

## CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONAL VALUES OF THE MACEDONIAN COMMUNITIES IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this article is to highlight certain Macedonian customs but also their influence in Romania. Old Macedonian customs are unchanged in some areas of Romania. The traditions of the Macedonians consist of many ritual activities. Therefore, these practices specific to Macedonians lead to the preservation of their ethnic identity. These customs are preserved from antiquity to the present, sometimes some aspects have been changed, but they still fit with the popular customs and beliefs of their Macedonian, both from the perspective of the time when they celebrate, but also in terms of actions, procedures, and ritual symbolism so that equitation reflect their Macedonian identity, from antiquity until today. In my approach I had as a point of reference a series of objectives: identifying the Macedonian cultural specificity, researching traditions, customs, habits, and social practices, capitalizing on authentic popular creation from the perspective of avoiding distortion and obsolescence, initiating a sociological study on the need for traditions popular as a component of the means of communication of old customs.*

**Keywords:** *customs; beliefs; Macedonian; rituals; Macedonian traditions.*

### 1.Introduction

In Romania, there are 20 national minorities: Albanians, Armenians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Croats, Jews, Germans, Greeks, Italians, Macedonians, Hungarians, Poles, Roma, Russian-Slipover, Athenians, Serbs, Slovaks, Tatars, Turks, and Ukrainians which have specific cultural, linguistic and religious traditions.

National minorities on the territory of Romania are identified by some particular characteristics that make a specific identity, that any member of an ethnic group trying to preserve and pass on to future generations. Identity in general and national identity, in particular, is seen as a fact as well as a process.

The group is ethnic "identity is justified in particular by the fact that they have the same origin and language, a cultural heritage shared consciousness of membership identity and a limited membership" (Otovescu, 2013: 77).

Custom, tradition called, is, therefore, usually target one of the most important elements of traditional culture. The study of customs has a special role in understanding the formation of communities and in explaining the national specificity of an ethnic group. By studying the so-called folklore, customs involving research content, their traditions can be outlined certain rules social of a community in its historical evolution (Boboş, 1999: 187). Custom is the oldest formal source

of society, before the existence of laws and rules of the organization, the terms of tradition and tradition were the only ones used in this social field.

Any culture single has specific values, which influence the conduct of members of society. If values are imposed on them as "abstract standards" for what is desirable, right, or good, traditions and norms are indicators of conduct that show what is appropriate or inappropriate in actions aimed at accomplishing individual and social tasks. An important role in social existence is played by traditional norms, which essentially influence the individual and collective conduct of members of society. So very occupied traditions, customs, rules of social life, holidays, rituals, etc.

Tradition is the multitude of habits, customs, beliefs that are transmitted from generation to generation, forming the specific features of a people. Traditions are a system of ideas, laws, norms of conduct, a totality of concepts that have formed over time that do not constitute a complete form spontaneously. Therefore, the structure of the traditional three layers can be delimited:

1. the idea (representation);
2. habit (a certain norm of conduct);
3. ritual (symbolic embodiment of custom). (Capcelea, 1998: 9).

Traditions are part of the social memory of a people that helps us to answer the six "of the sites" involved in self-knowledge: Who am I? Why am I? How are they? What are they for? Where? When?.

In which we are building on their sense, di away from the all other and individuals sem single n complicated with us. Consequently, there are multiple ways of dealing with traditions:

- traditions as a component of social consciousness;
- as a means of transmitting experience it is social;
- certain dealings with the social, etc. (Capcelea, 1998: 221-223).

In ancient Macedonia habits that work their ritual celebrating their religion are closely linked to the territory and the climatic conditions. Many customs and ritual activities of the Macedonians, were unique but some were changed but, still present among the Macedonian people. In the current period, the identity construction of Macedonians is a mixture of ethnic identity, national identity, and European identity, it helps us to observe a new historical, social and cultural situation, recognizing and reaffirming the cultural values of the Macedonian ethnicity. The Macedonian people lived in tribal territories mountainous leading many fights is for a gain certain territories that were covered with grass. Residents Macedonian territory and wanted to have as much land farming and land where he could hunting of and fish (Thomas, 2007: 138).

Ritual their customs and their Macedonian them that them I noticed at certain times of the year were closely linked to climate. Some of the holiday-related customs are centered around four astronomical phenomena:

1. spring equinox;
2. autumn equinox;
3. winter solstice;
4. summer solstice.

Most habits are closely linked to agricultural work season, ie planting and harvesting into other habits were an adjacent circle of life: birth and death.

