

Obrebski Joseph

RITUAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN A MACEDONIAN VILLAGE

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Joseph Obrebski (1905-1967) was a Polish cultural-social anthropologist. After receiving an M.A. in Slavonic ethnography from Crechow University in 1930, he did his initial research in the Balkans during the late 1920's and early 1930's, working in the Dobrudja region of Bulgaria and in Serbia and Macedonia in Yugoslavia. Some of the results, dealing mainly with material culture, were published in 1929 and 1931 in Polish journals. This work was done while he was studying with the Polish ethnographer Kazimierz Moszynski.

Subsequently he received a Rockefeller Fellowship and went to London and there worked with Bronislaw Malinowski. He received his Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of London for a dissertation "Family vs Organisation among Slavs as Reflected in the Custom of the Couvade." Part of this work was based on his field work in the Balkans. From 1936-1939 he was Vice-Director of the State Institute for Research in Peasant Culture in Warsaw. He also did considerable field work in the region of Polesie. In 1946 he went to London and joined the University of London's research group in Jamaica. From 1948 he was a member of the Secretariat of the United Nations. At the time of his death he taught anthropology at C.W. Post College of Long Island University.

Through the courtesy of his late wife, Tamara Obrebska, we were fortunate to obtain his papers and deposit them in the Archives of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

The present study was included among his field notes from Macedonia. Unfortunately it is not possible to reconstruct the exact circumstances under which this particular article was prepared. Dated for distribution in November, 1961, it is presented here as edited by us, although, of course, no attempt has been made to rewrite it to conform to modern anthropological approaches. The intention is to make available a unique set of documented observations based on a way of life which has, in certain critical aspects, ceased to exist.

The photos are a selection from several hundred glass negatives taken at the time of the original field work. During World War II they were buried in boxes in the backyard of his Warsaw home and then retrieved prior to his departure from Poland. Captions were prepared by Obrebski himself and included with the original manuscript.

It is hoped that this will be the first in a series of data papers based on materials in the Obrebski archives.

(For more details concerning Obrebski's life see *The Changing Peasantry of Eastern Europe* by Joseph Obrebski, Barbara and Joe Halpern, eds., Cambridge, Schenkman., 1976.)

Barbara K. and Joel M. Halpern
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RITUAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN A MACEDONIAN VILLAGE

Data on which this paper is based were collected during field work carried on in 1932-33 in the district, of Porech in Yugoslavian Macedonia. Most of the research was done in the village of Voltche (31 households, about 170 inhabitants), near Gostivar, some 30 miles southwest of Skopje. Here I had the unique opportunity to study a traditional peasant society not yet affected by modern changes.

This paper deals specifically with the ways in which religion contributes to group cohesion and integration of the village community in a traditional peasant society. An attempt is made to detail some of the social functions of religion by focusing analysis on the relation between organization of the ritual activities and social structure of the community.

Religion and Village Values

The religious life of the villagers is highly pragmatic in its basic orientation. The purpose of most ritual activities, concerned with both the holy and the profane, is the enhancement of the benevolence of the supernatural powers on behalf of the villagers and the mitigation of their potential evils. Ritual acts and compliance with the religious norms of the society are the non-sacred ways of achieving what is valued most in the life of the village—prosperity and abundance, good health and longevity, fertility of fields and stock, fecundity of women, all-around success (2) in family and individual life. In the village ethos these existential values go side by side with normative values—moral precepts and ideas of "good life." Both existential and normative values have definite religious connotations. Good feelings in life are God given, bestowed upon humanity by the Creator and accorded to the living generations as a result of His benevolence. They are intrinsically a part of the divine order. So, too, are the norms of the society. Their religious quality is manifested in the type of sanctions. Violations of the moral code of the society may be tolerated by members of the group and left unpunished. But they never are tolerated by God and his acolytes, the saints. They punish the violation of the moral code by illness, death, drought, poor harvest, losses in stock, flood and fire. Thus punishments inflicted by supernatural powers on erring humanity consist essentially in the deprivation of the existential values.

The Village as a Religious Community

Religious belief and shared ritual provide villagers an important foundation for their sense of group unity. The villagers view themselves not only as a community of kinsmen, relatives and neighbors, but also as a religious unit. Each village is felt to stand in a unique relationship to the supernatural, maintained through a system of ritual observances, which are a part of its specific tradition. Villagers say, "A hundred villages, a hundred traditions." Thus, in the diffused world of peasant Christianity, each village presents an autonomous entity. The participation (3) of the individual in the supra-local ecclesia is mediated through his participation in the ritual activities customarily carried out in his village.

