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In Bulgaria, and more precisely in the larger part of the Bulgarian villages, up to the middle of the 20th century folklore dance culture continued to function in a way typical for the traditional agrarian pre-industrial societies.

Depending on when, in what case and with what purpose a particular dance is performed, Bulgarian dances are classified into two basic groups – ritual, which are an inseparable part of the rite, and non-ritual, festive – which are performed on different occasions and are not strictly related to a particular case.

Ritual Dancing

Up to the beginning of the 1940s ritual dancing was still an inseparable part of life in most of the Bulgarian villages. One of its basic functions was to bring knowledge – knowledge about the structure of the world, man's knowledge about himself, knowledge about the society in which he lives – about the order, the laws, the governance and the values in this society, mythological and worldview knowledge. Folklore, in the original usage of the term as “people's knowledge”, was manifested and transmitted through the centuries in different ways. One of these was the movement way, and its manifestations were the movement culture, the movement memory, the dance. While dancing, this essential knowledge is activated, actualized and experienced, knowledge, which was not expressed verbally, nor is cognized or explained, but in a specific way it transmitted cultural values from generation to generation.

After the adoption of Christianity in Bulgaria as an official religion in the 9th century, pre-Christian rituals entered into a complex interrelationship with Christian festivity, which led to the formation of a specific folklore Christian festive calendar. Today in the festive system intertwined are some crucial points in man's lifetime, in the agrarian and the stock-

breeding calendar year, in the change of seasons and in the course of the planets. Thus rites mark the points of transition at the social, at the natural and at the cosmic level. The main ritual dances are concentrated precisely in the rites, related to a transition. In the Eastern Orthodox calendar of the Bulgarians these are *Christmas* (25 December), when the young boy passes into the group of the bachelors ready to get married, *St. Lazarus* (one week before the Orthodox Easter), when the little girl becomes a maid expecting to get married, and the *wedding*, which traditionally used to take place in the winter. It is around these that many of the pre-Christian ancient rites are re-structured, and ritual cycles are formed with the feasts mentioned as culminations. Therefore when we speak of initiation rites in folklore culture we should have in mind the new synthesis that have transformed and have given new meaning to the archaic initiation.

A maid could not get married without having learned St. Lazar's (St. Lazarus') Day dances in the period of the Lent and without having presented herself as a maid on St. Lazar's Day. A bachelor could not start dancing at the *horo* (a collective dance in a chain or a circle) and could not woo maids if he has not performed the Christmas rite. A wedding would not be a wedding without a special *horo* or a *rachenitsa* (a type of dance in the 7/16 measure, usually performed by many people but separately, i.e., they do not hold by the hands, unlike in the *horo*, which is a chain dance) being played at every important moment of the rite – from the preparation of the bride and the groom to the wedding night, and then *na povratki* (on the visit to the bride's parents) when is brought *blaga rakiya* (sweet brandy, brandy with honey – a sign that the bride is a virgin). Today few people know that the *rachenitsa* dance, emblematic for the Bulgarians, is a ritual wedding dance.

Along with the important transitions in the individual's life, there are many rites in the festive calendar that are performed through dances. The feasts in the Eastern Orthodox calendar, in which ritual dancing can be observed are over 20.

During the night before Christmas (25 December), as already pointed out, a ritual dance of the bachelors is performed. For Eastern Bulgaria this is a Christmas *buenek*. It is primarily a

dance “on the way” that repeats the idea of the mythical trip to the Lower World, about which the Christmas songs and the Christmas blessings retell. In Mid Western Bulgaria, while visiting the houses, the group performing Christmas songs is accompanied by the dance of a Grandfather and a Grandmother (*Starets* and *Baba*) – disguised men who represent a marriage couple. The dance is accompanied by erotic gestures.

