

Review

By Prof. Svetla Kaludova-Stanilova, PhD

in the procedure for holding the academic position of Associate Professor in the field 8. Arts, professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art, major 'Musicology-Ethnomusicology' for the needs of the Department of 'Theory of Arts' at the Faculty of 'Music Folklore and Choreography', *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv, promulgated in State Gazette Issue 63/25.07.2023. Candidate for the competition is Asst. Prof. Sofiya Ruseva Ruseva, PhD.

In the announced by *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv competition for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' in the field 8. Arts in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art (Musicology-Ethnomusicology), participated one candidate – Asst. Prof. Sofiya Ruseva, PhD. The documentation submitted by her is complete and complies with all the necessary requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRB) for holding the academic position of Associate Professor. All the documents required by the procedure have been submitted (performer's curriculum vitae, diplomas for higher education and for the acquisition of the scientific and educational degree 'PhD', medical certificate, criminal record certificate, certificates for work experience in the specialty and for teaching practice, reference for teaching workload, scientometric table, author's reference for scientific contributions - works and citations). The habilitation materials contain correct information about the candidate's research, artistic and creative activity and citations. The submitted materials correspond to the scientific major of the competition. They are the basis for my evaluation as a reviewer.

No plagiarism has been detected in the examination of the submitted materials.

Presentation of the candidate:

Sofiya Ruseva was born in Kotel. She started to be professionally involved in music at the age of 10, entering the music school at *Filip Kutev* National School for Folk Arts. In 2005 she graduated from the music school with the major of tamboura and a second major of folk singing. From 2005 to 2010 she studied at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts - Plovdiv. In 2009 she graduated with a bachelor's degree in Pedagogy of Music Education, and in 2010 - with a master's degree in Art Management and a master's degree in Ethnomusicology under the supervision of Associate Professor Vasilka Yoncheva, PhD. Since

2011 she is a full-time PhD student at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. In 2016 she defended her educational and scientific degree of PhD. Her teaching activity began in 2013 at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. She has been a lecturer in the majors 'Musical Folklore', 'Bulgarian Folk Music' and 'Collection and Deciphering of Musical Folklore'. Since 2016 she has been an assistant professor and since 2019 - a senior assistant professor at the University. Since 2009, she has been singing in *Gaudeamus* Academic Mixed Chamber Choir at *Prof. Asen Diamandiev* Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, with which she actively performs in Bulgaria and abroad. In 2020, her book *Structure and Form of the Choral Folk Songs of Northern Bulgaria*, based on her dissertation thesis, was published, and in 2023 - the book *A Look at the Humorous Folk Song of Kotel*, which is a monographic study focused on the specificity of the humorous songs of Kotel region. The only candidate for the announced procedure is Asst. Prof. Sofiya Ruseva, PhD. I have known her since her student years as inquisitive, responsive and focused in a specific scientific field. In time she has established herself as a successful teacher and researcher of musical folklore. Several sections stand out in the submitted habilitation materials: research, artistic and creative activities, citations and participation in projects. The emphasis of the habilitation reference is the **scientific research activity**. Sofiya Ruseva's participation in scientific forums, projects and publications are numerous. A significant place in the table for the scientometric requirements is given to the defended dissertation (group A - 50 points) on the topic of *Structure and Form of the Choral Folk Songs of Northern Bulgaria*. There, Asst. Prof. Ruseva, PhD examines in detail the specificity of the choral songs in Northern Bulgaria from different aspects. For the first time, the conclusions and findings are of the necessary practical applicability in folklore science.

A significant place is given to the monographic work (Group B - 3 - 100 points) entitled '*A Look at the Humorous Folk Song of Kotel*'. There, the author presents a matter insufficiently studied and analysed. Thus, Ruseva makes a claim for a regional, theoretical work that would find a worthy place in contemporary research trends in order to preserve the folk tradition. She enters her own field of research in which she reveals specific features of local song folklore. Her ambition to carry out a first attempt at a comprehensive study of Kotel region humorous folk song led her to fieldwork over a period of about a decade. Her analytical approach is aimed at elucidating the characteristics of the tunes in relation to their functional, metro-rhythmic, modal, poetic, form-building, structural and melodic specificities. She thus presents a development with wide practical applicability. She paves the way for new

conclusions and inferences based on extensive fieldwork and numerous meetings with respondents. Throughout the study, there is an aspiration to demonstrate one's own, personal research style.

The monograph contains several main thematic research emphases structured in the contents. It is clear from the literature review that the problem addressed in this paper has not been explored. This determines its contribution significance. Following are geographical, historical, ethnic information, cultural and educational activities, as well as a description of the lifestyle and livelihood of the population in Kotel and the surrounding area. The information given is important for the preservation of the socio-cultural conditions of life in the region.

