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Dimitrije Golemović:
Narodna muzika Plava i Gusinja. Muslimanska tradicija Plava
(The Folk Music of Plav and Gusinje. The Muslim Tradition of Plav)
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Although the methodological possibilities of modern musicology are diverse, for many scholars “fieldwork” remains the basis for any kind of research. Hearing music in an immediate performance and talking with players and singers is an invaluable experience, which can resolve many doubts and considerably shorten the way to discovering a specific scientific “truth”. What is particularly appealing is going to an off-the-beaten-track place enclosed by mountains, in which archaic forms of traditional culture are preserved. Ethnomusicological research in such circumstances turns into an irresistible adventure in which, like in a time-machine of sorts, sounds of the forgotten music past are directly revealed.

At the initiative of members of an association of citizens of Plav and Gusinje living in the Netherlands, “Prokletije”, ethnomusicologist Dimitrije Golemović found himself in Plav in December 2002. Caught in time and space, this barely accessible small town lies on the northwestern slopes of the Prokletije mountain range, near the Montenegrin-Albanian border. Although once mostly Orthodox, as witness the many deserted cemeteries and dilapidated churches, the citizens of Plav are now predominantly Muslim. Owing to its geographical position and, as Golemović formulates it, the absence of “good communication”, Plav safeguards the archaic forms of traditional rural and town music-making which, considering the denomination of the majority population, has many characteristics of oriental music.

As a typical rural instrumental praxis, the performing of traditional dances on the tambour, accordion or in a smaller ensemble (2 tambours, *karaduzen* and accordion), is to be found in Plav. Albeit very meager (barely a few dances: *alaturka*, *Sarajka* and *Suljovica*), the dance repertoire has been preserved to date. Unlike this repertoire, the old rural singing praxis is recorded through only one example on this compact disc. This is a song of small tonal scope *Devojka je goluba nivila* (*The Girl Stroked a Pigeon*), performed in the structure of ornamental heterophony, which is known in the villages of Plav and many other parts as singing *na glas*.

Rare music examples published on this disc are a real ethnomusicological treat. They are invaluable for a number of reasons. First, they are a direct testimony that the practice of gusla music-making was once characteristic of not only the Orthodox, but also the Muslim population, which is little known even among experts. Then, vocal forms of singing to gusla reveal a poly-genre character: the

narrative flow of the 13-syllable song *Opio se Gundžić Meho Biogradjanin* (*Inebriated was Gundžić Meho of Biograd*) is interrupted by a refrain, and it ends with a friendly moral in which the man's weakness for the woman is justified; the 7-syllable song *Pošetao lijep, mlad* (*He Walks, Handsome and Young*) is essentially amusing, despite the narrative quality of its flow.

Town singing in Plav can be with or without instrumental accompaniment. If it is played to an instrument, it is usually the two-stringed tambour or, in some cases, accordion. Regardless of the instrument used in the accompaniment, town singing in Plav is characterized by simplicity of melody and melopoetic shaping, as well as by the absence of agogic and dynamic nuancing. All this makes the town singing of Plav's Muslims sonically very reminiscent of the "ravna pesma" (flat song) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, according to Dimitrije Golemović, directly points to their common rural origin. This thesis is also confirmed by a presence of heterophonic second chords which appear in the two-part performance of certain examples (*Mejra šeta sama mermernim sokakom /Mejra Walks Alone Down the Marble Street/, Pospalo dvoje i dvoje* (*A Couple and A Couple Fell Asleep*), *Dockan Avdo iz tudjine dodje* (*Late is Avdo Returning from Foreign Lands*)).

The compact disc *Muslimanska tradicija Plava* reveals sonic spaces of times long past and distant regions, barely accessible even to musicologists. With an expert study in Serbian and English, a few photographs and a geographical map of south-east Montenegro, this ethnomusicological adventure of Dimitrije Golemović's becomes ours, too, and his musical experience becomes part of our joint ethnomusicological treasury.

Translated by Dušan Zabrdac