

**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
„1 DECEMBRIE 1918” UNIVERSITY ALBA IULIA
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOLOGY
PHILOLOGY**

DOCTORAL THESIS

ABSTRACT

Scientific coordinator:
Univ. prof. dr. Ion Buzași

Ph.D. Student:
Gloria Casandra Străuț (Nițu)

**Alba Iulia
2014**

**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION
„1 DECEMBRIE 1918” UNIVERSITY ALBA IULIA
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOLOGY
PHILOLOGY**

rites of passage in the traditional woodland village

ABSTRACT

Scientific coordinator:
Univ. prof. dr. Ion Buzași

Ph.D. Student:
Gloria Casandra Străuț (Nițu)

**Alba Iulia
2014**

CONTENTS

ARGUMENT.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	7
1. <i>Rites of passage. Concept and meanings</i>	7
2. <i>The woodlanders place in the ethnographic context of Hunedoara County</i>	14
3. <i>Historical coordinates of the woodlanders area</i>	15
4. <i>Geographic and landscape coordinates</i>	19
5. <i>Natural scenery</i>	23
6. <i>Woodlanders settlements</i>	24
7. <i>Traditional house</i>	28
8. <i>Traditional kitchen</i>	31
9. <i>Woodlanders occupation</i>	32
10. <i>Woodlanders clothing</i>	35
10.A. <i>Women's clothing</i>	36
10.B. <i>Men's clothing</i>	39
CHAPTER I. THE ROAD TOWARDS THE <i>WHITE WORLD</i> OR BIRTH AS A RITE OF PASSAGE IN THE TRADITIONAL WOODLAND VILLAGE.....	41
1.1. <i>Birth rites</i>	41
1.2. <i>Evolution and becoming within the birth rite for woodlanders</i>	44
1.3. <i>Rites of anticipation (preliminary)</i>	45
1.4. <i>Specific pregnancy rites (preliminary)</i>	49
1.5. <i>Actual birth rites (liminary)</i>	52
1.6. <i>Umbilical cord and placenta rites (postliminary)</i>	57
1.7. <i>From birth to Baptism. Post - partum protection rites (postliminary)</i>	60
1.8. <i>Mother and child integration rites (postliminary)</i>	66
1.8.A. <i>Mother integration rites</i>	66

I.8.B. <i>Child integration rites</i>	69
I.9. <i>Christian Baptism – Entrance into the Church</i>	71
I.10. <i>Magical practices for fertility protection</i>	76
I.11. <i>Denomination</i>	78
I.12. <i>Lullabies</i>	80
CHAPTER II. THE WEDDING – DAWN OF A NEW BEGINNING.....	84
II.1. <i>Marriage anticipation rites. Premarital customs</i>	88
II.2. <i>Preliminary rites: match-making, dowry bargaining, setting the wedding date, calling the community members to „the feast”, wedding clothes preparation, choosing the persons with a ceremonial role, preparing the wedding venue, preparing the figurehead</i>	100
II.3. <i>Liminary rites: clothing the bride, departure for the godparents, departure for the bride, ritual obstacles, asking for the bride, civil and religious marriage, the feast</i>	107
II.4. <i>Postliminary rites: new family integration in the community</i>	140
II.5. <i>Marriage Sacrament as an integration Christian ritual in the ecclesiastical community</i>	141
CHAPTER III. THE FUNERAL OR THE GREAT PASSING.....	145
III.1. <i>The Great Passing for Romanians or the Romanian peasant belief of death</i>	145
III.2. <i>Preliminary rites. Customs, beliefs and superstitions before the funeral</i>	151
III.2.1. <i>Signs predicting death</i>	151
III.2.2. <i>On the deathbed</i>	155
III.3. <i>Liminary rites: The great passing</i>	157
III.3.1. <i>The Rest</i>	157

III.3.2. The Bathing.....	157
III. 3.3. <i>The Dressing</i>	159
III.3.4. <i>The Casket (the coffin) and its manufacture</i>	161
III.3.5. <i>Laying the deceased in the coffin. Apotropaic rites related to the great passing moment. Belief in ghosts</i>	164
III.3.6. <i>The Deathwatch. Games of vigil</i>	170
III.3.7. <i>Parting the deceased out of the family environment</i>	181
III. 4. <i>Postliminary rites. Customs, beliefs and superstitions after the funeral. The alm and memorial services</i>	185
III.5. <i>Funeral repertoire: songs and wails</i>	191
III.5.1. <i>Song of the Dawn</i>	192
III.5.2. <i>Song of the Fir Tree</i>	195
III.5.3. <i>The Wails</i>	202
CONCLUSIONS.....	208
REFERENCES.....	211
INFORMANTS LIST.....	223
APPENDIX.....	226
APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE CHAPTER I: <i>THE BIRTH</i>	226
APPENDIX 2. QUESTIONNAIRE CHAPTER II: <i>THE WEDDING</i>	233
APPENDIX 3. QUESTIONNAIRE CHAPTER III: <i>DEATH AND FUNERAL</i>	241
The Romanian woman longing by Vasile Alecsandri.....	247
Love poems.....	249
Feregi wedding scenario.....	262
Funeral repertoire.....	274
PHOTOGRAPHIC APPENDIX.....	282
CONTENTS.....	317

ARGUMENT

Suspended between birth and death, passing through the experience of founding a new existence by the great mystery of marriage, man's life, within the traditional Romanian society, expresses a mysterious becoming, a continuous flow that each community member takes to acquire a new condition. Giving up a certain status causes a vulnerable existential situation, as passing through a threshold or limit state brings a certain existential imbalance. This is the reason for which the key stages of human existence – birth, wedding and funeral - involve, for the traditional Romanian society man, certain rites or external forms of expressing beliefs deeply embedded in the collective mind, whose purpose is to facilitate the transition from one state to another and to ensure the integration into the new condition.

I chose, for the composition of the present paper, an ethnographic presentation – which cannot be deprived, as previously shown, of references of religious parables – of the three major crossing points of human existence: birth, wedding and funeral, since I believe that, in such crucial moments, the man undresses the many masks society applies throughout life and becomes, truly, himself: a *homoreligiosus* created in the image and the similarity of God.

The present paper aims to present, from an ethnographic perspective, the three moments of human becoming - named since Van Gennep as *rites of passage* – as they are kept today in most villages of Woodlanders Country of Hunedoara County, therefore, the study is geographically circumscribed to the mentioned area. Woodlanders Country, one of the six ethno-folkloric regions of Hunedoara County, has raised, by clothing originality and depth of folkloric traditions preserved until today, the interest of several researchers, among which it is worth mentioning the ethnographer Rusalin Ișfănoni,¹ native from Hășdău village (located in the southern part of the region).

