

## COMPARABLE OCCURRENCES IN WEDDING CUSTOMS OF THE BUNJEVCI AND ROMANCE LANGUAGE SPEAKING INHABITANTS OF THE BALKAN PENINSULA

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UDK 392.5(497)

Izvorni znanstveni rad  
Original scientific paper  
Primljeno: 21. 11. 1995.

*The introductory part of the article is dedicated to Milovan Gavazzi, to the ethnology he was promoting and to its meaning and importance for the ethnology of today. The occurrence of stačel, a particular wedding honoured attendant, in the Croatian heritage could not be overlooked in the scientific opus of M. Gavazzi. After a short survey of his contribution to the research of the origin of the stačel, as well as to the latest research in the early nineties, the article is introducing the elements of the Bunjevci wedding customs which might have been formed according to certain indicators in contact with the Balkan Romance speaking population. More though research of each particular element may bring more light to the origins of at least one part of the cultural heritage of all the Bunjevci branches, as well as to the processes of their ethnogenesis.*

Instead of a full introduction I would like to dedicate a few words to Milovan Gavazzi and the ethnology he was promoting, as well as to the meaning and the existence of such ethnology today. It does not seem necessary to be particularly emphasising the universality of this scientist and his occupation with numerous ethnologic issues. He could, with one move, cover a series of ethnologic occurrences to then place them in the adequate cultural context as well as point to their possible origins. He has processed scientifically many of these occurrences himself, ascertaining their origins and their relation to a particular culture. In many other occurrences he has given indications regarding the origins, the position within the tradition heritage and development within the heterogeneous ethnic and cultural expanses of the south-eastern Europe. Thus, M. Gavazzi had inspired the research of a whole series of ethnological themes, he had even offered the themes for ethnologists to attempt a thorough research on and had suggested a number of assumptions to be researched for further confirmation. Such an approach had ensured research paths to the new generation of ethnologists who recognised them as sign-posts to follow in their own researching, thus, in their own turn, contributing to the disclosing of the history of the inherited culture.

M. Gavazzi's leaving the Croatian ethnological scene really may have meant the end of one epoch in the development of the Croatian ethnology, the thought being largely accepted. Fortunately, he has made a sufficiently deep furrow for the elapsing time to wipe it out easily. There have been frequent attempts to disclaim the kind of ethnology he had been striving for by putting remarks that it is non-current, long outlived and the like, with sometimes only superficial observations on the lack of methodology; such judgements being passed without being supported with arguments. Many of these allegations prove basic lack of understanding, even mis-understanding, of the disputed approach. Many trends of studying have been appearing in ethnology to be soon quelled, the process being continually present on the scene, which, of course, is good for the development of any science, in this case ethnology. However, Gavazzi's, and not only Gavazzi's, "cultural-historical" ethnological method (not in the sense of P.W. Smidt's methodology, but in the meaning given it by F. Ratzel and F. Graebner), had outlasted many other methods patiently withstanding different challenges, thus those disputing the method should be aware of the above fact and accept it. The field of the ethnology science is so large that there is sufficient space for other, different approaches, making nonsensical the attempts to destruct one well founded and tested methodical approach<sup>1</sup>. Instead, the ethnologists who do not find this approach acceptable should simply disregard its existence.

The occurrences I will tackle are the result of several years of my researching. I could well say that they belong to the group of research subjects M. Gavazzi was stimulating. When I have decided to study certain themes concerning customs and traditions of the Bunjevci<sup>2</sup>, M. Gavazzi immediately knew how to define (as the professor and mentor) what concrete occurrences I should start with. The occurrence of such a particular character, as *stacél* (wedding honoured attendant), in the Croatian tradition heritage could certainly not be overlooked in the scientific opus of M. Gavazzi. He had tried to establish its origin, accepting the possibility of a Greek basis of the term and connecting it with the Greek term *stahtiaris* which, according to the shrove-tide customs of the northern parts of Greece, is denoting a member of the wedding train attired in the Greek plaited shirt with a number of bells round the waist and the bag of ashes serving to defend the bride and the groom (Megas, 1958:61). He pointed to three possible ways of the element entering the region of Dalmatinska zagora:" 1. By way of the Adriatic from the northern Greek ethnic and language area, the way being the least possible in the case because: a) none of the elements and the term itself belonging to it appear along the eastern Adriatic area, which is, of course, to be expected if this thesis is a correct one, and b) the cultural elements, having entered the eastern Adriatic area from the Mediterranean, generally did not enter the Dinarides

