

For the great Christian holidays like the days of St. Basil the Great, St. John the Baptist, Epiphany, the Day of St. Theodorus, St. George, St. Athanasius, Easter, the Day of St. Elia, the Day of the Holy Mother, the Bulgarian Gypsies from the respective neighbourhood in Belitsa gather at the town centre for a common *horo*, accompanied by *zurnas* and *tapans*. “Even until recently, when there weren’t no installations, the *zurnas* have always played” – says an informant from the local people. The people gather for the *horo* about 2 PM and the dances last till 5 or 6 PM. Then those who have a nameday pay the *zurnaci* and celebrate with music at their homes [Й.Д., p.68].

PERFORMING ZURNACI MUSIC IN MUSLIM CONTEXTS

The *zurna* is used by various Muslim communities living in Southwest Bulgaria – Turks, Roma, Bulgarian Muslims (*Pomaks*). We should particularize that the discussion below does not deal with the Muslim context of performing *zurnaci* music in their meaning of religious rituals. In fact *zurnaci* music rarely accompanies the singing of the Muslim priest (*hodzha*). More often the *zurnas* and *tapan* go with the folklore rituals and secular celebrations, with the festive dinners and dances of the Muslims from this region. Of course, details are different with each group concerned. But the common characteristics prevail. The proceeding of a wedding and the music played on the occasion in Roma-Erlia (Turkish Gypsies) community in the region of Petrich differs from those in the community of Bulgarian Muslims (*Pomaks*) from the region of Gotse Delchev. On the other hand, the music leads the wedding processions in the both communities, regardless to the fact that the melodies sound different and their names are not the same: the former call their melody *na bayrak* (to the banner) and the latter *alay*. Therefore this study will present the summarized pictures of the rituals and feasts of the Muslim communities from the region in which *zurnaci* music is played. Since the emphasis of the research is put upon the music and its integrating function, the chapter gives the contexts of performing *zurnaci* music not according to their community affiliation but according to the rituals and festive situation where it is being utilized.

Ivan Kachulev has included the *zurna* in his study on the folk music instruments played by the *Pomaks* from the valleys of the Chepinska and Mesta rivers (namely the regions of Velingrad, Razlog, Gotse Delchev). The study is based on his field research carried out in the late 1950-s and early 1960-s. He has stressed on the fact that the *zurna* is the most popular instrument playing at “fairs, weddings, *sünnet*, wrestlings and other folk feasts” [Качулев, 1962:199]. The same is still valid for the utilization of this instrument in the Roma and Turkish communities from the region.

Our field recordings confirm that nowadays *zurnas* are the preferred instrument in the cases of big outdoor feasts celebrated by the Muslims from Southwest Bulgaria. *Zurnas* and *tapans* are present in the calendar rituals like *Kurban Bayram*, The Day of St. George (*Ederlez*, *Hederlez*), all village fairs. *Zurnaci* music is a part of the family feast like *sünnet* and wedding. The festivity of the Muslims is also connected with the music of *zurnas* that play at the festive dinners and accompany the dances. It can be said in general that the calendar, family and community feasts outlined combine the religious consolidation of the Muslim communities with the contemporary “secular” ethnic consolidation. *Zurnaci* music is a musical image of this transition, marking the expansion of the family rituals and the home beyond and turning them into feasts of the neighbourhood and the