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Meat in the Diet of the Dead (According to Material from the Traditional Period of the Bulgarians)

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Abstract: On the basis of archive material that has preserved the basic traditional notions of the Bulgarians, the study comments on the relationship between the souls of the righteous and the souls of sinners through the culinary code of one food, meat.

The souls of the righteous consume meat that comes from a ram (either lamb, hogget or mutton) and is perceived as a pure product; this raw material is always cooked and used to prepare *kurban* a dish with a distinctly sacrificial character. The Bulgarians conceive this dish as especially necessary for the dead, and by preparing and feeding it to them, the dead maintain the 'correct' direction of passage, guaranteeing their soul's place among the righteous in the afterlife. The souls of the greatest sinners tend to feed on blood and flesh. Such consumption is perceived by man as impure, conceptually matching the being who practices it. The living never provide flesh and blood to the most sinful souls, they do their best to interrupt this feeding process, and conceive the desire to consume both substances as a sign that the deceased has changed the proper direction of their movement and become part of the category of demons.

Thus, throughout the elements of the culinary code, the living keep the boundaries between the levels of the organised cosmos closed maintaining the mythological equilibrium within it.

Keywords: righteous, sinners, meat, culinary code, organised cosmos, balance, Bulgarians, traditional culture.

Introduction

The traditional society, also known as pre-modern, pre-industrial, is the focus of this research, which has been performed in the style of classic ethnographic science. This has been defined on multiple occasions by researchers. Its most concise definition fixes tradition as an immanent socio-cultural model, possessing an orderly structure perceived as ideal, where the routines of societies always dominate over innovations and individuals. The worldview of each member of a pre-modern society is defined by a stable moral-normative framework whose roots are archaic and characterised by thinking in opposing categories and analogies, for example God–the Devil, good–evil, day–night, light–darkness, etc. Traditional people reflect through their moral standards the ways in which they communicate with others, and make sense of the world and their own lives. Each individual's life is defined by three key events – birth, marriage and death.

These are also the general characteristics of society and the outlook of the traditional Bulgarian. Bulgarian researchers, including St. Genchev, G. Lozanova, Ann. Vodenicharova, V. Vaseva, are unanimous that traditional Bulgarians conceptualise the world as composed of visible and invisible parts. Living beings (including humans) live in the visible world, which they call 'this world'. The dead inhabit the invisible world, which is called 'that world' and is conceptualised analogously as a chronotope of the dead, parallel to but inverted from that of the living. Death itself is perceived as a social regulator, an assessment of the way each individual has spent his or her days among the living (Genchev 1985; Lozanova 1989, 1991, 1997; Vaseva 1994; Vodenicharova 1999; Mihaylova 2002).

The belief that, once dead, people slowly reach the world of the dead is widespread among Bulgarians, as Genchev writes. While moving through time and space, the deceased change from 'fresh' to 'old' ('long ago'). During this period, they are still not conceptualised as benevolent to people: assimilation to the category of ancestor is a long process. The 40th day is perceived as the turning point at which, according to Christian teaching, the soul's mortality ends and the deceased takes his or her rightful place among the dead. The

transition of the individual from 'this world' to 'the next' is completed on the first anniversary of death. From this point on, says Genchev, the dead pass into the category of 'ancestral dead', whose traditional veneration is calendrical in nature, and so they too begin to be mentioned only on days of remembrance. With the end of the first calendar year after death, the living everywhere ritually control the transition of the deceased to ensure continuity and direction are followed, and to preserve the post-death state in which body and soul are separated. It is believed that the observance of rites will ensure the soul's unimpeded passage to the afterlife, its incorporation into the dead, and its inclusion among the ancestors on whom the fertility and life of the living depend (Genchev 1985: 192–193, 201).

Traditional Bulgarians perceived the dead as a group mainly composed of the righteous (righteous souls), as well as a small number of sinners (sinful souls). The righteous are all of the dead whose lives were lived according to traditional rules and for whom all the traditional rites were performed after their death. The group of the righteous is considerably homogeneous.

The second group, that of sinful souls, includes those of the deceased who either sinned during their lives or in whose funeral rites there was a violation. Iv. Georgieva points out that the concept of sin enters into the moral system. She writes that popular notions include in the group of sinners those who violate God's commandments and church dogmas (including working on Sunday, breaking fast and prayer, and rejecting the mediating role of priests); fortune-tellers, sorcerers, and those who seek their services; those who take excessive care of their appearance; those who do not honour their parents and in-laws; drunks, usurers, dishonest merchants, bribers, cursers, the envious, eavesdroppers, gossipers, slanderers, traitors (Georgieva 1985: 71–73). Guided by the observation that in the "traditional ritual practice of the Bulgarians" there are also "several types of funeral that differ from the ordinary ones", Genchev adds these to the group of sinners as the traditional worldview negatively evaluates "actual or imaginary features of the deceased". According to Genchev, "the largest group of the 'peculiar deceased' unites those who are so sinful that 'the earth does not accept them'. These are evil-doers, murderers, arsonists, who are buried outside the cemeteries, without church rites and without observance of otherwise traditional folk customs. The only thing noted are the measures against reincarnation, since this category of people have communicated with 'impure' forces" (Genchev 1985: 204).

And so, unlike the group of righteous souls, that of the sinful dead is quite heterogeneous. There are many attempts to systematise it. S. Tolstaya, for example, points out that Bulgarians conceptualise the souls of sinners, demons, those violently put to death, unbaptised children and the dead with violations in funeral rites, as souls who do not know "personal well-being after death" (Tolstaya 2000).

At the same time, Bulgarian traditional notions arrange sinners in an ascending hierarchy. One of the highest positions is occupied by the vampire, whom Iv. Georgieva defines as "a demonic being, a reincarnated dead person who has a connection with a specific individual" and who "is a person who died or was buried out of order, i.e. reincarnated due to the violation of certain prohibitions" (Georgieva 1985: 50). Vaseva also classifies the group of demons as composed of eternally wandering spirits such as vampires and others, as the 'unclean' dead (Vaseva 1994: 153, 154, 156). A classification of the notions of demonic characters in Bulgarian tradition is also made by E. Troeva (Troeva 2003). The researcher also offers a summary of mythical and demonic notions, including the "monstrous" and the demonic body, given that people define "deviations" in the respective culture as demonic manifestations (Troeva 2011: 151). In general, researchers note that Bulgarians of pre-modern times not only believed that sinful souls have a negative effect on the living, but also contribute to some of the most sinful demonic traits. The origin of the vampire is particularly associated with the most sinful dead and with violations of funeral rites.