<sup>1</sup> I would like to add that a good or bad ethnology could be the result of such approach, the same being true for other approaches, and the "split" in the Croatian ethnology, if it is necessary, should be founded on that basis, instead of all the negative critique, often un-founded, being directed to only one methodical approach.

<sup>2</sup> The Bunjevci are a group of ethnic Croats originating from Dalmatia, southwest Bosnia and Herzegovina; they inhabited the regions of Primorje, Gorski kotar and Lika in the west and the Danube region in the north in 17th century.

background of the Adriatic and therefore could not be transferred into Dinarides Dalmatinska zagora (Dalmatian mountainous outback). 2. By continental route across inland carried by the Vlachs (Romance speaking population), whose presence in the Dalmatinska zagora is unquestionable; and who could have collected the elements during their herd and flock raising which involved their moving over many areas; though, there is another possibility of the influence coming from the south of the Balkan where the Greek influence, either cultural or linguistic, was manysided. 3. By continental route through the Dinarides interior carried by new-comers (particularly since 15th c. onwards) from the south-east, i. e. from Monte Negro and large area around it since ancient time those areas had been exposed to the cultural and linguistic influences from even farther neighbouring areas reaching the original Greek expanses". Further on, in his text M. Gavazzi is advising that it would be necessary to convincingly prove the connection between the Greek *stahtiaris* and *staćel* and also to check whether the term *staćel* had been confirmed in the rare remnants of the past or of the more recent times by which the way (and perhaps the time) of its entering the Dalmatinska zagora would be probably more thoroughly explained (Gavazzi, 1972:7). There were no concrete indicators, as the occurrences of the *staćel* in the wedding customs of the Bunjevci, of the Gradišćanski Hrvati (Croats of Gradišće/Burgenland), in some regions of Dalmatia (among Morlaks, in Kninska and Imotska krajina, in Poljice), with some traces in Primorje (northern coastal area of the Adriatic), in Lika, and in Istria as well, has not been investigated sufficiently. More thorough researches on *staćel* have confirmed its presence in even larger area (in Ravni Kotari, Bukovica, southwest of Bosnia, western Herzegovina and very probably in the area of the mouth of the Neretva river), as well as among the Vlachs in northeastern Serbia. But even this researching was not sufficient to prove the origins of *staćel*. What can be said with certainty is that the characteristic distribution of the occurrence of the character and the ethnological indicators of its role are relying on its being brought by the Balkan Vlachs (Černelić, 1991: 96-114, 153-160). Apart from the Vlachs who are inhabiting the area of the northeastern Serbia, other tribes inhabiting other areas of the Balkan do not seem to know of this wedding honoured attendant, as far as we now know. Apart from the distribution of the *staćel* in the expanse which speaks of its Balkan origins (either Greek one brought by the Vlachs or even of the very Vlach origins), other ethnological facts seem to be confirming that the *staćel*'s role was varying without sufficiently specific and defined characteristics; according to the necessity of the ceremony, differing from area to the area in which *staćel* outlived or could be traced to, the character was fitted into the ceremony or was taking on the roles characteristic for other wedding honour members, such as: *stari svat* (chief attendant), *djever* (groomsman), *čauš* (the wedding guest in charge of amusement), and *kum* (honoured chief attendant); the name of *staćel* sometimes denoted the group of simple wedding guests without particular honours (*pustosvati*) and even those among the wedding characters who were a laughing stock to their wedding participants. Such varied characteristics of the role of *staćel* are showing that the occurrence of such wedding honoured character in the wedding customs of some Croatian groups should not be considered as originally

Croatian, nor even of Slavic heritage, as apart from the possible linguistic (but not firmly proven) Slavic basis, the ethnologic indicators do not corroborate such a possibility. If the term "staćel" is of Slavic origin, then it would be a new creation common to some Croatian and some Romance speaking groups.

