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# **Dance Tradition of the Macedonian Diaspora in Serbia (Following the Research of Ethnochoreologist Mihailo Dimovski in Glogonj and Jabuka)**

The Macedonian minority in Serbia has always attracted great attention from Macedonian researchers, especially during the 70's and 80's of the 20th century. The interest, except in historical, philological and cultural terms, was also present regarding the dance tradition. This text will deal with the transfer, nurturing and maintenance of the dance tradition among the Macedonians in Glogonj and Jabuka, according to examples from the ethnochoreologist Mihailo Dimovski's research. He had taken an interest in Macedonian minority in 1973, whereupon he performed an extensive ethnochoreological research and collected extensive material. His records, which are in the Archive of the Institute of Folklore "Marco Cepenkov" – Skopje, have not been completely published yet. Thus, the text will be an attempt to present his findings regarding the dance tradition of the Macedonian diaspora in the said period.

*Key words:* folk dances, Macedonian minority, ethnochoreological research, archive materials

## **Плесна традиција македонске дијаспоре у Србији (по примерима истраживања етнокорееолога Михаила Димовског у Глогоњу и Јабуци)**

Македонска мањина у Србији је одувек привлачила велику пажњу македонских истраживача, а нарочито током седамдесетих и осамдесетих година XX века. Интересовање, поред оног за историјски, културни, филолошки и етнолошки план, било је присутно и у погледу плесне традиције. У овом чланку ћемо се фокусирати на пренос, чување и одржавање играчке традиције Македонаца у Глогоњу и Јабуци, на примерима истраживања етнокорееолога Михаила Димовског. Димовски се бавио македонском мањином 1973. године, када је сакупио обиман теренски материјал. Његови записи налазе се у архиви Института за фолклор „Марко Цепенков“ – Скопље, а још увек нису објављени у целости. Дакле, текст је покушај да се покаже његово знање плесне традиције македонске дијаспоре у Србији у наведеном периоду.

*Кључне речи:* народни плесови, македонски емигранти, етнокорееолошка истраживања, архивски материјали

Ethnologist Aneta Svetieva, regarding the continuous migrations on the Balkan Peninsula in general, states: “The Balkan is a space where there are intensive movements of people in various directions, mass movements, movements in groups or as individuals, in military establishments, during economic crisis, and also, during relatively peaceful periods. The movement and relocation of people can be a source of data in various fields of folk culture” (Svetieva 200, 25). In numerous fields of folk culture, dance tradition represents an important segment of the spiritual culture of one nation, in this case, the dance tradition of Macedonian population in Jabuka and Glogonj in the past. During the great migrations of people from one part to another, different deviations in the field of tangible and intangible culture appear. Having contact with the new culture, the migrants introduce new elements into their culture and way of life, but do not discard easily the customs and habits inherited and gained from their ancestors (Dimovski 1978, 264). Despite the fact that they were forced to leave their homeland, they have never neglected their own tradition, customs, and folk dances. This is evident in the ethnochoreologist Dimoski’s archive records, which shall be discussed further in the text. First and foremost, we shall briefly discuss the migration of Macedonian people to Serbia.

## Migration of Macedonians in Serbia

Admittedly, one year after World War II ended, in 1946, the first Macedonian colonists settled in Serbia, more precisely in Vojvodina, South Banat, during which they inhabited the deserted properties of the Germans<sup>1</sup>. This was a result of the new political intention in this area, effectuation of land reform through planned colonization of many parts of Yugoslavia, but mostly the territory of Autonomous Vojvodina<sup>2</sup> (Sokolovska 2006, 226). On 23.8.1946, the National Assembly of Yugoslavia passed the Law on Agricultural Reform and Colonization, which regulated the federal and internal colonization of the population, meaning movement of population from one republic to another, as well as the movement of population within the same republic (Lekić 1997, 12). The colonists were usually from several regions, especially from the passive areas of Macedonia, more precisely from the northeast and southwestern part. We use one quote from a newspaper for this planned settlement from *Utrinski vesnik* (16.10.2006), “Macedonian colonists in Vojvodina, people with two homelands”:

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<sup>1</sup> Three villages in the Panchevo region – Jabuka, Glogonj and Kacharevo have been abandoned when the members of the German minority left. Jabuka has been recently populated with Macedonian colonists, while in Glogonj, the Romanian natives, who consist one quarter of population, stayed. In that village on Tamish, mainly Macedonians and villagers from the neighboring area of the Vranje region were colonized, while in Kacharevo, besides Macedonian majority, villagers from various Serbian regions migrated. In the Vrshac region, Macedonians represent minority, colonized in seven villages near the Romanian border – Plandishte, Gudurica, Velika Sredishta, Velika Greda, Hajduchici, Star Lec and Duzina (Petrovic, 2000, 35).

<sup>2</sup> About Macedonian colonists in Vojvodina see: (Petrovic, 2000).

“The planned settlement was executed upon completion of military governance; majority was performed from September 1946 to August 1947. According to an established quota at that time, 2000 families with 12.000 individuals from Macedonia should have migrated, but more came. There is no exact data for how many people from Macedonia actually migrated to Vojvodina. According to one data, the settlers had come from 209 settlements in Macedonia. Five hundred families arrived in the village Jabuka. In the villages around Vršac, like Gudurica, Veliko Sredishte and Plandishte, 140 families arrived with 1.085 Macedonian people. It is presumed that there were about 2.000 families and over 11.000 members of those families from Kriva Palanka, Makedonski Brod, Kumanovo, Struga, Veles, Kavadarci.”

Furthermore, we shall mention several important data regarding this great migration of Macedonian population. According to immediate data, in seven villages from the Vrško region, 353 families with 2.100 individuals were colonized until 1956. Simultaneously, in the Panchevo region, more similar families with several thousand Macedonian colonists were settled. However, the documents containing data about the colonized inhabitants from Macedonia do not present a whole picture of the demographic movement. Almost quarter of the people in the first wave of colonists returned to Macedonia. On the other hand, there are numerous individual migrations, often initiated through family ties, in the villages of South Banat, where there is fertile land which has been inexpensive for a long period of time. That important process of individual migration continues until the 80's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over time, the Macedonians have migrated to town settlement, which renders the ability to follow the Macedonian colonists<sup>3</sup> movement more difficult. In the initial years, integration with the members of other national groups was minimal, due to the significant sociological differences, but later they started the assimilation with other groups, they changed their surnames, they changed the usage of their language, and generally they changed their way of life (Trifunovski, 1958, 20-23).

## **The research expedition of Mihailo Dimovski**

The research expedition, which was sent by the Institute of Folklore, intended to research the Macedonian's folk dance, vocal and instrumental tradition in the villages of Glogonj and Jabuka. Besides ethnochoreologists Mihailo Dimovski, part of the expedition was also the ethnomusicologist Gjorgji Gjorgiev. Both of them stayed in both villages in the period from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> April 1973, in which time they interviewed a total of 22 individuals, nineteen of them from the village Jabuka, and

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<sup>3</sup> The processes of colonization did not only change the demographic structure, they influenced the deeper cultural levels. Those processes contributed to cultural blending in which some individuals did not manage to succeed and adapt to the new context, therefore they usually returned to the places they came from (Rašić, 2017, 191).

only three from the village Glogonj. The field material was recorded on a tape recorder, and the text was transcribed on 76 pages.<sup>4</sup>

Both villages, Jabuka and Glogonj, are situated about 30 kilometers north from the town Panchevo,<sup>5</sup> and the local inhabitants' structure in Jabuka was 85% Macedonians, while in Glogonj, 65% of the population was Macedonian. The others were Romanians, and in less numbers Serbs and Croatians. For the majority of population, the main occupation is agriculture, but there were a significant number of people who worked in Panchevo and Belgrade (Gjorgiev 1978, 257). Most migrants in these two villages, according to Dimoski's research, were from Poreche and Kriva Palanka region, and less were from Veles, Struga, Ohrid, Kichevo, Krushevo, Resen, Bitola and Prilep regions (Dimovski 1978, 264). Overall, there were migrants from about 40 municipalities from Macedonia, particularly from the less developed regions.