An original systematisation of traditional Bulgarian notions of the cosmos, as well as of the beings and relationships within it, is offered by G. Mihailova. She starts from the construction of the traditional worldview using standardised examples from life. Pre-modern Bulgarians perceived following these examples as correct and any deviation from them as incorrect. Similarly, they evaluated all people according to their observance or non-observance of moral rules in life. Mihailova defines standard benchmarks as 'symmetrical' patterns in culture ('regular', 'normal'), and deviations from them as cultural 'asymmetry' ('irregularity', 'lack of normality'). She also classifies beings accordingly as 'symmetrical' (humans and others) or 'asymmetrical', often identified as characters who are conceptualised as marginal. Mihailova also relates the above definitions to the deceased, defined by tradition as sinners or righteous. She points to the Bulgarian belief that a person who lived according to the established rules and passed through all the traditionally regulated stages of life, observed the

correct behaviour, with the living conducting the rites after death according to the norms, should have a one-way and irreversible transition in which all sins are forgiven. The deceased are then 'normal', their status is normal, their souls enter among the righteous and they should be associated with the category of 'symmetry'. The antipode, regardless of type of deviation during life or after death, is sinner and belongs to the category of 'asymmetry' and the 'abnormal' dead. These souls cannot reach the world of the dead and stand on the boundary between this world and the world of the living (Mihailova 2002).

Thus, righteous souls and sinners (though different in type) are presented as a pair, part of the binary opposition of the structure of Bulgarian ideas about the model of the organised world and the creatures inhabiting it. Mihailova's classification offers a new kind of treatment in the research of the dead, one of the most commented upon ethnological situations, including in the Bulgarian tradition. Here, I accept it and will use the terms 'symmetrical' and 'asymmetrical' when referring them to the dead and the souls of the dead in general: the former, as a synonym for righteous souls, and the latter, as a unifying name for sinners and the demons that derive their origin from them. Below I will comment on the relationship of the two types of dead with one part of the culinary code. So far, the culinary code has been interpreted more as an addition to the problems of death in Bulgarian tradition (Lozanova 1989, 1991, 1997; Vaseva 1994, 1997) or as one of the classifiers of demonic characters (Troeva 2011: 162–163), although it has rarely been placed at the centre of research (Markova 2011a, 2011b, 2016). At the same time, the relationship between the culinary code and death is full-blooded even in the 21st century, when Bulgarians still believe that among the most important duties of the living is to feed their dead, and food itself is seen as the primary means by which the living and the dead communicate.

In this paper, I will draw on archive material that preserves basic traditional notions of the care of the deceased and the impact of death on the community. The information used is extracted from 25 archive units and is part of the IEFEM-BAS archive. The material was recorded entirely in rural settings, in the extended period between the late 1840s and the 1980s, when a process of intense disintegration of traditional attitudes and culture was underway, the pace of which was uneven in different regions and settlements. The information was collected from men and women who identified themselves as Bulgarians and inhabited a wide area, such as the following regions: Montana (previously

Mihailovgrad), Vratsa, Pleven, Lovech, Sevlievo, Gabrovo, Veliko Tarnovo, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Shumen, Varna, Dobrich (previously Tolbuhin), Silistra, Sofia, Pernik, Blagoevgrad, Sandanski, Gotse Delchev, Petrich, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Panagyurishte, Stara Zagora, Haskovo, Ivaylovgrad, Sliven, Yambol and Burgas.

The juxtaposition of information from ethnographic sources shows that the Bulgarians had the idea that righteous souls and sinners had their own diets. Even towards the end of the traditional period, a number of features of the structure and composition of the diet of the 'symmetrical' survived, as well as individual relics of its analogue in the 'asymmetrical' dead. In general, traditional Bulgarians associated certain foods with both types of deceased. It is noteworthy that their only common food is meat. Its presence in different souls depends on the origin of the particular raw material, on its relationship to culinary technology, on the *topoi* of its positioning and consumption, on the relationship of the particular type of meat to notions of clean and unclean. Below I will try to trace this without pretending to exhaust the subject.

The 'symmetrical' dead man

In the relatively clearly structured menu of righteous souls, meat has a strictly defined place. First of all, its appearance refers to the meat-fasting periods, fixed by the Orthodox Christian norm and clearly distinguished in the Bulgarian traditional culture. It is common knowledge that the consumption of raw materials of animal origin is permitted when one is eating meat and not allowed when one is fasting. The rule is observed by all the living and the dead in society, whose status is regulated ('symmetrical'); that is, only during the days when the consumption of meat is allowed did Bulgarians of the premodern society feed their 'regular' dead with dishes with animal ingredients[1]. This fact, however, does not mean that meat is a permanent part of the meat-containing menu of the dead. In fact, it is used mainly in the commemorative rites performed during the first year after death, and only when the soul begins or completes its transition. To some extent, meat is also associated with the calendar feasts of the dead, when all the ancestors of the community are honoured.

Old Bulgarians perceived meat as a particularly valuable food, including for righteous souls. It is also the main animal raw material for their meat dishes

and the main ingredient for the *kurban*[2] – their special ritual dish, without which the passage of the dead is unthinkable.

For the Bulgarians of the traditional period, *kurban* is a common dish. Its importance is so great that in some places its name is used as a double form of part of the communal ritual. Genchev specifically notes that in places in the north-central regions "kurban for the dead" is the term generally used for the rites after the funeral, spanning the period of one year from death (Bulgarsko slivovo village, Veliko Tarnovo region; Petokladentsi village, Pleven region AEIM № 360-II: 55, 59).

Bulgarians perceive *kurban* as an old dish, the making of which is known to them "from time immemorial".[3] The meal is compulsorily prepared for each deceased person during the first year after death[4], and several times at that. The consumption of *kurban* is always associated with meals at the communal tables to which local traditions attach the greatest importance, i.e. those after the funeral and at the most important commemorations, where the meals are often also called *kurban*; if one of these meals coincides with a day of fasting, the dish is prepared for the next most significant commemoration.

In most cases, *kurban* is cooked three times: "a total of three kurbans must be slaughtered during the days of remembrance in the first year" (Golitsa village, Varna region AEIM № 619-II: 25); "on three of the days of remembrance within a year of death they slaughter" *kurban* (Kilifarevo village, Tarnovo region AEIM № 361-II: 32); "for every dead, three *kurbans* are slaughtered" (Velichkovo village, Pazardzhik region AEIM № 610-II: 63); "by the end of the first year there must be three *kurbans* for the soul of the dead" (Devetaki village, Lovech region AEIM № 617-II: 90, 91); until the end of the first year, three *kurbans* are slaughtered (Dolna Dikanya village, Pernik region AEIM № 614-II: 60–61, 64); "three lambs or only one lamb shall be slaughtered by the end of the first year – no more or less than that" (Prevala village, Mihaylovgrad village); "until the end of the first year are slaughtered" an odd number of *kurbans* "up to until three" "or three exactly" (Dolna Riksa village, Mihaylovgrad region AEIM № 613-II: 26, 39–40); three times during the first year a *kurban* has to be slaughtered (Petrich); "[on] at least three of the days of remembrance it's obligatory to prepare a kurban" (Dobromirovo village, Veliko Tarnovo village AEIM № 616-II: 29, 99). The three *kurbans* are related to the tables after the funeral, to the 40th day, and the day after a year passes (Pokrovan village, Ivaylovgrad region AEIM № 62-III: 33; Kilifarevo village, Tarnovo region AEIM № 361-II: 32; Velichkovo village,

Pazardzhik region AEIM № 610-II: 63), to the 40th day, the sixth month and the passing of the first year (Popintsi village, Dyulevo, Panagyurishte region AEIM № 5: 11, 12; Lilyak village, Targovishte region AEIM № 615-II: 68; Glozhene village, Devetaki, Lovech region AEIM № 617-II: 60, 90, 91), to the 40th day, the ninth month and the passing of the first year (Dolno Lukovo village, Ivaylovgrad region AEIM № 62-III: 25; Valchetran village, Pleven region AEIM № 617-II: 11, 15).