On St. Basil’s Day (1 January) in a big part of the territory of Bulgaria, mainly in Mid Western and Mid Northern Bulgaria, ritual maid’s *horo* dances accompanied by singing are played, connected with foretelling the future. In Western Bulgaria, the songs, the folk dances and the rite are called *na Vasiliya* (on Vasil/Basil), and in Northern Bulgaria the rite is called *Laduvane*, and the folk dance *na Lada*. The folk dance is played in the evening before St. Basil’s Day, while bringing together the bunches of flowers with rings or other signs, bunches that must spend the night under the stars; dance is played also in the morning of the very day before the incantation. On the same day in Western Bulgaria bachelors’ and men’s masquerade dances are played. In some villages these dances are performed all through the week until St. Ivan’s (St. John’s) Day. The first type of the masquerade dances are “on the way”. These are special steps and hops with which the masked people go around the village. The other type of dance is acting scenes – representation of a wedding, of stealing the bride, etc. In the same period in Southwestern Bulgaria along with the masked *stanchinari* the ritual men’s group of *rusalii* performs their dances. The dance belongs to the type of men’s sabre dances popular in Europe. It is performed at the accompaniment of *zurnas* (wind instruments with a double reed plate of the oboe type) and a *tăpan* (drum).

On St. Jordan’s Day (Epiphany), *Voditsi* (6 January) in the village of Dobarsko, Razlog region, preserved are ancient types of *horo* dances, played while singing, by a ritual group of maids called *Vodicharki* who visit the village houses.

On St. Ivan’s Day (7 January) the winter masquerade dances are brought to an end. In the region of Pleven, Northern Bulgaria, during the night men’s ritual groups go round the

houses. These are called *Ivan's brides* and perform the *sitna vlashka* (tiny-step Wallachian) dance. In Eastern Bulgaria the *aratlitsi* – those who have sworn brotherhood, lead the festive *horo*. The *pobratimi* (sworn brothers) are distinguished from the rest by special bunches of flowers. During the brotherhood swearing, *Cher Piper* (Black Pepper) is danced, as are other dances of an erotic nature. On St. Ivan's Day the bachelors' initiation rituals come to an end. In Eastern Bulgaria the lads who performed the Christmas rite go to the yard of their leader, called *stanenik*, and play *the Christmas buenek* for the last time.

Babinden (Granny-Midwives' Day, 8 January) is a special women's feast. Celebrated is the *baba* (lit. "grandmother", but in Bulgarian folklore also meaning an old woman helping women in birth giving, a midwife), who helps in the delivery of the babies. The only man admitted to the women's festivity on that day used to be the bagpipe player, with his eyes blinded at that. On this day a lot of dances are performed. During the ritual table treat in the granny's home, dances are played individually such as *rachenitsa* and *peshachka*. In the afternoon from the granny's home to the village square a chain *horo* is played, led by the granny. In the village square *horo* dances are played for hours and wine is drunk. The dance is accompanied by erotic gestures and jokes. Women parody the manner of men's wedding dances, such as *kuskumber*, *cher piper* (black pepper), etc.

From St. Ivan's Day to Strict Shrovetide in the region of Haskovo in the neighborhoods are played *horo* dances, called *evening* and *vampires' ones* or *at the fire*, *at the playing of kaval* (a type of transverse flute), etc. On these dances grandmothers accompany the maids with a torch and the bachelors are allowed more liberal contacts in the dark. It was from these *horo* dances that bachelors used to steal maids for wives.

On Trifon Zarezan's (St. Trifon's) Day (1 February) after the ritual trimming of the Vines, men play *horo* dances led by the Trifon tsar.

In the period around Strict Shrovetide spring men's masquerade dances are played in Eastern Bulgaria – *dzhamali*,

dervishi, *kukove*, *kukeri* (different names for men's masquerade groups), etc. On Shrovetide in the region of Haskovo maids' *horo* dances are played while singing for calling the spring on the hill slopes outside the villages. Throughout Bulgaria a big Shrovetide *horo* is danced around a fire, which afterwards is jumped over. Men must emphatically stamp their feet, squat and jump. Anyone who is healthy enough must join this *horo*, so that hemp, potatoes, cotton, etc. should grow well. The dancing goes on all through the night, because the period of the Long Lent follows, when people will have to abstain from dancing, playing and festivities in general.

