de pe malul stâng al Nistrului. Молдавский сценический костюм. Левобережные районы МССР*. Кишинёв: Тимпул, 1985, р. 5; ЗЕЛЕНЧУК, В.С. *Costitul scenic moldovenesc. Raioanele de centru ale RSS Moldovenești. Молдавский сценический костюм. Центральные районы Молдавской ССР*. Кишинёв: Тимпул, 1988, р. 3; ЗЕЛЕНЧУК, В.С. *Costumul scenic moldovenesc. Raioanele de sud ale RSSM. Молдавский сценический костюм. Южные районы МССР*. Кишинёв: Тимпул, 1990, р. 11.

<sup>27</sup> BUJOREAN, T. Relații de interdependență și interinfluență între costumul popular moldovenesc cotidian și cel de sărbătoare în perioada contemporană. In: *Revista de Etnologie și Culturologie*. 2016, nr. 20, 135-139.

<sup>28</sup> POP, M. *Obiceiuri tradiționale românești*. București, 1976. p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> STOICA, G.; PETRESCU, P. *Dicționar de artă populară*. București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1997. 520 p.

<sup>30</sup> PAVEL, E. *Portul popular din zona Iași*. București: Meridiane, 1975. 40 p.; PAVEL, E. *Portul popular moldovenesc*. Iași: Junimea, 1976. 208 p.

<sup>31</sup> BUZILĂ, V. *Costumul popular din Republica Moldova*. Chișinău, 2011, p. 90.



special importance of this piece in the structure of the heritage clothing costume.

The men's folk costume, identified based on archives and museum collections, at the beginning of the 20th century consisted of: a lambskin hat, a felt or straw hat, a long "old man" shirt, a belt, a chimir or a wide leather belt, wrinkled țtari, narrow or wide izmene, cioareci or nădragi of thick white woolen fabric, fabric vests or leather breast-plates, short pelts with sleeves, long dimie clothes, sumane, large pelts, obieie, opinci, clogs or boots.

Common pieces of women's and men's clothing are the cingătorile, brăul, bârnețele, chimirul, which completed the men's or women's wear and emphasized the harmony between them. As a rule, they were specific for both every day and festive occasions, worn in the winter or summer season.

By studying the configurations of the folk costume of Bessarabia, of the popular culture and civilization in order to treasure its most valuable creation, the folk heritage costume faithful to the status of an identity mark, concerning the morphological and plastic-decorative structure of the folk costume at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, the data was systematized, and the following conclusions were drawn:

1) Folk clothing systems exhibit an extensive and varied set of common characteristics. The particularity of the heritage costume of Bessarabia lies in its own, unique interpretation of the worldview and the specific conditions in which this understanding developed.

2) As an element of material and spiritual culture, with social significance, this costume preserved its morphological structure (cut) almost unchanged until the beginning of the 20th century. By the 20th century, the folk costume had formed the basic typological characteristics, defined by unity in variety. The fundamental form of the morphological unity was given by the raw material, cut, decorative embroidery processes, ornamentation, chromaticity, composition of the whole, categories of pieces that completed the ensemble, being also determined by geographical conditions that allowed the use of the same raw materials in the manufacture of clothing and accessories. Thus, the folk clothing system was made up of constituent elements that interacted with each other through relationships of interdependence, compatibility and complementarity (of completion).

3) The women's shirt at the beginning of the 20th century presented unity in morphological character throughout Bessarabia, through alignment with the basic pattern, and variety in external appearance, and the main factor that contributed to the individualization of shirts at the local level and which generated several morphological-decorative variants at the regional and zonal level, was the type of cloth.

4) The study of ornaments and accessories, as an integral part of women's wear, has shown that they occupied a special place among the objects of everyday life and harmonized with the components of the garment. Their function, both in everyday and festive contexts, was of magical value, marking the gender, age, social and civil status of the person.

5) The fact of the existence and development of the folk heritage costume in Bessarabia since the beginning of the 20th century is argued by the following: the folk costume from Bessarabia in its archaic version, according to the accumulated materials, was kept at the beginning of the 20th century because the component parts of the folk costume

continued to last in formulas adapted to the whole; thus, what has legality for the folk costume as a whole, has legality for its component parts as well, because the whole has the power of argument.

6) Configurations of the popular costume from Bessarabia were investigated in the context of the early 20th century, with the involvement of several concurrent plans of its manifestation, which gives these ethnological facts their own dimensions. As it became resistant over time, the costume was an integral part of the social life of the community and of various aspects of its order, it represented an important way of affirming the individual at the interpersonal and collective level, but also of recognizing his ethnic and cultural identity. Correlated with the norms and rules of social coexistence of people, the costume was an active mechanism of social life, a creative and preserving mechanism of order and culture. The system of rules of the Bessarabian community, expressed through the custom of wearing folk costume adapted to the daily or ceremonial/ritual context, with a set of messages that involved an act of encoding and decoding, by virtue of a code known to both senders and receivers, ensured order in the patriarchal society, the folk costume having the possibility, means and necessary conditions to oscillate without losing its balance.