Parallel to this, the practice of slaughtering fewer or more than three *kurbans* in the first year after death is widespread. In various areas this is done only at the funeral (Varbitsa village, Pleven region AEIM № 617-II: 34–35; Kramolin village, Gabrovo region; Mandritsa village, Ivaylovgrad region AEIM № 618- II: 10, 39; Lyaskovets village, Gorna Oryahovitsa region AEIM № 695: 1; Vinitsa village, Beloslav village, Varna region, Platchkovtsi village, Etar, Gabrovo region AEIM № 619-II: 16–17, 38, 51–52, 59), after the funeral and on the 40th day (Kalipetrovo village, Silistra region AEIM № 610- II: 81; Enina village, Stara Zagora region AEIM № 611-II: 95, 97; Kozichino village, Burgas region AEIM № 612-II: 59; Egrek village, Krumovgrad region AEIM № 618- II: 32) or after the funeral and after a year has passed (Stoilovo village, Burgas region AEIM № 612-II: 40, 44; Mendovo village, Blagoevgrad region AEIM № 616-II: 24–25). More than three *kurbans* are slaughtered on one of the days of remembrance in the third, the sixth and the ninth months (Ustrem village, Yambol region AEIM № 611-II: 49; Varbitsa village, Shumen region AEIM № 613-II: 92–93, 94, 97; Rish village, Shumen region AEIM № 615-II: 74–76, 78) or at the funeral, on the 40th day, the sixth month, after a year has passed (Golitsa village, Varna region AEIM № 619-II: 25). Local reports from the Lovech region indicate that *kurbans* are slaughtered on the third, sixth, ninth and 40th days, the sixth month and the year after death (Dermantsi village AEIM № 617-II: 46–47). K. Terzieva notes that even at the beginning of the 21st century in Kazanlak region they still sacrifice *kurbans* on the 40th day, the sixth month, and one, six and nine years after death (Terzieva 2006: 192–193).

When preparing a *kurban* for a deceased person, the Old Bulgarians necessarily observed certain requirements. These are mainly related to the origin of the meat as raw material and following a specific culinary technology.

The accounts explicitly note that several types of meat are never used in the making of any dish for a dead person. Most rarely it is noted that it is beef. For example, Koleva reports that in the Varna region one of the domestic

animals sacrificed was the buffalo, as it faithfully serves man daily (Galata village, Ovcharovo region, Koleva 2006: 308). Earlier information from the Pernik region says that the meal for remembrance days "cannot in any way be cooked" with buffalo meat (Dolna Dikanya village) and that this prohibition is respected even when the animal is not kept in that particular settlement (Kozhintsi village AEIM № 614-II: 66, 100).

Recorded relatively more often is the prohibition on feeding the dead goat meat. In the Gorna Oryahovitsa region it is reported that goat or kid is never slaughtered for the dish after the funeral (Lyaskovets village AEIM № 695: 1), and in the Pernik region people explicitly exclude meat from the diet on days of remembrance (Dolna Dikanya village, Kozhintsi village AEIM № 614- II: 66, 100). In the Blagoevgrad region it is specified that since the goat is considered a devilish animal, it is not used to make a *kurban* (Mendovo village AEIM № 616- II: 24–25), and material from Berkovsko indicates that its meat "is not burnt", in the sense that it is not consecrated (Lyaskovets village AEIM № 200: 59). This connection is also traceable in materials recorded in the late twentieth century, for example in Sandanski they do not cook a goat for the dead because it is wild and a "devil animal" (Marikostinovo village, appendix I, III-IV, E. Troeva, personal communication). In the Varna region kid is one of the animals "that are not sacrificed" since it is just like "the devil – with horns and a beard" and appears as his incarnation; accordingly, "if it is promised for *kurban* it is not acknowledged and not seen "up there in the sky" (Galata village, Ovcharovo region, Koleva 2006: 308).

Quite a bit of material also points to the exclusion of raw materials derived from swine from the diet of the souls of the righteous. For example, in the Berkovsko region it is reported that "we do not burn pork", i.e., it is not consecrated (Kotenovtsi village, Lyaskovets region), that it is "not sacrificed" for days of remembrance because "the pig digs, it eats dirt" (Chiprovtsi AEIM № 200: 26, 59, 130). The motivation in Varna region is analogous: domestic animals such as pigs, "which dig in the ground and are perceived as 'unclean'", are not sacrificed (Galata village, Ovcharovo region, Koleva 2006: 308). In the region of Gabrovo people know that pigs are not slaughtered for *kurban* (Kormyansko village AEIM № 886-II: 30). Pork is also not used for days of remembrance according to information from the Panagyurishte region (Poibrene village AEIM № 5: 24), Sevlievo region – when a remembrance is held, "pork is not cooked and is not eaten" (Dobromirka village AEIM № 615-II: 88). Pork is not

given away for days of remembrance, as we see in material from the Pazardzhik region (Patalenitsa village AEIM № 610-II: 49) and the Pernik region, where people say that for these days food should not "be cooked with pork under any circumstances" (Dolna Dikanya village), and that it is "brought out", i.e. not given away for dead people (Rasnik village, Kozhintsi village AEIM № 614-II: 65–66, 81, 100). The ban on the use of pork in funeral and memorial food has also been registered in the Sandanski region (Marikostinovo village, appendix II, E. Troeva, personal communication), and the Veliko Tarnovo region, where it is known that "pork is not cooked for a dead man" (Slomer village, Veliko Tarnovo region AEIM № 616-II: 65). The juxtaposition between swine and the food of the 'symmetrical' dead can also be traced in the locally spread common ban to slaughter a pig up until the 40th day in the house in mourning (Haskovo region, Milcheva 1997: 151).

In the archival records it is often explicitly noted that the deceased's meal did not include poultry meat, for example, in the Sevlievo region it is mentioned that no hen was killed for *kurban* (Kormyansko village AEIM № 886-II: 30). In some places, it is noted that the chicken "is not burnt", for example in the Berkovitsa region (Lyaskovets village AEIM № 200: 59), the Sandanski region, where the ban is motivated by the ability of the bird to "dig backwards" and is reinforced by the fact that "it is devilish to take it to the cemetery" "chicken, hen, goose" (Marikostinovo village, appendix I, E. Troeva, personal communication). In the Varna region the hen is counted among the domesticated animals who "dig in the ground and are perceived as 'unclean'" (Galata village, Ovcharovo region, Koleva 2006: 308). In Chiprovtsi it is said that, since days of remembrance are held with the purpose of the dead "eating" "in the other world", "in the past people did not use hen [meat] because the hen digs and so it makes the table dirty" (AEIM № 200: 130)[5].

