

religion and ethnic group. The links in such a group are the strongest and presuppose uniform common activities [Николов, 1996:9]. During recent decades sociological and ethnological studies were carried out amongst the Bulgarian Muslims from the Chech region and in the Satovcha district (the birthplace of the person interviewed). They show religion to be the major affiliation marker of the community, its major consolidating principle and respectively, basic distinction. The distinction is between Christians and Muslims, not between Bulgarians and Bulgarian Muslims as it is in other regions. The social context ascribed to the words Christian and Muslim expands beyond the meaning of religion, including significant personal social relations – personal life story, clan, even attitudes towards the state [Желязкова, М., 1996:58-59]. The group is strongly consolidated. It is ethnically and socially homogenous. The processes of activating ethnic self-consciousness have been observed in the recent years [Минев&Спиридонова, 1996:52-53]. The encapsulation and the consolidation of *Pomak* communities has been a response to negative stereotypes of the Muslim communities as well as a resistance to their political repression [Желязкова, А., 1997:53]. An external observer who studied the *Pomaks* from the Gotse Delchev region in the early 1990s gave a possible explanation of the activation of the identity thus constructed: “Religion is the only factor differentiating the *Pomaks* from the rest of the Bulgarian Slavs. Therefore it is not surprising that they are much more Muslims than the Ethnic Turks” [Poulton, 1993:114].

The *zurna* as a musical instrument inevitably accompanying the feasts of the community is indicated as a symbol of Muslim and *Pomak* identity as opposed to the bagpipe, which is a symbol of the Christian identity. It turned out that the man interviewed had no facts in support of his comparison. For example, he was not sure if the *zurnas* are part of local Christian rituals. According to him, his opinion has no need of reasonable proof. It is of first order – ethnicity is seen as primary, like the person's name, the religion, the customs given to the person with his birth [Кръстева, 1998:18]. He accepts the symbolic bond between the *zurna* and his group *a priori* as natural. It is unquestionable and needs no logical arguments as it is consecrated by tradition. Thus, Bulgarian Muslims construct their group identity, opposing their own sacral story to the real history written by others [Лозанова, 1998]. It is more correct to say that the opposition is memory-history as memory is a symbolic reality. It is not a gnostic interest in the past, but an identity [Кръстева, 1998:18]. The utilization of the *zurna* as a marker of the collective memory and of the group's identity of Bulgarian Muslims resembles the words of Roma *zurnaci* who say that their instrument is *the first, the oldest, the richest*.

The *zurna*/bagpipe dichotomy has already been mentioned. When going through the *zurnacies'* images in travellers' notes, folklore texts, the speech of the musicians and academic literature, one finds that the bagpipe-*zurna* pair is correspondingly related to dichotomies such as poor/rich; old/new, sometimes citizens/villagers. This dichotomy of ethnic identifying markers and distinctive religious symbols is not a simply a myth of the imaginative community, a nationalistic ideologeme. The dichotomy of these two instruments in particular is due to their similarity with regard to semantics, functions and musical style. *Rusalia* plays are accompanied either by *zurnas* or bagpipes with a *tapan*, as well as the wedding processions, wrestling and competitions. There are common legends about their origin. A parallel between the droning of the two instruments is also possible. In this sense the contrast in the pair *zurna*-bagpipe is assigned to the resemblance and the limited choice, to the real qualities of what is symbolized that are used for building further