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Ethnographic Documentation of Professional Seamstresses of Folk Clothing in Selected Localities of Southeast Moravia

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to point out the continuity of folk clothing creation and to document the active creators - professional seamstresses who have been sewing parts of folk clothing. The research was carried out in the Moravian Slovakia region, namely in the Strážnice and Veselsko areas. The text follows the previous long-term researches of the last generation of folk clothing wearers who wore folk costumes every day in the area. Wearing folk costumes is a dying phenomenon today. The text documents a generation of professional seamstresses working in Strážnice at the beginning of the 20th century which still existed at a time when folk clothing was worn on a daily basis mainly by women. The personalities of Anděla Tvrdoňová – Baňařová (1907) and her mother Marie Tvrdoňová (1878) were described to the detail. These women lived in Strážnice and worked as professional seamstresses and made clothes for the inhabitants of the surrounding villages. The research of this generation of seamstresses used the family chronicle and memories of the respondents Marie Baňařová, the daughter-in-law of Anděla Tvrdoňová-Baňařová, both very unique sources of information that provide authentic testimonies. The article also publishes photographs from a family album depicting work and sewing and embroidery training.

Subsequently, the research is focused on the current generation of professional tailors who continue the work of previous generation. Two seamstresses Ludmila Kočíšová from Strážnice and Alena Šikulová from Kněždub were chosen. They are both engaged in making folk clothing professionally, but not commercially, i.e. they don't have their own business in this field. The research focuses mainly on the transfer of know-how and therefore in-depth interviews with respondents of the current generation were used. The study does not deal

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with material study of folk clothing and its typology. The today's generation of seamstresses of folk clothing defines a number of problems that prevent from maintaining the traditional aesthetics of clothing, such as the lack of typical materials (fabrics and lace). The respondents also pointed out the overall transformation of clothing aesthetics and its impact into the wearing of folk clothing. The contribution of the article to the field of ethnology consists in the description of way of intergenerational transfer of knowledge associated with folk clothing and its aesthetics.

KEY WORDS: folk clothing, folk costume, Moravian Slovakia region, seamstresses, tradition

Introduction

The following text aims to point out the continuity of folk clothing creation and to document the active creators – professional seamstresses who sewed in the past and also have been sewing parts of folk clothing. The research was carried out in the area of Moravian Slovakia, mainly in the Strážnice and Veselsko areas. Documentation of active creation is important especially to capture the way of transfer of folk clothing sewing technologies between generations. Folk clothing has very specific cutting forms which is not simple at all and at the same time very varied in individual municipalities. There were only few professional tailors in the village, often only one male and one female tailor, even for the surrounding villages. Cutting patterns and technology, however, were not trained officially or universally, i.e. know-how was transferred between generations.

It is interesting to observe the continuity and the reasons why the current generation of professional tailors who are engaged in creation of folk clothing began to be oriented to this area, as well as the sources of technological knowledge of sewing individual costume parts. In this way, the transfer of knowledge and the social context of folk clothing creation can also be observed.

Folk clothing is considered in most ethnographic studies as a part of material culture where it is possible to study its form and function (KŘÍŽOVÁ 2001), eventually to collect and to document iconographic sources presenting folk clothing of individual regions in the past (TARCALOVÁ – KŘÍŽOVÁ – ŠIMŠA 2013:168). Traditional approach of the study of folk clothing is the classification and gathering of documentation for individual ethnographic areas or monographically for individual municipalities (JERÁBKOVÁ 2014). Processing folk clothing into atlases according to geographical division is a complex way of studying it and its individual components (DROŽDŽ 2015:35-50). There are even less detailed

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technological studies on folk clothing in Central and Eastern Europe. The exception is M. Šimša's work on the technology of making and cutting men's trousers (ŠIMŠA 2015).