In Chapter 3 “**Folk costume: continuities and discontinuities**” we set out to examine the transformations of the folk costume in the context of the evolution of urban clothing in Bessarabia in the first half of the 20th century<sup>32</sup>. Regarding the historical development of the folk costume in Bessarabia until the First World War, we distinguish changes produced continuously and gradually by the intrinsic insertion of new urban elements, subject to transformation in the logic of local, regional or zonal style. The causes that initiated the faster metamorphosis of the folk costume are not so much decisions, but important social and political phenomena such as the First World War, the economic crisis, epidemics, industrialization and urbanization under the influence of which several new materials and pieces of clothing entered the folk clothing system. In villages, these changes gave rise to mixtures and hybrid forms that affected the value and structure of the local costume, conditioned its gradual withdrawal from everyday life, it being reserved only for holidays and other important moments.

Urbanization and industrialization acted through several circuits. The demographic and ethnic structure diminished the capacity to maintain practices in the field of peasant clothing and facilitated the crystallization of a heterogeneous society, opposite to the traditional one in the rural area. The evolution of the urban costume in Bessarabia generated not only strictly morphological changes in the popular clothing system, it calls into question the very transformation of the forms of social life in the given period. Of great ethnographic significance is the direct influence of the urban costume subject to fashion fluctuations, with the most diverse forms of manifestation, on the popular clothing in the region.

The emancipation of the city and the subsequent boom of the economy determined a continuous economic and cultural differentiation between urban areas, on the one hand,

<sup>32</sup> BUJOREAN, T.P. Evoluția vestimentației citadine din Basarabia în primele patru decenii ale secolului al XX-lea. In: *Patrimoniul cultural de ieri – implicații în dezvoltarea societății durabile de mâine*. Vol. 4, Iași-Chișinău: 2021, pp. 235-242.



and rural areas, on the other. Rural areas remained for a period of time with archaic forms of clothing, while urban areas differentiated more and more significantly in terms of the adopted clothing system. The urban area, heterogeneous in many aspects, with modern forms of socializing based on impersonal and indirect social interactions, began to shape a society, distinct from the rural one, in which individuals were different from each other, including in terms of fashionable clothing.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the first stage of regressive metamorphosis took place, which conditioned the change in time of the status of the peasant costume in the region and thus, a costume that included contradictory elements began to be worn more frequently. At another stage, the change in the appearance of the costume was due to the influence of the clothing of the nobility and the bourgeoisie, the emergence of city fashion and industrial materials. As a result of the relationship with the city population, starting with the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, we encounter a costume defined by a combination of archaic costume pieces and urban elements.

The cause of the mutations that marked the folk costume of Bessarabia in the first half of the 20th century is due to the mentality that everything that comes from the urban area is better. Urban clothing began to be more and more actively involved in the plans in which the folk costume was manifested, which was much less, or not at all, in step with fashion. Urban clothing becomes an active mechanism of social life, comes to be correlated with the norms and rules of social coexistence of people from the village and gradually replaces peasant attire. Thus, first of all, clothing, entertainment, language and then songs took urbanized forms, considered not as entertainment, but as flows of local spirituality.

According to field data from the first half of the 20th century, within the rites, we increasingly find two types of costume – the folk costume made within the peasant household and the hybrid one, with dysfunctions in the material and sewing or embroidery techniques<sup>33</sup>. The archaic clothing system and its component elements interact differently with urban clothing and thus it modifies and decomposes it differently. Under these circumstances, in terms of functionality, over time, the folk costume develops changes at the structural level because it begins to not correspond to the changes that occurred in the way of life of the inhabitants of Bessarabia.

As a result of the documentation initiated in museums and in the field, we identified characteristics that denote dysfunctions that occurred at the level of the cloth, of the structure (the generalization of the shirt with a collar in both the women's and men's clothing systems)<sup>34</sup>. The practical measures subject to modification trends, as in the case of shirts, which also began to be taken for *catrințe* and *fote*, are related to the fact that the homemade cloth began to be replaced by that the industrial cloth. Traditional festive footwear was gradually, under the influence of the city, flooded and substituted by various craft forms: clogs (low and high), boots, shoes, slippers.

We do not claim that the transformation through decomposition of the popular costume was directly caused by the urbanization process. There were a lot of other phe-

<sup>33</sup> BUJOREAN, T. *Portul popular în Basarabia la 1918: măturii documentare*, pp. 117-129.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*.

nomena responsible for both the existence and the variation of this phenomenon. The transformations of the popular costume can be explained by invoking several determining factors, which are related to contextual coordinates such as economic, political, social and cultural aspects. Urbanization and the expansion of clothing drastically influenced the transformation of the popular costume, but this influence was complex, being achieved through several secondary determining circuits, such as the migration of the population from rural to urban areas, the type of profession adopted in the urban area, the level of income, the type of work, the social status, the types of clothing associated with them and the complementary way of life with them. The population began to prefer another type of wear and their preference was caused by the new type of behavior<sup>35</sup>.

Archival materials confirm that the peasant costume, linked to the multinational and divided character of the region, after this period, from a generalized clothing at the level of rural habitat, reaches everyday use only occasionally. We deduce that the folk costume was no longer made at such a high level in the peasant household, the technique of its making was lost.

