

facts documented in archives, sources, and memoirs. But the people from Southwest Bulgaria do not consider *zurnaci* music as Turkish, first of all. They still get married and celebrate with it, regardless of its ethnic and confessional affiliation. The challenge for the scholar is to discover the mechanisms by which such ideological symbolism is created, the roles and motives of the artists, the symbolic capital. The scholar faces the unique image of a pure, authentic, national and typical Bulgarian folklore in which the *zurnas* are marginal. They expect him to “go in deeper”, to see beyond what is happening, to reveal the deformations in the perception resulting from the interests of those in power.

The *zurna* as an ethnomusical phenomenon is placed in the plane of “one’s own” and “foreign” relations. It is involved as a symbol in the construction of a field whose ethnocultural aspects are transfixed by the “us and them” attitude. What are the “own” and “foreign” characteristics of *zurna* and *zurnaci* musical symbolism? And for whom? The answers to these questions come from two sides: the words of the participants in *zurnaci* music themselves (musicians and audience) and from the reviewers (humanitarians, fiction, and media).

The zurna as “one’s own” instrument

First of all the *zurna* is the players’ “own”, for those who turn it from wood into music, from music for themselves into a message to the rest. As is well known, *zurnacies* are Roma. Is the *zurna* one of the Romas’ “own” instruments?

The various versions of the ethnic affiliation of the *zurnacies* are part of the complex symbolism of *zurnaci* music. For listeners, the player belongs to *Others* – Roma, *Egyuptsi*, Gypsies. The very *zurnacies* are conscious of being different, unique amongst the rest of the population in the region. *Zurnaci* clan stories tell of an ancestor from the Caucasus (“We are not Gypsies, we are Georgians”), of a family that came from Greece (“My great-great-granddad was a pure Greek”) or having Egyptian roots (“That’s why they call us *Egyuptsi*”). The biographic stories of the players state most often that the legendary ancestors who set the musician’s craft in the clan were foreigners. Yet, our sources from the Petrich region call themselves *Egyuptsi*, *Erlia*, *Gypsies*. The Roma identity is motivated by the fact that Gypsies found and brought up the granddad – founder of the clan of musicians as a child: “My grandfather, my grand-grandfather, the father of granddad, found his father and mother assassinated. And the kid was like this (a baby – n.a.). And it was found by Gypsies, and they took him into possession, adopted him and therefore he became a musician” [C.K., Д.К., 10/2001, p.31]. A similar desire to cast doubt on Roma identity is not rare among Roma musicians. Probably it is evoked by the negative connotations of the lower status of Roma in society and to the efforts of the musician to break with his social group. On the other hand, this desire might be an expression of the polyvalence of the professional musician – “a foreigner among his and “his own” among the others”. The musician differs from his milieu and finds his realization among others. But he is doomed to remain in the eyes of others someone who may be needed but is foreign and despised, being a Gypsy.

However, sometimes the *zurnacies* demonstrate non-Roma identity, not only when relating their clan mythology. When speaking, they often say “we Bulgarians” or “we Turks”. D. K. from Kavrakirovo ends his story about the place on the bank of the Strumeshnitsa river where Turks were assassinated in 1913 admitting: “We Bulgarians are sly, don’t forget!” [Д.К., 03/2001, p.16]. The preference of the same *zurnaci* to play