The main animal, which in Bulgarian tradition serves as the raw material for the food of the 'symmetrical' deceased, is the ram, either as lamb, hogget or mutton. Usually the meat originating from these animals is also the main matter of corporeal origin that is included in their menu. This practice was well fixed by the mid-20th century, for example, in Berkovsko it is noted that "only sheep" is used for dead (AEIM № 200: 26, 40, 59). In some places this was fully preserved into the 1990s, when in Petrichko "only sheep meat was cooked for the dead". (Marikostinovo village, E. Troeva, personal communication). An explanation for this common usage is recorded in various places. For

example, in Chiprovtsi they know that in order "that food may serve in the other world, it is best when it is given away and given for the dead, to slaughter a sheep, because for Christ 'when he was born, they sacrificed a lamb'. 'A lamb is like an angel, therefore when a man dies people slaughter sheep'" (Chiprovtsi AEIM № 200: 130–131).

In parentheses I will note that the Old Bulgarians also made substitutions for the sheep raw material intended for *kurban*, although rarely. Local materials show the appearance of beef and veal, which of course, like sheep meat, was used during meat-eating periods. Materials collected towards the middle of the 20th century show that the use of beef was "allowed" in Berkovsko (Leskovets village AEIM № 200: 59), that it was also known in the Veliko Tarnovo region (Slomer village AEIM № 616-II: 65) and the Pernik region, where it was possible for people to use meat from a calf or ox for the days of remembrance (Dolna Dikanya village, Kozhintsi village AEIM № 614-II: 66, 100).

Significantly more material indicates that during periods of fasting sheep raw material is replaced by vegetarian. It may be fish[6], a vegetarian product (for example honey or beans) or simultaneously fish and honey (most often)[7]. The connection between the emergence of fish, the Orthodox Christian worldview, the conception of the animal itself as one of the symbols of Christ and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church practice of consecrating only fish or vegetable food with oil on fast days is obvious.

Fish is most often used as a vegetarian substitute for funerary-communal dishes in the first year after death. A fish *kurban* is made after the funeral on the ninth, 20th or 40th day in Plovdiv (Krasnovo village) or on the 40th day, half a year or year commemorations in the Panagyurishte region (Popintsi village AEIM № 5: 5–6, 11). Fish is also found in the Pazardzhik region (Patalenitsa village, Velichkovo), the Silistra region (Kalipetrovo village AEIM № 610-II: 46, 60, 81), and the Varna region. In the latter they prepare *ribnik* (Vinitsa village), "fish *kurban*" (Beloslav village) or just fish (Golitsa village, three *kurbans* until the first year passes). Fish *kurban* or a dish of cooked fish is made in Gabrovo region (Platchkovtsi village AEIM № 619-II: 16–17, 25, 38, 51–52). In some places in the Lovech region if the 40th day, the sixth month or the passing of the first year fall during a fast, "the kurban is fish" (Devetaki village AEIM № 617- II: 90–91). Locally in Veliko Tarnovo region it is noted that during fasts "meat is not cooked, only olives and fish". Here the five *kurbans*, which are made during the first year, are divided as follows: "two fish and three lambs or two lambs

and three fish, according to the days during which the remembrance is held" (Slomer village AEIM № 616-II: 65, 71–72, 78–79). R. Hadzhieva also marks the presence of the *ribnik* on the funeral table in separate villages in Pirin (Hadzhieva 2006: 199–200).

In separate northern settlements it is explicitly noted that the fish can only be carp. This species is thought of as special and is given great significance, thus in the Pleven region, during fasts, they swap the *kurban* for the funeral with "one carp" (Varbitsa village AEIM № 617-II: 34–35). In the Veliko Tarnovo region people "roast one lamb or carp which are *kurban* for the deceased" (Slomer village) and even during the 1970s they found it obligatory, for at least three of the days of remembrance during the first year, "to slaughter a lamb or to cook or roast a carp" (Dobromirovo village, Veliko Tarnovo region AEIM № 616-II: 65, 71–72, 78–79, 99). The summary of the archival material shows that fish is most often a dish for 'fresh souls'. It is rarely used for the 'old deceased': for example, in the Petrich region on the day of remembrance that falls before the beginning of the Easter fast, they cook fish or they slaughter a bird (a hen or cock) (AEIM № 741-II: 16, 32–33, 49).

Returning again to the use of sheep meat for the deceased's *kurban*, I will note that in many cases importance is also attached to the sex of the animal[8] because in many areas it matches that of the deceased. Mainly in the north-west they slaughter a ram for a man and a ewe for a woman, for example in the Vidin region (Gradets village, Staropatitsa village AEIM № 612-II: 81, 94; Sredogriv village AEIM № 613-II: 2), in Montana village (Prevala village, Dolna Riksa village AEIM № 613-II: 22, 39-40), in the Sofia region and the Pernik region (Gintsi village, Vrachesh village, Dolna Dikanya village AEIM № 614-II: 10, 38–39, 60–61, 64; Galabovtsi village, Sofia region AEIM № 76: 9). In the Berkovitsa region it is especially noted that "for the woman, a female, for the man a male shall be slaughtered" (Kotenovtsi village, Leskovets village AEIM № 200: 26, 40). Locally in the Kystendil region the rule is specific: "they usually slaughter a ram for a man, a ewe for a woman, a hogget for a maiden or young (unmarried) man and a lamb for a child" (Treklyano village AEIM № 610-II: 28).

The practice of matching the sex of the sacrificed animal with that of the deceased is also known in the central northern areas. For example, in places in the Lovech region "for a woman a ewe or female lamb is slaughtered and for a man a ram or a male lamb" (Kukrina village, Devetaki village), and in Pleven region, if the deceased was an older and wealthy man, they slaughtered for

him a "kurban sheep or a lamb" for him (Valchetran village AEIM № 617-II: 11, 75, 91). Locally in Gabrovo region, "when the deceased is a man, a male lamb or ram is given and for a woman a female lamb or a ewe" (Dobromirka village AEIM № 615-II: 85), including during the 1980s (Kormyansko village AEIM № 886-II: 20, 30; AEIM № 888-II: 57). The practice is also known in the Veliko Tarnovo region (Duskot village AEIM № 616-II: 50, 55). Iv. Georgieva mentions that in separate villages in the Pirin region for a man they slaughter a ram and for a woman – a ewe that cannot have offspring (Georgieva 1980: 416). In the Pazardzhik region they used to slaughter "a ram for a man and a ewe for a woman or for other family members" (Patalenitsa village, Velichkovo village AEIM № 610-II: 46, 60).

According to some local information, a female animal is preferred for a dead man's *kurban* – such is the practice in settlements in Panagyurishte region (Popintsi village, Dyulevo village AEIM № 5: 11, 12) and the Blagoevgrad region, where it *kurban* is made "only from sheep" (Mendovo village), or if the deceased is a man they slaughter an ox and if a woman a ewe (Pokrovnik village AEIM № 616-II: 24–25, 39–40). In some places, the female animal is slaughtered only as an exception, for example in Kalimantsi village, Varna region, even during modern times a male lamb is preferred, or a hogget, and on rare occasions "a female lamb may be slaughtered but before is has been under a ram" (Koleva 2006: 308).

