



Razlog (up to 1923 named Mehomiya) is an old Thracian settlement. “Mehomiya” in Thracian means “my victory”. Old Turkish papers say that the whole valley of Razlog was abundant in pine trees and they used to call it “cham bahchesy” that is – the pine-tree garden. Since 1382 until October 1912 the territory of Razlog was ruled by the Turkish.

The town centre is called “pazare”- that was in the past and it is still the same in present day. Here use to be the town hall, the post, the military club, the mosque, the Turkish schools and the shops.

Varieties of goods were delivered from Nevrokop (Goce Delchev), Serr, Drama, Kavala, Thessalonica, Kachani etc.

Seven quarters used to start from pazare and separate the town into its neighborhoods.



A stamp of the town of Mehomiya 1879.



The militaries from the Bulgarian garrison in Samokov, led by colonel Topuzov, during their visit in the Turkish garrison in “Mehomiya” in July 1908.



The konak (the town hall) in Mehomiya



The camels in Mehomiya- 1912

After town was freed - October 1912, started the urbanization of the town. A new Bulgarian administration and government were established.



Close to the **Rila monastery** and on the road to **Sweta gora (the Holy woods)** the region of Razlog has always fallen under the strong influence of the public education and worldly culture. The first teachers in Razlog who taught the young and the old to read and write were the confessors of the Rila monastery. That is how it can be explained that 18th century there were literate people in the settlement who knew how to read, write and sing in their own language. In 1795 was opened the first secular school in Razlog by schoolmaster Yosiff Mandzurski .

By 1821 in Razlog already existed three schools with well prepared teachers. From time immemorial church and school were inseparable. The most active people for the cause of the church, education and the revolution deeds were the priests and the teachers.

In 1909 was opened the library in Razlog. It still carries its original name - “15th September 1903” – in sign of gratitude to all perished on that day.

The earliest material evidence of the presence of the Christianity in the region of Razlog are the remainders of the early – Christian basilica on the land of the town of Razlog in the locality of Katarino. Its patron is “St Iliya” and is dated by experts back to 5th – 6th century. Close to it there are remnants of pagan settlement.

In the place of “Krushe” there are remainders of three small Christian churches. They are dated back to 12 - 14th century and are remembered by the names “Byalata”, “Pisanata” and “St Nikola”.

Two kilometers south of Razlog, on a natural mound are still present the remainders of the church “The Holy Trinity” which is dated back to 13 – 14th century. This temple presents the early stage of the development of the churches with a cross at the dome.

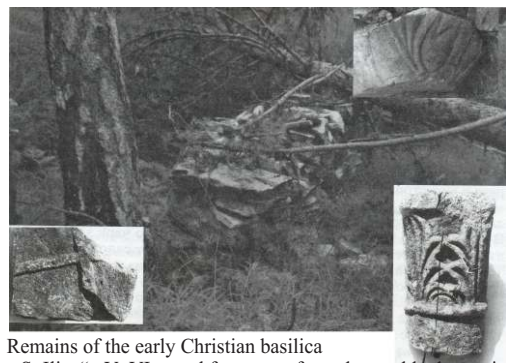
Seven kilometers west of Razlog is situated the church “St Katerina “, dated back to 14 – 15th century. The legend says:

”The Turks came. They liked a lot the beautiful lass Katerina and wanted to take her to the harem of the bey. In trying to save herself from becoming a Turk she ran away in the dense woods of Katarino. The Turks looked for her long time and the more time passed the more malice and anger they gather in their souls because of the disobedience. That is why at the moment when they found her they slew her. On that place people built a church and named it after the lass – “St Katerina “– a remembrance of her courage and sacrifice.”

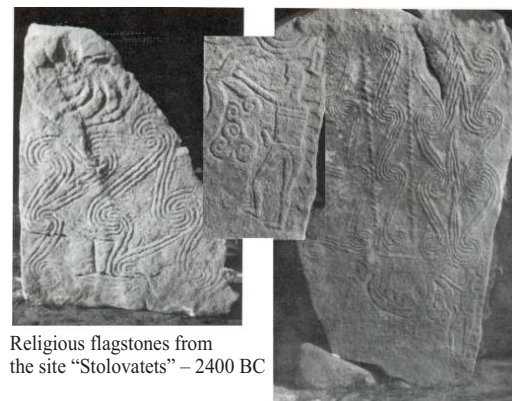
In 1834 in Razlog was built the temple “ St Georgi Pobedonosetz”. That was the first church of the Bulgarian national revival in the region of Razlog.

