

### Sirnitsa (Proshki) The Eve of Lent

The successors of refugees from southern Macedonian regions Gevgeli, Drama, Ser<sup>11</sup> live in the Sharon neighbourhood of Petrich. In the recent years they have been making *listnik*, *orata kopata* – a special fire built on the Eve of Lent in this neighbourhood and *horos* are played around fire to the music of *zurnas*.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the unique local custom *Garo* used to be celebrated in Razlog with the inevitable participation of *zurnaci* music. The informants remembered that since their childhood it had always been held on March 3 – the Day of Bulgarian Liberation from the Ottoman Yoke. Probably this custom originates from the tradition to build fires on the Eve of Lent. The citizens of Razlog claim that the holiday and the notions connected with it *ovina* and *Garo* are both typical of Razlog only. *Ovina* is a juniper and *Garo* is a big fire built of juniper logs. In the past they used to build the fire at the place called *Golak* (a bare spot) over the town in the mountains. They used to build fires in the neighbourhoods too, in the form of a specific competition whose *Gare* will be burning for the longest time. The biggest *Gare* ever made was about twenty years ago. It had a special supporting construction and more than twenty lorry loads of juniper trees went to build it. Such a fire burns for several days and nights and *horos* serpent around it, *zurnas* squawk, drums beat [C.B., p.38].

### Todorovden (The Day of St. Theodorus – The first Saturday of the Lent)

In the past on the Day of St. Theodorus *horos* used to be made together with the horse races (*kushii*) in some of the settlements. According to the famous *horo* dancer from Petrich, Kostadin Kudov, the *zurnas* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had an important role in the celebrations of the Day of St. Theodorus as it is guild's holiday in Petrich. "On the day of St. Theodorus we used to make a big *horo* at the Old Coal Stores. Then all cartmen used to grab the *zurnas* and order the drums. Here the races took place, the people competed in percussions, in throwing of stones and much, much *horo* used to be played" [Цветков, 2000:28].

The Day of St. Theodorus is a holiday for the "Bulgarian Gypsies" from the Roma neighbourhood in Belitsa. The women colour red eggs, using them to colour in red whom they meet in the street while the men race with horses and dance a festive *horo*. *Zurnas* are playing during the races (when the horses were running) and at the *horo* in the centre of the neighbourhood ("when they have finished and had a drink then they begin to dance") [Й.А., p.56; Й.Д., p.66-67].

### Velikden (Easter)

The masked plays in Eleshnitsa unlike elsewhere in Southwest Bulgaria take place on Easter Day (during the years of socialism on 1<sup>st</sup> May). *Zurnacies* from Razlog and Petrich are specially commissioned and preferred to local ones. During the 2002 *babuger* plays in Eleshnitsa one could hear Selim Demirov's group from Kavrakirovo, Petrich region, the *zurnaci* from Razlog members of the *tapanci* Emil's group as well as the groups of the local *zurnaci* Ivan Lefterov and Ivan Blagoev.

The carnival plays are claimed to have been accompanied by a bagpipe and a drum in the past [А.П., p.72]. As far as their origin is concerned, the local people say that their tradition has been influenced by the Greek masquerade rituals for meeting the spring since in the past many men from Eleshnitsa used to go to Greece for the cotton harvest. After