The three rites of passing, part, from the ethnological analysis point of view, of the category named by the ethnographer and sociologist Ernest Bernea *the cycle of life* (or *the family cycle*),² provides researchers a unique study material on ritual events and extremely complex in terms of spiritual and religious significance of these events: *let us forget that the circle of life engages us in genesis issues, namely the mystery of creation, and those of the end, namely of*

¹ Rusalin Ișfănoni, *Pădurenii Hunedoarei*, Mirabilis Publishing House, București, 2006.

² Ernest Bernea, *Civilizația românească sătească*, Vremea Publishing House, București, 2006, p. 44.

*death. Between these two extremes the human life unfolds and undertakes problems that go beyond just the social, towards cosmology and ontology.*³

From time perspective, the references mentioned in the present paper are extended to about a century, most of the cited informants are persons with ages between 65 and 80 years old, who took part in specific moments of some birth, wedding, and funeral traditions. I chose this subject thus pursuing an older endeavor, regarding the events specific to the Romanian peasant in general in crucial moments in his personal or the community's life. These events gain capital meaning for the woodlanders – of which I believe that, by natural isolation, are the keepers of a folkloric tradition rooted in the great-Romanian period, due to the geographical proximity of the two Romanian people genesis fortresses, Sarmizegetusa – Regia (located in Orăștie Mountains) and Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana (located in Hațeg Country).

The scientific information composing the paper's critical apparatus comes from both direct sources, from living informants, witnesses of the events I am mentioning, and indirect sources (informants describing aspects they have not witnessed, but received the information from other persons), but also from my personal observation based on the direct participation to the rites and traditions presented and, last but not least, on the references listed at the end of the paper. In addition, for each of the three rites of passage, the information was obtained from direct informants both by interview method, and by applying thematic questionnaires, attempting, as much as possible, to achieve a uniform coverage of the woodland villages. The ethnographic study benefited, outside the bibliographic material, of the significant documentary intake of more than 60 informants from the studied region representative villages.

The purpose of this paper is to present, systematically and scientifically, the manner of expression of the three major rites of passage in the traditional woodland village, in a dynamic dialogue with newer traditions, well-known by the younger generation, called to reassess and to perpetuate national culture fundamental themes. The manner of dealing with the material presented is not purely descriptive, of exposing the specific traditions to the three cycle of life major events, but one in which it was tried, as much as possible, an exegesis of the magic-religious reasons underlying the traditions presented, as well as using my double qualification, philological and theological.

³*Ibidem*, p. 45.

In the face of death, and as surrounding a new life, the human being discovers its true dimension: the religious one. Always searching for answers to the great existential questions, the Romanian peasants – and the ones in the woodland villages suspended on *the sky's eyebrow* are no exception – cannot conceive to enter or leave the world of God without relating, in a more or less obvious manner, to the Creator. Therefore, we will find Hunedoara's woodlanders in crucial moments of personal or social existence around the village church: here they will be spiritually reborn, by Baptism, here they will unite their destinies before God and man, by Marriage, and here they will have their eternal sleep. Accepting the existence – with good and bad – as coming from the hand of God, for the woodlanders, life acquires the meaning of eternity as it used to happen for their Geto-Dacians ancestors.

The paper has a simple structure, that logically follows the sequence of the three passage points, resulting three chapters (*Birth, Wedding and Funeral*), preceded by an introduction in which I made reference to the used terminology and the rites of passage meaning and in which I described The Woodland Country from a geographical and historical, traditional clothing and every day life events point of view, the paper ends with a chapter dedicated to conclusions. In the appendix found at the end of the paper I have reproduced the questionnaires about birth, wedding and funeral used to gather the ethnographic material, an original collection of love poems preserved in manuscript, dating from the middle of the twentieth century, having as author the brother of an informant from Alun village (Lupescu Gheorghe, deceased in 1965), a wedding scenario from Feregi village, gathered, as well, from an informant's manuscript (Pădurean Ioan), a brief funeral repertoire collected from Bătrâna and Feregi villages, as well as a collection of over 60 photographs taken during field research between 2010-2014.

INTRODUCTION

1. RITES OF PASSAGE. CONCEPT AND MEANINGS

Submitted to the exonerable flow of time, the man of traditional cultures has always put his life under the sign of what Lucian Blaga called a *great passing*. This passage has always known three distinct stages: birth or entrance into life, life here and life beyond. Having the desire to come closer to the rites of passage symbology, I made, in the paper's introduction, certain remarks regarding the comprehension of the *rite's* significance.⁴ According to this meaning, *the rite is an act around which certain sequences are built, becoming an action with a well-marked functionality. We will not be able to reduce a rite to a gesture or a word, but it will be the sum of gestures, objects, images, words that, context influenced, receive a symbolic value.*⁵

Depending on the devoted research nature, of schools of thought that analyzed it or the disciplines that studied it, the general concept of ritual and rites of passage, in particular, have been treated differently. The word *rite* derives from the Indo-European Vedic root *rta, arta*, referring to a cosmic order, an order of relations between gods and men, and a human order as well. The latin word *ritus* names what it is put in order, what has to be done.⁶ Beyond the different approaches of this concept, it is worth underlying that the ceremonial customs of birth, wedding and death are the result of a complex and longstanding process derived from the primitive man's spiritual need to represent the sacred. *Since his appearance on Earth, man "suspected" the existence of a cosmic order. The rites were only repeating this order „forged” by the gods, here on Earth, as a guarantee of, as well, (re)establishing the same order here, below, accepting the idea that somewhere, in illotempore, man lived above, with deities and was the same as them, immortal.*⁷ Mircea Eliade believes that *any rite, any myth, any faith or divine figure reflects the experience of the sacred, and therefore implies the notions of being, meaning*

⁴ According to the French linguist and semiotician Emil  Benveniste, the word *rite* derives from the Latin *ritus*, with the meaning of *predetermined order*. Online source: http://www.sociologia.uniroma1.it/users/studenti/Riassunti/Antropologia%20Culturale_Longo/Riti_e_rituali_contemporanei.doc. The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language defines the term as: *invariable and standerdized order*, according to *The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, The Romanian Academy Institute of Linguistics Iorgu Iordan, Second edition, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, Bucureşti, 1998, p. 929.