In 1921 was opened the church “The Holy Virgin“

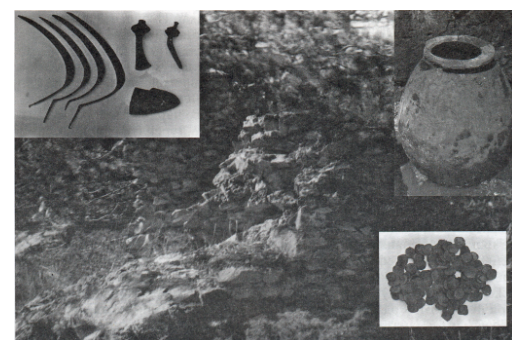
In 1939 was sanctified the temple “The Annunciation of the Holy Virgin“– one of the most impressive and beautiful churches in the Pirin region.



Remains of the early Christian basilica „St.Iliya“– V–VI c. and fragments from the marble decoration



Religious flagstones from the site “Stolovatets” – 2400 BC



Remains of “Kalyata” – a fortress, which was a part of the local defensive system of the Medieval Bulgaria



The church “St. Katerina”



The temple “The Annunciation”

Do you know that...?

- In 1869 the Apostle of liberty Vasil Levski stayed in Mehomiya (Razlog) and he established a secret revolutionary committee in the house of Kipre Maksev
- In 1876 Stoyan Angelov from Mehomiya (Razlog) joined in the band of Hristo Botev
- In 1896 Goce Delchev established a committee of IMRO (internal Macedonian revolutionary organization) in Mehomiya (Razlog) in the house of Nikola T. Kanazirev
- 15th September, 1903 – The day of the Cross in Razlog, the site of Andako.

In a terrible and heavy battle two sons and two brothers of Magdalena Yurukova were beheaded. She washed out their bodies and heads and buried them in that holy land. Something unbelievable!

- The leader from Drama Mircho Kiprov was born in Mehomiya (Razlog). He descended from a rich and patriotic family. He relinquished his father's wealth and became a teacher. Later he became a revolutionist. Because of his personal and fighting characteristics he was chosen for a leader of Drama. On 16th September, 1903 in the village of Kalapot, the region of drama, he was badly wounded in a battle and with the last bullet he put an end to his life

- On 12th October, 1912 – Mehomiya (Razlog) met the freedom. The first mayor of the town was Vladislav Kanazirev

- In the XIXc. Mehomiya was one of the centres for pottery-making in the Bulgarian lands.

- Brothers Petar and Ivan Kanazirevi were ones of the founders of the chemical industry in Bulgaria – they founded soap factories in Sofia, Varna and Burgas. They endowed money for building up a school in Mehomiya (Razlog)

- On 12th July, 1913 Greek troops entered and reached the town of Mehomiya (Razlog), along the valley of the Mesta river, and became rulers of nearly the whole valley.

- On 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th July, 1913 the Greek troops and the Bulgarian troops from Samokov and the ones of the West Rhodopes took the field.

- On 17th July, 1913 the captain Telmah Lazarov Iliev from Russe and the lieutenant-colonel Grigor Hristov Spiridonov from Sevlievo were killed for the freedom of Mehomiya (Razlog)

- In 1913, after the signing of the Peace Treaty of Bucharest, according to which Macedonia was divided between Greece and Serbia, and Romania took the southern Dobrudzha, a lot of refugees from Macedonia and Dobrudzha settled down in the town of Mehomiya



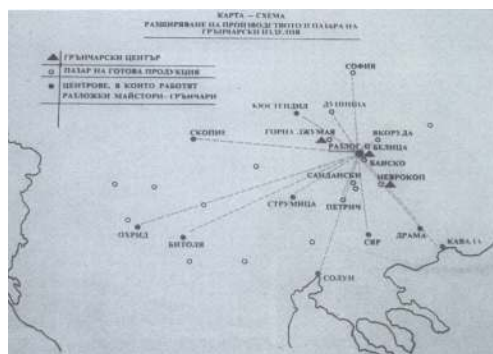
The house of Kipre Maksev



The house of Nikola T. Kanazirev



Revolutionists from Mehomiya, that had taken part in the emancipation of the town on 11th October, 1912



In the XIX c. Mehomiya was one of the centres for pottery-making in the Bulgarian lands



The sanctification of the monument-fountain "God rest their souls" in the site "Predel", devoted to the perished in the battles on 15th-18th July, 1913



Brothers Petar and Ivan Kanazirevi were ones of the founders of the chemical industry in Bulgaria



A course in pottery-making in the town of Razlog – 1926/ 1928

TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS AND CUSTOMS

Razlog is extremely abundant in well-preserved traditions, melodies and shades of colours. In the well-kept up to nowadays customs, rituals, folklore the heathen elements predominate. These elements give an original and peculiar aspect of the local civilization and art and learning.