An attempt was made to stop these processes when the historic act of Union (1918) was achieved<sup>36</sup>. The decisions taken at the state level, systematically implemented, were a determining factor in the formation over time of the causes that contributed, as an effect, to the revival of the cultural process and the return of the folk/national costume to the area of daily interactions between people. The capacity to produce the folk/national costume within peasant households was increased, which could be achieved through cultural education, and the factors of cultural education could be implemented in a more general framework of raising the standard of living of the urban and rural population. Under these conditions, the role of the church and the state in the propagation of national values is appreciable, given the fact that this role was highlighted not only in the sphere of education, but also succeeded in supporting creative activity, spiritual values and cultural propaganda. Even if the actions of the Romanian Government did not take shape, because there was a gap between the strategies expected to be applied and the time period reserved for them, the general characteristics of the folk/national costume in the period under study highlight an important aspect of the function of the costume: through the unitary character of the folk costume, the individual integrated into the collective, into society, into a nation-state that subjected its members to a collective discipline, kept them in a kind of constant tension necessary to preserve cohesion and perpetuate its existence<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> BUJOREAN, T. Evoluția vestimentației citadine din Basarabia în primele patru decenii ale secolului al XX-lea. In: *Patrimoniul cultural de ieri – implicații în dezvoltarea societății durabile de mâine*, 28-29 septembrie 2021. Iași – Chișinău: 2021, Ediția 4, pp. 235-242.

<sup>36</sup> CONDRAȚICOVA, L.; BUJOREAN, T.; CERCAȘIN, M.; TOCARCIUC, A.; PINTILEI, E.; ISCHIMJI, A. Actul Unirii Basarabiei cu România de la 1918 și patrimoniul cultural: impact, evoluție, perspective. In: *Dialogica*, 2023, nr. 1(S), supl. nr. 1, pp. 141-154.

<sup>37</sup> BUJOREAN, T.P. Portul popular în Basarabia la 1918: Mărturie documentare. In: *100 de Ani de la Unirea Basarabiei cu România. Rolul politicianului buzoian Alexandru Marghiloman*, Martie 22-23, 2018, Buzău, pp. 117-129.

**Chapter 4** is entitled “**The Emergence of the “National Costume” in the Moldavian SSR**”. Since the second half of the 20th century, in full swing of the forced modernizations imposed by the communist regime, specialized museums, through the development of ethnographic heritage funds, have stored several categories of objects from the village world, including pieces of folk costume. For several decades, the objective of museographers in the national network of ethnographic museums has been to identify, collect and classify this treasury of folk culture and civilization, which has favored the growth of costume collections.

The events related to the establishment of the Moldavian ASSR, on 12 (1924), the Moldavian SSR (1940), the soviet period 1945–1991, constitute the second stage of the transformation of the popular costume of Bessarabia, a stage in which it was assimilated through deconstruction into a “Soviet-type national cultural project” with the aim of creating and promoting a “national costume” of the Moldavian SSR, which throughout the Soviet period claimed to be authentic. For these reasons, the “Moldovan national costume” is an invented concept, which became a symbol of ethnocultural diversity in the USSR, a “new visual image” associated with a “new national identity”. The concept, throughout its existence, in the context of Soviet reality, was articulated with the formula “the flourishing of the national form with socialist content” and was validated at the level of state leadership and popularized through the press, mass media, cultural and ceremonial events.

In an attempt to demonstrate the existence of the “Moldovan nation”, of the “Moldovan language”, the need to manufacture a new “national costume”, through which this nation would be able to identify itself, was also taken into account. The new type of “national costume” had to be the product of the evolution of the popular clothing system, which preceded it, in order to ensure, from an ideological point of view, a metamorphosis resulting from a perpetual transformation of the latter, a transformation so obvious that no one can dispute it<sup>38</sup>.

The new social relations brought with them a wide spectrum of new customs and rituals, and the denunciation of the authentic and the acceptance of these interventions created the ambiguous situation when the “national costume”, including in the case of the Moldavian SSR, was used as a new cultural symbol. The change of content while preserving the national form was aimed at transposing socialist ideas into the visual communication tools mastered by it. The “national costume” promoted by Soviet ideology was imposed on everyday life and associated with the rigors of selecting and building new national values, to the detriment of the performances of the authentic prototype.

We find that this is about undermining the value and significance of the folk costume, which is too complex to represent the new identity, with actions being taken to simplify the cut, replace the material, stylize the ornament, and remove local differences, social or civil status. The ornament, through repeated processes of stylization, ended up losing its original meaning. Groups of astral signs, cosmogonic and magical motifs, archaic no longer retained their origin in the consciousness of the creators of the “national costume”,

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<sup>38</sup> BUJOREAN, T. Considerations regarding the national costume as an object of the soviet propaganda. In: *Brukenthal. Acta Mvsei XIII. 5, Brukenthalia Romanian Cultural History Review*. Editura Muzeului Național Brukenthal, Sibiu/Hermannstadt. 2019, nr. 9, pp. 1027-1035.

they being taken over not by virtue of tradition but due to their plastic expression<sup>39</sup>.

The popularization of the “national costume”, in the context of new social engineering, was accompanied by the unification, throughout the ex-Soviet space, of its production industry. The “national costume” becomes indispensable for ritual manifestations, instruments with the potential to impose mechanisms of domination and control and, implicitly, to ensure social order, through which Soviet power is legitimized and obtains the function of validating the existing social and political order. The development and implementation of a “Moldovan national costume”, which would substitute the popular costume, were contributed by the successive operations of spreading Soviet-type ideology. The consolidation of the “Moldovan national costume” was based on the identification of specific or general features of the authentic ethnographic prototype, capable of expressing the national belonging of the individual, was oriented towards the interpretation and formation of the ideological reality retouched and configured according to the political standards in force and was an indispensable component of “correctly” organized discussions about ethnic diversity in the USSR.