This is the period devoted to maids' initiation dances, related to the preparation of their transition. Preserved in Eastern Bulgaria are cycles of different maids' dances, called *buenek*, *filek*, *vazhichki*. These are not regarded as *horo* dances. *Buenek* is another type of chain dance, which is only ritual. Most characteristic of its form is that it winds its way like a snake. In these cycles some games are also played such as *Kralyo portalyo*, *Kotka i mishka* (A Cat and a Mouse), *Orel i kvachka* (An Eagle and a Brood-Hen), *Irumenche pozlatenche* and many others.

During the Long Lent in Eastern Bulgaria closed *horo* in a circle is not played. A special type of chain dance is performed that is not thought of as a *horo* and is not called a *horo*. The most popular name for this type of dance is *Buenets*. Maids play in an open chain, which is closed as late as Easter "when the dragon bites its tail" (and when the maids are ready for marriage). *Buenets* is a basic element of spring maids' ritualism. The dance of the *Buenets* type has many names: *Ludata* (The Mad One) *Tichanitsata* (The Running One), *Na byagane* (On the Run), *Boyan*, *Vazhenitsa*, *Luda Lazara* (Mad Lazara), *Kriva Lazara* (Crooked Lazara), *Krivo horo* (Crooked *horo*), *Karapilek* (a black *horo* or a black plait).

In Bulgarian folkloristics *Buenets* is used as a type designation for a group of similar dances, united by a common two-fold (two-beat) musical pulsation, often with a marked iambic step. This is a chain dance, as can also be seen from its names, in which people holding hands in a long chain make

ordinary steps, or limp, or run with a fast step. This is a type of dance known in the whole of Europe under the general name *farandole*, usually played around carnivals. There is evidence about such type of dances from as early as antiquity. The dance chain winds its way and draws figures on the ground like a snake – it folds, strains, winds itself in a coil and again relaxes, pulsating.

On St. Todor's (St. Theodore's) Day, the Saturday after Strict Shrovetide, in Western Bulgaria women's ritual *horo* dances are played while singing. These are for the young wives, who got married the previous year, and for their mothers-in-law. They dance around ritual loaves of bread that are handed out on that day.

On St. Lazar's Day, the ritual groups of maids perform their ritual dances while going round the houses. In Eastern Bulgaria these are variants of the mentioned above *buenek* dance. We must add that along with the chain-type snake-like *buenek*, the variants of which differ according to the degree of accentuating the basic step, also observed is the so-called one-by-one *buenek*, in which the group sings and only two girls dance. In Western Bulgaria, with a different song and a different dance step, a similar configuration is observed. Two maids, called *shetachki* (walking about girls), perform a dance called *shetane* (walking about).

On Palm Sunday the maids, having already performed St. Lazar's Day ritual, gather beside a river and choose a godmother, and in separate places in Southeastern Bulgaria – a godfather. The godmother or the godfather, playing *buenek* on the way, takes the maids to her/his home. There they are given a dinner and continue to dance. On Easter they gather again in the godmother's home, have a treat, play *horo* dances and then go to the village square. There, with commemorating songs for the maids and the bachelors who died during the year and slow *horo* dances in circle, they open the great Easter festive *horo*. This is the first show in front of the whole village for the new generation of maids who obtained the right to get married. In Southwestern Bulgaria, with the maids' dances *Kralyo Portalyo*, *Drelyo* and *Irumenche* they "close Easter", i.e., they put an end to the three-day Easter

horo dances. Again in Southwestern Bulgaria, men's masquerade dances are performed on the Easter *horo*.

On the Easter or the St. George's Day *horo* with a special rite start to dance with the others the young wives – those who got married the previous winter.

On St. Jeremiah's Day (1 May) in Western Bulgaria the unique women's rite *making podnitsi* (flat earthen baking dishes) is preserved. Women hold hands in a circle and, with a song and a *horo*, trample the soil, out of which the *podnitsi* are made.