A very significant class of ritual observances consists of zarotsi, sacred prohibitions associated with

the holy periods of the village's ceremonial calendar and imposed on work, diet and other aspects of personal behavior. Violation of these prohibitions incurs supernatural sanctions, and these are particularly severe when more important saints are involved.

Punishments are eventually inflicted not on the individual trespassers, but on the whole village. Hence compliance with these norms is not a matter only of an individual's religious duty; it is, as well, his sacred duty to both the supernatural and his community and a matter of public concern. The sacred prohibitions constitute this part of ritual observances in which all without exception participate and with which everyone is expected to comply. This is considered essential for the welfare of the group and its continuity. Thus, in its operation the whole system of *zar-otsi* makes for an equation between the sacred and the social, the religious community and the village group. A tangible symbol of the religious dimension of the village is its church. No collective prayers or supplications are held in these tiny buildings. The local tradition does not provide for this form of religious expression. Nevertheless, together with the surrounding graveyard, the church area is the most important sacred space of the village, a center of its spiritual cohesion. Important, yearly rites, for instance the Epiphany ritual (4) with its accompanying feasting and dancing, are held there. The graveyard itself is an important place of ritual, the site of constantly recurring mortuary and post-mortuary rites associated with a cult of the dead. The graveyard presents in a way a replica of the internal subdivisions of the village, with the location of the graves corresponding to the village's lineages, sublineages and households.

Organization of Ritual Activities

There are several types of ritual activities: the celebration of the holy days and holy periods of the annual cycle; the cult of the dead; healing magic; divination; individual worship; crisis rites associated *with* the individual life cycle; inauguration and termination of main economic activities; weather magic; ritual curse and witchcraft.

As in other villages of the region, there is no formal specialized and separate organization for taking care of the religious and ritual life of the local group. There is no village priesthood, no village ecclesia organized separately from the total life of the community, and no allocation of the ritual roles to only a few selected persons. Ritual, magico-religious, permeates deeply and extensively all kinds of mundane activities and it is intertwined with many phases of local culture. But ritually expressive religious behavior of the individual member of the group is not a matter of his personal religious commitment. Religious roles cannot be undertaken by the individual on a whim. They cannot be assumed by him because of his personal inclinations. They are assigned (5) to him, allocated by customary arrangements, according to his social status: (the position he occupies in the village group as a man or a woman, a child or an adult, a neighbor, a kinsman or a family member.

The allocation of ritual roles is neither haphazard nor does it depend upon the personality characteristics of the individual. It is related to the community's social structure and its status system. In spite of the seemingly amorphous and diffused nature of religious behavior, there is a definite meshing of ritual roles with the social structure. One of the effects of the structural alignment of ritual roles is the emergence of various structurally determined, sacerdotal groupings, differently and differentially engaged in the performance of ritual activities. These ritual activities not only give expression to the religious sentiments of the performers and to the values shared in common by the members of the village group, but they also articulate with the structural

configuration of the village community: the community as such, Its lineage system, the age and sex structure, the kinship system, the family and the household.

Ritual Roles and the Status System

A salient feature of the village's ritual activities is the predominant part played in their performance by women. Although in the Epiphany ritual, the paramount rite of the yearly cycle, men are the main actors, in all other ritual activities women dominate the scene. In some of them they are the sole and exclusive performers in principle or in fact.

The preferential allocation of ritual roles to 'women is striking by (6) its apparent incongruity with the status system of the society. Patriline-ality is the fundamental principle underlying the organization of the village group and the joint family system, winch is the dominant form of family life. Under this system tlie village men, tracing through agnatic lineages and sublineages their descent to an original ancestral pair some 200 years in the past, enjoy the full inalienable birth-ascribed rights to village citizenship. Their sisters and daughters do not count, since, due to the patrilocality of marriage and tlie preference for village exogamy, they marry out of the village. Only the male agnatic descendants of the founders of the village have indisputable rights to residence in the community, to patrimony, to the utilization (under the customary land tenure system) of the village's resources and also, according to their family status, to participation in making decisions of public concern through the intermediary of the village council. In the workings of this patrilineal system, a sharp differentiation is made between tlie status of men, natives of the village, and that of women, the strangers, whose rights and duties are assigned to them according to their family ties with the men.

