



SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL CLUB RUSE,
BULGARIA

TASTES OF DANUBE: BREAD WINE AND HERBS



Authors:Juliana Andonova

Milena Popova

The project concepts **BREAD, WINE** and **HERBS** have been deeply connected since time immemorial:

Biologically – through technologies of preparation, where herbs were used in making wine and bread

Spiritually – as a cultural mosaic of intertwined religions and civilisations, ancient and modern rituals, where each element of the trinity is loaded with symbolic meanings.



ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF BREAD ON THE LANDS OF BULGARIANS

- ❖ The oldest archeological finds of wheat grain in Bulgaria are of *limets* (*Triticum monococcum*) during the Neolyth in **Ohoden**, Vratsa, Northwest Bulgaria dated to the **7th millennium BCE**.
- ❖ The settlement belongs to the early Neolythic culture **Gradeshnitsa-Kurcha** between the rivers Yantra and Timoc, south of the Danube and Oltenia in Southwest Romania.



ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF BREAD ON THE LANDS OF BULGARIANS

- ❖ **Bread** can be seen as a **ritual object** in the ancient burial ceremonies, painted on the walls of the burial chambers in the **Thracian mounds** in the valley of the Kings near **Kazanluk**
- ❖ In the Thracian cult temple in **Starosel**, near Plovdiv, the stone breads found were most probably offerings to **Hestia**, the Greek goddess of home, hearth and fire, dated **359-351 BCE**.



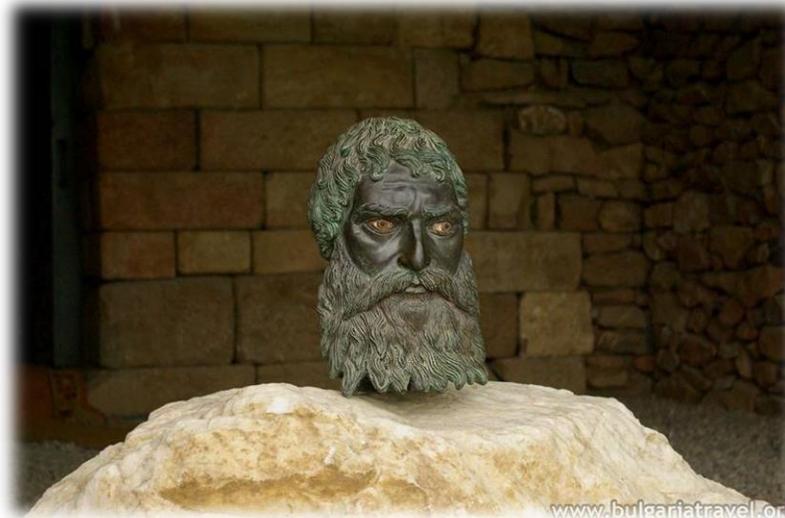
ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF BREAD ON THE LANDS OF BULGARIANS



The **stone breads** near Starosel and the
Thracian ritual of offering bread and wine to
Hestia



ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE OF BREAD ON THE LANDS OF BULGARIANS



Ancient Greek written sources (Xenophon) testify that the Thracian ruler, **Seuthes**, **broke the bread** himself and **gave out wine** to his guests – a sacred ritual for **INCLUSION** of “foreign” to “own” in the community.



A living tradition today is welcoming the guests with bread and salt, which can be found not only in Bulgaria, but in other countries along the Danube

CHRISTIANITY is accepted as the boundary between the **two periods** in the evolution of bread:

Discovery of bread and development of technologies for its production

Transforming bread into the centre of a cultural and spiritual value system.

The Bible says:

Luke 22:19 *And he took bread, and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them, saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*

First Corinthians 10:17 *...because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.*



EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION OF BREAD

BREAD is not only a staple food, but also a universal cultural symbol, accompanying key moments in people's lives – national **calendar rituals, initiations** and transitions in one's life: **birth, wedding, death**, etc. The grain is ground, sifted, kneaded into bread, decorated and baked.





The final purification of this symbolic object is putting it through fire in the hearth

Rituals help **order** to win over **chaos**. Man's activities that involve "taming the wild" have always been considered sacred. This is the meaning of bread: it is made from grain, which is a product of man's cultivation of land.

BULGARIAN RITUAL BREADS

Calendar rituals

They follow the **Christian calendar** of feasts. The bread recipes take into account the **periods of fasting** in Christianity. However, some have ancient pre-Christian influences. Another criterion is the reason for the celebration: the **bread for health** is made **with leaven** (sourdough), while the **bread for death** is **unleavened**.

Christmas Eve bread



SPRING AND SUMMER HOLIDAYS

St. Theodore's day - the first Saturday of the Great Lent

The holiday involves **horse racing**, so the bread is in the shape of **horse shoe** and is sprinkled with garlic, walnuts and salt.



SPRING AND SUMMER HOLIDAYS

St. Lazarus' day and Palm Sunday – related to the parable of Lazarus rising and Christ welcomed in Jerusalem

The folklore is marked with pagan rites - girls, called “**lazarki**” carry ivy branches, bunches of flowers and **bread “dolls”**, which they throw in the river for life and fertility.



SPRING AND SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Easter – the sweet Easter bread symbolises Christ's body and the red egg – the power of Resurrection



SPRING AND SUMMER HOLIDAYS

St. George's day - 6 May

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church celebrates St. George the Victorious, who died in 303 CE for Christianity. He is the patron saint of Bulgaria. On this day we celebrate the Day of the Bulgarian Army. It is also the day of Ruse, Bulgaria and Giurgiu, Romania. The bread is decorated with the initials of the saint – SG.