An empty space in the research on folk clothing can be seen in the documentation of its social and everyday use, in this regard the study "Traditional life and clothing of women in the Strážnice region" (BROŽOVIČOVÁ 2017) can be mentioned. In the study, the author documents the last generation of women who wore folk clothing every day as common clothing. A completely unexplored area is the way of wearing folk clothing for special occasions and forms of folk clothing which are related to the religious events (way of dressing in Advent, fasting, Easter, etc.), as well as precise combinations of individual clothing parts. These exact rules are still kept in spite of the fact that folk clothing is withdrawing as popular everyday clothing. Furthermore, the last generation of wearers and witnesses is dying out and the awareness of the combinations is gradually disappearing.

Methodology

The research of seamstresses making folk clothing is closely linked to the research of the last generation of traditional costume wearers which took place in the years 2007-2013. A great deal of information about the oldest seamstresses was successfully gathered on this occasion. The oldest seamstress known as the "auntie Tvrdon" was very often remembered by the wearers of folk clothing (women born in the 1930s and 1940s) who had their folk clothing made for everyday wearing when they were young.

The research of the oldest generation of folk clothing makers drew from the family chronicle of the Baňar's family and also a family photo album was used as the respondent Marie Banerova was willing to share it. Furthermore, the research focused on the material study of folk clothing and cut and the individual parts and techniques of making details were documented (eg a bride's wedding cap and the detail of curly lace).

Two respondents from the young generation (born in the 1950s) working at present in the region as folk clothing makers were mainly interviewed to focus the research on material study of folk clothing, technology of production and cuts, while documenting the procedures. At the same time, in-depth interviews were conducted to document the biographical path how they got to this job. In-depth interviews and biographical narration were used for both generations of respondents. In the first case, because Anděla Tvrdoňová is no longer alive, the memories of her daughter-in-law Marie Baňarová, the wearer of the folk clothing, were used. In the case of the younger generation of respondents, interviews were conducted directly with them.

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Free interviewing was used in all cases. Although the structure of basic questions was kept, the narration and the possibility of completing the story were entirely left at the choice of the respondents. “The aim is to discover new aspects of a selected area of inquiry (including biographical aspects), through the everyday practice of various social (interactive, biographical) processes that act hidden behind the known external facts. This cognitive intention excludes any specifications or use of restricted categories that would lead to attention deterioration and the formulation of closed battery questions” (SCHÜTZE 1999:40). In the research process, the role of the researcher cannot be completely separated from the examined environment because the respondents react to her presence and they can change their behaviour because of her presence. As for the locality, it is necessary to mention self-reflection of the researcher who is connected with the region. It was her birthplace but she is not involved directly to the process of traditional folk clothing wearing neither in folklore activity.

P. Bourdieu adds to the researcher's self-reflection: “In short, there is no need to choose between the active observation, necessarily a fictitious immersion in a foreign environment, and the objectivism of a “distance view” which keeps the observer at a distance, a distance to himself or herself and a distance to the object of his interest. The active objectivization is not dealing with exploring the 'lived experience' of the knower, but with the social conditions of the possibility - and therefore the effects and possibilities - of that experience, and more precisely, of the act of objectivisation itself. It seeks to objectify the subjective relationship to the object, which by no means leads to relativistic and more or less anti-scientific subjectivism but it is one of the conditions for real scientific objectivity” (BOURDIEU 2003: 19).

The data was processed in programme Atlas.ti (FRIESE 2014) where all transcripts were loaded into the program and coded (FRIESE 2018:277-309) by consecutive re-reading according to the focus of the interview parts. Atlas.ti is mainly used in “grounded theory”, but the aim of the work is not to create a grounded theory generally valid but to analyse a local specific case.

Older Generation of Folk Clothing Seamstresses – Anděla Baňářová (Tvrdoňová): Dressmaker, Auntie Tvrdoňova from Mizerov

Anděla Tvrdoňová (1907) was a famous dressmaker from Strážnice who made the same type of clothing for people in a small town and adjacent villages, i.e. Petrov and Radějov. Considering a big amount of clothing she made, her impact on the development of folk clothing in the locality was considerable. References to Anděla Tvrdoňová are also found in