⁵ Delia Suiogan, *Simbolistica riturilor de trecere*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucureşti, 2006, p. 169.

⁶ Ion Căliman, *Ceremonialul riturilor de trecere*, Excelsior Art Publishing House, Timi oara, 2011, p. 43, (electronic edition).

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 44.

*and truth.*⁸ Therefore, every folkloric fact, and especially those related to the rites of passage, gain significance as it enriches symbolically, according to traditional thinking, along with magical-religious meanings with which the Romanian peasant knew to accompany any act, rite or ritual performed in crucial moments of life. Thus, the Romanian peasant sensibility materializes the universal human spirit manifestations and channels them towards the need of mythical-religious symbolization of a world that, in this manner, charges itself with meaning.

In other words, the man of traditional societies lays his humanity ideal on a superhuman level: *one cannot be an accomplished man until one has overcome and has abolished somehow natural humanity, because initiation is finally reduced to a paradoxical experience, supernatural, of death and resurrection, or of a second birth; initiation rites including attempts, symbolic death and resurrection were founded by gods, Civilizing heroes or Mythical ancestors; therefore, these rites have a superhuman origin and, fulfilling them, the neophyte copies a superhuman, divine behavior.*⁹

The rites within the individual transforms itself and exceeds certain life stages and borders in his community life are - according to Mircea Eliade - those related to birth, childhood, puberty, betrothal, marriage, pregnancy, parenthood, funerals etc.¹⁰ The same author believes symbolisms and rites of passage reflect a specific conception of human existence: *at birth, the man is not yet complete; he must be born a second time and reaches fulfillment by passing from an imperfect, embryonic condition, to the perfect state of adult. In other words, we can say that human life reaches its fulfillment following a number of rites of passage, of successive initiations.*¹¹ Summarizing, we could say that the entire earthly existence of a man requires *surpassing three mandatory peaks: birth, marriage and death.*¹² The success of any ceremonial act, and therefore the rites of passage depend on the actors capacity to discover and understand human existence and the world we live in. Through rite, the man gives itself to the profound meanings of life and death, so he can, later on, master these meanings and *humanize* itself by changing from a socio-cultural point of view and enrich human civilization with new existential truths.

⁸Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas. Vol. I. From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*, Universitas Publishing House, Chişinău, 1992, p. 8.

⁹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane*, translation by Brânduşa Prelipceanu, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucureşti, 1995, p. 162.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 160.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 156.

¹² Ion Ghinoiu, *Sărbători şi obiceiuri româneşti*, Elion Publishing House, Bucureşti, 2002, p. 114.

The three milestones of life, birth, wedding and funeral, generic called *rites of passage* know, according to the theory expressed in the work of Arnold Van Gennep (1873-1957)¹³, published in Paris, in 1909, three relatively distinct stages: *separation from the old state, the transition itself and integration into the new state*. The ceremonial acts that accompany every stage are performed in order to initiate and prepare the individual for acceding the new state. The transition itself from one existential status to another, proves to be, most times, difficult, as the rites beneficiary crosses a liminal situation, a *threshold*, located between the two existential conditions. This phenomenon is caused by the individual's identity cancellation through a journey of initiation, the access to a new identity occurring only after restoring the original balance, lost by leaving the prior existential status.

From a semantic point of view, the *rites of passage* relate, in the archaic community, to certain actions or symbolic gestures preparing the person to evolve to a new state, a different one, in terms of quality, from the previous. According to the mentioned author, *individual life, no matter the society type, consists of successive passing from one age to another and from one occupation to another [...].The very fact of living requires successive passages of a particular society to another and from one social status to another: individual life consists of a sequence of steps whose beginnings and endings form assemblies of the same order: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, class flourish, occupation specialty, death. And each of these assemblies is reported ceremonies whose object is identical: achieving the individual passage from a fixed situation to another fixed situation. As the object remains the same, it is imperative that the means used to achieve it are, if not identical in detail, at least analogous, the individual transforms itself after having crossed several stages and exceeded several borders.*¹⁴

Without doubt, the rites of passage play an important role in the religious man life. All nations practice passage ceremonies at birth, marriage or death, and it could be said, that, in each of these cases, it is still an initiation, because an ontological and social status radical change occurs. When it is born, the child only has a physical existence, being still unrecognized by the family and unaccepted in society. *Rites performed immediately after birth are those that give the newborn its **alive** status; because of these rites, the child is integrated into the community of the living ones. Marriage too is an opportunity to shift from a socio-religious group to another. The newlywed youngster leaves the bachelor group to be part, from now on, of the family head*

¹³ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, translation by Lucia Berdan and Nora Vasilescu, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 1996.

¹⁴*Ibidem*, pp. 16-17.

group. Any marriage involves tension and distress, triggering a crisis; therefore it is performed through a rite of passage.¹⁵

Rites of passage are more complex in the case of death, beyond the parameters of a simple physiological phenomenon, involving *both an ontological and social change: the deceased has to go through some trials on which his own fate beyond the grave depends, but, in the same time, he must be recognized and accepted by the community of the dead. For some people, death is confirmed only by the ritual burial, the unburied by tradition is not considered dead.*¹⁶

Under the influence of Christianity, rites of passage have been enriched with new meanings, old pagan practices have been *christened* and have received form changes and, content, in particular.

Romanian rites of passage, with their ceremonial pomp and poetry, have been the subject of many scientific studies of well-known ethnographers and folklorists who, by Alecsandri's example, have compiled extensive collections of folklore from all three Romanian provinces.¹⁷ A special mention ought to be made for the monumental trilogy of Simeon Florea Marian devoted to family cycle - *Birth* (1892), *Wedding* (1890) and *Funeral* (1892) published almost two decades before the work of Van Gennep, in which the Romanian author structures the three rites of passage ceremonies in distinct stages, as it follows: separation from the old state, transition to a new existential state (quality) and integrating into the new order or state.

Given the social importance and the vested sacredness, the ceremonies that accompany the major crossing points – birth, wedding and funeral – are still religiously practiced in woodlanders villages, rightly representing, cultural *infrastructure* that underpins the community. We can say that through the whole rites of passage ceremonial, the woodlanders reinforce their spiritual connection with the great family to which they belong and reaffirm the community's solidarity with its historical past.

As any social creation, ritual manifestations accompanying the important moments of human existence do not remain frozen in archaic forms, but change according to the space-time context in which they evolve. Thus, among the woodland villages some variations of the birth,

¹⁵ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane...*, p. 160.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 160.