In the eastern regions, most often, a male animal is slaughtered for the deceased. In some places by preference this is a mature animal, i.e. a ram, for example in the Lovech region (Dermantsi village AEIM № 617-II: 46–47), the Gabrovo region (Platchovtsi village AEIM № 619-II: 51–52), the Targovishte region (Lilyak village AEIM № 615–II: 64), the Sliven region (Glushnik village AEIM № 615-II: 26). This also happens among immigrants from the Yambol and Sliven regions to the Silistra region (Alfatar village AEIM № 776: 4), and in the city of Perushtitsa until the 1950s (Kableshkova 2010: 41–42); this preference is also known in the Petrich region (AEIM № 616-II: 29).

In other eastern settlements, people slaughter a young animal, i.e. a lamb, for example in the Razgrad region (Kostandets village AEIM № 615-II: 39– 40), the Veliko Tarnovo region (Slomer village, Dobromirovo village AEIM № 616- II: 65, 99), the Ruse region (Pirgovo village), the Burgas region (Fakia village AEIM № 612-II: 18, 30), the Yambol region (Ustrem village AEIM № 611-II: 48). In the latter two village it is especially noted that the animal has to be

young. In the Lovech region it is usually "a one-year-old lamb" (Glozhene village AEIM № 617-II: 60). There are even more precise requirements in the western Blagoevgrad region where people slaughter a black lamb (Dobursko village AEIM № 616-II: 10, 16). In some places in the Pleven region (Varbitsa village AEIM № 617-II: 34), the Varna region (Vinitsa village AEIM № 619- II: 16–17), the Ivaylovgrad region (Mandritsa village) and the Razgrad region (Dryanovo village AEIM № 618-II: 39, 47–48) people might slaughter a lamb or ram, i.e. sometimes the young and the old animal are interchangeable raw materials for the food of the dead.

The traditional Bulgarian *kurban* for the deceased is prepared in a specific way. Archival information records a couple of main ingredients. The first is meat, which is used only fresh. For this purpose, the animal is first slaughtered, skinned and cleaned of its insides. Only its meat and bones are used for the *kurban*, and in some places also its head[9]. The necessary raw materials are cut or "chopped into small pieces", a stage that is especially noted (Alfatar village, immigrants from the Yambol and Sliven regions to the Silistra region AEIM № 776: 6). The prepared pieces of meat and bones are "as early as the morning" put into a big copper tinned container, especially meant for the boiling of the *kurban* (Ustrem village, Yambol region AEIM № 611-II: 48; Fakia village, Burgas region AEIM № 612-II: 30; Ustrem village, Yambol region). Two other main ingredient – salt and water – are added, which are poured into the container "to the rim", and it is put to boil on a high temperature (Ustrem village, Yambol region AEIM № 611-II: 48). "From time to time", people get rid of "the foam" (Fakia village, Burgas region AEIM № 612-II: 30) until the meal is ready.

In some places, additional ingredients are added to the dish. For example, immigrants from the Yambol and Sliven regions in the Silistra region add a couple of whole big onions and peppers (Alfatar village AEIM № 776: 6). The *kurban* is rarely boiled as a stew (the Lovech region, Vodenicharova 1999: 418– 420, notes 30, 31) with vegetable oil, fried onion, red pepper, water, tomato sauce and mint for smell (Varbitsa village AEIM № 617-II: 34).

Everywhere the *kurban* is prepared only by boiling, i.e. its culinary technology is traditional and single-type[10]. The information shows that for a dead person "roasted meat is not given away, but boiled meat, done in a big pot or cauldron" (Popovyane village, Sofia region); for days of remembrance "meat is never roasted" (Dolna Dikanya village, Pernik region AEIM № 614-II: 57, 64); "the lamb or the ram are not brought roasted but boiled in a big cauldron [for

the] kurban" (Dryanovo village, Razgrad region AEIM № 618-II: 47–48). The *kurban* itself is defined as "boiled meat with added ingredients" (Popovyane village, Sofia region), "boiled meat in a big pot or cauldron" (Dolna Dikanya village, Pernik region AEIM № 614-II: 57, 64); meat for the *kurban* is "boiled in a very large pot or in a tinned white cauldron" (Treklyano village, Kyustendil region AEIM № 610-II: 28–29). It is apparent that the Bulgarians perceive boiling chopped pieces of sheep meat and bones with added salt and water in a voluminous container as traditional technology for making sheep *kurban*.

The summary of the said archival ethnographic material shows that during the Bulgarian pre-modern period lamb, hogget, mutton and poultry are the main types of meat used to feed the 'symmetrical' dead. Their souls do not receive and do not consume poultry, ox meat, goat's meat or pork, the negativity towards the latter two remains present to the present day.

The arguments could continue in many directions. First and foremost is the relationship between food and death. Researchers are united in concluding that feeding the dead is among the most ancient of cultural relics, that it has a bearing on issues of sacrifice and offering, give-and-take, the right of the dead to the first portion of food, etc. (Freydenberg 1978: 38–41; Listova 1983: 166; Prop 1995: 148, 150–152; Vaseva 1994, 1997). Additionally, the connection between death and food containing meat is clearly outlined, and the sacrificial nature of the *kurban* in Bulgarian tradition is undeniable. As pointed out by G. Lozanova, in the cultures of the southern Slavs, a meal made of the meat of a sacrificed animal is among the obligatory dishes at the funeral table. It is perceived as a sacrifice for the soul, and the *kurban* itself is ritually equivalent to and interchangeable with other basic and obligatory ritual foods such as bread and *kolivo* (a type of boiled wheat dish used for remembrance of the dead) (Lozanova 1991: 6–8).

Indeed, in the Bulgarian tradition, the *kurban* for the dead is perceived as a ritual dish in contrast to an everyday one. This character undoubtedly brings it closer to bread and wheat, but unlike them the *kurban* is not a permanent part of funeral and memorial rites, but appears only at the moments of the soul's transition to the world of the dead and is perceived as crucial. Obviously, the *kurban* is conceptualised as food that is especially needed for the dead. This finding is supported by the traditional observance of the same basic requirements not only for the origin of the meat as raw material and for the culinary

technology, but also for the spatial arrangement of the *topoi* where the animal is slaughtered and the living eat the dish.

The same raw material is used to make the *kurban* in all of the country's regions. This is always fresh meat and bones from a ram (lamb, hogget, sheep), which in some places are replaced by beef (veal), an obvious difference from the everyday life of the traditional Bulgarian, who very rarely cooked or consumed fresh meat in daily life. The raw material is prepared in a primitive way, most often being chopped into large, irregular pieces; less often it is sliced. The remaining body parts are not used. In some areas the preference is for either a male or female animal, and in others its sex mirrors the sex and possibly social status of the deceased[11].

Using the traditionally fixed culinary technology is of great importance. The dish uses simple, minimal ingredients: meat and bones, salt and water. It is made solely by boiling, which can take place either in the home or on an open fire outside the home[12].