To date, the Macedonians of Northern Macedonia, but also in Romania kept their fundamental characteristics, language, traditions, customs and origin, and ethnic unity consciousness.

The Macedonian minority located in the territory of Romania is identified by some particular characteristics that make a specific identity, that any member of an ethnic group trying to preserve and pass on to future generations. The Macedonian ethnic group has many customs that play an important role even today in the daily life of Macedonians. Some rituals are practiced by ethnic groups today, others are present only in the memory of older people. All events in the life of Macedonians are accompanied by appropriate traditions that are rules, codes of conduct, springing from experience and habit even though they are not written, is a major ethical feature of any ethnic community. The events that have marked the life of each person are an opportunity to use that happiness to the person at the center of the event. Popular customs played an important role in the self-regulation of nuptials, births, and deaths. The passage is prepared long before, through customs, ritual acts, magical practices (Capcea, 1998: 9).

The traditions of the Macedonians in Romania preserved over time refer to the belief in ancestral traditions, creating a close connection between ethnic Macedonians.

## **2. Old Macedonian customs and traditions**

The traditions and customs of the Macedonians from Northern Macedonia but also from those from Romania are related to our daily life. The Macedonians have kept certain customs, traditions, passed on to the generations the spiritual values of the Macedonian people through religious traditions, folklore, customs, culinary art, etc.

For the Macedonians, the most common ceremonies are those of initiation, namely those that make the transition from childhood to adulthood. The rituals of transition from childhood to adulthood are performed by boys and involve the transition from an immature child to an adult (Proeva, 2004: 132). Religion plays an important role in the life of the Macedonian community, as does each of its members. Religion was one of the reasons for the emigration of Macedonians to Romania.

Ethnic Macedonians in Romania, as well as those in Northern Macedonia, are Orthodox of the old rite, celebrating most church holidays 13 days after they are celebrated by Romanians. So, for the Macedonians, Christmas is celebrated on January 7, and the New Year on January 14.

The most important holidays for Macedonians are Veligden - Pasha; Bojik - Christmas; Bogorodița - Virgo Maria; Cârstovden - Epiphany; Nova Godina - New Year; Ilinden - Saint Elijah; Spasovden - Ascension; Petrovden - Saint Peter; Saint Dumitru.

In the Republic of Northern Macedonia, a well-known custom that is practiced today is the celebration of Vasilica, the "unbaptized days". These days are twelve in a number being between Christmas which is on the 7th of January in Macedonians and the Epiphany which is on the date of January 19th. In this period time, they take holidays, according to some popular beliefs, spirits them evil enters homes Macedonians making them worse.

So, as to ward off evil Macedonians (Kovacheva and Boceva, 2014: 23) during the holidays day's Christians are processions in which men are asked to remove the spirits that bring misfortune in their lives. Masked men are just bachelors or younger married people (Kovacheva, 2012: 133-134).

The processions were attended by between 30 and 50 Vasilicas people, of whom only four were "maskardzhi" ("men in masks"). But today the number of those participating in processions is declining. The men who take part in the procession have well-defined roles to mark the struggle between good and evil, and where of course good always overcomes evil. This celebration show ritual symbolism of the victory of good over evil, which, according to popular belief brings it healthy house and harvest rich (Kovacheva and Boceva, 2014: 30-31).

The most spectacular "Rusaliis" dances are those that Macedonians perform on the occasion of the feast of Basilica, the "unbaptized days". In the Republic of Macedonia Northern groups of countries called "Rusaliis" consist of 20 or 30 for boys and men between 20 and 40 years and 10 or 30 for girls. Each group has musicians, the most appreciated being the drummer. The dance "Rusaliis" ends the baptismal holiday. Dancers before returning to their homes go first to the church for prayer with some swords which they hold up in the church. For example, if a child is sick and is held in the arms of his mother in the church as prayer takes place, symbolically it is considered that the disease is banished far away (Kovachev, 2012: 131-132).

The feast of Basilica, of the "unbaptized days", which we find in the Macedonians of Northern Macedonia, in those of Romania we find under the name of Pentecost which also takes place between January 7 and 19, starting with the last day of Christmas and ending - on the eve of the Epiphany. These are the so-called days of evil or fairy tales that cripple people and threaten people's lives.

Pentecostal customs are sprinkled with choruses, these chairs are nothing more than ritual dances dating back to pre-Christian times. Originally, this tradition was very different from today.