¹⁷ The poet George Coșbuc highlights the traditions rich heritage related to great crossings of human existence in poems such as : *Nunta Zamfirei*, *Moartea lui Fulger*, *Moartea lui Gelu*.

wedding, funeral ceremonial have arisen, as a result of interacting with new cultural elements, introduced, especially, in modern times, due to contact with urban civilization.

Rites of passage description, as they are kept in one of the ethno-folkloric regions considered the Romanian civilization cradle, will allow us to look at the experience of life and death not only as a simple narration, but as a mirror which reflects the deepest and most authentic cultural event of the Romanian people.

2. The woodlanders place in the ethnographic context of Hunedoara County

As I have shown, without the pretention of having drained the subject, in the rites of passage concept and meaning, the introduction continues with a brief description of Woodlanders Country, from a historical, geographical, clothing and daily habits perspective.

Hunedoara County preserves some rich and diverse ethno-folkloric traditions, enjoying a tremendous dowry of folkloric and religious traditions specific to the three essential moments of individual and communitary becoming, which provides uniqueness in the Romanian area. Located in the central western part of the country, at the junction of four roads: Mureș, Banat, Oltenia and Țara Crișurilor (Criș Country),¹⁸ Hunedoara county includes a rich expression of rites and folkloric traditions occasioned by the three essential moments of initiative becoming – birth, wedding and funeral – present, and still fairly well represented, in the six ethnographic regions of the county, namely: Woodlanders Country, Zarand Country, Orăștie Mountains, Mureș Valley, Hațeg Country and Jiu Valley.¹⁹

In the ethnographic context of Hunedoara County, Woodlanders Country is distinguished by originality and archaism: *no any other country region can give us something more and more characteristic in terms of ethnography as a region inhabited by these sons of the mountains and the woods, so far and so little spoiled by civilization.*²⁰ The well-known researcher in the field of ethnography and folklore, Elena Secoșan, rightly believes that Hunedoara's woodlanders are *a unique ethnographic treasure, an archive of living documents,*

¹⁸ *Județul Hunedoara: monografie*, collective coordinated by Ioan Sebastian Bara, Denisa Toma and Ioachim Lazăr, second edition, rev. and add., Emia Publishing House, Deva, 2012, vol. I, p. 9.

¹⁹ Ioan Sicoe, Nicu Jianu, *Județul Hunedoara, zonele etnografice*, Edited by Avram Iancu Cultural Society in România –Deva Branch, Deva, 2008, p. 4.

²⁰ Octavian Floca and Victor Șuiaga, *Ghidul județului Hunedoara*, County Printing House, Deva, 1936, p. 253.

with a past we have yet to entirely understand,²¹ while Romulus Vuia considered the inhabitants of these lands *an ethnographic wonder*.²²

3. *Historical coordinates of the woodlanders area*

The studied ethnographic area contains material evidence showing that this region has had human activity since prehistoric times. On these lines, three caves in Lelese commune can be marked: Cerișor Cave, the Cave from Căuce (Cerișor village) and the Cave from Runcu Mare, where (pottery) archeological materials have been found proving the existence of human settlements since the Neolithic Age.²³

The bi-millennial history of these lands ties itself to metalworking craft, the eastern part of Poiana Ruscă Mountains is located in the area of the main Roman and Dacian centres: at the mountain feet, in Hațeg Basin, Roman Dacia capital was placed, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa.²⁴ It is known that gold and iron were the most important metals in the Dacian and Roman economy.²⁵ Historians researches highlighted the fact that iron ore required in the iron mining and processing workshops from Sarmizegetusa came from Woodlanders region, particularly from Ghelari and Teliuc. Iron ore deposits in the two mentioned towns were the iron richest throughout the entire Carpathian region.²⁶

Following the Dacia Province conquest by the Romans, they took over the exploitation of subsoil resources, among which iron ore had an important position. Such being the case, Hunedoara area was turned over to the Emperor of Rome, and as a natural consequence the other regions received a strong Roman influence as well. *It is possible that around Woodlanders Country, on Runcu Valley and especially on Cerna Valley passing through Hunedoara, there must have been an old road designated to transport iron to Sarmizegetusa workshops.*²⁷ The

²¹ Elena Secoșan, *Pădureții Hunedoarei*, „Sargetia” Magazine, XVI-XVIII, County Museum Deva, 1982-1983, p. 66.

²² Teodor Onișor, *Romulus Vuia*, in „Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei” 1962-1964, Cluj, 1966, p. 270, apud Ioan Sebastian Bara, Denisa Toma, Ioachim Lazăr (coordinators), *Județul Hunedoara, monografie*, vol. III (culture and spirituality), Emia Publishing House, Deva, 2012, p. 353.

²³ S.A. Luca, C. Roman, M. Baicoană, *Materiale arheologice din peșteri ale județului Hunedoara*, apud R. Ișfănoni, *Op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

²⁴ Alexandru Vlad, *Monografia comunei Ghelari*, Emia Publishing House, Deva, 2003, p. 18.

²⁵ Following the two conquest wars of Dacia (101-102 and 105-106), some of the Dacians retreated into the neighboring mountains, therefore the land inhabited at present by woodlanders; we can consider that this area has preserved until today, due to natural isolation conditions, an important part of the events through which our ancestors understood to relate to the existence crossing points, whether it is birth, wedding or funeral.

²⁶ N. Chindler, S. Popa, *Contribuții la istoria metalurgiei feroase în împrejurimile Hunedoarei*, in „Metalurgia”, București, 1969, nr. 5, p. 21, apud Ișfănoni Rusalin, *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

²⁷ Neculai Chirica, *Viorel Răceanu, Sub cerul purpuriu al Hunedoarei – File din istoria de ieri și de azi a Municipiului Hunedoara*, without publishing house, 1976, p. 31.