In the first post-war years, the development of technical means of production led to the founding of cooperative associations of workers in several locations of the Moldavian SSR, which had as their purpose, among other things, the production of clothing and accessories and which were patronized by the Moldavian Industry Council (Russian: “Молдпромсовет”) of the Moldavian SSR<sup>40</sup>. The “national costume” of the Moldavian SSR, made on an industrial scale, came to be empowered with the function of validating the existing social and political order and became indispensable for the ritual manifestations through which Soviet power was legitimized.

In the 1960s and 1980s, the mass folklore phenomenon of highlighting “new Moldovan national traditions” expanded considerably through museums, holidays, festivals<sup>41</sup>, Olympiads<sup>42</sup>, parades, commemorations and official visits at national, union or international level, all of which are testimonies of exaggerated forms of manifestation of a phenomenon of inventing socialist-type traditions through the ideological equivalence of concepts such as tradition/folk art/folk costume. The “new type” holidays and rites were marked by the display of the “Moldovan national costume”, a mark of the culture “national in form and socialist in content”<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>40</sup> CONDRATICOVA, L.; BUJOREAN, T.; CERCAȘIN, M.; TOCARCIUC, A. Ateliere de confecționare a pieselor textile și vestimentare din RSS Moldovenească în anii 1945–1960. In: *Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis*, XXXVIII, 2017, Iași: Editura Pim, pp. 275-286.

<sup>41</sup> CONDRATICOVA, L.; BUJOREAN, T. Confecționarea costumelor naționale și a accesoriilor pentru Festivalul Mondial de Tineret (Moscova, 1957) în cadrul atelierului „Promhudojnik” din Chișinău. In: *ARTA*. 2019, nr. 1(AV), pp. 155-162.

<sup>42</sup> BUJOREAN, T.P.; CONDRATICOVA, L. Piese vestimentare și accesorii create de artiști plastici din RSS Moldovenească pentru Jocurile Olimpice de la Moscova din anul 1980. In: *Educația în spiritul valorilor naționale și universale din perspectiva dialogului pedagogic*. Ediția 2, Martie 27-28, 2020, Chișinău, pp. 167-173.

<sup>43</sup> BUJOREAN, T. P. Considerations regarding the national costume as an object of the soviet propaganda. In: *Brukenthal. Acta Musei XIII*. 5, Brukenthalia, Romanian Cultural History Review Nr. 9, Editura Muzeului Național Brukenthal, Sibiu/Hermannstadt. 2019, pp. 1027-1035.

The change in content by apparently preserving the national form of the folk costume, using the heritage but not its nature, was aimed at transposing socialist ideas into the visual communication tools mastered by the structure of the folk costume. Holidays and festivals of a secular nature displayed the way of life and the “new type of culture” of the newly created nation.

If we were to define the nature of the transformations to which the popular clothing system was subjected in the context of the phenomenon of Soviet-style fashion in the Moldavian SSR in the second half of the 20th century, then we can say that it was assimilated and processed to be integrated into the evolutionary foundation of the folk style, an essential component of Soviet-style fashion, where fashion or changes in costume always appeared within a style. The political power, which generalized a totalitarian state, and which sought to impose and perpetuate its own fashion, froze one within the folk style.

The folk style involved clothing for the creation of which motifs, ideas, images, cutting and finishing techniques specific to folk costume were used. It originated in the 1950s and proved to be extremely useful for the aesthetic ideal in the USSR, as it contributed to the popularization of efforts to cultivate stylizations based on tradition and custom, later included in the Soviet-type socio-cultural circuit<sup>44</sup>. In the Moldavian SSR, the institution empowered with this right was the Chisinau Fashion House, established in 1953, under the custody of the Ministry of Light Industry. The main objective of the transformations, extremely important to achieve for the painters-modellers of the given period, consisted in extracting ideas, features and working techniques from the samples of folk costume (their mechanical reproduction was not approved), by their subsequent integration into modern clothing patterns, framed in the folklore style, avoiding the loss of the “socialist content”. Thus, the official function of the artists responsible for adapting Western fashion to the Soviet conditions of life, allowed the application of the dogmas of socialist realism to clothing inspired by the folk costume.

Following the analysis of the assimilation and processing operations to which the elements of folk costume were subjected to in order to formulate the folk style, the set of methods, procedures and rules applied in this context was noted, which can be summarized in two stages: the decomposition of the folk clothing system into constituent parts in order to proceed in analysis from the general to the particular and from the compound to the simple; the subsequent recomposition of the constituent parts into new clothing configurations capable of highlighting the characteristic features of the folk style; the field research allowed us to identify concrete and relevant examples to demonstrate the fact that folk-style clothing, made on an industrial scale, was propagated in society through several dissemination channels.