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the testimonies of witnesses, especially those who wore folk clothing. The references are more or less scrappy in the context of another statement, more detailed are the memories of Helena H. from Radějov who was telling of how her sister, one year older, had a winter short coat called "kacabaya made." „*At that times, “kacabayas” were made, in Stražnice, at the Tvrđons, Anděla had a new one, her mum made one for her. Anděla remembered when a seamstress was making the “kacabaya” she did not even have a meter to measure her size she used a cord. Imagine that! She put the measurements and she made a knot...And it was at the Tvrđons, here in Mizerov. And today, even in Stražnice nobody wants to make it*“.¹

It is possible to obtain the most information about Anděla Baňarová (n. Tvrdoňová) from Marie Baňarova who provided several interviews on this topic. Marie starts telling: „*Our granny, my husband’s mum, was a dressmaker she made clothes and many people of Radejov came and had their clothes made here. She sewed also typical skirts of Stražnice, look here, there’s something like it...it’s her, our granny, she is sewing and embroidering*.”² In this way, Marie Baňarova commented on the following photo (Figure 1).

Another very valuable source to trace the line of tradition inherited in the gender line is the family chronicle. It is undoubtedly an extraordinary achievement which, in many ways, facilitates the work of a researcher and provides another possible view on tradition directly from the position of a family member. The reports in the chronicle are based on a close knowledge of family life style and circumstances, which is why Anděla Tvrdoňová is described internally and in the context of her sisters and her mother who also dealt with folk clothing.

¹ Respondent Helena H. (1924) from Radějov narrated in the interview. When she comes back to the past telling the story about “kacabaya”, she compares herself with her sister. Her elder sister had a newly made coat while Helena bought it almost new, second hand one. It is possible that this was the fact why the story stayed on her mind for ever and she referred to her sister’s detailed narration. The story can be a little confusing in spite of the fact that her mother’s name (Marie Tvrdoňova) and her sister’s name (Anděla Tvrdoňova) were the same. It is not evident when she is telling about her mother or about her sister, they were both famous dressmakers.

² Interview with Marie Baňarová 1932, Stražnice..

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Figure 1: *Anděla is embroidering a wedding little cap with pearls at her house. Strážnice, in 50s, family archives.*

Anděla was born on 2 May 1907. Like her two sisters, she was interested very much in sewing and all the art associated with this work. After leaving school, she stayed at home helping in the family farm. In spite of this, she was keen on embroidering and sewing folk costumes. In winter, all four women sit at the table because there was less other work to do and she was sewing and embroidering and completing orders. She received embroidery lessons from her mother and her aunts Rybecká. Her mother observed their daughters and when she did not like it, when it was not done well, she said: "I 'll slap your fingers, do it better and watch me how I am sewing it and put a stitch after a stitch." She provided the most of work for Mrs. Janková who had an embroidery shop. In 1934 she attended a machine embroidery course which took place in the Vavříks' inn in the valley. She also embroidered or sewed things of her own. On 25th September 1928 she married František Baňar from no. 580 Nová Street

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and settled in a house no. 55. They all worked together land farming. The homestead was growing due to the contribution of the land of the young farmer Baňař [...].³



Figure 2: The birthplace of Anděla Tvrdňová (married Baňařová), Strážnice, 1926. The family chronicle.

When Marie Baňařová tells stories about her husband's mum as a seamstress, she highlights the complexity of the Anděla's tailor art. *“My grandma sewed the whole men's and women's folk clothing she could sew every piece besides that, pants, she didn't make them. No pants, Vavřik made them, he was an experienced tailor. But the wide shirt, the narrow shirt, the “kordulas” (vests) ..., she could made all these things.* ⁴ Marie further emphasizes that the craft was particularly demanding because of adapting garments to different figures, so all garments were tailor-made. *„She made everything, she had cut patterns for them, she did not have that one for “kordulas”, but she could also have them, she sewed for strangers like anybody, every person was differently built, and she could cut according to the figure and*

³ A report from the Baňař family chronicle. The transcription is exact and has not been modified.

⁴ An extract from Marie Baňařová's narration 1932, Strážnice.

