

cream, meat), and the hosts pour their brandy to the guests. The dinner goes on with the agreement of the wedding. They decide on the date of the wedding, time of arrival and time of departure of the wedding guests, number of the bridegroom's guests and of the bride's guests, as well as gifts that the girl shall bring to her new home. It is very important to determine the number of wedding guests that will come for the girl, since her family shall prepare breakfast and beverages for them at the wedding day. They agreed on the number of bride's wedding guests that will come with her at the bridegroom's house for a wedding reception. At the time they agreed also whether the couple would carry out municipal or church wedding ceremony on that same day, or they would do it on some other day only in presence of their godparents. The night goes on with songs and joy and it mostly happened that some neighbors or cousins who knew, or found out that something is happening in the neighboring house, would join the celebration. On this occasion people would often play folk dance called the round. The proposers would dominate in the celebration, since the girl's family used to be restrained, because this act leaves them without one member of family. The girl could come for couple of times in front of the proposers, by her father-in-law's wish. In Potkozarje there is a recorded case that father-in-law wanted the girl to light the pipe for him, so the future daughter-in-law on her palm first covered with cold cinder brought a piece

of live coal which her father-in-law used to light the tobacco in the pipe.

The proposal would end before dawn, at sunrise. The proposers would pack, and some of younger females in the household would bestow them with prepared gifts. At recent time the future bride would bestow and adorn her proposers. They would put *cloths* (towels) on men, and *scarves* (napkins) on women. Apart from all these mandatory items, the proposers could be bestowed by shirts, bags, woolen socks, or other items. Earlier all gifts were handmade by the bride, and in recent time the shirts or towels would be bought for this occasion. All gifts were put on the proposers, and care was taken that the father-in-law is the best adorned. If the proposers came from afar, by horse carts, both the horses and the carts would be adorned by tissues. The host pours brandy to their flasks and if the girl is not present, he takes her out to salute the proposers. Often in the yard they would sing and dance the folk dance round. All the present people celebrate and shout, and adorned like this, proposers set to their homes. In the recent time it is a custom that the girl sends them off for a part of the road. On their way home they celebrate, sing and treat all persons they meet with brandy, informing them in this way that they have managed to propose to a girl for their bachelor and that soon there would be a wedding celebration.

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# Proposal

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## Proposal

One of the most important moments of the wedding ritual is a proposal, or *proposition* of a girl, as said by residents of Potkozarje. The act of proposal confirms the consent of both families to marriage and other residents of a village are informed that the two young people from these houses are going to get married, and that the girl and the bachelor are no longer available.

Conventional activities prior to the very act of proposal differ, so in the territory of Potkozarje there are several different elements of ritual practice. When a girl and a bachelor like each other, or if a bachelor is interested in a girl, he sends his mother into the girl's house to the *arrangements*. She comes carrying *grace gifts* (a cone of coffee, poured cube sugar, brandy, apples, washing soaps, scented soaps) to check whether they agree with their wishes. If they agree to give their daughter for her son they will let her in the house, receive grace, treat her and agree on future plans for the wedding, as well as the day of proposal. On this occasion, the future mother-in-law shall review the gifts that a girl has been preparing for the wedding since she was fourteen years old. If the girl or her parents for any reason are not satisfied with the potential groom they will not receive the grace, nor will they treat his mother, and she leaves their home with the work unfinished.

In some parts of the examined region, first the bachelor comes to the girl's house with his brother of some of his

friends, to announce their relationship to her parents, and the wish for them to get married, with mandatory explanation that the girl promised him that she will marry him. Her parents, that is, her father, ask that the bachelor's parents come to *arrangements*. Several days after this announcement, the bachelor's parents, usually with two more witnesses, come to *arrangements* to the girl's house. They carry with them the *grace gifts* and there, with slightly richer lunch or dinner they agree on further plans, that is, the day of the proposal.

In the evening of the agreed date, with the first dusk, when they finish all obligations in their homes, the proposers come to the girl's house. Not many people attend the proposal and most frequently there are father-in-law and mother-in-law, godfather, bridesman, governor and they are obliged to come without the groom. They only carry a hip flask of brandy with them. Going through the village they don't tell anyone they come across where they are heading and for which business. When they reach the girl's house they pretend that they came here by some unintentional business, say that they lost their sheep, or they are heading somewhere on a journey and they got tired so the dusk caught them right there, and if they would let them come in, to rest and refresh. The housekeeper lets them in the house where, in the presence of the household, but without the girl, continues small talk and jokes, until the moment when someone of proposers tells the hosts to ask them why they really are in their home. At

the host's question the proposers finally discover the true reason of coming, after which the girl's brother brings her in front of the proposers. The father asks her if she knows all these people and who they are. If she is interested in the bachelor she tells it to the father and says that she herself told them to come, but that he is the one to decide whether it is a right decision. The father answers that he has no objections about it if she agreed. The proposers take out a hip flask with brandy and give it to the girl, who takes a gulp and forwards it to her father to make a toast by blessing his daughter and he takes a gulp as well and returns her the hip flask which she returns to her father-in-law. The father-in-law takes a gulp and gives the brandy to other proposers and household to make a toast as well. After this, it is considered that the girl accepted to marry and that they all agree with this decision. The girl kisses her father-in-law and all the others, takes an apple from her father-in-law prepared for her, and her brother takes her out to another room. There are three coins of different values stuck in the apple (earlier they used to be three coins from 50, 20, and 10 dinars). In recent years, the father-in-law used to bestow the bride with money and it happened that the bride does not leave the room in which now they continue with celebration of a marriage proposal. It often occurred that shooting from a rifle or a gun informed the neighborhood and the village that the bride from that house was engaged. Only after the proposal is arranged, coffee is made, there is a dinner (fritters, pies, cheese,