*Staćel* is of course an interesting and particular occurrence of the cultural heritage of the Bunjevci. Though the final positive answer as to its origins and to the ways it had been brought here still does not exist, *staćel*, the mysterious wedding ceremony character has become the scientific research challenge and the stimulus that opens many questions on the cultural heritage of the Croatian group denoted, sometimes clearly sometimes less clearly, by the name of the Bunjevci. Ethnological indicators have brought many of the questions within a step to the possibility of setting some answers. Perhaps our debt to M. Gavazzi is lying in the fact that his urging to find right answers always gave rise to new stimuli which might prove a sufficient reason for the future ethnologists to start very often complex research with uncertain result, though still provocative enough to those who can and want to recognise them. The road researching to obtain answers is not an easy one, but we believe that this is not a sufficient reason to make us give it all up.

The mentioned researches of the defined themes of the wedding customs had been based primarily on the occurrence of the chosen wedding guests, wedding honoured attendants, and their role in the wedding ceremony, thus limiting the knowledge by the beforehand given definition. Despite the limitations, a series of new themes has been welling out, pointing the new knowledge on the possible origins of the cultural heritage among all the branches of the Bunjevci. Every theme can be researched separately (or perhaps several occurrences could be put together for a larger study) aiming to bring more light to the origins of at least one part of the cultural heritage of all the Bunjevci, touching thus on their ethnogenesis which still appears to be unknown despite numerous attempts on explanation. Many of those attempts had been less based on the facts than on the hypotheses and thus they could not have been finalised. The ethnological indicators can help bring a number of complex questions to light, such as e. g. the question of ethnogenesis of an ethnic group, but the procedures must be based on the numerous facts, correctly methodologically processed, to be absolutely certain that the final results are correct. The cultural heritage of one ethnic group is a sum total of a number of elements of various origin, which gives them particular characteristics within one greater national corpus. The fact that the Bunjevci have divided into several branches from the common nucleus during their ethnocultural development, makes such research even more complex.

In this article the attention will be directed to the cultural elements of the Bunjevci which might have been formed according to certain indicators in contact with the Balkan Romance speaking population. The comparison of particular cultural elements and occurrences of the wedding customs confirmed only in some or in all the Bunjevci branches, with the same or related elements appearing among the Vlachs on the Pindus area in northern Greece (in Samarina and neighbouring Vlach settlements)

and in the area of northeastern Serbia might be sufficient for the purpose. Only in the mentioned Vlachs' areas the wedding customs have been studied more. Some of the occurrences have been also confirmed among other Balkan peoples, the Albanians and Greeks<sup>3</sup>. It is not possible to claim that all the confirmed related occurrences are of the Romance speaking areas origins without a thorough analysis. Some of them could have been adopted by the Vlachs on the south of the Balkan, and as they were wandering herd and flock raising nomads they could have carried the customs to the peoples they came into contact with, as M. Gavazzi had suggested in his considerations of the occurrence of *stačel* and some other cultural elements. The contacts of different cultures always mean mutual permeating. Only the study of the presence of such occurrences in their specific form on a large expanse could offer more precise determinants of their origins. The existence of numerous common cultural elements of the wedding customs among the Vlachs in the northeastern Serbia and in the areas of the Dinarides and Adriatic expanses all to Istria, including Vlach cultural elements in general, had already been confirmed (Kulišić, 1963; Pantelić, 1971:69; Vince Pallua, 1992, Černelić, 1991, 129-160.). The common elements seem to verify that the Vlachs had often been the preservers of the Slav cultural heritage on these expanses. When we speak of the Bunjevci as an entity we should think of the wide expanses which this group could have been inhabiting, though they have not yet been precisely defined; all the Adriatic and greater Dinarides areas (Herzegovina, parts of Bosnia and Monte Negro) should be taken into account. These are, at the same time, the areas on which the presence of the Vlachs was unquestionable in the past. In what measure had this fact reflected on the ethnocultural image of these expanses and on the development and ethnogenesis of the groups that inhabited the areas, then leaving them at a later period, is yet to be investigated.