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*the person had to come again and she adjusted it, a little bit. And the female "kordula" as well, she had to bring the other "kordula" and she cut according to it, everyone was differently strong, with a different length, she assembled every "kordula" and she called for them and now she had to check it, here, at the neck, not to be choky she had to shape it out, ... she had that tailor's chalk, made a sign that she had cut it out to fit it better, and a woman's skirt too, she had to come to try it on. I saw that she wrote notes on the patterns, I notice that certain women, she had individual patterns for certain women she wrote notes on the patterns. She, however, measured them, it was wider by a centimetre, a woman was stronger, so she had to make it five centimetres wider according to her body. Yes, there were too many people (to have the clothing sewed)."*⁵

As it was mentioned in the excerpt from the family chronicle, Anděla Baňářová mastered the craft since her youth, which was probably also due to the instigation of her mother, Marie Tvrdoňová who was also a renowned seamstress of folk clothing. The influence of the mother on her daughters is obvious because the two sisters of the Anděla Baňářova (Tvrdoňova) were engaged in the production of folk clothing but each of them knew how to do something, as stated Marie Baňářová: „Everyone knew how to do something but together they made everything.“⁶ While Anděla tended to sew and she embroidered only hats and "kordulas" when she replaced the embroidery with pearls, but her sisters concentrated on embroidery and toledo. “There were Marie, Anděla and Anna, they were her daughters and they all were making embroideries. They embroidered, therefore, only the grandma embroidered with pearls, but they embroidered also in colours. But the aunt Tvrdoňova could embroider also with these pearls, our grandma, also for male kordulas, so she made the embroidery with pearls. The auntie Tvrdoňova did not sew but embroidered like those blue aprons, scarves were nicely embroidered, these Sunday church ones, also she embroidered antipendia to the church, the curtains, in the church on the altar as there were, and with white and red pearls embroidered, on the Saint Spirit there were red and they sent power to nurses, they embroidered aprons, and male sort of aprons with pearls and colourful threads. The grandma, she was not..., she did not prefer sewing, she made the kordulas with pearls but she did not embroider, used threads.“⁷

⁵ Interview with Marie Baňářová 1932, Strážnice.

⁶ Interview with Marie Baňářová 1932, Strážnice.

⁷ Interview with Marie Baňářová 1932, Strážnice.

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Figure 3: *Anděla Tvrdňová (married Baňáňová) in the left, Marie Tvrdňová, Anna Tvrdňová (in the middle), the family chronicle.*

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Mentioning the Tvrdoň sisters, Marie Baňarová as the daughter-in-law of Anděla Baňarová, (Tvrdoňová) may be confusing. She simply calls her mother-in-law, her grandma (sometimes grandmother), her sisters are called aunts and she adds the proper surname that they were using at that time, i.e. Můčkova and Tvrdoňova. For a complete explanation, it can be added to Marie Baňarová's interpretation: *“They were three sisters of the Tvrdoňs, she (Anděla) married Baňar and he married and settled here, that is like Tvrdoň's house, and the other married Můčka and one was single, she stayed there, in Skalická street. She inherited the aunt's house from her aunt who was also single.”*⁸ In the family chronicle of the Baňar family, all the sisters are presented in individual photographs.

Marie Baňarová speaks about Marie Tvrdoňová, the mother of Anděla who was also a famous tailor from Strážnice, she gives only incomplete and mediated pieces of information, which is logical due to the time gap between two generations. Yet we have learnt quite a lot thanks to the carefully run family chronicle.



Figure 4: Marie Tvrdoňová, a photograph from the family album.

“Marie was one of the sisters Rybecký who was born on 6 April 1878 in Strážnice in No. 231 Bednářská Street (old system). As all her sisters were talented in embroidering and costume work in her youth, she had an even greater interest and love for folk embroidery and

⁸ Interview with Marie Baňarová 1932, Strážnice.

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crocheting and sewing costumes for all occasions. At that time, the folk clothing was worn more often, both on ceremonial occasions and at home, at work, both women and men. After completing her schooling, she trained her skills with Mrs. Baňárová, a peasant seamstress in Bednářská Street for 3 years to work later in this field. Everything was sewn by hand at that time. She was performing the work at home while she was learning it, because her teacher was satisfied with her work and she could do it by her own. She was very pleased with her and Marie did a good job even then. And also because sewing of folk clothing was more demanded and cash was needed. She enjoyed the work and moreover, she had enough time. After having finished her apprenticeship, she performed sewing on her own at home at her free time. After getting married and moving to Mizerov (Vinohradská) she still enjoyed sewing and embroidery. She sewed even in the evenings under poor lighting. At that time, they used a home-made sort of candles (a bowl of fat with a wick). This was very smoky. They also used kerosene...