In May and June, if there is a drought, in the whole of Bulgaria *Peperuda* (lit. Butterfly) or *Vay Dodola* is played. This ritual dance, a prayer for rain, is performed by a younger girl. The rest of the girls in the group who sing are maids who have already performed St. Lazar's Day ritual. In Eastern Bulgaria sometimes the whole group plays a chain dance – a type of *buenek*. The *Peperuda* girl goes round the yards of the houses, where every housewife pours water on her.

On St. George's Day (6 May) women play slow *horo* dances while singing around the laid on the ground table with loaves of bread and with St. George's sacrificial lambs. In Thrace the first *horo* dance on St. George's Day is led by a pregnant woman or by a breast-feeding mother with a green twig in her hand. In the region of Haskovo bachelors dance with children up to the age of one year.

On the Day of Sts. Constantine and Elena (21 May) in South-eastern Bulgaria *nestinary* dances (on glowing embers) are performed. Ritual *horo* dances are performed also at the springs with healing water, called *ayazmo*. During the processions with icons from the temple to the *ayazmo* and later in the evening to the glowing embers *rachenitsa on the way* is played.

On Ascension Day in Western Bulgaria women play slow ritual *horo* dances. In Southwestern Bulgaria they hold by each other's aprons, a technique which is unusual for other regions. During the *horo* they stop and cross themselves at the four directions of the world.

From Pentecost/Whitsunday (50 days after Easter) during the whole of the Midsummer Week in Northern Bulgaria *kalushari* are playing. *Kalushari* dances are performed only by men. Their ritual group observes a number of rules and taboos in this period. One of the aims of their dances is to heal from the *Rusalyas'* disease, which is believed to be caused by *Rusalyas* (evil supernatural creatures).

On Midsummer Day (24 June) in Eastern Bulgaria the maids perform *Enyova bulya* (Enyo's Bride). This is a young girl who is carried by the maids on their shoulders throughout the day. With ritual *horo* dances and the *Enyova bulya* on their shoulders, they go about the cultivated territory of the village and play around water springs and wells. When they enter the village again, they stop and dance at every crossroad. Meanwhile every housewife takes outside the herbs picked early in the same morning and places them on the ground, so that the *horo* of bare-footed maids passes over them. It is believed that in this way the herbs increase their healing powers.

In the summer, at the end of the harvest, women play ritual harvest *horo* dances while singing around the last sheaf, called *brada* (beard).

At the end of autumn and in winter weddings start and each lasts a week. The maids' ritual group plays the main role in the ritual dancing, especially in the preparatory part of the wedding. They perform special ritual *horo* dances while singing around the flag, the bunches of flowers, the breads, while sieving the flour, putting the bride's veil, shaving the bridegroom, etc. The ritual dances *horo* or *rachenitsa* include bachelors and the playing of a bagpipe while crushing the groats or the *kishkek* (pounded wheat), and in some places also while shaving the bridegroom and while breaking the *medenik* (wedding honey bread).

Another group of ritual wedding dances are played on the road when the wedding procession is on its way to take the bride and bring her to the church and then to the bridegroom's home. All people may dance along the way, but the maids' group and the musicians are placed at the head of the procession. In the regions of Razgrad and Bourgas maids

share this role with the bachelors' group or relinquish it to them altogether. On the way *rachenitsa* dances are played, either individually or in a chain, also a wedding *buenek* or *danets* "on the way", etc.

Another group of wedding dances are performed individually and in the form of a competition in front of the godfather's table – such as *rachenitsa*, *peshachka* (on foot), *kasamska*, etc.

During the connubial night only married people dance. Men play ritual wedding dances such as *Cher piper* (Black Pepper), *Zaeshkata* (The Hare's Way), *Njamo horo* (Dumb *Horo*). After the connubial night, the bridegroom's mother leads a *horo* or starts a *rachenitsa* with the bride's *chemise*. During the night the *horo* dances continue round a fire in the yard with many jokes and teasing. In the morning the wedding guests go to visit the bride's parents with *blaga rakiya* (sweet brandy, brandy with honey – a sign that the bride is a virgin) and dancing *rachenitsa*.