It seems reasonable to start with the wedding honoured attendants, as one of them, *stačel*, has initiated the researches. The character has already been explained and there is nothing new to be added for now. There is another honoured attendant who might be interesting in the same sense. The term *kum* (marriage witness, best man, chief attendant) is of Romance language origins (Skok, 1972:231-232). This wedding honoured attendant has not been known in the Slav traditional heritage, though the character of *kum* is familiar to the Russians and the Slovaks, only as a honoured guest in the wedding customs as well as the child's godfather. The wedding character *kum* appeared with the introduction of the Christian elements into the wedding customs, having the task to be the marriage witness during the wedding ceremony in church. Besides, *kum* has developed into one of the most important wedding honoured attendants in some areas. Such a development of the role of *kum* happened also among

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<sup>3</sup> The bibliographic data on the wedding customs in the Vlach area in the northeastern Serbia can be found in : Černelić, 1991: 219-226. G. Weigand brings some data for other Vlach areas (1894:32-59). D. Antonijević also gives data on the Vlach wedding ceremony in general, but it being only a compilation of the data of other authors we are not taking it as the source. Those elements of the Bunjevci wedding customs which are known in the Albanian and Greek wedding customs will be also pointed to, according to the data of J.G. Hahn on the Orthodox Albanians and to R.Rodd in some regions of Greece. A more thorough look into the literature of the Albanian and Greek wedding customs seems necessary for a more detailed analysis and comparison to be obtained.

the Danube area Bunjevci. It seems interesting that in other Bunjevci branches there are only the beginnings of the process of the development, so that on the Adriatic and Dinarides expanse the more important role of *kum* has been only a sporadic occurrence, while in the coastal and Lika region *kum* is appearing as the main honoured attendant at the wedding. Only among the Danube area Bunjevci *kum* has the role of the wedding chief attendant (Černelić, 1991:37-38,128; the same author, 1991:183-184,187). There are some other interesting details regarding the role of *kum*, as: the custom of fetching *kum*, accompanying him on his leaving the feast, visiting *kum* after the wedding, special *kum*'s presents in food and cake and other details. The occurrences confirmed among the Danube area Bunjevci are familiar to the Bunjevci in Croatian coastal area, on the area of Livanjsko polje in southwestern Bosnia, in parts of Herzegovina and in Dalmatia as well, particularly in most southern parts including Boca di Cataro. In southern Dalmatia and in Boca di Cataro some of these occurrences are more present than in some other parts of the expanses where more traces of the Bunjevci would have been expected (Černelić, 1991:43, 51-57). Some of the mentioned details connected with the role of *kum* have been also confirmed in the parts of the Montenegrine areas. The significant presence of the mentioned characteristic elements of the role of *kum* is found among the Vlach population of the northeastern Serbia where he is called *naš* (Černelić, 1991:137-139). Among the Vlachs of the northern Pindus the elements of the role of *kum* range him as the chief wedding honoured attendant called *nun(u)* (Wace-Thompson, 1972: 144, 120, 124-125; Weigand, 1894: 36-37, 40). It seems necessary to mention that among the Vlachs there are only several honoured attendants of the same name, apart from *nun(u)* and they would be more corresponding to the role of our *djever* (groomsman). According to the available sources, it appears that there is only one chief wedding honoured attendant: *wlam* with the Albanians, *koumbaros* or *paranymphos* with the Greeks (Hahn, 1853: 145; Rodd, 1968: 91-92). The fact makes them differ from the Bunjevci wedding customs figures, as well as from the customary characters among the Croats in general and South Slavs as well, as the different wedding roles have been distributed among several wedding honour attendants, the most important one among Bunjevci being the honour of *kum*.