inscription discovered at Ghelari, written in latin: *natusibi; ubiferumnascitum* (translation: *born where the iron is born*), is an argument proving iron exploitation and manufacture process continuity in the area.²⁸ After the retreat of Roman domination (between 271-272), the activities undertaken in the exploitation of iron decreased, but did not end, being intermittently practiced by the remaining population.²⁹The first written document in which these inhabitants appear under the name of *woodlanders* is an official register (*urbariu*) from 1681-1682, written in Hungarian. The 23 woodlanders villages represented a particular chapter in this *urbariu*, under the title of *Woodlanders District*.³⁰The mentioned document states the existence, in Woodlanders Country, of no more than five *iron mines* (workshops): Plosca, Baia Nouă, Toplița, Nădrab and Limpert, which procured raw material from an iron mine located near Ghelari village.³¹ The first written record of some of these settlements dates from 1297, namely, in a document listing Zlaști and Ruda villages as vassals of Hunedoara chief magistrate. Other towns are later documented: Cerișoara and Poienița Voinii (1380), Bunila (1418), Hășdău (1438), Dăbâca (1464), Cerbăl (1482), and Cerișor, Feregi, Poienița Tomii, Runcu Mare, Socet, Sohodol, Vălar and Alun towns are mentioned in the official documents from 1482, while in 1499 Runcul Mic and Ulm villages, and in 1506 Poiana Răchițelii village are attested as well.³²

4. Geographic and landscape coordinates

Woodlanders Country represents a distinct area, homogeneous and well-defined in terms of geographic and ethnographic points of view. The town's socio-cultural unity allowed the preservation and perpetuation of the archaic culture until present times. *Although there is no historical date on the territorial unit of Woodlanders Country across Hunedoara County, however, this area has a distinct character, clearly defined borders and a strong ethnic personality distinguished from other, more or less remote, neighboring areas.*³³

²⁸ Laurențiu Viscki, Ioan Jianu, *Poiana Ruscă: 220 (1954-1974)*, edited by Casa Județeană a Corpului Didactic Hunedoara și Întreprinderea Minieră Hunedoara, Deva, 1974, p. 15-16, apud Rusalin Ișfănoni, *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

²⁹ Rusalin Ișfănoni, *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

³⁰ David Prodan, *Producția fierului pe domeniul Hunedorei*, study republished in *Din istoria metalurgiei hunedorene*, under the care of Ioachim Lazăr and Dan Lazăr, with the support of Societății Siderurgica S.A. Hunedoara, 1994, p. 119, apud Rusalin Ișfănoni, *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

³¹ Ioan Sebastian Bara, Denisa Toma, Ioachim Lazăr (coordinators), *Județul Hunedoara, monografie*, vol. II, Emia Publishing House, Deva, 2012, p. 134.

³² Atanasie Bran, *Monografia județului Hunedoara*, Matinal Publishing House, Petroșani, 2001, p. 31.

³³ Gherghina Boda, *Informații de arhivă despre câteva localități pădurenești (sec. XX)*, in *Sargeția II (XXXVIII)*, new edition, Dacian and Roman Civilisation Museum Publishing House *Acta Musei Devensis*, Deva, 2011, p. 459.

Woodlanders Country lies on the eastern side of Poiana Rusca Mountains, between Cerna Valley and Mureş Valley and comprises 40 villages and hamlets, of which 33 are located on the peaks of smooth and deforested hills, between 600 m and 1.100 m of altitude, and the other seven, on rivers valleys: Cerna, Vălărița, Florese, Runcu and Zlaști. The inhabitants were called *woodlanders* by their neighbours in Hațeg Country and other limitrophe areas due to the fact that the entire region is surrounded by forests, one cannot reach it, no matter the path, without crossing a forest.³⁴ Woodlanders Country is a compact rural territorial unit geographically speaking, being bordered on the north by Mureş Valley, on the east by Cerna Valley and city of Hunedoara, on the south by Hațeg Country, and on the west by Poiana Ruscă Mountains.³⁵

The most known ethnographic demarcation of Woodlanders Country belongs to the ethnographer Romulus Vuia, that, after a half century research, prepares a map including the 40 towns considered woodland villages: *known as woodlanders, people understand the eastern region of Poiana Ruscă, across Hunedoara, between Mures Valley and Cerna Valley, with a more sparse, isolated and thus very conservative population.*³⁶ The woodland settlements identification made by Romulus Vuia is also confirmed by Hunedoara's ethnographer Rusalin Ișfănoni, mentioning that he does not consider, in his own analysis carried out during 1970-1990, the villages in the northern part (Strigoanea, Stăncești, Ohaba, Rădulești and Făgețel) enclosed by Romulus Vuia in Woodlanders Country, as part of this ethnographic region.³⁷

According to the current administrative-territorial division, Woodlanders Country comprises the following towns: **Bătrâna** commune (Fața-Roșie, Piatra, Rachițaua, Bătrâna villages), **Bunila** commune (Bunila, Alun, Cernișoara, Florese, Poienița Voinii, Vadu Dobrii villages), **Cerbăl** commune (Arănieș, Feregi, Merișoru de Munte, Poiana Rachițelii, Poienița Tomii, Socet, Ulm villages), **Ghelari** commune (Govăjdia, Plop, Ruda villages), **Lelese** commune (Cerișor, Runcu Mare and Sohodol villages), **Lunca Cernii de Jos** commune (Fântâna, Gura Bordului, Lunca Cernii de Sus, Meria, Negoiu, Valea Babii and Ciumița villages), **Toplița** commune (Dăbâca, Dealu Mic, Goleș, Hășdău, Mosoru, Vălări villages).³⁸

³⁴ Ioan Sebastian Bara, Denisa Toma, Ioachim Lazăr (coordinators), *Județul Hunedoara, monografie*, vol. III (culture and spirituality), Emia Publishing House, Deva, 2012, p. 354.

³⁵ The massif toponymy is Latin and derives from *Poiana Rustică*, the word *rustic* was used to indicate isolated settlements outside the urban center of Sarmizegetusa. Online source: <http://www.toplita-hunedoara.ro/localizare/localizare.htm>.

³⁶ Romulus Vuia, *Studii de etnografie și folclor*, vol. II, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1980, p. 401, apud Rusalin Ișfănoni, *Op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

³⁷ Rusalin Ișfănoni, *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

³⁸ Vezi Rozalia Pistori, *Op. cit.*, pp. 201-211.

The introductory part of the thesis concludes with a presentation of the natural scenery, of woodlanders settlements, of the traditional home, of the woodland kitchen, of woodlanders specific occupations and traditional clothing. The geographic position of woodlanders settlements allowed them, for centuries, a partial isolation to later external influences, the preservation of certain original linguistic elements and a certain originality of folkloric clothing.

The exposure, in the following chapters, of woodlanders specific behaviour in the three major stages of human crossing through life – birth, wedding and funeral – opens a window into the past of a nation to which the experience of life and death was meaningful, and man rediscovered, in practicing specific rites in different moments of life, answers to all great existential questions.