She had a good character, she was cheerful and kind-hearted. Together with her husband František Tvrdoň, they lived in the back wing of a house No. 55. She bought a sewing machine called Singer (shuttle) after some time. The work went faster. This lasted until 1927. When they moved into a newly built house, she bought a new Bobbin sewing machine. She was very satisfied with this sewing machine which lasted until her death. Together with her husband František they raised three daughters.”

Marie Baňárová remembers Marie Tvrdoňová well. Marie Baňárová had her clothes made by her when she was a single girl, and later, after getting married her clothes were sewn by Anděla Baňárová (n. Tvrdoňová). *“She could sew everything, a camisole, a “kacabaya”, as well as skirts, every shape of skirts she could make, the skirts of the aprons... they were all dressed in folk costumes, so was she, all the seamstresses who were in Stražnice, were able to make the skirts but not the camisoles, they could not make the “kacabayas”. However, my grandma could sew everything as well as camisoles; also for me, she sewed also a camizole once and a “kacabaya”. Oh maybe not, it was my old grandma Tvrdoňová, I had it at my wedding, so it was my old granny Tvrdoňová who made it when I was still single. She lived over there in the street, in Skalická street, I could not quickly remember. I used to live there, too... “⁹ Marie in her interpretation continues and captures just the very important moment of the situation after getting married to the family: “It was at time I haven’t been here, in this family, yet, but the old grandma Tvrdoňova used to live here, in our street, Skalická street,*

⁹ Interview with Marie Baňárová 1932, Stražnice.

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so we had the kordulas made here, she made them, for everyone, but then I got here and my grandmother sewed me a "kacabaya" with those big statues. I had one, but she sewed me one more, I had two, I had a warm one, and she made me a thinner one which I wore in this way... ¹⁰ Marie admits the influence of her mother-in-law, the clothing she made was a kind of financial support so Marie was not motivated to leave folk clothing, and she also literally mentions this fact: *"I used to wear my home dress until I got married and since that time I have got a costume all the time."* ¹¹

According to Marie Baňarová's memories, the overall atmosphere in the family had to be influenced by the professional interest of Anděla Tvrdoňová and her sisters. Typically, peasant livelihoods were supplemented by income from tailoring and embroidery, but according to Marie, interest in folk clothing was often prevailing and the potential gains from this activity were higher than from field work, which was, on the contrary, the priority in other families. *"[...] my grandmother said that during season work she preferred to hire people from Radějov to help in the fields, and she and her sisters would embroider at home. They enjoyed it, and they liked it, they had money from it and they paid those workers in the fields. At least that was what my granny said."* ¹²

The decision to hire farmworkers did not have to be solely due to self-interest or a matter of hobby; there is a practical point of view. Field work and permanent contact with the soil dry hands and create cracks and agnails that prevent fine work with materials such as silk or brocade from which folk clothing in the Strážnice area was made. The same is true of embroidery work, field work would make it impossible to earn by embroidering and therefore they preferred to hire and pay labour. ¹³

In the family chronicle, the sisters are captured in courses of cooking, sewing and embroidery that took place in the late 1940s. ¹⁴ Obviously, they were interested in self-improvement, as the photographs show. The family chronicle mentions Anna, Anděla's sister: *"Anna attended sewing and embroidery courses at the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent in Strážnice, which*

¹⁰ Interview with Marie Baňarová 1932, Strážnice.

¹¹ Interview with Marie Baňarová 1932, Strážnice.

¹² Interview with Marie Baňarová 1932, Strážnice.

¹³ It was an idea of Helena B. from Strážnice, a professional tailor who was the consultant to the text, expert in lexicology of sewing and tailoring who told the author about.