The calendar ritual is presented narratively with all the elements of the ritual cycle and their accompanying songs. The main aim is to show the essential connection of the song folklore with the customs and festivals of the region, as a sustainable element of the traditional culture that has preserved its specificity until today. The conclusions about family ritual are drawn from the '*synthesized*' presentation of thirty songs accompanying the various ritual actions – ritual bread kneading, braiding the maiden, shaving the bridegroom, inviting with a wooden wine vessel, i.e. they represent '*formal songs*'. Ruseva stresses that the preservation of calendar and family festivals and customs until today shows the persistence of a tradition reflecting the spiritual essence of society.

A second chapter entitled '*On the Humorous Folk Song of Kotel Region*' contributes to the development. Here the author draws on the work developed by P. Dinekov's '*classification of verbal creativity by subject matter, according to which humorous songs appear under the category of domestic-social folk songs*'. The leading criterion for defining a humorous song as such is its verbal content '*... in its relation to the origin and antiquity of songs, in its manifestation in form and style*' (P. Dinekov). Drawing on these statements, Ruseva boldly presents fifty-eight humorous songs based on a text describing a specific comic incident, reflected delicately both in the text and in the figurative and emotional content of the melody, ornamentation, rhythm and form of the tune.

Valuable for the study is the emphasis on the essential connection of the humorous folk songs of Kotel region with the system of family customs and rituals. Significant for the work is the juxtaposition: tradition-modernity, which represents the mechanisms of transmission of cultural heritage today, through continuity within a society.

Contributive moments are also associated with the analyses and systematization of the songs according to the following indicators: *'functional definiteness, metrical rhythmic structure, versification, form, structure and modal melodic organization'* (P. Dinekov). In terms of functional definiteness, the song material shows that the humorous tunes of Kotel region belong mainly to the choral and get-together repertoire. In terms of metro-rhythm, the choir chants predominate, and more precisely the *'wise horo* or *'wise rachenitsa'*. In terms of form, it is dependent on the versification and the number of lines constituting the *'verse-melodic'* stanza. For the *'modal melodic'* structure, the claim is available that the construction of the melodic sequence is related to the ambitus, the tonal content of the sound order, the tonal kind and type. The presented monograph concerns local dialectological studies that are useful for Bulgarian folklore science. The chosen topic is significant in expanding the knowledge of folk music heritage from the past to the present.

I believe that this monographic work could offer a more thorough study of the humorous song of Kotel region. This does not preclude its contribution to the enrichment of the music-folklore literature.

In (Group Γ -7 - 75 pts. and Γ -9 - 75 pts.) five publications, related to the subject of Ruseva's dissertation and this monographic study, are presented. All of them are related to problems of folklore studies in traditional manifestations and in modern times. The author expresses her position for preservation of the regional characteristic of our folk song with all its structural elements and characteristics.

Artistic creative activity and quotations:

Candidate's reference presents: (group Γ -14 - 190 points) supporting artistic performance, Asst. Prof. Ruseva, PhD presents 19 performances in the country and abroad, as a chorister in the composition of *Gaudeamus* Academic Chamber Choir.

Four pieces of evidence are presented in the scientometric table in (Group Δ -17 - 40 points) - Citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes. *'Svetlana Zaharieva on Structure and Form in Bulgarian Folk Song'*, *'Structure and Form of Choral Folk Songs of Northern Bulgaria'*, *'Wedding Folk Song of Kotel Region'*, *'Functional Characteristics of Humorous Songs of Kotel Region'*. All of them show the personal research field of the candidate with its local affiliation. They have been cited by Bulgarian authors writing about Bulgarian musical folklore.

Sofiya Ruseva shows her creativity as a participant in projects at academic level (group E-22 -30 points and E-24 with 60 points).

The candidate's proposed contributions to the monographic research, publications and citations reflected in the reference are credible. The submitted habilitation materials in the individual sections are sufficient for the scientometric requirements of this procedure.

Conclusions

The submitted habilitation materials of the candidate meet the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and its Rules on the Implementation. They show a certain contribution to the enrichment and development of Bulgarian folklore science and practice. The scientific and research activity of Asst. Prof. Sofiya Ruseva, PhD show depth in a specific, local field of research, according to her personal research field. This is a reason for the candidate to receive a high evaluation for her overall activity. This is proved by the fulfilled requirements for the position of Associate Professor. On the basis of the above arguments, I give my positive assessment.

I recommend the Honourable Scientific Jury to award Sofiya Ruseva Ruseva with the academic position of 'Associate Professor' in Professional Field 8.3. Music and Dance Art (Musicology-Ethnomusicology).

Plovdiv

Prof. Svetla Stanilova, PhD

November 02, 2023

/ Prof. Asen Diamandiev AMDFA/