Regarding the opportunities for dancing in the villages Jabuka and Glogonj, we discovered that the majority of the dancing was mostly included in the mass celebrations, weddings, baptisms and birthdays. Apart from these opportunities, according to Gjorgiev, there was dancing during public holidays, for Jabuka – Ilinden, and for Glogonj – Fourth of October (Gjorgiev 1978, 259). These data about the dancing opportunities refer to the period when they both did their researches, the beginning of the 70's in the last century. At that time, it was an actual situation in the field. Regarding the gatherings on the occasion of holidays like Christmas, Easter, Gjurgovden, and the national holidays 1<sup>st</sup> May, 26<sup>th</sup> November, they disappeared entirely. The same applies to the celebrations held on Saturday and Sunday afternoons (Dimovski 1978, 264). This situation was present in both villages, and to this testifies Jane Pavloski<sup>6</sup>, who claims that in the first years they gathered on Saturdays, on Sundays, in the park, in the village center, at the municipal committee, at the school. The gatherings were held during Easter and Christmas until 1950, and quite rarely since then. The establishment of culture facilities in that period was one of the many reasons for perishing of those gatherings, which is evident from the statement given by Gjorge Mladenovic, born 1890, in the village Durachka Reka, Kriva Palanka region, and migrated to Glogonj in 1946, who says: "It was in the middle of the village for about 2-3 years. Afterwards, it all changed, when the facilities were opened, dances, other things, third things." As an occasion when there was most dancing, Dimoski indicates the weddings, whether they included all the rituals and customs, or they were "all modern". They represented a unique form of massive revival and facing of folk dances, especially those brought from homeland

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<sup>4</sup> The records are in the Archive of the Institute of Folklore "Marco Cepenkov" – Skopje, hereinafter referred to as AIF.

<sup>5</sup> About planned migration of Macedonians in the Panchevo area, see Trifunovski, 1958.

<sup>6</sup> Jane Pavloski, born in 1910 in village Gorno Divjaci, Krushevo, moved to Jabuka in 1946, AIF – Book of folk dance and vocal tradition, Glogonj and Jabuka, Panchevo/SAP Vojvodina (8-12.4.1973).

(Dimovski 1978, 264). One elderly inhabitant of Jabuka, Vasil Petroski<sup>7</sup>, on the topic of perishing of the gatherings and weddings with all appropriate customs as they were made in Macedonia, argues the following: “The weddings were same. Up to 3-4 years. After that, this man was a communist, that man was a communist. That man was in the Party”.<sup>8</sup> From this statement we can realize that in that time period, the political situation had a great influence on the folk dance tradition, as well as on the rituals and customs with the Macedonian population.

Due to the large diversity of population in both villages, it was natural and normal to have distinction among them regarding folk dances. Although almost all of them were Macedonians, nevertheless they belonged to different regional groups, for example, Brsjaci and Shopi. It is important to mention that some of the migrants Brsjaci clearly declared themselves as they are from Macedonia, but at the same time proudly pointed out that they were Brsjaci. On the other hand, the Shopi did not share that attitude. The Shop identified himself that he is from Macedonia, but he also identifies himself according to local administrative centers in his native area, for example: Krivopalanchanec, Kratovchanec, Pijanchanec, Berovchanec etc. (Svetieva, 1992, 9-18). At the beginning, at the gatherings, the differentiation was much more emphasized, thus at the gatherings, every ethnic group danced separately. Stojan Trajcheski<sup>9</sup> gives us an example: “We, who came from Kichevo region and Malesija, danced together with the people from Ohrid in one place – folk dance, people from Bitola and Prilep, over there, and on a different spot, people from Palanka. There were usually two folk dances. We had our own people, musicians, our clarinet, and the people from Palanka danced with large drums.” One settler from Poreche, Evgenije Stojanovski<sup>10</sup>, has described the gatherings in the village Jabuka very specifically: “When we came here, Jabuka was very colourful, I mean with traditional costumes, every place with its own traditional costume, all different ... the traditional dances were similar. We, people coming from Poreche, didn't have our own music, but people from Palanka had their own music.” Later, with time, they started dancing the traditional dances together, namely, they started joining each other and a common folk dance has been formed. This was verified by Ilija Jovanovski: “People from Poreche, Ohrid, Palanka, we danced together. Them and us, Macedonian...” When they started blending into one common folk dance, regardless of the ethnic group they belonged to, those who were skilled dancers stood at the beginning of the folk dance, and the others followed them accordingly, or someone who had money to pay the music would stand at the beginning of the line.