Before the dances that were made on this occasion had a magical character, which ward off evil spirits which was referred to above, ensuring - human and animal health.

The customs and choruses of Pentecost that we encounter in all the peoples of the Balkans have something in common. What is common is that everywhere we find traces of ancient cultures.

What it is, however, for us and more importantly, that the magical power of these dances is practiced and Călușarii. Romanian given recovery sick "these ancient elements we meet and Macedonians in-far more insignificant" (Obrembski, 2002: 78). Dancers or Pentecostals, as they are called by some and others, rarely allow the introduction of the sick in their midst and just as hard go to the houses where they are sick. At the request of that family, they are willing to go applying some of the rules rites, but without them to do something on their initiative, while at Călușarii Romanian. This element is primarily where dancers have the same role as doctors, priests, and sorcerers (Pouqueville, 1826:172-176).

in Macedonia, a very popular celebration is Saint Tryphon, which is described as a patron of the owners of taverns and protector of Macedonians have gardens. In

the cities of Ohrid, Prilep, and Radovic you can drink for free in taverns (Kovacheva and Boceva, 2014: 328).

In the middle of the Macedonian community from Urzicuța locality from Dolj county, we find a custom kept by Saint Tryphon, which takes place on February 1st in new style and in old-style on February 14th. People who have vine crops go on the plots and sprinkle it with wine, to be fruitful and the wine to be of the best quality. The ritual is attended by the priest who holds a service where all the villagers gather who wish each other much abundance and health. On this holiday the drums play, the trumpets drink a lot of brandy and wine. This ritual is still practiced today by Macedonian ethnics in Romania wine-growing areas of Macedonia.

For Macedonians, the feast of St. George is very important for the family, in the past this holiday was equivalent to the transhumance of the flocks, it was a spectacle, people went out of town to see the sheep of the Macedonians. Men wore weapons and holiday clothes, and women also wore special holiday clothes. At the head of the congregation was a newlywed young woman in a wedding dress. Climbing the mountain was an event full of joy, a joy that Macedonians still experience today by organizing cultural and artistic events. We can say that there are numerous sources that partially provide information about their Macedonian holidays, customs, and rituals, but these are not known (Thomas, 2007: 50).

The traditional songs and dances of the Macedonians are mainly related to their history, dominated by pastoral life, always in motion, which required a good knowledge of places, cycles of nature and its laws, dangers of all kinds.

In Romania, they brought with them all these songs that evoke their troubled and dynamic history, but they also developed specific folklore, recently, influenced by European multiculturalism.

In addition to inspiration from their history and culture, Macedonian folk songs, dances and costumes were influenced by other Balkan peoples, Greeks, Turks, Albanians, and to a greater extent Slavs.

The village choir, the seats (claca), and the various holidays occasioned by calendar customs, family life were opportunities for ethnic Macedonians to learn traditional games and songs. Detached from their hearth, they had to adapt to imposed conditions, the Macedonians managed to keep in the collective memory all those artistic manifestations (ballads, own songs - sayings, customs, rituals, and games) that differentiated them from the other ethnic groups around them.

Among the Macedonians, the old song was monophonic, sung by shepherds with the help of a whistle. Later, after the Ottoman conquest, the violin, the flute, the flute, the drum, the kaval, or the gaida were adopted.

Regarding traditional Macedonian songs and games, they are known, sung, and danced by young people, who know part of the traditional repertoire.

Children know traditional songs and games because they learn them in the family, but also in an organized setting, in the program of celebrations organized on various occasions, customs. They are performed at weddings, baptisms, holidays, parties organized on the occasion of the birthday or name day, on the occasion of visits to relatives and friends.

The popular instruments that Macedonians play most often today are the whistle and the horse that we find in the folklore of other peoples in the Balkans.

He drums an instrument with pinched strings of Arab - Persian origin, from the lute family. It can have from 2 to 12 metal strings, pinched with the help of a plastic plectrum. It is a characteristic vocal accompaniment instrument or instrumental being found- to the popular culture of the countries in the Balkans, this tool can be found under the name of gîdulka, gunilka, Lirik. (Cernea and Coatu, 1986: 13).

The whistle, brought from its native places by ethnic Macedonians, is a whistle with seven openings (six on the front and one on the opposite side of the tube). The whistle is semi-transverse, without a stopper, small in size, the fingers being placed at equal distances, covering the six holes placed on the front of the tube. He still plays this type of whistle.