In the context of the role of *kum*, some proceedings and procedures with the wedding cake are interesting as they show certain analogies in the Vlach and Bunjevci wedding customs. It should be remembered that the wedding cake of the Bunjevci custom contains many elements of the Slav tradition, and their ancestors have known them before their moving and settling on the south. However, the characteristic space distribution of some proceedings with the cake speaks of the mutual contacts of the Slav and Balkan traditions. In this case it appears impossible to precisely divide the Bunjevci cultural elements from the Vlach ones, such as: the cake as the present, breaking and distribution of the cake, throwing of money on the cake, the cake in the ceremony of the blessing and rings procedure between the bride and the groom (Černelić,191: 139-145; the same author, 1993). All the proceedings have been confirmed in the wedding customs of the Vlachs in the north eastern Serbia, while among the Vlachs on the north of Greece there appear some of the following elements:

the cake as the present, the cake as the component in the wedding ceremony, the ritual of breaking the wedding cake above the bride's head while all the present youth is grabbing for it and the cake being the communication means at inviting of the honoured wedding attendants (Černelić, 1991: 141-145; Wace-Thompson, 1972: 112, 117, 199; Weigand, 1894: 38).

One special custom of the Danube area Bunjevci belongs to the same group of customs: the bride is kissing the guests during the wedding festivities and for every kiss she is rewarded with money. If considering the possible expanses of the origins of the Bunjevci, it can be concluded that the custom is known in Dalmatia (only according to Lovrić's data regarding the Morlacks), in the Livanjsko polje, in Tomislavgrad and in Gacko in eastern Herzegovina, and even more towards the east, sporadically in Monte Negro, where this element of the customs is largely present, but mostly without rewarding the kiss with the money (Černelić, 1991: 86, 195). This proceeding is characteristic for both Vlach groups, being particularly significant among the Vlachs in northern Greece, as it is repeated several times in different occasions (Wace-Thompson, 1972: 118, 120-121; Weigand, 1894: 40). In the Albanian wedding customs the bride is also kissing the wedding guests at parting and they are rewarding her kiss with money (Hahn, 1853: 146).

The custom that the bride is separated, for a longer or shorter period, from the wedding guests, but accompanied from time to time by one or the other of the honoured wedding attendants, either male or female, or both, has been spread on the same expanses, with more confirmations for the spaces of the continental Dalmatia down to the Boca di Cataro, and sporadically in Lika. This custom has been known in both groups of the Vlachs (Černelić, 1991: 88-89, 145-146; Wace-Thompson, 1972: 155; Weigand: 1894: 37). In the Greek and Albanian wedding customs the bride is separated from the male guests in the company of the womenfolk at the wedding ceremony (Rodd, 1968: 93; Hahn, 1853: 145).

Apart from the mentioned customs characteristic for the Vlach wedding which are found primarily among the Danube area Bunjevci, then partly in the coastal and Lika area and in the areas of their possible origins, there are several other customs which, according to the accessible sources have not been confirmed in all the areas with possible tradition traces of the Bunjevci. They are not known by all the regional groups of the Danube area Bunjevci. They are also not known among all the Vlachs.

In that way, the characteristic custom among the Danube area Bunjevci of guests throwing coins into the container with water before entering the house had been known among the Vlachs in northeastern Serbia (Černelić, 1991: 132). In some places the custom has included certain other proceedings. In Zlot and in the larger area of Bor, the bride is sprinkling the wedding guests with a branch of sweet basil, dipped in water, when they are entering the house and throwing coins into a container with water; when all the wedding guests pass, the bride (in Zlot), or the couple or the groom (larger area of Bor) topples the container with the foot and the bride alone collects the money (Đorić..., 1977: 132; Pantelić, 1975: 133-134). Some of the elements of the custom are