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<sup>7</sup> Vasil Petroski, born 1912 in the village Dolno Dupeni, Prespa region, migrated to Jabuka in 1946, AIF – same.

<sup>8</sup> Referring to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (Savez komunista Jugoslavije - SKJ).

<sup>9</sup> Stojan Trajcheski, born 1922 in the village Lokov, Struga region, migrated to Jabuka in 1946, AIF - Book of folk dance and vocal tradition, Glogonj and Jabuka, Panchevo/SP Vojvodina (8-12.4.1973).

<sup>10</sup> Evgenije Stojanovski, born in 1926 in the village Kovach, Makedonski Brod, migrated to Jabuka in 1946, AIF - same.

Stojan Trajchevski's<sup>11</sup> statement confirms this: "If you pay, you dance, if you don't pay, you don't dance."

Integration in folk dances, besides among Macedonian ethnic groups, used to happen with other nationalities that lived in both villages. Although less in numbers, they were part of the weddings. Dimoski emphasizes that anybody could have danced on weddings in traditional dances regardless of their social status, nationality or religion. In that period of time, at weddings, the rich and the poor, the Serbs, Croats, Romanians and Roma people danced together (Dimovski 1978, 265). Regarding the influence of traditions from the mentioned nationalities, they were not noticed in these two villages, as Macedonians were population which spoke their mother tongue and were significantly larger in numbers (Gjorgiev 1978, 260).

Traditional dances repertoire, which was performed at the gatherings, was quite opulent and diverse, and rather extensive. The difference in the repertoire is due to the difference of ethnic groups, thus every ethnic group danced their specific traditional dances from the area they had originated from. Further in the text, we shall list the traditional dances which were danced at the gatherings in Jabuka and Glogonj, according to the place or area<sup>12</sup> where the ethnic group originated:

- Krushevo - *Teshka, Kumitsko, Caparskoto, Kasapskoto, Pajduskata, Eleno mome*.
- Malesija - *Radikalkata, Srpskoto, Pravi ora, Pajdushkata, Shushu Mile, Beranche, Chamche, Suchi mustakji, Kumitskoto*.
- Strushko – *Pajduskata, Teshkoto, Chachak, Uzicko, Kukunjeste*.
- Krivopalanechko – *Chachak, Zikicu, Crnomravku, Prestupku, Sitno oro, Kukusheste, Ramno kolo, Hajdunchko, Zikino, Eleno mome*.
- Makedonski Brod - *Starskoto, Doshlo pismo iz Bosne, Kukuneshte, Shano mome, Eleno mome, Pajdushko, Bajramche (Beranche)*.
- Ohridsko – *Kukunjeshka, Pajdushka, Chachak, Zikino, Chetvorka, Srbijanka*.

If we observe the ethnochoreological characteristic of the folk dances, as well as the area of their origin, we realize that majority of the traditional dances belong to two folk dance areas in Macedonia. Those are southwestern and eastern areas. Thus, traditional dances like *Teshka, Kumitsko, Caparskoto, Beranche, Chamche, Starskoto, Bajramche (Beranche), Pajdushka, Shareno oro, Eleno mome and Chetvorka*, belong to the southwestern folk dance area. Whereas other folk dances, like *Chachak, Zikica, Crnomravku, Sitno oro* are traditional dances which belong to the eastern folk dance area of Macedonia. It is important to mention that Serbian traditional dances were also danced, like, for example, *U shest, Zikino kolo, Magja-*

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<sup>11</sup> Stojan Trajcheski, born 1922 in the village Lokov, Struga region, migrated to Jabuka in 1946, AIF – same.