Following the coexistence in the multi ethnic Balkan space, it was natural to have loans in the traditional culture of various ethnic groups. The Macedonians also adopted the horse. It consists of three tubes, the middle tube having seven openings, three up and four down, plus an opening on the opposite side of the pipe. The third tube, at the bottom, has four other holes, grouped two by two.

The historical conditions allowed contact between the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula, united by the fight against the invaders. These connections have left their mark on their folklore. The outlaw song, a species of the old song, represents in the Macedonian folk creation the class struggle of a people against the oppressors.

The dances or choirs ("hour"-in Macedonian) that Macedonians play at various events, are characterized by rhythms frequently alert with interruptions of rhythm or their identification. The most important Macedonian dances are the men's dances, the warrior dances, in which only men play, with spectacular steps - jumping, kneeling, etc. The symbol specific to Macedonians - the Sun - is also found in dance - Macedonian dancers play with their eyes on the sun and their knees facing the sky.

Their traditional dance, specifically, is the choir in an open circle. Usually, at this choir, the whole community was gathered, women and men, old and young, in a very large circle, usually in a meadow, on the edge of the village. Today in Romania there are no big choirs in the meadows of the villages, but the habit of dancing in the choir is still preserved, either at weddings, parties, or during various Macedonian folk dance festivals. The same open circle is kept in which the person in front leads the dance, having in his free hand a white scarf or a talisman, made of beads. Sometimes they dance in a double circle, consisting of two concentric circles, the men on the outside and the women in the inner circle. But in general, the simple, open circle predominates.

Along with the language, Macedonians also identify with traditions but especially with the spirit of unity in family and community.

The family in Romania still preserves its traditional values, although there has been a process of emancipation, democratization, secularization, and liberalization of family life.

From a sociological perspective, the family is defined as a specific form of human community (Otovescu, 2010: 838).

It represents the "cell" of society, it is the unique element of primitive society and the essential element of modern society, gathering around it the social forces. It is a specific form of human community, uniting people through marriage, filiation, or kinship, constituting a community of life, interests, and mutual aid (Otovescu, 2006: 70).

Just as for Macedonians, the family is holy, it is the most important social institution. In their family, the family is somewhat conservatively united, dominated by a code of honor which, if violated, the individual was completely excluded from both the family and the community.

In addition to their language, they are found in their culture and traditions, especially in music and folk costumes, which they proudly display whenever they have the opportunity to spend time together.

Another symbol that Macedonians identify with is the flag, which represents the sun with its rays, the symbol of the Macedonian royal dynasty from which they claim to have originated, to emphasize their connection with Alexander the Great and thus their antiquity among the European peoples who would it gives the moral and historical right to their recognition as national minorities and the support to preserve their language and traditions (Obrebski, 1977).

Currently, the most important role belongs to the family in which the specific ceremonies and rituals take place, on the occasion of the family and calendar holidays. Thus, baptisms, weddings, and funerals are conducted in Macedonian, traditionally safe adapting them - are conditions of society and progress.

In the case of mixed families, the situation is similar to that in Macedonia, as we will see, in the sense that the cultural heritage takes precedence over the husband. This situation is also encountered, however, in the case of marriages between Macedonians and Romanians.

### **3. Conclusions**

The archives show that Macedonians have respect and devotion to their customs. They are proud of their origin, language, and religion, and preserved habits Macedonian, as evidenced by Quintus C. Rufus: "Macedonians should not forget the language and customs of their ancestors. The uniqueness of their language was one of the ways to distinguish themselves from the citizens of other nations" (Quintus, 2008: 43-44 ).

To a certain extent, the Macedonian communities also contributed to the opening of the Romanian space to universal culture. The contribution of Macedonian culture to the Romanian spiritual life must also be understood within the historical and political transformations.

The identity of Macedonians in Romania is given by their mother tongue, their culture, and traditions.

Today, the language and culture of the Macedonians is a Slavic one, it does not deny their common belonging to this Romanian cultural space. The identity of Macedonians is given by their mother tongue, which for Macedonians is the only homeland, their identity card, which reflects their conscience and ethnic identity.

We can say that the story of the Macedonians in Romania is a happy one because they remained a united community, well preserved and culturally active, a fact confirmed by the Association of Macedonians in Romania with a cultural character from the numerous public events, folk ensembles.

With the belief that Europe will be a diverse one with space without borders, Macedonians will integrate into the European family, the future will be very good for Macedonians and their language and culture will last.

The Macedonians kept and promoted the identity of the communities they belonged to and managed to find ways to know and understand the "others", but also of the people they worked in the community.

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