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<sup>44</sup> BUJOREAN, T.P. Contribuția portului tradițional moldovenesc la crearea stilului folcloric în vestimentație: cazul RSS Moldovenești. In: *Patrimoniul cultural de ieri – implicații în dezvoltarea societății durabile de mâine*. Vol. 1, Iași-Chișinău: 2020, pp. 248-253.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study regarding the coordinates of the development of the folk costume in Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR, a picture of its variation over the last hundred years was obtained. The folk costume, during the 20th century, was analyzed in social, economic, political and ideological contexts, to which cultural and spiritual landmarks were added. The general aspect of the problem addressed conditioned the analysis coordinates of the development of the folk costume on contextual levels, which allowed us to identify: 1) the coordinate of conservation from the beginning of the 20th century, a stage in which the folk costume manifested itself as a landmark in the formulation of the ethnic identity of the people; 2) the coordinate of the evolution of the altered forms of the morphological and plastic-decorative structures of the folk costume in the 20th century, profiled under the impact of the industrialization process and the fashion phenomenon, of urban clothing, but also of the affirmation of national identity, of modernization and adaptation to the new requirements of society in the interwar period; 3) the coordinate of abandonment and substitution of the folk costume from Bessarabia with a synthetic „Moldovan national costume”, a distorted form of the folk costume, an instrument through which a „new national identity” was represented in the Moldavian SSR. The established objectives led to the achievement of the proposed goal, and the detailed analysis of the information data on multiple aspects led to the following conclusions:

1) The coordinate of preservation of the folk costume of Bessarabia from the beginning of the 20th century was identified, when the folk costume manifested itself as a landmark in the formulation of the ethnic identity of the people. By systematizing the data regarding the basic morphological and plastic-decorative structures of the folk costume, of its forms of manifestation, at the beginning of the 20th century, we find that it was perpetuated in the archaic version, as were its component parts, which continued to endure in formulas adapted to the whole.

2) Resistant over time, the folk costume was a component part of the social life of the community and of the various aspects of its order, it represented an important means of affirming the individual at the interpersonal and collective level, but also of recognizing its ethnic and cultural identity. Correlated with the norms and rules of social coexistence of people, it was an active mechanism of social life, a mechanism that created and preserved order and culture. The system of rules of the community in Bessarabia, expressed through the custom of wearing folk costume adapted to the daily or ceremonial/ritual contextual plan, with a set of messages that involved an act of coding and decoding by virtue of a code known to both the transmitters and the receivers, ensured order in the patriarchal society, the folk costume having the possibility, means and necessary conditions to oscillate without losing its balance.

3) The changes that occurred in the national structure of the city had an important ethnographic significance. The process of denationalization of the city determined that most of the functions and contextual manifestations of the folk costume were taken over by clothing influenced by fashion. The evolution of the urban costume in Bessarabia

generated not only strictly morphological changes in the folk clothing system, it called into question the very transformation of social life. What's important is the direct influence of the urban costume, subject to fashion fluctuations, with the most diverse forms of manifestation, on the popular wear of the region.

4) Regarding the historical development of the folk costume in Bessarabia, we distinguish, in the first half of the 20th century, until the First World War, changes produced continuously and gradually, through the intrinsic insertion of new urban elements, subject to transformation in the logic of local, regional or zonal style. The influence of tsarist legislation, the growth of the urban population, ethnic and cultural diversity, urban civilization, migration and work environments, penetrated the folk costume, altering its functions and contributing to its disappearance, by replacing it with the urban type. At the base of the chain of causes that initiated the faster metamorphosis of the folk costume, are not so much decisions, as important social, economic, political and ideological phenomena, such as the First World War, the economic crisis, more general processes – industrialization and urbanization, under the influence of which more materials and new pieces of clothing enter the popular clothing system. In the villages, these changes gave rise to mixtures and hybrid forms, which affected the value and structure of the local costume, conditioned its gradual withdrawal from everyday life, it being reserved only for holidays and other important moments. Social and political phenomena, in our opinion, generated several types of distinct causes of the transformation of the costume. The demographic and ethnic structure diminished the capacity to maintain practices in the field of peasant costume and facilitated the crystallization of a heterogeneous society, opposite to the traditional one in the rural area, being invoked as causes of the metamorphosis of the elements of the popular costume.

5) Specific changes in the popular clothing system conditioned the emergence of new structures, much more organized and more efficiently connected with the social environment. The state of imbalance installed in the archaic costume favored the reformulation and recombination of the constituent elements through new interconnections and, as a result, a new, clearly defined, innovative but not necessarily positive structure was obtained. Not all the characteristics of urban clothing, however, evolved towards the village area at the same speed. During the period of transition from one type of clothing to another, the expansion of altered forms of the popular costume resonates with the phenomenon when several forms of mixing between archaic and urban clothing are frequent. Urban clothing becomes an active mechanism of social life, comes to be correlated with the norms and rules of social coexistence of people from the village and gradually replaces peasant clothing. Thus, first of all, clothing, entertainment, language, and then songs took on urbanized forms, considered not as entertainment, but as emanations of local spirituality. The measures to revitalize the popular port during the interwar period, resulting from the integration of Bessarabia into the administrative and social structure of Romania, changed the social and, implicitly, cultural life of the region.

6) Following our investigations, we identified the coordinate of abandonment and substitution of the folk costume of Bessarabia with a synthetic „Moldovan national costume”, a distorted form of the folk costume, an instrument through which a „new



national identity” was represented in the Moldavian SSR. „The Moldovan national costume” is an invented concept, which became a symbol of ethnocultural diversity in the USSR, a „new visual image” associated with a „new national identity”.