Social inferiority of women is one of the basic themes of this culture. Ideas concerning conception, sexual gratification or the transmission of physical resemblance stress the paramount part played in procreation by men and the subsidiary role of women. The inferior position of women is reflected in a variety of customs: the name-giving systems and the possession of personal names; terms of address; double table (7) arrangements; and finally the limitations imposed on the participation of women on various social occasions. Manners regulating contacts between the sexes are invariably expressive of the deference due from women and men.

IN the joint family a woman-wife is subordinated to the multiple authority exercised over her by the inner family circle: her mother-in-law, her father-in-law, her husband and her brothers-in-law.

These are her superiors, who at times assign work to her, give her orders, supervise her activities and control her conduct. It is only when she becomes established as the headwoman of an independent joint family household that the restrictions placing her in a subordinate position are lifted, and the status she achieves becomes complementary and comparable to that of her husband. The ritual roles of men and women differ profoundly in quantitative and qualitative aspects. The roles played by men are not those enacted by women. There is a close correspondence between the allocation of tlie ritual roles and the status system of the community. A significant aspect in this differential allocation is that it is related to the positions occupied by the members of the group either in the lineage system or the family and kinship system or the community.

Men's Part in the Ritual

In the cycle of village life,' the profane periods, during which people work and attend to their daily business according to the demands of the (8) season, alternate constantly witli the sacred periods, filled with ritual and ceremonial activities. During these holy periods, sometimes extending over

several days, the villagers unite in varying capacities in the performance of symbolic acts with one common and supreme referent: the world of supernatural entities and forces, believed to be at that time particularly active and therefore instrumental in controlling the welfare (or the ill-fortune) of the group.

One ritual for which the responsibility rests exclusively with the village men is a water consecration ceremony corresponding to Epiphany. The ritual extends over three days, with an intervening "women's day" dedicated to the commemoration of the dead. This rite stands in the whole of the yearly ceremonial cycle as the climax of all ritual activities. Never omitted or neglected, it is considered essential to the prosperity and successful life of the village.

The main person in the ceremony is the village godfather, the *kum*, described by the villagers as "our village priest." The office is "elective" on a lineage basis. It is assigned yearly in rotation to one of the three oldest lineages, or *kabile*. Usually a man strong enough to stand the hardships of the ritual is designated for this function by his ability.

The village *kum* acts as an intermediary between the local religious community and the supra-local ecclesia. The ritual starts with the consecration of the water by the parish priest at the parish church, where all the village *kums* from the surrounding area gather. Each *kum* carries (9) his village cross, which is both a symbol of his village's sacral unity (and of the *kum*'s dignity) and of fertility, health and plenty which, through the performance of the ritual, are to be delivered to the village.

On his return home the *kum* walks about the village and, with appropriate blessings, sprinkles the homesteads, buildings, fields, meadows, stables, huts and shelters, orchards and beehives, and particularly the villagers and all their livestock, chanting: "As many children, as many drops. As drops are many, so may be calves, lambs and kids. So many apples, so many bees. Let there be health, prosperity and plenty. For everyone and everything. Amen." All the households are visited, and at each the *kum* is expected to be generous with his blessings. Nothing alive which is valued by the peasant may be overlooked. Every member of the household must be mentioned by his personal name and included in the blessings.

At the nightly receptions held at each house following the rite the *kum* acts not as a guest, but as if he were the actual host. Accompanied by his acolytes he enters each house without knocking at the door, sits down to the prepared feast without waiting for an invitation, and, without invitation, starts eating and drinking, offering toasts to the health and prosperity of the head of the house and his family. Only men participate in this reception. The same ceremony is repeated at each house, with an increasing number of participants, since the men of the visited house then join the *kum*'s party (10) The next day is a day of respite for men. It is also a day of mourning for the village, a memorial day for their dead. All villagers participate in the ceremonies, but articulate ritual roles are performed by women only. The day is called "women's little waters" as distinguished from the third day "men's little waters."

The third day of the cycle, at which the ceremony comes to a close, ends in feasting and dancing. As with all such celebrations, the festivity takes place at the village graveyard. The main ritual consists of the inauguration of a new *kum* and the transfer to him of the village cross. This starts with a procession around the church, led by the retiring *kum*, to the accompaniment of girls' songs. Then, in a spacious vestibule in front of the tiny church, the village cross is handed over by the old *kum* to his successor, to be kept until the next year's rite. At this time, pieces of string, by which

flowers used in the consecration of water were attached to the cross, are cut off and distributed to all house-hold aids.