In Bulgarian tradition, slaughtering, preparing and eating the dish take place in two main places, in the house or at the grave of the deceased. The symbolic and real movement of the dead from his or her dwelling in 'this world' (house, home) to its chthonic analogue (grave), which is perceived as part of 'that world', points to the framing of these *topoi* as the two main focal points of the commemorative rituals in the first year after death. At the same time, the relationship between the culinary code and the home and grave of the dead also marks the change in status. A summary of the material shows that as long as Old Bulgarians conceptualised the deceased as 'new', i.e. in the first year after death, they fed them both at the grave and at home, and even visited the grave daily until the 40th day. After the first year, the connection between the culinary code and the grave diminishes, and the space of the living intensifies; respectively the meals of the deceased are considerably diluted.

The relationship between the culinary code and the grave is archaic. By the advent of modernity, the post-funeral meal had shifted more and more explicitly to the home of the deceased, despite once being held at the grave, where the animal was slaughtered. In places in the southern regions the older practice has persisted even into the modern period. For example, by the mid- 20th century, the grave *topos* was still associated with the preparation of the meat meal for the funeral: locally in the Plovdiv region they boil "the kurban at the cemetery itself" (Brestnik village AEIM № 611-II: 30, 31), and in one of the

Christian villages in the Kardzhali region people slaughtered and cooked the animal next to the cemetery fireplace (Pchelarovo village AEIM № 62-III: 42). Around mid-century, the post-funeral table was also set up next to the grave in a lot of villages in the Plovdiv region (Krasnovo village, Krushevo village), Panagyurishte region (Dolno village (Levski), Tsar Asen village AEIM № 5: 2, 5–6, 7, 21, 22), and locally in the Pirin region (Georieva 1980: 416). The link between the consumption of the *kurban*, the grave and the feeding of the dead is also suggested by older accounts which say that even when prepared in the home, the *kurban*, along with other dishes, was brought to the table in the cemetery, for example in the Razgrad region (Dryanovo village AEIM № 618- II: 47–48) and the Plovdiv region (Brestnik village AEIM № 611-II: 30, 31). Usually this happens with the container, for example in the Pazardzhik region (Saraya village Gerginova, B. 2010: 217, 220) and the Kyustendil region, where they hang it from a big stick so that the dish remains warm (Treklyano village AEIM № 610-II: 29).

Details of the origin of the meat as raw material, use of a certain culinary technology, the consecration of the *kurban*, and eating it near the grave are all signs of the sacrificial character of the dish and its symbolic purity. Vaseva defines the rule that food for the dead should be clean, since unclean food is conceptualised as being capable of 'dusting' (contaminating) the deceased's table, as a common Bulgarian one[13]. Generally, the living provide only pure food and drink to the souls they feed.

Analysis of ethnographic evidence points to the conclusion that when feeding the dead, the Old Bulgarians sought to preserve established order in the organised cosmos. The archaic notion that boundaries are drawn between worlds which the living must take special care of and preserve is relatively fixed in their pre-modern thinking. These boundaries are broken down at times of crisis such as the significant moments in human life: every birth of a new person and the onset of death among the living are conceived such. Tolstaya writes that the "formula of coexistence" between the worlds of the living and the dead provides for their separate existence through strictly defined modes of interaction in chronotope and ritual, and that this "formula" aims to maintain the boundary and ensure the well-being of both the living and the dead (Tolstaya 2000: 19–20). As I have already pointed out, the dead, and especially those with an incomplete transition, carry an abstract danger which the living neutralise in various ways through rites. Vaseva points out that through their

ritual actions on the calendar days of remembrance the living aim to complete the transition of these dead, to restore stability to the society (Vaseva 1994: 157–168).

One of the means by which the living help the dead to make their transition, stabilise their status and preserve it, is obviously the culinary code. Relating this conclusion to all that has been said so far about sheep *kurban* for the dead, we can say that this food is only for those whom traditional Bulgarians perceive (assume to be, expect to be) 'symmetrical'. In a reciprocal sense, this means that by offering the righteous soul its favourite food sacrifice, i.e. sheep *kurban*, the living seek to maintain the 'symmetrical' status of the dead in the afterlife. Two local accounts are interesting in this regard. The first is from the Panagyurishte region and reports that the *kurban* is made for the "forgiveness of the sins of the dead" (Metchka village AEIM № 5: 19), i.e. by feeding the soul with this dish, the living seek to secure a place among the righteous souls. The second piece of information is from the Pazardzhik region, where it is believed that in the 'other world' the dead "form a little flock of the three *kurbans* and will be its shephard" (Velichkovo village, Pazardzhik region AEIM № 610-II: 63), i.e., also with the help and the *kurban* slaughtered for the dead they will retain the regularity of status they enjoyed in life.

To the frequency of the *kurban* as food not just for the dead, but for the righteous dead, is significant. It is present most often in the first year after death, appearing several times: in most cases after the funeral, on the 40th day and on the day on which the first year of death passes, i.e. to a large extent the *kurban* can be defined as one of the typical ritual foods for the dead in transition. When the first year after death has passed the *kurban* is no longer an obligatory part of ritual meals. After this period, its occurrence is rather linked to the material possibilities of the family, for example, it is noted in some places that after the first year it is rarely prepared, and that it is possible to make it on the three and nine year anniversaries (Duskot village, Veliko Tarnovo region AEIM № 616- II: 50, 57), but this depends more on the means of the family (Mogila village, Yambol region AEIM № 613-II: 85). Thus, the presence of the *kurban* can be seen as a sign that the dead person for whom it is intended is perceived as 'symmetrical' and that most often no more than a year has passed since death.

It is obvious that during the period of passage from 'this world' to 'the next' (i.e. during the first year after death) Bulgarians 'control' the soul's flesh-eating through the *kurban*. It is not unimportant that 'control' is associated with meals

at communal tables, to which local notions attach the greatest importance (rather than to handouts or lesser commemorations) and where the elderly socialised men and women of the whole community participate. This prevents the risk of an unwanted reversal in the direction of movement of each deceased individual, ensuring the 'symmetry' of souls reaching the afterlife according to traditional rules, maintaining balance in the cosmos.

The 'asymmetrical' dead

In the Bulgarian ethnographic material, there is little direct information about the diet of the 'asymmetrical' dead. Therefore, in most cases it is possible to partially reconstruct it by applying a different approach, i.e. correlating the abundance of information about the diet of the 'symmetrical' dead with specific relics of the pre-modern conception of the world through opposing categories. Such a method implicitly points to the specificities in the diet of their antipodes.

According to Bulgarian traditional ideas, demons, whose origin is associated with sinners, also consume food, but in a way that is different from that of both righteous souls and living people. Their menu is composed mainly of corporeal matter, which is, however, distinguished from the raw material used for the *kurban* of the 'symmetrical' dead. The origins of demons, their lack of substitutability and their attitude to culinary technology are what stands out[14].

It is thought that some of the souls of sinners consume meat raw materials that their 'symmetrical' antipodes do not consume. For example, certain diseases whose origin is female have a marked affinity for poultry (Markova 2011b). The ghoul definitely shows a penchant for sucking the blood of pigs slaughtered for Christmas and for eating blood-sausage made with their blood[15]. The idea that some of the most evil demons swallow blood from humans and domestic animals is widely known among Bulgarians. A typical example is the vampire, who not only occupies one of the highest positions in the demonic hierarchy, but is also perceived as a kind of emanation of aggressive feeding behaviour. The vampire feeds on the blood of humans and some of their domestic animals (Georieva 1985: 50–52; Troeva 2003: 55), a characteristic that is understood to be a typical feature.