7) Following the analysis of the process of substituting the folk costume with the „Moldovan national costume”, placed on an ideological rather than cultural axis, in the Moldavian SSR it was possible to understand the ideological makeup of the „new” national costume, meant to attribute to the peoples of the ex-Soviet space a „new national identity”. Examining the algorithm of the establishment of the national costume in the Moldavian SSR allowed us to demonstrate that the creation of the „Moldovan nation”, of the „Moldovan language”, required the manufacture of a „national costume” through which this nation would be able to identify itself. The phenomenon known as „the national costume” of the Moldavian SSR, which throughout the Soviet period claimed to be authentic, was articulated through a set of characteristics that designated the difference in relation to its prototype – the folk costume from Bessarabia. It functioned in its own space of action, being placed on an axis, rather, ideological than cultural. A product of Soviet conceptions, well-founded theoretically, „the Moldovan national costume” managed in about half a century to considerably expand its area of influence and to initiate numerous image falsifications.

8) The new social relations in the Moldavian SSR brought with them a wide spectrum of “new customs and rituals”, and the denunciation of the authentic and the acceptance of these interventions created the ambiguous situation when the “national costume”, including in the case of the Moldavian SSR, is used as a new cultural symbol. The actions of representing the new Soviet-made national identity were oriented towards starting the operation of identity engineering, started by the establishment of the Moldavian SSR and the project of building the “Moldovan nation”. With the implementation of the Stalinist plan, the system of values of the popular costume in Bessarabia was substantially reduced, triggering deformations and distortions that illustrate the articulation of a new visual image and the way of implementing and putting into practice the new evaluation criteria. The “national costume” promoted by the Soviet ideology was imposed on everyday life and associated with the rigors of selecting and building new national values, to the detriment of the performances of the authentic prototype. We find that it is a question of undermining the value and significance of the folk costume, which is too complex to represent the new identity, with actions being taken to simplify the cut, replace the material, stylize the ornament and eliminate local differences. The popularization of the „Moldovan national costume”, in the context of the new social engineering, is accompanied by the unification, throughout the space controlled by the USSR, of its production industry. The „Moldovan national costume” becomes indispensable for the ritual manifestations through which Soviet power is legitimized. Being a mandatory component of political rites that were instruments for ensuring social order with the potential to impose mechanisms of domination and control, the „Moldovan national costume” was assigned the function of validating the existing social and political order.

9) The reflection of the process of the establishment of Soviet-style fashion and folk-style clothing, based on the folk clothing ensemble, demonstrated that the political



power sought to impose and perpetuate its own fashion by freezing one within the folk style. In this attempt, all the elements included in the categories of folk wear were included in the chain of transformations based not on the exploration of their characteristics and performances but on the identification of general features that could formulate the definition of the concept of folk style, capable, in turn, of initiating clothing models promoted in the mass production of the light industry of the Moldavian SSR.

10) Previously well established in the research, the differences between the notions of costume popular costume from Bessarabia and the „Moldovan national costume” of the Moldavian SSR, the latter being defined by a wide range of stage and theater outfits, clothing products of associations, artels and production plants, clothing in folk style of fashion houses that the „Moldovan national costume” of the Moldavian SSR cannot be perpetuated as a physical presence in society because it continues to emit and transmit ideological messages, continues to influence and shape the perception of events within society.

11) Given the importance of researching the coordinates of the development of the folk costume in Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR, the results obtained validate the initial hypothesis according to which the folk costume in Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR, in the objective reality of the social, economic, political, ideological contexts, formed, in turn, from several contextual plans, with events occurring concurrently or progressively and gradually, during the 20th century, was subjected to two distinct types of transformations: 1) the continuous development of the folk costume in a hybrid clothing system until the mid-20th century, followed by its gradual disappearance from everyday and festive use; 2) forced development, largely determined by the political circumstances after the Second World War, followed by the substitution of the folk costume with a „Moldovan national costume” of ideological nature, with the aim of conferring a „new national identity” to the population of the Moldavian SSR, part of the USSR.

The present research led to determining the coordinates of the development of the folk costume of Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR, establishing very clearly the differences between the notions of „folk costume of Bessarabia”, „folk costume”, „authentic costume” and „Moldovan national costume”, so that the abdication of the rigors of the folk costume of Bessarabia represented a major challenge of the last century, which must be overcome in the 21st century, in order to highlight the authentic folk costume.

### **Recommendation**

#### **1. *In the field of patrimonialization and theoretical ethno-historical and artistic research:***

The valorization of cultural heritage is an objective of major importance and through the approach related to the values of folk art, we reiterate the obligation to protect the cultural heritage transmitted through authentic costumes.

By consolidating information on the elements of authentic ethnographic heritage, preserved in museum and private collections, it is recommended to maintain the interest of fashion specialists in order to capitalize on everyday, festive and ritual folk costumes, within the more complex framework of folk heritage wear.

Despite the fact that the folk heritage costume is currently sufficiently well-defined thanks to the efforts of museographers, there are still “Moldovan national costumes”,

of Soviet origin, which have replaced the old folk costume and served the project of identity engineering. In order to avoid their physical and symbolic presence in society, we recommend excluding these distorted segments of the costume from the circuit over time.

**2. *In the applied field of handicraft development, fashion design, etc.:***

Modern society in the Republic of Moldova increasingly adopts elements of folk costume, associating them with festive and ritual contexts. We recommend expanding the use of the traditional blouse with embroidery on the shoulder as a heritage piece. Proof of the collaboration between tradition and innovation, it can be worn in an authentic format with all the insignia perfected for hundreds of years, but also in a stylized one (this being specified to avoid errors), with new qualities of aesthetic and symbolic expressiveness, also found in street clothing with a tendency to assert itself in a new aspect, present in everyday activities.