On 1st January every year there is high jinks in Razlog. It is a great feast. The day starts with the so called sourvakane. Little boys and girls, called sourvakars, with ornate cornel-tree twigs go from house to house wishing people health, fertility and luck in the New Year. In return they receive gifts, coins and, surely, walnuts in order to be healthy and strong as them.

By 10 o'clock in the morning the Mummer dances begin. Out of the seven quarters of the town groups of mummers, young women and men, dressed in national costumes, sourvakars, bear-trainers with their bears, jesters and an orchestra go out into the street. The mummers are dressed in a goat fur, with a higher than one metre fur cap, ending with a horse tail.

They gird themselves around the waist with the so called chanove and tumbelitsi (these are special bells in different form and size), tied on a thick leather strap. They hold in their hands whips, made of ox tails.

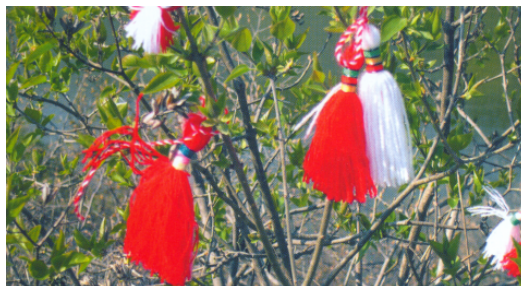
The mummers move and walk in groups, which are named "old men" by the local people. This rite brings fertility and health. The people in each quarter dance a ring dance that surrounds the orchestra. The mummers guard the dance.



St.Jordan's Day is among the holidays where the interweaving of Christian and heathen believes can be clearly seen. Characteristic features of the holiday are the fling of the cross into the river, the ritual throwing-water over and bathing, bringing health and fertility. The fling of the cross takes place after the holiday mass. Young men jump into the cold water to take the cross out. After that they go about from house to house and receive gifts to be healthy. Fortunes are told when looking into the cross. It is believed that if the cross is covered with ice, the year will be fertile.

Martenitsas are a symbol of a specific Bulgarian custom. People wear them only in march, as according to the people's calendar the new farm year begins on 1st March.

Martenitsas are a kind of amulet that should be worn during the whole March. They are made of twined tasseled red and white thread, symbol of spring and health. According to the people's belief they have the power of the sun and give vitality. That's why everybody wears Martenitsa on 1st March, and the animals and the trees are also adorned with them. They are worn until the storks and swallows come flying. After that Martenitsas are placed under a stone and later it is surmises from the stuck little living creatures how fertile the year will be.



During the first week of March, according to the church calendar, **First week of Lent** is celebrated. According to the church canons from this day on the Long Lent starts and one should abstain from meat and milk products.

In this day the boys and the young men chop twigs of juniper. They carry them onto a special place in the village. The juniper twigs are heaped up. These heaps are called by the local people “gare”. People go to church in the morning and fire the “gare” in the evening. The people surround it. The juniper burns with a brisk blaze. Then a ring dance is played near the “gare”.

The Todor's Day is celebrated during the second week of march, depending to the church calendar. Horse races are organized, as the horses pull some load. The participating horses are decorated with tassels and ribbons. The fastest and the strongest horse is rewarded.



Разлог и неговите деца



Razlog Wisdom(conceit)

Who is first usually loads before the rest of the goddamn razlog throng.

A hen successfully drank out of mind.

Mother mercy can not be measured.

The sly does not count.

Who mocks other people might well have it all thrown in his face.

Pure face catches no dust.

Nobody runs away from beauty.

You cannot cross the river before your godfather.

Feed your soul to keep it whole.

Get up from your chair so I can sit there.

Justice suffers, still it it remains Justice.

Homemade accounts are worthless at the market.

Menace come, prepare for many.

Be healthy, everything else is a point of negotiation.

Bear no fear, when black on white appears.

Sends a man to a lame donkey.

Who boasts can't do the most.