¹⁴ Dated back according to the record in the family chronicle, a photograph of a cooking course held in 1948.

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*Miss Šebestová held, and they made embroideries mainly for the church.*¹⁵ When the part of the chronicle was read (a daughter of Marie Baňářová read it), Marie added information during the interview: “*You see, it used to be there a street, a small street, going from the parish church down, at the bottom, there were such houses and that’s where Miss Šebestová used to live. She was quite small, I think, she was single and very pleasant.*”¹⁶ The organization of the Sisters of Charity in Strážnice was therefore significantly involved in the development of education spreading modern technologies at that time among the female population in the locality.

The following photo depicts Anděla Tvrdoňová during a machine embroidery course, which was held at the “Na Dolině” inn in Strážnice, probably because of larger premises. A photograph of embroidery “toledo” is also preserved.¹⁷



Figure 5: *Machine embroidery course held in “Na Dolině” in Strážnice. Anděla Tvrdoňová in the middle, with a white collar, a photograph from a family album.*

Marie Baňářová revives her memories and adds her comments to the photographs, stating that the experience did not always come to its use: “*Grandma then had the embroidery*

¹⁵ Chronicle of the Baňář’s family.

¹⁶ Interview with Marie Baňářová 1932, Strážnice.

¹⁷ See pictures added to this chapter.

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*machine but she did not use it, I do not remember*¹⁸. The period after the 2nd World War and the early fifties was the last era of trainings and courses in the area. One of the reasons was that the Sisters of Charity left Strážnice, but also women started to work away from their homes, which no longer allowed them to make handwork to the same extent as before. Marie Baňarová compares the position of women of the previous generation with her own situation: *“There were courses of cooking and sewing, which used to be mostly over the winter, they worked in summer and they gathered together in winter, the sewing courses were very useful. I didn't participate there, only women older than me, then the courses were not organized anymore, women had to go to work, they were no longer at home in agriculture, they worked in factories, in the Šohaj factory, there used to be Grauburn's, a workshop there.”*¹⁹ This statement shows a break point that occurred in the 1950s and early 1960s when women who entered factories and agricultural cooperatives left traditional clothing because of their wear and maintenance requirements.

New Generation of Folk Clothing Seamstresses – Alena Šikulová from Kněždub a Ludmila Kočišová from Strážnice

Alena Šikulová, like Ludmila Kočišová, is a professional tailor who actively does this craft and they both make and customize their clothing according the customers' needs. Not only they are able to sew contemporary clothing professionally, they are experts in the design and manufacture of folk clothing parts. Their skills are so high that they are able to make even the most complicated parts, such as the "kacabaya" - a short women's costume coat that extends to the waist and forms two waves at the back. This ruffle consists of a special cut and a reinforcement of parts, and the sewing know-how of this part had to be restored after making experiments. The two seamstresses are also researchers who are keen on the reconstruction of folk clothing and renewing the technological knowledge necessary to maintain it.

Unlike the older generation of seamstresses working in localities in the first half of the 20th century who used to dress the clients on a daily basis, contemporary tailors supply the costumes used for the ceremonial use and performance of folk ensembles. While the first group still lived in a community where folk costume was a common style of clothing, it is a specific one now. During the research, respondents were asked how they got to make folk

¹⁸ Interview with Marie Baňarová 1932, Strážnice.

¹⁹ Interview with Marie Baňarová 1932, Strážnice.

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clothing. Alena Šikulová considers her work in the “open-air museum” to be the first impulse where she made her first ordinary costume. The next step was to sew for her grandson’s performance, then she began sewing the costume for a granddaughter and she added individual parts until she learned to make the entire costume wardrobe. Another way was described by Ludmila Kočišová working in Strážnice who stated how she was asked from a neighbouring village to make one: *“I was asked to make it, just from Radějov. The first attempt was a contract from Radějov when I sewed the pants. I tried it, I did it, they were nice, so I kept trying. And since then I’ve got into everything, also sleeves.”*²⁰