found among the Vlachs in northern Greece. When the wedding train is coming to take the bride away, the groomsman throws the money in the jug and then topples it with the foot. On the third day of the festivities, the bride fetches water, pours it in and out three times, and on the third time the groomsman throws the money into the jug and when the bride throws the water out, the gathered youngsters are trying to find the coins in the mud (Wace-Thompson, 1972: 115, 123). The related proceedings can be found in eastern Herzegovina. Among the Croats in the village of Ravno in Popovo polje and among the Serbs in Gacko polje the bride uncorks the container for carrying water placed in front of the door of the groom's house and pours the water out (Palunko, 1908: 260; Delić, 1907: 281). In some other regions among the Serbs the bride also uncorks the container for carrying water and throws money in it, while, according to the general data for Popovo polje (these data seem to be related only with the Serbs' customs), she is taking out of the container an apple with coins stuck in it and leaves it upon the opening of the container (Bratić, 1903: 391; Lilek, 1898: 25-26; Mićović, 1952: 195). A very interesting variant of the custom can be found in Dubrovnik, dating from 15th c.: the bride topples, with her foot, the container full of milk or milk mixed with water, explanation having it that in that way she is bringing abundance of earthly riches into the house (Diversis, 1973: 69)<sup>4</sup>. In the Albanian wedding customs there are related proceedings: bride's mother welcomes the bridegroom at the door, he is kissing her hand, while she sprinkles him with the bouquet dipped into the vessel with water which she is carrying in her hand. The bridegroom throws money into the vessel with water, then mother-in-law fits a handkerchief on his right shoulder (Hahn, 1853: 145). Though the examples of the cited customs may differ in details, there are some common elements that connect them: throwing coins into the container with water and/or toppling of the container, the proceeding takes place in the space separating two wedding sides. The important difference is the absence of crossing as an element of the custom in most of the mentioned examples.

The other characteristic custom, known only in the vicinity of Sombor among the regional group of the Danube area Bunjevci, and among the Vlachs, refers to the bride entering the groom's home stepping over the white cloth. There are rather sporadic traces of the custom in Lika, Sinjska krajina, in some regions in eastern Herzegovina, Monte Negro and Boca di Cataro and, in the past, among the Morlacks, where confirmed only by Š.Ljubić, and therefore not quite certain (Černelić, 1991: 147-148; Mićović, 1952: 195; Đorđević, 1984: 296; Karadžić, 1953: 136; Weigand, 1894: 38; Antonijević, 1982: 149)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup>I am thanking Prof. Vitomir Belaj for letting me know the fact.

<sup>5</sup>When citing the detail Weigand is mentioning the review *Macedonia*, Bucharest, 1889, while remarking that he himself had not found the occurrence when on the field research, but he did not mention which group of Vlachs he referred to and did not specify the source. Antonijević cites one specific variant of the proceeding: "Among the Vlachs (Karaguna) a rug is put in front of the house entrance and underneath three ritual bread loafs are put. The bride must first step on the bread and crush the loafs well before entering the cottage." In the remark on the matter he refers to Wace-Thompson as the source for this detail. It seems obvious that it is the matter of the false citation, as in the work of the source the detail is not mentioned, making the confirmation of the source impossible for now.



Only the Bunjevci from the vicinity of Sombor seem to know the following specific manner of inviting the guests: bride's parents are inviting the relatives by offering them an apple, when encountering them in the street or at the market, the apple symbolising the invitation to the wedding. The special manner of invitation by an apple is not known among the Bunjevci outside the vicinity of Sombor in Bačka, and there is no trace of the custom in other areas either, but the apple as the present for every invited guest is occurring in the northern Vlach group, with more confirmation so far for the northeastern Monte Negro (Černelić, 1991: 148).

In the conclusion, let's mention one more specific occurrence among the Danube area Bunjevci, according to the data from the last century, confirmed only in the vicinity of Budapest. It is the matter of delaying consummation of the marriage which may last up to two years and even up to four years (Berkity, 1839: 328). New data are not confirming the occurrence any more. Only in Monte Negro there still existed a longer postponing of the consummation of the marriage, the occurrence being quite overspread in the area. The delay of the consummation of the marriage for one or two nights was recognized in Dalmatia (Morlacks, Ravni kotari, Bukovica) according to some earlier sources, and, according to more recent data the custom is known sporadically in the area of the mouth of the Neretva river, in Boca di Cataro and in the eastern Herzegovina as well as among the Vlachs in northeastern Serbia (Černelić, 1991: 146-147). In the description of the wedding customs of the Vlachs in northern Greece no customs related to the first wedding night are being mentioned. The delay in the consummation of the marriage is also known in the Albanian wedding: during the first night of the festivities the bride and the groom are sleeping separately and they are allowed to sleep together only on the third night (Hahn, 1853: 147).