There are **typical** ritual dances that are spread throughout Bulgaria. A most illustrative example in this respect is St. Lazar's Day dances. But these are not uniform in all places. Leaving aside the basic difference between the eastern and the western type of Lazar's dance, it should be emphasized that almost every village has its own unique variant of a Lazar's dance – these being equivalent from an evaluative point of view. Along with this, there are also, of course, **unique** practices that are not common in all places. Such are the dances with which the clay is kneaded to make *podnitsi* on St. Jeremiah's Day, the *horo* with a *rusalska nevesta* (a ritual puppet), the dance of the *kalushari*, common mainly among the Wallachian population, the *rusalii* in Southwestern Bulgaria, *nestinary* dances in Strandzha, etc.

In folklore culture itself **men's and women's ritual dances** are differentiated. Their study reveals that women's ritual dances are prevailing – both as a variety and a multitude of manifestations, and as a richness of meanings and as cultural strata.

In the first half of the 20th century (up to the middle of the 1940s) the ritual dance still functions in its original milieu, and in places up to the 1960s and the 1970s it still exists as performance. In other words, those who played ritual dances in their youth can still show them, reproduce them and transmit them in their original style, although in a changed circumstances. What we call the **style** of a performance represents a no lesser value or, more precisely, it is an important component in the determination of the value of the performance, because, along with the form it also carries and structures the skill for building up a movement behavior – something that is no less important than the other types of a person's training. It is common knowledge that the different peoples can be identified according to their movement behavior, gait, gesture, position of the body in different poses, way of sitting, etc.

The ritual dance is usually a simple re-iterating dancing formula. This movement formula is an element of the ritual complex and does not exist independently of the music and the ritual action. This complexity in the performance of the ritual dance is the object of special attention in this project.

The re-iteration and the monotonousness of the movement behavior take the performers outside everyday life – both as a movement behavior and as a psycho-mental attitude. Behind the external simplicity of the ritual dance a complex world is hidden, messages from the ancient times and from the following cultural epochs, that have come to us not in material form but in the living matter of the dance, inherited from generation to generation.

The ritual dance did not accompany the revelry on the occasion of a particular event; it used to be part of the very event. Without it the event would not be valid. The dance has the function to sanctify and change personal life, nature and the universe.

In most European countries this relatedness between dance and life is long-forgotten. The folk dance long ago has been turned into a kind of amusement, into a means of communication and pastime, rather than being a vitally important element of culture. Even where separate ritual dances are

preserved, their relation to significant life moments is no more topical. That is why it is extremely important to keep and master not only the performance of a particular dance, which is valuable in itself, but also the knowledge and the awareness of the original purpose of the dance, of the mechanisms for regulation and for solving particular issues featured by it.

After a discontinuation, shorter or longer in the different villages and regions, the ritual dance became the object of a folklore revival, a revival caused by the *Festivals for Folk Art* movement, developed nation-widely since 1965, when the first *National Festival for Folk Art* in Koprivshtitsa was held.

Festive Dancing

The festive *horo* dance is another characteristic phenomenon in the traditional dance culture of the Bulgarians. Along with ritual dances, on every significant calendar feast from the Eastern Orthodox calendar, as well as on every Sunday *horo* is played – a large festive *horo* in the middle of the village, in the square. There are two types of dramaturgy of a festive *horo*. First, related to the calendar feast and devoted to the day, whereby the ritual group of maids “makes an opening” with ritual *horo* dances while singing (for example at Easter, on St. George’s Day, etc.), and after that the dances from the village local repertoire are played for hours. Second, the festive *horo* dances, when only the local repertoire of non-ritual dances is performed. The second type of dramaturgy is characteristic of the festive *horo* dances connected with a calendar feast, also of the dances performed every Sunday.

The village *horo* in the square is performed regularly until the middle of the 1940s. The model of the festive *horo* from the first half of the 20th century is characterized by the dramaturgy of the Sunday *horo* type. *Horo* is played every Sunday and on every big calendar feast, but it is not directly related to a ritual aim. It presents a more abstract form of communication with the world of the sacred, a later stage in the development of the ideology of the dance. The Sunday *horo* is a main pre-marital dancing situation. By a *horo* not only the

separate folk dance is meant in this case but the whole event, which features its own social communicative and spiritual dimensions.

