

these contexts. The major line in organizing the information obtained has been the role of this music (as a determining factor in the construction of the cultural contexts) as well as the viewpoints of the musicians who act as experts in the rituals.

There comes the compulsory stipulation: the situations to be described are an abstract of the field notes on the practices of *zurnaci* music as an actual reality. Like any abstract, they lack the details sacrificed for the sake of the produced scheme of the phenomenon under discussion. Schematizing is inevitable when one attempts to isolate an image from the versatile cultural reality. Hence tracing the contexts of performing this music means in fact constructing the *zurnaci* practices as an open text built up of events, versions and situations.

## CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS OF PERFORMING ZURNACI MUSIC

This chapter of the book deals with *zurnaci* music played in the traditional contexts of Bulgarian Christians and Roma Christians (In Bulgaria they are called Bulgarian Gypsies). *Zurnaci* music is being utilized in two cycles – the one of human life and the calendar one. There are some pieces of information about *zurnas* playing at family celebrations like the receptions after baptizing, farewell parties of boys on the eve of their joining the army, or engagements. The richest information concerns the *zurnaci* music played at weddings, therefore the text will discuss in details the role which this music has in Christian wedding. The calendar and ritual contexts are of greater variety – *zurnaci* music is part of the New Year rituals and the seasonal festivals, of those connected with the celebrations on St. George's Day, the parish and village festivities according to the holy days in the Orthodox Christian calendar, etc.

### *Contexts of performing zurnaci music connected with traditional family celebrations*

#### Wedding

*Zurnaci* music is present in many descriptions of the traditional Christian wedding in the geographic region called Macedonia. The ethnographic sources and published results from field researches done in the districts of Galichnik and Debar since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century show that the instruments playing at a wedding are *zurnas* and *tapans*). *Zurnas* and drums or bagpipes (*gajdi*) and tambourines are the typical wedding music in the traditions of the town of Razlog, according to a study on the local folklore culture covering the period from the 1930s to the 1970s.

*Zurnaci* music marks the beginning of the actual wedding rituals in Galichnik. Both sides – the bride's and the groom's – hire musicians. Starting from Monday, an orchestra of two or three big drums and two or three *zurnas* plays in front of the houses of the groom, the bride and the kinsmen. On Tuesday begins the wedding banner (*hajrak*) procession lead by drums and *zurnas* and accompanied by gunshots. Groups of guests arrive at the "wedding houses". Lead by the *zurnaci*, the banner procession enters the groom's house where a table laid with dishes and drinks is waiting for them. On that day the inviting ladies (*kalesnici*), as a must young wives, go about the place and, offering wine, invite guests to the wedding ceremonies scheduled for the next day. In the evening the bride goes to bring water to her parents for the last time. The groom sends *zurnacies* to accompany her during this ritual. Once the ritual is over, a feast begins in her yard; *zurnaci*