There are some indicators for other related occurrences in the Bunjevci and Vlach wedding customs which I would like only to mention here: the custom according to which in the period between the suit to the actual marriage the bride's relatives are bringing presents to the bride at different times, the task of the bridegroom or his father being to give the bride the wedding attire, then there is multiple bringing of the presents in food and drinks, then also the role of the bride's brother, the tasks of particular honoured attendants - to help the bride get off the carriage or off the horse and to take her to her new home, then bringing the bride into dancing group in front of the bridegroom's house, there is also the custom of womenfolk and menfolk sitting separately at the wedding festivities, the couple taking leave of the wedding guests by accompanying them, bride's parents and relatives coming to the wedding feast etc. The ceremoniously rich and abundant presents in food and drinks are being brought for the occasion figure in the wedding customs of the Vlachs, while among the Danube area Bunjevci the *pohodani* (bride's visitors) are coming two times - to and after the festivities bringing the presents, primarily the cakes and the like. Some of these customs have been known as the Greek and Albanian wedding customs as well.

All the mentioned customs, known both to the Bunjevci and the Vlachs, are given in only a limited survey of their space distribution, as the Adriatic and the Dinarides expanse had been studied with the discovery of the possible traces of the Bunjevci in the past and present. We could point to the specific circumstances within

a limited space in which the customs had been created, developed and formed as ethnocultural features of this Croat group. Later on, they have been adapted to the new cultural milieu to survive in the Danube area<sup>6</sup>. Some of the mentioned customs have been not only well-known but have also been characteristic for other Croat group: the Šokci in Bačka, in Baranya and in Slavonia, and partly for the Bačka Serbs as well. The Šokci as well as the Serbs, similarly to the Bunjevci, had populated Pannonian expanses in the centuries marked by the Turk invasions. The roots of these customs should undoubtedly be looked for in the southern areas, having not been the result of later acultural processes in the new milieu. There is still the possibility that the Bačka Serbs have adopted some of the customs in their contacts with the Bunjevci and the Šokci in Bačka, but they could have got to know them at earlier times, when those Serbs had settled in Bačka having arrived from the neighbouring southeastern expanses where the contacts with Vlach population had been an unquestionable possibility. They might have even been "Serbised" Vlachs.

All the considered occurrences can be traced into the interior of the Balkan, to the expanses which must have known mixing of the cultural elements of the settling Slavs with the autochthonous Romance speaking population. Though it may seem that the mysterious wedding character *stačel* had mingled the already entangled Balkan ball, it is also true that it has offered the right stimulus to make an attempt on finalising and solving complex ethnocultural processes and historical occurrences on the expanses of the southeastern Europe.

Translated by Beatrice Mićunović

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## SRODNE POJAVE U SVADBENIM OBIČAJIMA BUNJEVACA I BALKANSKOG STANOVNIŠTVA ROMANSKOGA GOVORA

### Sažetak

U uvodnom dijelu članka autorica se kratko osvrće na znanstveni rad Milovana Gavazzija, na etnologiju za kakvu se on zalagao te na značenje i opstojnost takve etnologije danas. Pojave o kojima se u ovome članku raspravlja ubrajaju se u skupinu istraživanja koja je Gavazzi poticao, a rezultat su višegodišnjih autoričinih istraživanja. Ta su istraživanja započela s pojavom osebujnog svatovskog lika *stačela*, kojom se svojedobno bavio i Milovan Gavazzi, i pretpostavio njegovo moguće grčko podrijetlo te ukazao na tri moguća puta unosa ovoga kulturnog elementa u Dalmatinsku zagoru. Pojava *stačela* tada još nije bila dovoljno istražena. Tek su novija istraživanja dala detaljnije podatke o toj svatovskoj ulozi i njezinoj ukupnoj prostornoj zastupljenosti: osim u Bunjevaca, gradišćanskih Hrvata, u dijelovima Dalmacije, Primorja i Like i na širem području Dalmacije, u jugozapadnoj Bosni, zapadnoj Hercegovini, području