Judging from the corresponding word collocations in Bulgarian, *horo* is a type of dance – “*to play horo*”; *horo* is a social event – “*to go to the horo*”; *horo* is a place for playing – synonyms of the word *horo* in Bulgarian are words like *horishte* (*horo* ground), *megdan* (village square), *igralishte* (playing ground).

The *horo* is a living organism, too. *Horo* in Bulgarian traditional culture is thought of as one body, not as a mechanical assembly of players. Bulgarians say “the *horo* is dancing” and not “the people are dancing”. The chain of the *horo* is thought of as a living body with a head and a tail – the body of a snake. The open *horo* chain is **led**. In Bulgarian people call its front the forehead (the head) of the *horo*, and its end is called a tail. The symbolism is related not simply to the similitude of the form that the dance chain draws and the snake, but also to an understanding, deeply embedded in the people’s visions, which has led to the emergence of phrases (in Bulgarian) like “winds like a snake”, “the *horo* winds itself, coils the whole square”, “the *horo* winds itself into 9 folds” etc.

In Bulgarian traditional culture **the *horo*** is also the most common dance form. This is a chain of a group of players holding hands, which moves in an open or closed circle. The open chain winds its way and forms different figures – a circle, a snail, a snake, an open half-arch with two ends coiling into a snail, etc. The players hold their hands or each other’s belts. The play is concentrated mainly in the legs. Hundreds of types of *horo* dances exist with various steps. The variety is increased through their variants and through the different measures – regular and irregular (asymmetrical), which the Bulgarian musical and dance folklore is rich with. Every village developed its own local repertoire of *horo* and other dances, and these reach a considerable number at certain places.

Most *horo* dances are played to the right, but there are some to the left and some to the both sides. The left ones are

mainly related to rituals and to the notion of the world beyond. The great festive Easter and St. George's Day *horo* dances begin with women's left *horo*. Festive left *horo* dances, however, can also be observed.

The festive *horo*, although freed from a concrete ritual purpose, is subjected to many rules and norms that create a specific etiquette of communication. *Horo* dances while singing ("on a song") are usually women's, in a closed circle. The Sunday and the festive dances used to start with them. When the musicians come and start playing, men, too, join the *horo*. The most common instruments accompanying the *horo* are a bagpipe and a *tăpan* or *kaval*. Only men can lead the great festive *horo*. In many places in the first half of 20th century, men played at the beginning of the *horo* and women in its second half. They used to hold each other through a piece of cloth so that they should not have any immediate contact. In the Shopp and the Srednogorie region and in some places in Thrace, men used to play at the beginning and at the end of the *horo* chain, and women danced in the middle. In Northwestern Bulgaria at the earliest men and women begin to dance mixed in the *horo* chain, but the rule remains that bachelors could not separate two maids who are friends.

The meaning of the *horo* as a dance is contained in the whole communicative situation of the *horo* as an event, which, due to the specificity of folklore culture, comprises, in its turn, the whole social, historical and cultural experience of the community.

Children's Games

Children's games are regarded as a part of traditional movement culture. Many of these games include a song and a dance. A good example is *Kralyo Portalyo*. This game is known in different variants and under different names throughout Europe. But in contrast to the Czech Republic, the Ukraine, etc., where it is predominantly a boys' game, in Bulgaria it is more popular as a girls' game.

Depending on the participants the children's games are classified into three types: first, only for girls, second, only

for boys, and third, mixed games. Ordered in this way the games have their own characteristics and specificities. Many girls' games are accompanied by a song and a dance – usually holding hands in chains or in a circle. This is because most of the girls' games are “borrowed” from the maids' initiation rites, which comprise a song and a dance. In principle, singing with a dance in Bulgarian culture is a women's activity, and this can also be seen in children's games as a form of training. Fortunately, in Bulgaria there are two regions in which initiation maids' games are still remembered and they show and prove the connection.