This leads to the constatation that the Old Bulgarians conceived corporeal matter in general as the most important, the main, and in some cases the only

dish for the demonic characters whose origins were associated with the 'asymmetrical' dead. While the souls of the righteous eat meat only during the blessed periods and at the most important moments in the first year of their transition, the greatest sinners can consume such food at all times. The vampire especially wishes to ingest mainly blood. Accordingly, its consumption, like that of human flesh, is conceptualised as a sign of harmful demons, of being in their space and of their wild and absolutely untamed nature. Bulgarians define total gluttony and eating dead creatures as impure regimes; this consumption is not only taboos, but also identified as among the absolute cultural prohibitions for members of the group (i.e. living people and souls of the righteous) (Markova 2011 a).

Beliefs never connect the consumption of blood and human meat with any kind of preliminary processing, i.e. the two materials also relate negatively to culinary technology. The semantic link between their ingestion, their raw (natural) state and the complete lack of cooking is obvious. Blood and forbidden meat are absolute and meaningful antipodes of man's food and culture[16].

As Mihailova writes, traditional Bulgarians believe that "righteous souls live in the other world in paradise", but she does not specify the location of sinners clearly (Mihailova 2002). In some places in the Lovech region it is localised generally as "hell" (Dermantsi village AEIM № 617-II: 1, 42), while in other places it is considered that the souls of sinners remain "wandering the earth" (Varbitsa village, Pleven region AEIM № 617-II: 20; Kozhintsi village, Pernik region AEIM № 614-II: 84–85). This means that they consume in *topoi* and in time periods that are conceptualised as impure; the food of the 'asymmetrical' dead is also undeniably conceived as a possible contaminant on the table of its 'symmetrical' antipode. Of course, the places and time periods in which the two groups of dead eat are different. In the case of sinners, these are their dwelling places mainly located in the vicinity of their graves. Temporally, their consumption relates to the "secretive hour", the nocturnal hours locked between sunset and the first crowing of the roosters, which are also perceived most negatively (Markova 2011b). In the mentioned chronotope the most sinful souls can devour these substances, which, however, the living never provide them with, and even do their best to interrupt the possible feeding process on these foods. This reasoning has its clearest confirmation in the fragmentary notions of the feeding of the vampire. For example, according to beliefs from the Vidin region, a vampire's soul "cannot reach the other world and remains in the grave. In the 'secretive hour' after midnight, it goes out there and wanders

until the first rooster crows" (Sredogriv village AEIM № 613-II: 10), while in the Veliko Tarnovo region they think that during the night the soul of a dead man-vampire "comes out of the grave through a small hole and goes to disturb its relatives" (Duskot village AEIM № 616-II: 48–49).

There is also a clear semantic link between consumption and the change in the status of the dead. According to the classical definition of Vl. Prop, the dead ask the living to satisfy their hunger because if they remain hungry "[they] will find no rest and will return as a living ghost. This is what the living and the dead are afraid of, and this is what fear of the dead is due to" (Prop 1995: 146, 148, 149). In Bulgarian traditional beliefs, there is apparently also a meaningful connection between the hungry dead (in general), eating human flesh, and the movement of beings between mythological levels, for example both the grateful and the hungry dead move in the organised cosmos, although unlike the grateful dead, the hungry can move towards the chronotope of 'asymmetrical' beings and can change status in a negative way. It is no coincidence that Bulgarians perceive eating as the main occupation of characters who devour flesh and blood[17]. They are perceived as constantly hungry, with their insatiable hunger awakening and developing the demonic in their nature. I will also refer to Mihailova's observation that when hungry, demons and sinful souls seek food, becoming mobile and causing catastrophes. When they perceive 'symmetrical' beings as the source of their food they threaten to devour them (Mihailova 2002: 184–195). Living people cannot control the consumption of vampiric characters and thus cannot influence their behaviour. Their perception as antipodes is also guided by the action code, for example at night, when demons are active, mobile and hungry, the 'symmetrical' (humans, souls) are passive and static (sleeping and not eating). Therefore, the appearance in the deceased's diet of corporeal substances which the person perceives as impure, with taboos on their consumption, can be seen as an indisputable sign that the deceased has not successfully completed the transition and has joined the category of sinners.

Conclusion

And so, according to Bulgarian traditional beliefs, meat is the only matter of corporeal origin that can be defined as common food for all the dead. The 'sym-

metrical' deceased satisfy their nutritional needs with meat that is perceived to be pure, and do not consume products that come from bird, buffalo, goat or pig. Their meat comes only from the ram (lamb, hogget, mutton); in many areas the animal's sex is also important; and during fasting periods sheep may be replaced by fish. Meat for the 'symmetrical' dead is always processed culinarily in a way that is used only in ritual and is characterised by primitivism, a minimum number of ingredients and the use of boiling only. Only one dish is thus prepared, called *kurban*, which has a distinctly sacrificial character. In the Bulgarian tradition, its preparation and consumption are associated with the two main *topoi* of the commemorative ritual in the first year after death, the home and the grave.

Bulgarians conceptualise the *kurban* as a particularly necessary meal for the dead. It appears mainly in the first year after death – at the funeral, on the 40th day, and the day after a year has passed since death. Then it repeatedly marks the key moments of the soul's transition to the world of the dead and maintains its 'proper' direction. By presenting the soul with pure sacrificial meat at communal meals where socialised members of the community participate, the living exercise nutritional 'control' over the flesh-eating of dead souls, ensure their place among the righteous ones, and guarantee their 'symmetrical' status in the afterlife.

For these 'asymmetrical' deceased, meat is the most important dish they can consume regardless of the periods of allowed meat consumption and fasting. The most sinful souls can even consume human flesh, and together with human blood this makes up both their main 'menu' and two of the main substances that the premodern Bulgarian taboos in relation to 'symmetrical' beings. It is believed that the most sinful souls inhabit a wilderness which the living cannot tame or control. Humans perceive their feeding as an impure mode and identify chronotopes distinguished by impurity. In general, Bulgarians conceive any being who practices such feeding as absolutely malevolent and harmful. The living never provide flesh and blood for the most sinful souls, instead they do their utmost to interrupt such feeding, conceiving the desire to consume both substances as a sign that the deceased has changed the proper direction of movement and become part of the category of demons.

By feeding the dead who are perceived as righteous, and by seeking to hinder the analogous process in the most sinful souls, traditional Bulgarians try to control the specifics of their statuses, i.e. preserving the 'symmetry' of

the former and maintain the established distance to the latter. Meat is one of the ingredients with which man serves himself. Thus, through elements of the culinary code the living keep the borders between levels in the organised cosmos closed and maintain mythological equilibrium within it.

Notes

[1] The dependence of the dead's menu on periods of meat consumption and fasting is a cultural trait that is well known to Bulgarians today.