In the case of festivals, folklore competitions, museum exhibitions, fashion shows, we recommend rehabilitating the folk heritage costume in contemporary content in order to offer a unique aesthetic experience, which would involve a pursuit and appreciation of the elements of authentic folk wear, but also of clothing collections inspired by folk creation. The act of perceiving the presented forms, of the authentic folk costume or of the outfits inspired by it, would involve its transfer from the past to the everyday, modern setting.

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## ADNOTARE

**BUJOREAN Tatiana.** „Coordonate ale dezvoltării costumului popular din Basarabia și RSS Moldovenească”, teză de doctor în istorie, specialitatea 612. 01 – *Etnologie*.

**Structura tezei:** introducere, patru capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 484 de titluri, 3 anexe, 101 figuri, 194 de pagini de text de bază, total 252 de pagini. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 27 de lucrări științifice.

**Scopul lucrării:** constă în fundamentarea teoretică și aplicativă a coordonatelor dezvoltării costumului popular din Basarabia și RSS Moldovenească în secolul al XX-lea.

**Obiectivele cercetării:** sistematizarea datelor privind structurile morfologice și plastico-decorative de bază ale costumului popular din Basarabia, ale formelor lui de manifestare la începutul secolului al XX-lea; reflectarea și interpretarea principalelor transformări ale contextelor și, implicit, planurilor de referință care au înlesnit reducerea sferei de acțiune a sistemului vestimentar analizat; identificarea și precizarea modificărilor intervenite în sistemul vestimentar țărănesc în prima jumătate a secolului al XX-lea; examinarea principalelor transformări ale contextelor și planurilor contextuale care au favorizat algoritmul constituirii ”costumului național” în RSS Moldovenească; analiza procesului de substituire a costumului popular cu ”costum național moldovenesc”, plasat pe o axă mai degrabă ideologică decât culturală; reflectarea procesului de constituire a modei de tip sovietic și a vestimentației în stil folcloric, bazate pe ansamblul vestimentar popular în RSS Moldovenească; prezentarea coordonatelor dezvoltării costumului popular din Basarabia și RSS Moldovenească în secolul al XX-lea.

**Noutatea și originalitatea științifică:** teza este o primă investigație științifică complexă, din punct de vedere istoric și etnologic, care reevaluează informațiile despre evoluția și statutul portului popular din Basarabia și RSS Moldovenească în secolul al XX-lea.

**Ipoteza:** Având în vedere importanța cercetării științifice a coordonatelor dezvoltării costumului popular din Basarabia și RSS Moldovenească în realitatea obiectivă a contextelor sociale, economice, politice, ideologice, formate, la rândul lor, din mai multe planuri contextuale, cu evenimente produse concomitent sau progresiv și treptat pe parcursul secolului al XX-lea, demersul prezent pleacă de la ipoteza că în această perioadă s-au produs două tipuri distincte de transformări ale sistemului vestimentar popular: 1) dezvoltarea continuă a costumului popular într-un sistem vestimentar hibrid până la mijlocul secolului al XX-lea, urmată de dispariția sa treptată din uzul cotidian și festiv; 2) dezvoltarea forțată, determinată, în mare parte, de circumstanțele politice de după cel de-Al Doilea Război Mondial, urmată de substituirea costumului popular cu un ”costum național moldovenesc” de factură ideologică, având scopul de a conferi o ”nouă identitate națională” populației din RSS Moldovenească, parte a fostei URSS.

**Semnificația teoretică:** valoarea teoretică a tezei constă în accentuarea semnificațiilor complexe, a legităților și specificului dezvoltării costumului popular în secolul al XX-lea.

**Valoarea aplicativă:** teza poate servi drept punct de reper pentru specialiști la pregătirea tezelor de licență, master și doctorat, pentru lucrări de sinteză privind geneza portului popular, ca suport de curs în cursuri universitare la etnologie, antropologie culturală și istorie ș.a.

**Implementarea rezultatelor științifice:** rezultatele cercetărilor au fost valorificate în 27 de publicații, 5 articole în reviste internaționale, 1 articol în revistă categoria A (SCOPUS), 4 articole în reviste naționale Categoria B, 2 materiale în culegeri naționale/internaționale, 8 materiale ale conferințelor naționale/internaționale, 7 rezumate ale conferințelor științifice. Rezultatele cercetărilor au fost aprobate la 15 conferințe naționale și internaționale.



## ANNOTATION

**BUJOREAN Tatiana. „Coordinates of the development of the folk costume of Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR”, Doctoral Thesis in History, Specialty 612.01 – *Ethnology*.**

**Thesis structure:** introduction, four chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 484 titles, 3 annexes, 194 pages of basic text, 101 of figures, total 252 pages. The results obtained are published in 27 of scientific papers.

**The purpose of the work:** theoretical and applicative establishment of the coordinates of the development of the folk costume of Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR in the 20th century.

**Research objectives:** systematization of data on the basic morphological and plastic-decorative structures of the folk costume of Bessarabia, of its forms of manifestation at the beginning of the 20th century; reflection and interpretation of the main transformations of the contexts and, implicitly, the reference plans that facilitated the reduction of the scope of action of the analyzed clothing system; identification and specification of the changes that occurred in the peasant clothing system in the first half of the 20th century; examination of the main transformations of the contexts and contextual plans that favored the algorithm of the establishment of the „national costume” in the Moldavian SSR; analysis of the process of substituting the folk costume with the „Moldovan national costume”, placed on an ideological rather than cultural axis; reflection of the process of establishing Soviet-style fashion and folk-style clothing, based on the folk costume ensemble in the Moldavian SSR; presentation of the coordinates of the development of the folk costume of Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR in the 20th century.