CHAPTER I

THE ROAD TOWARDS THE WHITE WORLD OR BIRTH AS A RITE OF PASSAGE IN THE TRADITIONAL WOODLAND VILLAGE

1.1. Birth rites

The sequence of rites practiced at birth seeks integration into the living community through the transition from biological to social birth (described by family and community integration), beginning with the assumption that *when it is born, the child has nothing more than a physical existence, not being yet recognized by family, nor welcomed by society.*³⁹ This social integration stage transited with specific rites and ceremonies requires the presence of all community members, each of them assuming a well defined role.

1.2. Evolution and becoming within the birth rite for woodlanders

As a rite of passage, birth is the result of fertility and fecundity practices specific to matrimonial period, the two rites of passage (birth and wedding) having a subtle interdependence in between. If during pregnancy it can be talked about the existence of an indissoluble bond the pregnant woman and fetus have (rites applied to one affect the other), the actual birth, leads to a differentiation of rites, focused either on the mother, or on the child, and not having a clear and total dependence between them.⁴⁰

1.3. Rites of anticipation (preliminary)

In the woodland traditional village, birth anticipation rites include several fertility and pregnancy protection aspects, pregnancy completion (easy birth), and also infertility reversal for barren women, in certain cases. For woodlanders, we cannot discuss the existence of objects and

³⁹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane* ..., p. 160.

⁴⁰ Chiselev Alexandru, *Nașterea ca rit de trecere în cultura tradițională*, on <http://www.e-antrOpolog.ro>, p. 1.

anticipation rites with fertilising valences⁴¹, but rather of a certain psychological pressure exerted by the community on young married couples and even on unmarried individuals, who surpassed the usual age for this event. These pressures materialized through questions addressed to young married couples regarding the moment when they will become parents, especially if they went a few years without having given birth to an offspring.

I.4. Specific pregnancy rites (preliminary)

During pregnancy, the woodland women value certain prohibitions in performing certain activities or avoiding certain situations (which we can consider as being child prenatal protection rites) and practice certain knowing the child's sex rites, its physical and moral features or assuring an easy birth. The pregnancy itself is a sensitive condition, which was talked about with discretion, only the family members had access to information concerning the woman's condition, which was referred to in an euphemistic terminology, saying she is *greoanie* (*heavy*). The primary interdictions are the ones related to legitimacy and temporality of the child conceiving act, seen as a creation act that required a certain sacred aspect. From this point of view, the Christian morality provisions in terms of child conceiving were strictly obeyed: sexual intercourse was avoided during fast periods, during repast days, and, particularly, outside marriage or between relatives (incest sin).⁴² Failing to fulfill these religious provisions could bring God's anger upon the family and, implicitly, the birth of a child physically marked (bodily defect) or with mental incapacities.⁴³

Another category is the one of food interdictions, based on the transfer principle of certain food characteristics to the future child. Therefore, the pregnant woman was forbidden the consumption of certain intertwined fruits (for example *twin* plums or cherries – for not giving birth to twins), she was forbidden to eat foods *on the knife* (otherwise she could develop mouth sores) or to consume alcoholic beverages. Restrictions and interdictions related to carrying out certain activities (especially physical work) or participation in certain events is due to either pregnancy protection desire or to impurity conceptions related to this period.

⁴¹ Although in borderline cases, where the birth rate alarmingly declined in communities with a low number of members, the woodland women practiced a fertility ritual called *cămașa ciunii*, that will be described in the subchapter *Fertility protection magic practices*.

⁴² Informant priest Miron Stencoane, 82 years old, from Alun village (information from 2012).

⁴³ Informant Domnica Lăcătuș, Ciuplăz, 92 years old, 2 classes (information from 2012).

Another group of preliminary rites is the one connected to the anticipation and determination of child sex or its physical and moral qualities, beginning with the physiological changes the woman feels during pregnancy. In Woodlanders Country villages, the most widely used method of determining the sex of the child was the first movement of the fetus: if the mother felt the movement on the right side of the abdomen, the child to be born will be a boy, otherwise it will be a girl.⁴⁴

1.5. Actual birth rites (liminary)

Birth rites are usually practiced to ensure an easy birth, including those used for labor pain relief. Because woodlander women worked until the birth preceding moment, the birth usually went easy, without complications. If labor lasted longer, different methods were used to ease the pain: *the mother was asked to inhale steam (vapours) from hay flowers, dried, gathered from a barn loft in a bowl of water, then a reddened iron was placed in the bowl. The woman kept her head over the bowl and inhaled the vapours.*⁴⁵

At birth, the midwife played a very important role⁴⁶, who, for woodlanders, was kept *with the family and the other relatives*. If the midwife was very old or sick and was no longer able to fulfill the ritual role, another midwife was chosen, as much as possible, from the same family.⁴⁷ Given the role it holds in the context of birth, she was not randomly chosen, but she was part of the women with a certain social prestige, moral probity and, last but not least, qualities related to skills and diligence.⁴⁸ The family midwife – child – mother relation, functioning as a family relationship of a particular type, was strengthened, established by certain rites and ceremonies and is reflected in the terminology and appellations used by three characters: the midwife calls the midwifery woman *a niece*, and the child – *a nephew*. Woodlanders would, usually, opt for a family midwife from the mother's family if she was

⁴⁴ Informant Domnica Lăcătuș, 92 years old, from Ciuplăz village, 2 classes (information from 2012).

⁴⁵ Informant Maria Lăcătuș, Cerbâl, (born in 1934), 4 classes, cited by Rusalina Ișfănoni, *Op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁴⁶ The word *midwife* was first mentioned in 1480, in a Slavonic text, with the meaning of *grandmother*. See Valeriu Bălțeanu, *Dicționar de magie populară românească*, Paideia Publishing House, București, 2003, p. 190.

⁴⁷ Informant Aurelia Costa, 73 years old, from Găunoasa village (now Dumbrava), 8 classes (information from 2012).

⁴⁸ To woodlanders, the midwife is almost as important as the goodmother: *in addition to moral and social prestige obtained by the spiritual parents families, they also had certain material advantages. When the godmother's or midwife's family organized a gathering for spinning or weaving, in winter, or grass cutting or harvest, in summer, or various construction in the household, for these works contributed, first, nieces and nephews, eventually the godchildren, according to the work specific.* Ion Căliman, *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

married in the same house, and the husband was the son-in-law, while if the mother was the daughter-in-law, they would opt for the husband's family midwife.⁴⁹

Midwife's role is to ritually bathe the newborn, having the first bathe water thrown in a clean place, where no animals passed (so that the child would not get sores).