St. George's bread



SPRING AND SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Assumption - 15 August

It is one of the biggest Christian holidays, dedicated to Virgin Mary, celebrated by all Christian denominations. The ritual bread is consecrated in church and given to friends and neighbours for health.

Virgin Mary's bread



AUTUMN AND WINTER HOLIDAYS

Holy Cross day - 14 September

Exaltation of the Holy Cross of the Lord. On this day the Sun goes back to winter – the day and night cross. The ritual bread is unleavened, so it must be eaten while it is warm. It is decorated with a cross.

Holy Cross bread



AUTUMN AND WINTER HOLIDAYS

St. Archangel Michael's day – 8 November

In the Bulgarian folklore tradition this day is related to **honouring of the dead** and the soul of man. The bread is made from two round shaped pieces and decorated with crosses and an open “fence”, so that the home is never empty. **The oldest family member breaks the ritual bread, pours wine over it and blesses it.**

Rangelov bread



AUTUMN AND WINTER HOLIDAYS

St. Nicolas' Day - 6 December

In the orthodox tradition St. Nicolas, is revered as the **patron of sailors, anglers and bankers**. According to the legend, the saint was caught in a storm at sea and water started coming into his boat from a hole at the bottom. He took a fish and plugged the hole with it.

The ritual bread is decorated with **a fish and a cross**. On this day the Christmas tree is decorated.

St. Nicolas' bread



AUTUMN AND WINTER HOLIDAYS

Christmas Eve – 24 December

The **unleavened bread**, called **Bogovitsa**, is broken with the words „Come, Oh Lord, to have dinner with us“. The table is not cleared after dinner, for it is believed that in the silent night, besides the Lord, all our dead relatives are having dinner with us. The decoration includes **grapes and wheatear** for prosperity, **sun** to caress the crops and a **cross** as a symbol of faith.

Bogovitsa



AUTUMN AND WINTER HOLIDAYS

Christmas day - 25 December

The **unleavened bread**, called **Bogovitsa**, is broken with the words „Come, Oh Lord, to have dinner with us“. The table is not cleared after dinner, for it is believed that in the silent night, besides the Lord, all our dead relatives are having dinner with us. The decoration includes **grapes and wheatear** for prosperity, **sun** to caress the crops and a **cross** as a symbol of faith.

Christmas day bread



AUTUMN AND WINTER HOLIDAYS

New Year's - 1 January

The **luck tokens** in the New Year's banitsa are your luck for the coming year. You may “draw” the **house**, the **car**, the **prosperity**, a new **job**, **health**, etc. The most desired piece is the **coin** as a symbol of good material fortune.

Banitsa with luck tokens



AUTUMN AND WINTER HOLIDAYS

St. Trifon Zarezan – 14 February

St. Trifon is a **saint-healer** and a **martyr**, slain with a sword in 248. In the Bulgarian folklore calendar, the holiday resembles the pagan Dyonisian festivals. On that day the **vines are cut** and “**washed**” with **wine** with a wish for fertility.

The ritual bred is made with leaven and decorated with grapes.

Trifon Zarezan's bread



COMMUNION BREAD – EUCHARIST

- ❖ One of the Christian church sacraments is the Eucharist. Bread is central in this ritual. Through bread and wine we take Jesus into us, believing that the Holy Spirit has turned them into Jesus' body and blood.
- ❖ The early Christians brought their bread and wine to church for the sacrament to be performed – that is why it was called “offering” (prichastie)
- ❖ In Orthodox Christianity the bread is leavened and in the Catholic rituals it is unleavened.



COMMUNION BREAD – EUCHARIST

Bread with a symbol

The small breads are made in the shape of two circles and on the top one a stamp with specific religious symbols is placed. The round shape symbolises the Earth where Jesus descended to save humankind. The **two circles** symbolise the **two natures of Jesus** – divine and human. The church Communion bread stamps have canonical shape. Their most important sign is a **square with a cross** in it and the letters:

IC XP NI KA – Jesus
Christ the Victorious



HOME EUCHARIST

Wooden domestic Communion bread stamps

Besides the church Communion bread stamps, in Bulgaria there are domestic Communion bread stamps, used on the ritual breads.

The home-made Communion breads also observed the canonical requirements – to be **leavened and censed, kneaded** by a married woman with **“silent water”**. While kneading, the woman would say prayers with the words “God bless this bread” or „Holy Cross over this bread, Holy Mother over this bread”.



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Preparing rye sourdough and bread following Carmen Stadelhofer's recipe



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Preparing rye sourdough and bread following Carmen Stadelhofer's recipe



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Preparing rye sourdough and bread following Carmen Stadelhofer's recipe



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Ritual bread on the 40ieth day of Juliana's grand daughter Bella



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Friends baking bread and bread products



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Friends baking bread and bread products



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Passing the sourdough to SI Club Brashov



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Exchanging bread with SI Brashov in Brashov



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Exchanging bread with SI Brashov in Brashov



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Exchanging bread with SI Brashov in Brashov



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Sharing bread with members of SI Club Ruse



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Sharing bread with members of SI Club Ruse



OUR EXPERIENCE WITH BREAD

Sharing bread with members of SI Club Ruse





THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Check on us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/SoroptimistRuse/>