The boy's games (such as *chelik* ‘tip-cat’, *preskochi magare* ‘jump over the donkey’, *svinka* ‘female pig’, *buz-z-z* ‘buzz’, *gonenitsa* ‘tag’, *sechi glava* ‘cut a head’, *kutsanitsa* ‘limping’, etc.) train men's skills such as running, wrestling, jumping, throwing, etc. An important feature in them is the competitive principle.

Mixed games are less frequent. Usually boys take part in girls' games or in games that are inherited in the children's repertoire from ancient rituals, as is the case for instance with *Kralyo Portalyo*, *Kotka goni mishka* (A Cat is Chasing a Mouse), *Orel i kvachka* (An Eagle and a Brood-Hen), etc. They are based on the performance of motifs like grabbing, catching, choosing, etc. of a girl by a boy. In other words, what is acted out is the initiation enumeration for everyone to be chosen, hit, “married”.



The folk dance, in contrast to folk music, is more conservative in its development. The impulses for development during the Bulgarian National Revival period, of course, reflect in the dance culture, but they to a much lower degree lead to a change in the dance forms themselves. The ritual dance adopts least innovations. The festive *horo* includes, along with the local repertoire, new dances, popular for the whole country. Dance evening- and day-time parties emerge where people play dances in couples – waltz, tango, rumba, foxtrot, etc., popular for the whole of Europe. These do not oust playing the *horo* and are performed in individual cases. In some places the

influence of European dances in couples leads to a curious blending of the two rather different dance traditions. This is the so called *rachenitsa* a la waltz, performed in couples in the form of a waltz but with *rachenitsa* steps.

During the time of communism after 1944, dance traditions change abruptly. Ritual dancing related to the Christian feasts does not conform to the new official atheistic view of the world. Rituals associated with the agrarian calendar are no more actual in the system of co-operative farming. On the other hand, a special state care is taken for the preservation of folklore within the movement for amateur art. Thus the discontinued traditions start to get restored around the 1960s – but in amateur groups at the so called *chitalishta* (culture centers, lit. “reading-houses/reading rooms”)*. These groups performed dances and rites on the stages during the festivals for folk art.



In the preparation of the list of activities associated with dancing, activities, which are valued and deserve special care, the specific for Bulgaria situation is taken into account as to the degree of development, of preservation and of endangerment of folklore dance culture.

The performance of ritual dances is restricted. Data from archives, field work and different investigations certify that the cases in which ritual dances are performed up to the middle of the 20th century are much more numerous than those recorded today and included in the lists of the separate regions. The cards reflect the typical and the common, rather than the unique one. It is quite natural that in the employment of a statistical approach, characteristic for a questionnaire card, a picture of the typical should be obtained. But the typical, in its turn, has proved its value through its stability

* A *chitalishte* is a unique Bulgarian institution of culture, still in existence, that dates back to the National Revival period. It is usually a relatively small building in which there is a public library, a reading room, a small hall for lectures and for theater and other performances. A *chitalishte* may also house different social clubs, clubs for music, art, dancing, etc. (Translator’s note)

and through the ability to find its place in contemporary culture.

In the regional lists are presented the performances of non-ritual, festive *horo* dances characteristic of each administrative region (according to the nowadays's division). It should be pointed out that most often the columns with the sample names of the more popular dances are filled in. Small is the percentage of the settlements in which the names of the *horo* dances are added in the columns left empty for the purpose. In spite of this, many of the dances' names in the lists are given by the settlements themselves, which indicates that at the moment they are in their active repertoire.

A special column in the questionnaire cards is aimed at reflecting the contemporary co-relation between music and dance.

In the so-called classical traditional Bulgarian culture, **singing on a *horo* dance** is a women's activity. In most cases these are ritual dances in which men do not take part. In some regions (in Thrace for instance) singing on a *horo* is more developed and preserved, whereas in Northwestern Bulgaria even **traditional instruments** gave way to **brass bands**. Traditional instruments that accompanied the *horo* dance are mainly bagpipe (with or without *tăpan*), *kaval*, *gadulka*, *duduk*, etc.