ušća Neretve i među Vlasima u sjeveroistočnoj Srbiji. Ta saznanja nisu bila dostatna da se dokaže izvorište *stačelovo*, ali karakteristični razmještaj pojave *stačela*, kao i etnološki pokazatelji njegove uloge upućuju na mogući unos posredstvom balkanskih Vlaha (Romana). Osim toga, *stačel* je kao zagonetni svatovski lik otvorio put mnogim pitanjima koja se tiču kulturnog naslijeđa hrvatske grupe, katkada više, a katkada manje jasno označene imenom Bunjevci. Proučavanje pojave odabranih svatova i njihove uloge u ukupnom zbiru svadbenih običaja u Bunjevaca ukazalo je na niz tema čije buduće proučavanje može pridonijeti novim spoznajama o mogućem ishodištu kulturne baštine Bunjevaca u svim njihovim ograncima.

U ovome prilogu izdvajaju se običaji ili elementi običaja, koji su se po svojoj prilici oblikovali u doticaju s balkanskim stanovništvom romanskoga govora. U tu svrhu autorica uspoređuje pojedine kulturne elemente i pojave u svadbenim običajima, koje su potvrđene samo u nekim ili u svim bunjevačkim ograncima, s istima ili srodnim pojavama u Vlaha na području Pinda u sjevernoj Grčkoj i u području sjeveroistočne Srbije. Neke od tih pojava poznate su i drugim balkanskim narodima, Albancima i Grcima, te se pri usporedbi i na te elemente okvirno ukazuje. Autorica razmatra karakterističan prostorni razmještaj sljedećih pojava: svatovska čast *kuma*, njegova primarna uloga starješine svatova i određeni karakteristični elementi njegove uloge; posebni običajni postupci sa svatovskim kolačem; običaj da nevjesta tijekom pira ljubi svatove i za poljubac biva nagrađena novcem; običaj da se nevjesta na dulje ili kraće vrijeme odvoji od svatova. Potom slijedi pregled pojava koje nisu potvrđene u svim bunjevačkim područjima niti ih poznaju sve skupine podunavskih Bunjevaca, a isto tako nisu poznate niti svim Vlasima: običaj da svatovi bacaju novčiće u posudu s vodom pred ulazom u kuću i/ili običaj da pritom nevjesta, mladoženja ili djever nogom obore tu posudu; običaj ulaska nevjeste u mladoženjin dom preko bijelog platna; specifičan način pozivanja svatova s jabukom; odlaganje konzumacije braka. Nadalje, autorica ukazuje i na druge pojave, koje bi još bilo potrebno detaljnije istražiti.

Sve spomenute pojave potvrđene u svadbenim običajima Bunjevaca i Vlaha daju tek ograničen pregled njihove ukupne prostorne zastupljenosti, jer su se razmatrali samo nešto šire obuhvaćeni jadransko-dinarski prostori s mogućim bunjevačkim tragovima u prošlosti i sadašnjosti. Tako postavljeni okviri ukazali su na specifične okolnosti u kojima su nastajale, razvijale se i oblikovale etnokulturne osobine ove hrvatske skupine, koje su se prilagođene novoj kulturnoj sredini održale u znatnoj mjeri. Trag razmatranih pojava vodi nas u unutrašnjost Balkana na čijim je prostorima znatno ranije došlo do prožimanja kulturnih elemenata doseljenih Slavena i starosjedilačkog stanovništva romanskoga govora. Premda je zagonetni svatovski lik *stačel* naizgled samo još više zapleo i tako već zamršeno balkansko klupko, u isto je vrijeme dao poticaja za pokušaj konačnog razrješavanja složenih etnokulturnih procesa i povijesnih zbivanja na prostorima jugoistočne Europe.