

fact that the *zurna* performers are “only Turks and Turkish Gypsies, Bulgarians do not play it” [Качулев, 1967:251].

Nikolay Kaufmann also has pointed out that in the Pirin region the *zurna* is played by Roma: “The *zurna* is played exclusively by Gypsies in the Pirin region” [Кайфман, Н. 1965:210].

Our informants from Southwest Bulgaria have confirmed what the research workers have stated about the ethnic profile of the *zurna* player. All of them with few exceptions are Roma and playing the *zurna* has been a clan tradition. A player from Javornitsa says: “The *zurnacilik* (the skill to play the *zurna*) is been adopted via a clan – fathers, sons, grandchildren – in one house” [АИФ, I, № 100, с. 13]. The musicians interviewed claim that the *zurna* is played only by “Muslim Gypsies”: “There aren’t others – only our folks. We are of three types here: Turkish Gypsies, Bulgarian Gypsies and Kurbats. And the musicians are only from ours, the Muslims” [M.K., p.25].

The practices we have observed show that there are non-Roma who learn and try to play the *zurna*. According to the player from Razlog some Bulgarians “have a desire” and come to the neighborhood to play. But this is a practice that is not innate for them, just a hobby that they’d hardly demonstrate in public: “Is he ashamed since he is living there among the Bulgarians? We here are not ashamed as for us it’s our craft” [Б., p.9].

Even in our days this craft remains a Roma one, but playing the *zurna* seems to expand over its ethnic basis. To meet the needs of the music folklorism in the professional and amateur ensembles *zurna* is also played by Bulgarians some times – L. P. and W. B. from the village Karanalovo, the *kavalci* (a player on the folk pipe *kaval*) K. from Blagoevgrad, the bagpipe player M. from Sofia, the dancer and choreographer I. I. from Sofia. The contemporary political folklorism symbolically correlates the *zurna* with Islam and evokes the practice of *zurna* playing among Bulgarian Muslims (*Pomaks*). As the materials from our recent field research testify, the instrument is played now and then by *Pomaks* from Gotse Delchev, Fargovo, Tuhovishta. The practice of playing the *zurna* has been established since 1989 and is explained by the restoring of the Muslim names of this population in the region and the possibility to freely carry out the Muslim rituals as well as by the activation of group festivity with music [Ю., p.25; Б.С., p.2].

Gender Characteristics

Singing has been a female priority in Bulgarian traditional culture, while playing the music instruments a male occupation. Moreover, it has been “a skill and a privilege of a few, accompanied by a halo of a unique chosenness and representativity parted by a special talent and disposition of the individual” [Захариева, 1998:126]. The instrumental *zurnaci* music does not make an exception from the traditional norm mentioned. *Zurnas* are played only by men and apart from the gender marking mentioned this fact can be explained by the special physical and professional qualities required to play the *zurna*: strength, durability, performing technique.

The modern *zurnacies* practicing under the conditions of a decaying tradition, confirm the rule that the *zurna* is a male instrument. During our fieldwork we have never registered a case of a woman playing the *zurna*. Only in an interview taken from a *zurnaci* from Kavrakirovo there is the memorate about such a case in his family as an exception confirming the rule: “A woman never plays the *zurna*, only my aunt did as a *glashnik* to my granddad” [АИФ, I, № 100, с. 13]. According to a *zurnaci* from Razlog sometimes