All households unite in the possession of a tangible symbol of the benevolent mystical powers. With the lineage system as its basis, the ritual stresses the responsibility of the village men for the unity, continuity and welfare of the group. At the same time it gives expression to an all-inclusive sense of community, embracing descendants of the ancestral pair, their wives and families and including even those who have passed away. Through the office of the village kum, a spiritual kinship, (11) which is the Inchest and the most sacred form of kinship, is established at a ritual level between all members of the group, irrespective of their lineage. The lineage system elevates the men. Yet symbolic, spiritual kinship, officiated through the Inchest system makes for a unity bridging cleavages which, at a profane level, are maintained in the community through patrilineality.

Ritual Roles of Women

Most ritual activities of women consist of traditional rites performed by them, or under their direction, in connection with the holy periods of the ceremonial calendar. Both in their organization and content the women's rites differ sharply from the Epiphany ritual. First, the basis for the organization of women's ritual activities is neither the village as a whole nor its lineage system, but the household. Some rites performed by village girls, however, are organized on a sublineage basis. Secondly, unlike the Epiphany rite, the women's adets consist of numerous ritual acts, each with a highly specific purpose and each carried out separately. In some cases, these purposes coincide with some of the basic existential values of the society: the health of the people, fertility of fields, fecundity of the livestock, abundance of milk. In others, the concern of each ritual act is to discourage and keep under control some specific supernatural or natural evil threatening peasant life, such as the she-devil *loshotiya*, an unspecified devil creature causing most illnesses, or the wolves which attack herds, or the mice which eat into the stores of (12) grain. Such ritual, following each other in succession, are carried out on the praznitsi, "empty days," of the holy period, during which the sacred prohibitions are imposed, or on the eve of the *svedni*, "holy days," festive days of the cycle.

Adets are respected as a part of the village tradition and valued as a privilege granted by God to humans in order to enable them to control the sacred and the profane for their own destinies.

Neglect of the traditional laws does not incur supernatural punishments, nor does it evoke the anger of the saints. But it does deprive the community of some of the supernatural sources of its welfare and security. Essentially their observance is a moral duty, an obligation of some members of the community towards others.

The main responsibility for the performance of adets rests with the wife of the headman of a household. Some acts are assigned by her according to the rule of the ritual or its symbolism to other members of the household: her daughter or her daughter-in-law, her son or her husband, a brother or a sister, or a father and a daughter. Most of the rites, however, are performed by her, and all are carried out under her direction and supervision. In fact, ritual functions loom conspicuously in her activities. Most of the women's work, again directed and supervised by her, is done by the junior female members of the household: her daughters-in-law, daughters or granddaughters. She herself no longer works in the fields nor attends to the stock. She does have to keep track of holy days (13) and holy periods and organize the everyday work and routine of the household accordingly. By means of simple ritual acts she initiates the imposition and the termination of the

sacred taboos. Finally, in the organization and performance of household ritual she acts as the supreme authority, superceding the position of the masculine family head, be it her husband or son. Her ritual roles thus form an intrinsic part of her elevated status.

Women and the Cult of the Dead

An important area of the ritual activities in which women again predominate are rites and ceremonies associated with the cult of the dead. Men are not absent from these rites. But ritual roles assigned to women make female participation in mortuary and post-mortuary rites continuous, conspicuous and ritually expressive. Women are expected to mourn longer than men and the mourning observances with which they must comply, are more exacting and severe. The performance of magic-religious practices associated with the death of a family member and his burial is also part of their job. Their particular responsibility extends over the organization of post-mortuary rites and the enactment of ritual roles associated with commemoration of the deceased. They prepare the food for feasts on these occasions, distribute food and other gifts on the mourning days on behalf of the departed, make ritual offerings of food, fruits, brandy and flowers at the grave, and participate in ritual lamenting and wailing sometimes for as many as three years after a burial.

(14) Wailing is one of the central and most demonstratively conspicuous ritual acts of private family rites as well as at communally organized commemorations of the dead by the whole village, on "dead Saturdays" or in connection with the more important holy days. On these occasions men may stand close to their family graves, they may express grief by weeping or crying aloud, or they may engage in talks with others, exalting the virtues or deploring the sufferings of their deceased family members. But the ritual expression of family sentiments and of a sense of unity between the living and the dead is the role of women.