Among the liminary rites we can mention naming the child as well, moment when he is integrated within the family and gains a spiritual patron (a protective saint chosen from the Orthodox calendar, generally depending on the date of birth).

The birth dedicated chapter continues with the description of a few *rites (postliminary) related to placenta, a link between mother and fetus, as a charm and as an element with fertilising valences⁵⁰ and the umbilical cord.*

Woodlanders have a placenta funeral rite: its burial as a *final* means of stopping future births. Placenta burial is both a separation ritual (the child from its previous existence), and an integration one (by binding the child to house or field and other spaces dedicated to this burial). Within this ritual, the placenta - associated with fertility, as an expression of feminine essence and fragility – is buried into a clean place, less accessible (*pathless*).⁵¹

Another category of postliminary rites are the rites specific to the period between biological birth and Baptism (spiritual birth), period considered vulnerable implying some protection rites arisen from the need to protect the mother and the newborn.

The protection rites specific to this period use, either charms (amulets and talismans, magic plants, sacred objects), or certain magic acts such as incantations (the evil eye and other troubles, fright, etc.), all with the aim of ensuring the young mother and the newborn a certain degree of safety against demonic forces that would jeopardize their community integration. Some of these prohibitions had a practical nature, sprang from the need to ensure conditions for the mother's physiological recovery (she was not allowed to lift heavy weights or practice heavy work) or ensuring child protection, who was not to be left alone in the house.

In the context of postliminary rites I found it necessary to mention the woodlanders belief in destiny and fate prediction practice. Woodlanders belief in *faries*⁵², in their power to

⁴⁹ Informant Aurelia Costa, 73 years old, from Găunoasa village (now Dumbrava), 8 classes (information from 2012).

⁵⁰ MerciaMacDermott, *Bulgarian folk customs*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd Publishing House., London, 1998, p. 79, apud Chiselev Alexandru, *Nașterea ca rit de trecere în cultura tradițională...*, p. 10.

⁵¹ Informant Maria Stănilă, 86 years old, from Merișoru de Munte village –Cerbăl commune, no school (information from 2013).

⁵² *The faries* are considered *female mythical representations that predestinate children at birth. The fate telling is a giving, a sacred thing that man cannot divert from.* Ion Ghinoiu, *Panteonul românesc. Dicționar*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 2001, p. 200.

tailor every man's destiny,⁵³ was and still is widespread and rooted in Woodlanders Country, as it was inherited from the Geto-Dacian ancestors.⁵⁴ These are the three so-called *fairies* coming in odd nights (the third, fifth or seventh) from the newborn child first week of life and they *assign his destiny*.⁵⁵ According to researcher Marcel Lapteș, *for woodlanders, the fairies table remained in Hunedoara the only birth object, as a living fact, perpetuated from one generation to another and present, over time, in almost the same ritualistic form*.⁵⁶

A special subchapter was dedicated to *mother and child integration postliminary rites*, that culminate with the Sacrament of Baptism – Christian ritual that has an ambivalent significance: it is a separation rite from the secular world (the old man, subdued to sin)⁵⁷, and a rite of integration into the community and the Christian belief. The Sacrament of Baptism (*door into the Church*, according to Orthodox theology)⁵⁸ remains, without doubt, the most important step of integrating the new member into ecclesiastical and village community. Through Baptism, the child is purified from the original sin *through water and Spirit*,⁵⁹ dresses the neophyte immaculate coat (*crijma – piece of cloth in which the godmother wraps the baby during Baptism, after he is removed from the baptismal font*), leaving behind the previous impure state (by godparents telling exorcisms or denials and ritual trimming), receives the Sacrament of Anointment, the first Communion and becomes part of the faithful.⁶⁰

In the context of Baptism – which was analyzed in terms of important liturgical moments symbolism – I have emphasized the godparents spiritual and social importance. Given the role he had in the traditional village, the godfather is a true institution, *active throughout human life*,⁶¹ the child's relation with its godparents is very strong and involves obligations throughout life.

⁵³ *Drumul nostru prin viață nu nu-i croim noi așa cum am vrea, ci urmăm o soartă care ne e trasă încă de la naștere și de la care nu ne putem abate. Ele ne ursesc cât voi trăi, iar noi, ca niște orbi, mergem pe drumul pe care ele ni l-au ursit.* Marcel Olinescu, *Mitologia românească*, critical edition and foreword by I. Oprea, Saeculum Visual Publishing House, București, 2008, p. 182.

⁵⁴ Marcel Lapteș, *Taina ursitoarelor*, Corvin Publishing House, Deva, 2013, p. 114.

⁵⁵ *Romanii aveau, ca și românii de azi, trei zâne de naștere, pe care le numeau, în genere Parcae, (...) care vin la cel născut și anunță soarta, întâia și a doua hotărându-i bine, iar a treia, de regulă, o moarte curândă – cf. Simeon Florea Marian, Op. cit., p. 123. As well see Clara Gibson, Cum să citim simbolurile – Introducere în semnificație simbolurilor în artă, Litera Publishing House, București, 2010, p. 43.*

⁵⁶ Marcel Lapteș, *Op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁵⁷ *Au nu nu știți că toți câți în Hristos Iisus ne-am botezat, întru moartea Lui ne-am botezat? Deci ne-am îngropat cu El, în moarte, prin botez, pentru ca, precum Hristos a înviat din morți, prin slava Tatălui, așa să umblăm și noi întru înnoirea vieții.* See *Epistola către Romani*, cap. VI, verses 3-4.

⁵⁸ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 1997, p. 40.

⁵⁹ Gospel of John III, 5. (Scripture quotations reproduced in the contents of this paper were taken from the *Bible or Holy Scripture*, Printed under the direction and care of the Blessed Teoctist Priest, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, with the approval of the Holy Synod, Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 2006).

⁶⁰ Ene Braniște, *Liturgica Specială pentru facultățile de teologie*, Lumea Credinței Publishing House, București, 2005, pp. 290-293.

⁶¹ Ernest Bernea, *Sociologie și etnografie românească. Ordinea spirituală*, selected text by Rodica Pandelescu, Vremea Publishing House, București, 2009, p. 63.

The birth chapter ends with a brief presentation of *magical practices to ensure fertility*, with a subchapter dedicated to *denomination in the late XIXth century* (Baptism names specific to woodlanders living in two villages located in the geographical extremities of the Country – Bătrâna and Găunoasa – taken from Hunedoara County’s archives) with considerations on Lullabies – folkloric lyrical poems expressing the unique spiritual bond between mother and child.