The data in the questionnaire cards show that these "classic" rules are to a large degree forgotten and are not considered important. **The accordion**, which is not a traditional Bulgarian instrument, established itself as the most common accompaniment to the *horo* dances. It is like that because the practice of the amateur groups in the years included an accordionist accompanying their training. It is becoming more and more difficult to find a local performer of a traditional instrument who knows how to play the *horo* dance music and is trained in the traditional fashion. Most graduates of the secondary and the high schools for traditional instruments play in chamber formations and also as an accompaniment to singers. Concert performance cannot be used for dancing. Especially valuable are the performances of folk dances in the settlements in which there are still traditional musicians but,

unfortunately, the young people lack the stimulus to learn from them. **The synthesizer** is another instrument becoming gradually popular, along with the accordion, making its way onto the stages of the festivals held under the label of “authentic folklore”. It is quite clear that many groups at the culture centers have no financial means to hire a musician, which leads to the use of a **cassette-recorder**. What is curious is that in quite many questionnaire cards the cassette-recorder is diligently pointed out as an accompaniment to the dances and it is not clear, of course, whether at least the recording in question is of local music.

Many ritual maids’ dances are given in the questionnaire cards as children’s. Today probably only certain investigators and some older people still remember and know that they have their ritual variant.

In the column “other dances” in the questionnaire cards it was expected that waltz, foxtrot and other similar dances would be mentioned, as they were popular both in the towns and in the villages of Bulgaria at the beginning of the 20th century. But these appeared in several cards only. Their small number in the questionnaire cards, as well as the fact that they are not a living tradition today, restrained us from including them in the lists at this stage. For the time being they are not the object of interest for revival. In Bulgaria their performance is limited to the sport dance clubs.

The column “other dances” provoked rather the including of some authors’ choreographies performed by local amateur groups. In other words, although they were not intended in the questionnaire card, they found some expression in the final results as part of the contemporary dance culture which goes under the label of “folklore”. Being a form of professional art, these also remain outside the lists.

Until the 1990s the dance culture of the ethnic and the religious communities has not been purposefully investigated and collected by folklorists. In most cases the people filling in the questionnaire cards do not distinguish between *kyuchek* (belly dance) as a ritual dance and the modern *kyuchek* learned either from Indian video-cassettes or from Turkish television shows. It is hard and important, however, to make

a distinction between the original dances, which are the object of attention in this program, and the modern trends. The scanty presence of the specific ethnic dance activities in the list reflects their scanty presence in the questionnaire cards. This does not mean, however, that they cannot be added in the lists in the future, for the lists are open. Probably the lack of active research and the lack of tradition in organizing festivals, which basically maintain vital the traditional dances of the Bulgarians, is reflected in that picture. The good presence in the questionnaire cards of Wallachian dance culture should be mentioned here, which, in my view is due to the same reasons. Less adequately reflected in the questionnaire cards is Turkish dance culture. This section should be further developed and structured.

In the preparing of the list, the principle of maximum conforming to the data in the questionnaire cards is followed. In a limited number of cases are added certain dances, about which it is known that are still performed but have been omitted for technical reasons. Although incomplete in some cases, although the regions are not fully covered, the results to a large degree reflect the real state of the living tradition and of the tradition that is still remembered and could be restored – either in the life of the community, or as an element of the movement for a revival of folklore with its most typical form of manifestation in our time – the fairs and the festivals.

It must be pointed out that a considerable part of the dances found their “second life” outside Bulgaria’s borders. Today there are thousands of Internet sites about clubs and courses on Bulgarian folk dances. The folk dance at the border between the 20th and the 21st century ceased to be a “heritage” of the separate nations and turned into a cultural achievement of the world.

In view of the scope of the folk dance today, these lists do not exhaust the richness of the activities that deserve to be investigated, documented, archived and supported in order to maintain their vitality or to re-introduce them in the cultural life of contemporary people.