The allocation of these roles stresses the bilateral basis of the family and kinship ties. A woman is obliged to lament for the members of her family of orientation, her family of procreation, and the joint family she entered on marriage. She is expected to wail for different periods of time for her mother and her father, her child, her husband, her brother and sister and her cousins and for her various in-laws.

The Medicine Woman and the Holy Woman

The equalization of the status of women with positions held by men through the allocation of important ritual responsibilities is particularly conspicuous with respect to healing magic. This is an area monopolized almost exclusively by women. Healing magic is effective only when performed by older women past child-bearing age. It consists of a large collection of separate magical performances, each including manual acts and elaborate spells, the exact knowledge of which is indispensable for the (15) practice of the profession. *To be* fully effective, the spells must be transmitted in the performer's mother's line, "from my faith and from my blood."

Every old woman in the village knows and practices some healing magic. To attain a status of prava basnaritsa, true medicine-woman, a woman has to have expert knowledge of a whole collection of rites and spells appropriate for various ailments, and she has to own the paraphernalia of her art, including a consecrated deer's horn, with which she exorcises all kinds of evils, and finally, she has to establish a reputation as an effective healer. She has to be able to properly diagnose the ailment, whether it is from God, evil spirits or witchcraft, and apply appropriate ritual, including counter-magic, by which the black magic is destroyed and its perpetrator eventually

brought to death.

The functions of a medicine-woman are in a way complementary to those of the village. As the kum deals solely with the holy, so the province over which the medicine-woman exorcizes her power is the unholy, the supernatural underground of evil spirits and forces, to some collectively organized rites as, for example, an elaborate rite of expelling an epidemic from the village, she will act as the main organizer and leader of these ritual activities. Her work is considered a public function and is highly respected: she "saves" the people.

Her services are remunerated usually by mostly symbolic payments. The real reward granted to her is the elevation of her status. (16) She attains privileges otherwise denied with men. She does not have to stand up to greet them. At any social severing, such as a wedding reception, she may mingle freely with men, sit at their table, drink brandy with them and converse with them as an equal. If she so wishes, she may even indulge in profane language otherwise used only by men. A similarly exalted status, with even more prestige attached to it, can be achieved by a woman in another sacerdotal role, that of a holy woman. A holy woman is one who is able to communicate with the saints through hallucinations and visions. There was only one such woman in the district during my study, the holy woman of Retchane. She was in communication with saints who appeared to her and expressed their pleasure, and most often displeasure, with the affairs of village life. In diagnosing the troubles of the people who came to her seeking help, she relied mostly on dreams. Then she was able to tell her clients what to do, whether to go to church with prayer and offerings or to a medicine-woman for treatment. There was no payment for her services, but gifts of money were usually generously donated toward a sort of meditation chapel which she built in her yard and to which she retired for her visions.

All her services to the people were rendered to the accompaniment of teachings regarding the nature, qualities and attributes of the supernatural world. Her house developed into a center of religious thought and moral reflection expressed in traditional terms. Her main concern was not so much with the preservation of the existential values cherished (17) by the villagers but with the fundamental normative values of peasant society. The main constantly recurring theme of her teachings has been the sacred nature of the society's mores and the imminence of supernatural punishments for bad conduct: "The Lord can tolerate much, but the saints are very impatient. "

Witchcraft and Its Ways

Witchcraft is at the bottom of the ritual scale. It is anti-social and must be practiced in secrecy. According to the villagers its efficacy is attributed to the Lord's blessing given to early experiments with the black art in mythical times.

Witchcraft is an easy art, and there is nothing esoteric about it. Because of the simplicity of its spells and matter-of-fact symbolism its operations are known to practically everyone, men and women alike. The basic canon of this society, nevertheless, is that it is practiced by women only, and "never, never by men": it is done by "women, the misers; women, the selfish ones; women, the evil-doers; women, the covetous ones; women, the witches. "