At present, both respondents can make not only all women's but also all men's costume parts. It means they are able to create the parts of the most complicated cuts such as ladies' sleeves, ladies' shirts (long-sleeved shirts which are pocketed on the arms), as well as winter men's and women's costume coats. The seamstress Ludmila Kočišová described it literally: *“Well, I can sew everything today, the whole folk costume – a „kordula“ (a vest), sleeves, „kacabaya“ (a short women's coat), a camisole, petticoats, top skirts, shirts (women's shirt with long sleeves) children’s costumes, simply everything.”*²¹

Because they are professionally trained, both tailors master the complex making of any garment and consider making folk garments as a kind of bonus to their abilities. They accept orders not only from the location where they work. They are also able to produce parts from other regions such as Wallachia (Valašsko). However, in making it they always strictly follow all the specifics of the garment, even in details. The part is always made according to the original the clients bring and the exact copy is made, the material should correspond to as well.

Alena Šikulová who is embroidering the folk clothing points out that it has to be a local pattern. She comments: *„Firstly you have to watch the region, area, there must be original local ornaments.“*²² Strict adherence to the local specifics is also necessary when choosing embroidery for individual parts, for example white embroidery of men's shirts is allowed to be made by machine while male aprons are embroidered exclusively by hand, as Alena Šikulová stated: *“The boy's apron must be embroidered by hand as... there is not other possibility, not by machine, only by hand.”*²³ Similarly, both respondents point out the

²⁰ Ludmila Kočišová, interview from 10 January 2020, Strážnice.

²¹ Ludmila Kočišová, interview from 10 January 2020, Strážnice.

²² Alena Šikulová, interview from 8 January 2020, Kněždub.

²³ Alena Šikulová, interview from 8 January 2020, Kněždub.

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necessity to dress the folk clothing in a coherent way, i.e. in particular skirts and petticoats should form one line.

A major problem currently facing folk clothing tailors is the lack of some costume-specific materials, for example some typical and popular cloths for the back skirts, as Alena Šikulová mentioned: "... *the material is less and less available and you have to take what is produced. The girls can't get the material anymore.*"²⁴

Another problem is unified lace which is being used across areas. Moreover, there is not sufficient variability in size and width of the lace. Such a lace is then unsuitable for children's costumes: "*Now you buy lace, maybe in Brumovice and it has all the same width and now imagine that you should put it on such skirt for a child (fěrtušek), so you have to adjust the ratio. So I have embroidered to the cloth.*"²⁵ It is obvious that in this respect the folk creators must have a lot of imagination and they are able to make it up.

Both respondents agree on the transformation of some body proportions and thus on the change in the aesthetics of wearing folk clothing. A marked change is in the shape of the breast which was different because women did not wear bras. "*Today it is different, aunts used to wear their breasts down and today girls have bras. When the breasts fell, the vest (kordula) was flatter and tucks were not done.*"²⁶ As for children's costume, certain variability was needed because children grow up. At the waistcoat (kordula) the fabric was commonly added in width, the waistcoat was additionally narrowed to allow to be extended it when the wearer put on weight. Likewise, girls' tops and bottom skirts were extended in the whole perimeter. The parts thus served the child for several years during the child's growth. It is interesting that just like the older generations of seamstresses who made cut patterns for their regular customers, today's tailors also make clothing for their clients on measure. The tailors not only copy the patterns exactly according to the older components, but they also keep these patterns for their individual customers: "*I cut the patterns according to the old clothes, according something they had brought. Everybody is different and everybody has different shoulders and then it doesn't fit.*"²⁷

²⁴ Alena Šikulová, interview from 8 January 2020, Kněždub.

²⁵ Alena Šikulová, interview from 8 January 2020, Kněždub.

²⁶ Ludmila Kočíšová, interview from 10 January 2020, Strážnice.

²⁷ Ludmila Kočíšová, interview from 10 January 2020, Strážnice.

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The knowledge of cuts and shear patterns was shared among a narrow community of experts and, with the gradual disappearance of folk clothing from everyday life, a detailed knowledge of cut design of clothing also left. A good example of renewed knowledge of technical solution is the reconstruction of the cut of a women's winter coat, the so-called "kacabaya". It is a short jacket made of velvet or black fabric that extends just above the wide skirt and is lined with flannel. At the back, the jacket is shaped so that the back of the jacket protrudes slightly and creates waves. Creating such a shape is quite difficult both in terms of cut and in the solution of the reinforcement.