[2] Apart from this, in Bulgarian tradition only a few other meat dishes are included in the diet of the dead. These are *sarma*, stuffed peppers, eggs or cooked meat (rare and local variants). Compared to the *kurban*, the importance of these foods is much lower.

[3] It is noted only in isolated accounts that preparation of the *kurban* only began in more recent times. For example, material from Ivaylovgrad, recorded in the mid-1980s, notes that "in older times, in Turkish times, the ram was not used at all. In most recent times, they started to slaughter the ram and they cooked a kurban in a cauldron". (Dolno Lukovo village AEIM № 62-III: 22).

[4] Most likely, the generally known character of this obligation is the reason why in some cases it is not reported or explicitly stated in the information.

[5] In isolated and localised material collected after the mid-20th century, when traditional relationships were rapidly breaking down, old notions were fading and being lost and new and modern elements were increasingly entering even the most isolated villages and their gated communities. At this time pork and poultry products began to be mentioned among the foods of the dead. Bacon was among the ingredients (also boiled cabbage, bulgur wheat) for a dish prepared for the funeral table locally in the Plovdiv region (Karadzhalovo village AEIM № 851-II: 111–112). Bacon is also added to the *kachamak*, which in the Gotse Delchev region "according to a very old custom" is boiled before dawn on the first Thursday of Lent and distributed "after dark for the dead" (Ilinden village AEIM № 742-II: 56). In single reports from Dobrudja among the mentioned winter foods of remembrance is pork with rice (AEIM № 632-II). Separate materials mention the fragmentary participation of poultry meat on lesser and great days of remembrance: in Vidin people who come to pay their respects the deceased also bring chicken (Sredogriv village AEIM № 613-II: 3), while poultry stew appears on the funeral table in Dobrudja (AEIM № 632-II) and in some villages in the Sredna Gora region, on the evening of the 40th day, they arrange a "dinner for the dead" at the grave, one of the foods brought being "seven or eight hens". (Slatina village, Plovdiv region AEIM № 852-II: 198). In the Razgrad region, if days of remembrance fall on a day

when meat consumption is allowed, lamb can be swapped for poultry (Osenets village AEIM № 613- II: 68), and on the anniversary of the death, in the Targovishte region it is "obligatory [to] slaughter a goose or a turkey" (Lilyak village AEIM № 615-II: 67). Although rarely, the meat of a bird is also associated with food on days of remembrance. For example, chicken is one of the foods given out in the Lovech region (Devetaki village AEIM № 617-II: 92), the Gabrovo region, where it is noted that it is boiled (Dobromirka village AEIM № 615-II: 89–89), and the Sofia region, where it is a fried hen. The researcher P. Petrov, who registered the practice in the latter region, specifically notes that this dish is an "interesting" local peculiarity on days of remembrance and that the practice dates from "older times" (Gintsi village AEIM № 614-II: 15–16). Locally in Dobrudja (AEIM № 632-II) and in the Petrich region, poultry appears on days of remembrance before the Easter fast (AEIM № 741-II: 16, 32–33, 49).

[6] In some villages in the Lovech region the belief that fish should not be given as a *kurban* for a dead is registered. Popov notes that here it is motivated by the danger that "in the other world the soul will run after the fish and drown" (Popov 1999: 280).

[7] Some accounts refer to the interchangeability of fish and honey as vegetarian equivalents of sheep *kurban*, for example in the Gabrovo region (Kormyansko village AEIM № 886- II: 30, 31) and the Razgrad region (Kostandenets village AEIM № 615-II: 39–40; 39), where "they spare nothing to feed the soul of the dead well". In the Kazanlak region, the simultaneous function of the two foods existed at the end of the 20th century, when they were still found on the 40th day, sixth month, and one, six, and nine years' anniversaries of death (Terzieva 2006: 192–193).

[8] In some places it does not matter, and according to availability a lamb or a sheep is slaughtered, for example in Kalipetrovo village, Silistra region (AEIM № 610-II: 81), Brestnik village, Plovdiv region, and Mogilevo village, Stara Zagora region (AEIM № 611-II: 31, 84).

[9] In the Lovech region, the head is separated and boiled and the meat taken out and chopped into pieces. This is left for the soul of the deceased so that "he may eat when he comes" (Vodenicharova 1999: 418-420, notes 30, 31). In the Veliko Tarnovo region they give it to the priest (Slomer village AEIM № 616-II: 71, 72), while in the Panagyurishte region, they take it to the cemetery where they break it up and give it away after the funeral (Smilets village AEIM № 5: 15). Locally in the Veliko Tarnovo region, they do a similar thing to the head of the fish: "if it is during a fast the *kurban* is either fish or honey, and in this case the head of the fish has to be given to the priest" (Duskot village AEIM № 616-II: 55).

[10] The meat is roasted only according to isolated information (Varbitsa village, Pleven region AEIM № 617-II: 34).

[11] Local evidence suggests that beef or veal functioned as an identy marker of the male sex and higher social status of the deceased: in places in the Gorna Oryahovitsa region, if the deceased was wealthy, they slaughtered a calf (Lyaskovets village AEIM № 695: 1), while in the Blagoevgrad region an ox was slaughtered for a man and a ewe for a woman (Pokrovnik village AEIM № 616-II: 39–40).

[12] A different method of preparation is sued only on rare occasions. For examples, materials from the Pazardzhik region explicitly state that if beef is used for a deceased man, "they cook it like normal meat, not like a *kurban*" (Patalenitsa village AEIM № 610-II: 48–49), thus making the dish is linked to the culinary technology of everyday life, not with that of the *kurban*.

[13] Vaseva considers this risk in mythological terms and interprets it as a threat to the birth–death–rebirth cycle in global terms (Vaseva 1997: 98).

[14] See also the observation of Troeva that demons in male hypostasis have a tendency to eat meat, and those in female to eat vegetarian food. Troeva concludes that gender differences are expressed at the mythological level through the culinary code and believes that "demons whose origin comes from a deceased person show a greater preference for foods that contain meat and blood. Since this is the substance of which they are made, eating it can be interpreted as an act of self-devouring", and that "by attributing to demons the tendency to cannibalism, one of the basic prohibitions in human society is marked" (Troeva 2011: 162–163).

[15] M. Gabrovski and M. Benovska-Sabkova mark that the ghoul is also perceived as an incarnation of the spirit of the Christmas pig (Gabrovki 1985: 208–209; Benovska-Sabkova 2002: 156).

[16] Traditional Bulgarians mainly consume cooked or fermented dishes. Onions, garlic, leeks and salt are eaten raw (fresh fruit rarely). Bulgarians never associate garlic with the diet of the 'asymmetrical', and uses this as his main apotropaic against them.

[17] The hypertrophy of their organs, associated with consumption, is indicative: carnivorous creatures possess enormous mouths, bellies and teeth, and are described or conceptualised as large sacks (Markova 2011a).

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Used sources: AEIM (АЕИМ) № 5, 76, 200, 695, 776, 360–II, 361–II, 610–II, 611–II, 612–II, 613–II, 614–II, 615–II, 616–II, 617–II, 618–II, 619–II, 632–II, 741–II, 742–II, 851–II, 852–II, 886–II, 888–II, 62–III.

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