There are two facets to local witchcraft; actual practices and widespread suspicions regarding these practices. People say, "a woman whom people accuse of witchcraft, this woman perhaps knows nothing. Another one, never mentioned, this one is the witch. " Types of witchcraft that are actually practiced are of a less invidious nature as, for instance, love magic causing a girl to run away with a young man who (18) might be a total stranger to her, or magical theft of the neighbor's cow's milk,

achieved through the perversion of some traditional laws. Other types of witchcraft, ever present in suspicions, are more serious. They cause death of children, barrenness of women, family quarrels, marital discord, total extinction of the family. Basically they consist of antisocial perversion of ritual acts and are contrary in every respect to the main purposes and intentions of legitimate village ritual. Witchcraft, in so far as it is practiced, provides a mechanism through which antagonisms, jealousies and animosities, inconsistent with the precepts of family and village solidarity, find covert ritual expression leading to their releases. Wide-spread suspicions of witchcraft indicate that these antagonistic attitudes are morally repressed and projected to others. The social context of these suspicions is of importance. They originate and attain high emotional intensity in joint family relations, as between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law or between joint family wives, i.e. women married to brothers living together under the zadruga system.

Their reciprocal suspicions of foul play stem from the basic split in the joint family due to its patrilineal emphasis, a dissociation of its status system from the system of family solidarity. Each member of the group is placed in a situation of divided loyalties: to the group as a whole, to his own family of orientation, to his own conjugal family and to other conjugal families of which the joint household is composed. These loyalties are at times at variance with each other. This is particularly true (19) of women-wives, who are of course outsiders in the group and whose sentimental family attachments do not coincide with those of their husbands. They are restricted to their own conjugal unit, and loyalty to the group as a whole and to its "inner circle," in which authority is vested, is never perfect.

They represent centrifugal tendencies in the group, generating antagonisms and rivalries, not to be expressed in overt behavior. With the growth and aging of the joint family, and with the decreasing solidarity of its inner circle and the increasing solidarity of its component conjugal units, these tendencies lead, finally, to the division of the joint household. The divisions are carried out in an atmosphere of quarrels and sometimes to the accompaniment of reciprocal accusations of witchcraft. "Women divide the family."

The association of women with witchcraft is consistent both with the general pattern of the allocation of ritual roles favoring women and also with the inferior status they occupy in the village and the family.

Summary

The question of how religion adds to group cohesion is approached by focusing analysis on the *relation* between the social structure and the organization of activities. Use is made of a concept of "religious community," an entity separate and distinct from "secular community."

In the village of Voltche, Macedonia, the religious community is not (20) a highly structured group. There is no village priesthood as such and no formal organisation or taking care of the religious life of the local group. The "religious community" is an analytic abstraction from the total culture pattern. It consists of interrelated systems of ritual activities and corresponding beliefs, attitudes and sentiments shared by villagers.

The organization of ritual activities articulates with the social structure. The emphasis of the unity of the village groups the importance of its patrilineage system, the focal position of the joint family, and, finally, bilateral family and kinship relations. A marked feature is the predominant duty played

by women. With the exception of the supreme rite of the annual cycle, in all other ritual performances women are exclusive or main actors.

The allocation of ritual roles to women is striking because of its apparent incongruity with the status system of this society. Under the system of patrilineality which dominates social organisation, there is a sharp differentiation between the status of men and women. The status of women is inferior and subordinate in both village and family. Social inferiority of women is a basic theme of the culture. Through the allocation of ritual roles and the organisation of the ritual, a superstructure of a religious community is built upon its secular basis, distinct in essential respects from the secular community. The fundamental difference is in the area of social responsibility and social solidarity. The secular community is unbalanced, torn by conflicts, (21) divided by cleavages, weighted heavily towards the limiting effects of the patrilineal system. The religious community restores the balance. In the secular community men enjoy superior status. In the religious community social responsibility, authority and power are shifted towards women. The secular community stresses the relations of agnatic descent. In its religious counterpart the ritual roles assigned on the lineage basis are transformed into a symbolic spiritual kinship relationship binding together all members of the secular group. The orientation of the religious community, as expressed in the cult of the dead, is bilateral. The secular community is the community of the living. The religious community embraces present, past and future generations. In the secular community good things in life are scarce and shared very unequally. In the religious community they are symbolically made abundant and accessible to all. The secular community tends toward masculine authoritarianism and exclusiveness. The religious community is egalitarian and all-inclusive.

This superstructural syndrome provides in this village society a functional basis for the equation between the sacred and the social.





1.

2.

1. A Christmas custom. The daughter of the house, a young girl, performs one of the Christmas season rites, kindling the fire on the hearth and intoning: "As many sparks - so many lambs, so many calves, so many kids. As many sparks - so many children. The female lambs, the male calves. The male children." The grandmother supervises the rite, while her nephews watch.



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