**Scientific novelty and originality:** the thesis is a first complex scientific investigation, from a historical and ethnological point of view, which re-evaluates information about the evolution and status of the folk costume in Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR in the 20th century.

**Hypothesis:** Considering the importance of the scientific research of the coordinates of the development of the popular costume from Bessarabia and the Moldavian SSR in the objective reality of the social, economic, political, ideological contexts, formed, in turn, from several contextual plans, with events produced simultaneously or progressively and gradually during the 20th century, the present approach starts from the hypothesis that during this period two distinct types of transformations of the popular clothing system occurred: 1) the continuous development of the popular costume in a hybrid clothing system until the middle of the 20th century, followed by its gradual disappearance from everyday and festive wear; 2) the forced development, largely determined by the political circumstances after the Second World War, followed by the substitution of the folk costume with an ideological „Moldovan national costume”, with the aim of conferring a „new national identity ” to the population of the Moldavian SSR, part of the former USSR.

**Theoretical significance:** consists in emphasizing the complex meanings, regularities and specifics of the development of the folk costume in the 20th century.

**Applicative value:** the thesis serves as a reference point for specialists in the preparation of bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral theses, for synthesis papers on the genesis of folk costume, as a course support in university courses in ethnology, cultural anthropology and history, etc.

**Implementation of scientific results:** the research results were capitalized in 27 publications, 5 articles in international journals, 1 article in a category A journal (SCOPUS), 4 articles in national Category B journals, 2 materials in national/international collections, 8 materials of national/international conferences, 7 abstracts of scientific conferences. The research results were approved at 15 national and international conferences.

## АННОТАЦИЯ

**БУЖОРЯН Татьяна.** „Координаты развития народного костюма в Бессарабии и Молдавской ССР”, докторская диссертация по истории, специальность 612.01 – *Этнология*.

**Структура диссертации:** введение, четыре главы, общие выводы и рекомендации, библиография 484 названий, 3 приложения, 194 страниц основного текста, 101 рисунок, 262 страниц текста. Полученные результаты опубликованы в 27 научных работах.

**Цель исследования:** состоит в теоретическом и прикладном обосновании координат развития народного костюма в Бессарабии и Молдавской ССР в XX веке.

**Задачи исследования:** систематизация данных об основных морфологических и пластико-декоративных аспектах народного костюма Бессарабии, формах его проявления в начале XX века; отражение и интерпретация основных преобразований контекстов и, соответственно, контекстных планов, способствовавших сокращению сферы действия анализируемой системы одежды; выявление и конкретизация изменений, произошедших в системе крестьянской одежды в первой половине XX века; рассмотрение основных трансформаций контекстов и контекстных планов, благоприятствовавших алгоритму становления «национального костюма» в Молдавской ССР; анализ процесса замены народного костюма «молдавским национальным костюмом», поставленный, скорее, на идеологическую, а не культурную ось развития; отражение процесса становления советской моды и народного стиля в одежде на основе народного костюма в Молдавской ССР; рассмотрение координат развития народного костюма Бессарабии и Молдавской ССР в XX веке.

**Научная новизна и оригинальность:** это первое комплексное научное исследование с историко-этнологической точки зрения, которое по-новому оценивает сведения об эволюции и статусе народного костюма в Бессарабии и Молдавской ССР в XX веке.

**Гипотеза:** Учитывая важность научного исследования координат развития народного костюма Бессарабии и Молдавской ССР в объективной реальности социального, экономического, политического, идеологического контекстов, формируемой, в свою очередь, из нескольких контекстуальных планов, Поскольку события происходили одновременно или постепенно и постепенно в течение 20-го века, настоящий подход исходит из гипотезы, что в этот период произошли два различных типа трансформаций системы популярной одежды: 1) непрерывное развитие народного костюма. в гибридной системе одежды до середины XX века с последующим ее постепенным исчезновением из повседневной и праздничной одежды; 2) форсированное развитие, во многом обусловленное политическими обстоятельствами после Второй мировой войны, с последующей заменой народного костюма идеологическим «молдавским национальным костюмом», с целью придания населению «новой национальной идентичности» Молдавская ССР, часть бывшего СССР.

**Теоретическая значимость:** состоит в подчеркивании смысла, закономерностей и особенностей развития народного костюма в XX веке.

**Практическая значимость:** диссертация может служить ориентиром для специалистов при подготовке бакалаврских, магистерских, докторских диссертаций, для университетских работ по генезису народного костюма, этнологии, культурной антропологии, истории и т.д.

**Внедрение научных результатов:** результаты исследования использованы в 27 публикациях, в том числе в 5 статьях в международных журналах, 1 статье в журнале категории А (SCOPUS), 4 статьях в национальных журналах категории В, 2 материалах в национальных/международных сборниках, 8 материалах в национальных/международных конференциях, 7 тезисов для научных конференций. Результаты исследования были одобрены на 15 национальных и международных конференциях.

**Bujorean Tatiana**

**COORDINATES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOLK COSTUME  
FROM BESSARABIA AND THE MOLDAVIAN SSR**

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Specialty 612.01 “Ethnology”.

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