Ludmila Kočíšová has reconstructed the cut pattern according to the model of an older „kacabaya“ and she states: *“Here I unseamed the old kacabaya to see what is inside. And there was given paper and also a sort of material, such as rough canvas, thin as organza, as if it were soaked in starch. I don't know what kind of material it is.”*²⁸ The inner materials are often replaced by modern ones but with the same characteristics, e.g. the material must be rigid but flexible so that the rear part of the coat stayed elastic. The original procedure for the manufacture of reinforcement in „kacabayas“ has not been preserved, so the tailor has no choice but to be creative and replace the material when making new parts.

The similar case is the transfer of knowledge in the embroidery of folk clothing. Alena Šikulová talked about learning the special techniques of embroidering called “šlingrování” (embroidery of holes) on men's shirts. This is pinhole embroidery where the individual holes are embroidered with white threads as in the so-called "toledo". She learned this technique requiring precision from Mrs. Chudíčková who at the time of passing on the knowledge was almost confined to bed. *“Tommy had his costume embroidered whole I had gone to see the auntie Chudíčková, she advised me. And the auntie, though she was nearly immobile and her fingers were so twisted from rheumatism but she was still embroidering. I went to her and said... Auntie I don't know how ... so she looked at it....well done, sewed well. It'll take you some time until you learn the technique.”*²⁹ Thanks to the willingness to pass on knowledge, the details of the technique are being preserved and allow the continuity of the traditional process.

At present, folk clothing tailors not only produce folk clothing parts and thus supply the dance ensembles and people living in villages with missing parts, they also contribute to the preservation of the tradition by collecting things. Each of the seamstresses gradually made

²⁸ Ludmila Kočíšová, interview from 10 January 2020, Strážnice..

²⁹ Alena Šikulová, interview from 8 January 2020, Kněždub.

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sets of cuts for all types of folk costume parts and Alena Šikulová has also collected patterns of local embroidery. She received the first embroidery samples from her teacher, Mrs. Chudíčková, as she remembers: “As I used to go to the auntie Chudíčková, when I began to embroider, so it was her who gave me samples on paper saying: there you have samples of everything, like cross embroidery on shirts, on skirts, aprons, bows. The aunt used to make it up.”³⁰ She is expanding her collection of patterns on the occasion of the village holidays: „You go round the village, you hang out, people show you their embroidery you can even take a photo of it you have a sample. You go to the feast, you take some photos, especially photos of lace, even the faces don't have to be there, the most important are the samples (she is laughing).”

In this way, tailors play an important role in the preservation of traditional clothing and its form. Tradition, however, depends on the preservation of specific knowledge which is often impossible to obtain because the creators of the original components died a long time ago. In some cases, the skills of contemporary creators who are able to restore cuts and patterns help. Another difficulty is often the secret information and knowledge transmitted only in families, such as pleating back skirts on the wire. If the knowledge of the pleating technique remains in only one family, there is a high probability that this technique will disappear with the lack of interest of one of the generations and the part of the costume will be replaced by another technique that requires less maintenance.

The aim of the paper was to document professional tailors working in the villages of Strážnice and Kněždub and their contribution to the local tradition of folk clothing. Thanks to the archive materials of the Baňar family from Strážnice, the folk clothing creators who worked in the area at the beginning of the 20th century were successfully documented and their biographical data recorded. As for contemporary creators, the aim was mainly to document the transfer of tradition and the way of learning and maintaining professional knowledge related to the specifics of folk clothing. The success is the permanent interest in folk clothing but also the ability of creators to cope with the pitfalls when the knowledge is lacking and there is no-one to advise them how to keep the original appearance and characteristics of the folk costume parts. Finally, it should be emphasized that it is necessary to preserve not only material costumes, but also special knowledge about the maintenance and creation of folk clothing which play a key role in the continuity of this tradition.

³⁰ Alena Šikulová, interview from 8 January 2020, Kněždub.

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