<sup>12</sup> Names of places and areas are stated as they were originally recorded by the researchers Dimoski and Gjorgiev, whereupon larger centers of particular areas like: Ohrid, Struga, Kriva Palanka region etc. were taken into consideration.

*rac, Chachak, Kukunjesht, Radikalka, Banatsko kolo and Shano mome*. Dimoski states that these traditional dances were accepted more by the younger population, whereas the older population preferred to dance the traditional dances from their homeland (Dimoski 1978, 264). Regarding the folk dance pattern, the most popular traditional dances were considered the traditional dances with simple dance patterns, like *Pravoto, Starskoto, Sharenoto oro, Nevestinskoto*. These traditional dances were also generally accepted by the younger population because they were easy for dancing. These dances are a type of *Lesnoto*, which originate from the western parts of Macedonia, and they consists a three measure dance pattern. The rhythmical structure of these dances is usually 7/8 and 2/4. However, the traditional dances that have more complex dance pattern are *Komitskoto, Caparskoto, Kasapsko, Beranche*. These folk dances, compared to others, were danced more rarely due to the complex structure of the dance pattern, and were mainly performed by the elderly people. They consists more than three measure dance pattern and the rhythmical structure is uneven for example 11/8, 12/8 etc. One interesting fact is that the majority of the Serbian folk dances<sup>13</sup>, which were performed at the gatherings in Jabuka and Glogonj, were not learned from the local inhabitants, but were brought from their areas of origin, where they were performed at the gatherings. This is confirmed by the statement from the bagpiper Jane Pavloski,<sup>14</sup> who answered Dimoski's question if he played Serbian traditional dances in the village Divjaci with the following answer: "Yes, I have played them. There were Serbian gendarmes and I had to play Serbian music."

With such opulent and diverse repertoire of traditional dances performed in both villages, it is inevitable for the dancing style to have no difference. The style features were essentially different, which is confirmed by the informant's statements: "traditional dances were danced according to the music, they were different in dancing, different, those from Veles region were different, ours from Kichevo were different".<sup>15</sup> The people themselves recognized the differences in the dance styles, and they recognized the most skilled and best folk dancers. Thus, people from Palanka region were most willing dancers, while people from Resen region were the best folk dancers: "People from Palanka have different steps, we have different. They stomp in place. But there was no better dancing than that of Resen

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<sup>13</sup> In the period of the First Balkan War, more specifically in 1912, a large Serbian army was situated in the southwestern region of Macedonia, and they took the town Kichevo from the Ottomans on the 4<sup>th</sup> November, and they stayed there for a long period of time (Koviloski 2012, 69). The soldiers, carrying their spiritual culture, during occasions like dances and celebrations, performed part of the traditional dances from the regions where they came from. Therefore, in this wider area, Serbian soldiers had influence on the local inhabitants, who accepted part of their traditional dances (Kostov 2017, 214).

<sup>14</sup> Jane Pavloski, born 1910 in the village Gorno Dvjaci, Krushevo, migrated to Jabuka in 1946, AIF - Book of folk dance and vocal tradition, Glogonj and Jabuka, Panchevo/SAP Vojvodina (8-12.4.1973).

<sup>15</sup> Dimo Simonovski, born in 1897 in the village Zbazdi, Struga region, Malesija, migrated to Jabuka in 1946, AIF- same.

people, they have melos in their dancing”.<sup>16</sup> The dancing style was also explained by Dimoski, who emphasizes that in the past, men danced on their entire foot, the tempo was slower and there were elements in dancing like twirling, kneeling, getting down on knees, actually, that was the style they brought from homeland. Whereas in the period when he and Gjorgiev made the research, the traditional dances were performed artless, on half foot, without many elements, the tempo was faster and there was more feet interweaving, so that the folk dancers had tendency to create greater effect with fast feet movements and tempo which was uncharacteristic for the Macedonian folk dance (Dimovski 1978, 265).

