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# Ritual and Social Structure in a Macedonian Village (Introduction)

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RITUAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

IN A MACEDONIAN VILLAGE

by

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edited by

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Department of Anthropology

University of Massachusetts

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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 Cracow 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 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. Dittosed 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 Joel Halpern, eds., Cambridge, Schenkman, 1976.)

Barbara K. and Joel M. Halpern  
Amherst, May, 1977