In the Macedonians folk dance tradition in both villages, there is a special place for folk dance leading songs. Lack of instruments often forced the people to practice folk dance leading songs. Most prevalent are *Ne zadevaj se mori Nedo*, *Borjano Borjanke*, *Prsten mi padna Nesho*, *Shto imala k'smet Stamena*, *Shano mome* and many others (Dimoski 1978, 264). The popularity of folk dance leading songs at the gatherings is more present in the first three to four years of migration, while in the later period, they were gradually reduced, and namely there was a diminished interest for their performance. In relation to the folk dance leading songs, we can use one statement from Velika Jovanovska,<sup>17</sup> who, for one of those folk songs, says: “Altano Kadano, this song is sung while dancing. The folk dance is performed by a number of women; the lead is usually by the mother-in-law. The folk dance does not have any specific name.”

When discussing the instruments accompanying the folk dances, it can be reliably confirmed that, in the first years, the dominant instrument was the bagpipe. According to Dimoski and Gjorgiev's records, in the period of 70's and 80's of the last century, there were two bagpipers in the village Jabuka and one in the village Glogonj. The bagpipers who played actively played during weddings, but only for those who wanted to have a wedding in “the old way” (Dimovski 1978, 265). They also played at birthdays and baptisms, but they mostly accompanied the songs, not the folk dances. Dimoski emphasizes that factory instruments like accordions and clarinets, at that time, seriously endangered the dominance of the bagpipe (Dimovski 1978, 265).

Gradual disappearance of the gatherings in the middle of the village, and much sparser practice of folk dance tradition, contributed to disappearance of the folk dance social role in both villages. People did not have any more opportunities of that kind to socialize, to exchange their opinions on everyday life, nor to teach the younger generations to dance the folk dances, which was a way to maintain the life of the folk dance tradition. Dimoski states that with such attitude, older generations became selfish, considering only their own interest (Dimovski 1978, 265).

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<sup>16</sup> Stojan Trajcheski, born in 1922 in the village Lokov, Struga region, migrated to Jabuka in 1945, AIF- same.

<sup>17</sup> Velika Jovanovska, born in 1903 in the village Ogut, Kriva Palanka region, migrated to Jabuka in 1946, AIF – same.



This condition was also confirmed by Levko Gerasimovski,<sup>18</sup> from Slivovo, Struga region, who says: “In Slivovo, there was dancing and singing even on ice and snow. It was freezing, but there were three to four traditional dances winding in the middle of the village. Here, let me tell you, we have everything: food, drink, television, radio, fridge, but we don’t have that old thing, from home. We became like Germans. Like egotists, like self-seekers. Everyone wants to work more, to have more.” In this context, I shall mention Gjorgi Gjorgiev’s opinion, which I clearly agree with, who indicates that the great progress of culture and technics during that period in Yugoslavia had negative effect on preservation and development of folk music as well as the folk dance tradition. For example, young people from Jabuka and Glogonj, started celebrating their birthdays, not their name days, on which only sounds of electrical guitars and other instrumental compositions which were represented in the popular music could be heard (Gjorgiev 1978, 260).

## Conclusion

A lot more could be said about folk dance tradition of Macedonian people in Jabuka and Glogonj, regarding the researches realized by the ethnochoreologist Dimoski and his colleague Gjorgiev. We attempted to indicate only the most important aspects of folk dance tradition, like transferring the folk dance tradition, performance style, its viability, modifications, its application and its gradual disappearance. We have presented all these aspects through some informants’ statements, inhabitants of both villages, as well as through some notions and opinions of the both researchers.

As a general conclusion at the end, we could say that the folk dance tradition had an important role in the everyday life of the people who migrated to the villages Jabuka and Glogonj. Notwithstanding the forced migration from their birth places in Macedonia to, for them, unknown regions in Serbia, the people managed to transfer and maintain part of their traditional culture. They also succeeded in applying majority of their folk dances, which were engraved into their memories, at least for a particular time period. However, later, the modern way of life, technology development, expansion of the pop music as well as the social and political life, had the largest influence in application and viability of the traditional dances in both villages.

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<sup>18</sup> Levko Gerasimovski, born in 1915 in the village Slivovo, Ohrid region, migrated to Glogonj in 1946, AIF - Book of folk dance and vocal tradition, Glogonj and Jabuka, Panchevo/SAP Vojvodina (8-12.4.1973).

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