CHAPTER II

THE WEDDING – DAWN OF A NEW BEGINNING

The wedding is a great spectacular event with overwhelming importance within the woodland traditional village, being *the largest and most moveable folkloric rite*.⁶² With a rigorous chronology of events, keeping a whole array of traditions and customs, the wedding is a *transition*, a threshold in the peasant's life cycle. Perhaps, nowhere in any of Hunedoara ethnographic area, the rural wedding has such profound ritualic meaning, yet so picturesque, as Woodlanders Country, ethnographic area where the wedding is still seen today as a community celebration involving, at least in villages with a lower number of inhabitants, the entire community. *This gathering of numerous people transforms marriage and wedding into an event with a strong social nature, holding ritual acts to give greater depth and durability*.⁶³

For woodlanders as well, the traditional wedding meets the three important stages: *preliminary rites* included: match-making, dowry bargaining, setting the wedding date, inviting community members to the event, wedding ceremonial costumes preparing, choosing the persons with a ceremonial role, preparing the wedding venue, baking bread rings, couple's separation of youth. Within *liminary rites* we can find: the wedding call, the groom's dress up, gift offering, ritual changes, couple's clothing, religious ceremony, small feast (at the bride's house), sharing gifts, the dance, presenting the dowry, the bride's separation from parental home, leading the couple and welcoming at the groom's house, the great feast, etc. The most important *postliminary* moments are related to the new family taking part to the Sunday dance, to pastoral festivals and other community life events.

Preliminary rites. To understand preliminary rites context and dynamics regarding marriage, we must take their analysis to the traditional village premarital institutions, where events as pastoral festivals, Sunday traditional folk dances (hore), community reunions, harvest, Easter holidays, meeting at community reunions and gatherings or pastoral holidays, fairs, carols custom or Sânvăsâiul (the chosen one guessing ritual for unmarried girls) were other events where the love bond between young people could be confirmed, often followed by wedding. Young people union wedding ceremony was not random: the family guided the young couple by

⁶² Nicolae Băieșu și colectivul, *Folclor din Țara Fagilor*, Hyperion Publishing House, Chișinău, 1993, p. 148.

⁶³ Ernest Bernea, *Op.cit.*, pp. 47-48.

explaining the event importance, psychologically preparing them for future family founding great event. Once with the couple's physical and mental growth, parents would create meeting and bonding occasions during village life collective events.

In the subchapter dedicated to *preliminary rites*, I described woodlanders specific customs: match-making, dowry bargaining, setting the wedding date, inviting community members to the event, wedding ceremonial costumes preparing, choosing the persons with a ceremonial role, preparing the wedding venue, preparing the figurehead.

The woodland wedding includes complex events: music, dance, poems, theater and an impressive number of ritual acts and props, all with well-known purposes once. We could state that the woodland traditional wedding was a series of rituals that were held three days in a row, starting on Sunday and ending on Wednesday morning. In woodlanders mentality, the wedding, which they call *uspăț* (*feast*),⁶⁴ was the one that established the union of two young people before the community, granting it a higher importance than acts presided at religious and civil institutions, at townhall and church.

From *liminary rites*, I have described *dressing the bride, departure for the godparents, departure for the bride, ritual obstacles, asking for the bride, civil and religious marriage, the feast*.

Concerning the wedding *postliminary rites*, I mentioned that, with the visits the newlyweds paid to the bride or groom relatives after the wedding, as well as their Sunday dances attending as a *family*, pastoral festivals or other community life major events, of happiness or sadness, the young family would integrate into the great rural family and received its recognition.

Broadly, the traditional woodland wedding unfolded after a scenario similar to the Transylvanian wedding, that, in its own turn, integrates into the Romanian wedding scenario. Nevertheless, the woodland wedding presents some particularities distinguishing it from the neighboring ethnographic areas weddings. Here are some of these features: woodlanders main mark was the apple tree, a circle shaped frame decorated with red apples, which, formerly, was an apple tree branch with three twigs holding several apples, in the other Romanian ethnographic areas, the overall wedding sign is either the fir tree, or the flag; and the main wedding meal which was held, both at the bride's house in the first wedding day, and at the groom's house, the following day, consisting of cold food, the eatables were brought by the wedding guests in

⁶⁴ Informant Măgher Viorica, 83 years old, from Poiana Răchițelii village, Cerbăl commune, 2 classes, (information from 2013).

baskets carried on women's heads, as a gift to the bride and groom, though they ate with all wedding guests.

Given the importance of marriage, not only socially, but religious as well, I have described, in a particular subchapter, *Marriage Sacrament as an integration Christian ritual in the ecclesiastical community*. Receiving **the Marriage Sacrament**, the young woodland family would take part at the most profound integration rite: if through Baptism each of the two grooms became part of the great Church family, as the mystical body of Christ, through Marriage, the two would become one body⁶⁵ and become part as a new spiritual entity – *ecclesia domestica* – in the great Christian Church family.

⁶⁵*De aceea va lăsa omul pe tatăl său și pe mama sa și se va uni cu femeia sa, și vor fi amândoi un trup.* (Genesis, II, 24)

CHAPTER III. THE FUNERAL OR *THE GREAT PASSING*

The Great Passing for Romanians or the Romanian peasant belief of death

The funeral ceremonial great importance is well known to all people across the world, offering a certain conception of life and world, with a particular accent on the ancestors cult. Love for the deceased, the living spiritual bond with those who left, expressed by honouring acts for the dead, gave birth to a cult with rich and various ritual events. Nothing is more sacred in the mentality collective as the cult of the dead, nothing is preserved with high fidelity over the centuries as funeral rites, among traditional folkloric events, the ones related to death are, by far, the best kept. According to Mircea Eliade, death transformation into a rite of passage illustrates the human endeavor to overcome this phenomenon that goes beyond the natural's borders. To the traditional societies man, *death can be considered the supreme initiation and the beginning of a new spiritual existence.*⁶⁶ The same death vision seen as ontological threshold to a new world is also shared by Ernest Bernea: *the old traditional village Romanian peasant sees in death a sort of sequel of the living, not an evolutionary continuity, but a qualitative leap. Through death, man only leaves this world, and not the complete existence, life going on in a different way and another plan.*⁶⁷

The Romanian funeral folkloric creations confirm the pre-Christian origin of some ancient practices and proves the continuity of Dacian-Roman and Geto-Dacian elements in Romanian culture, individualizing its own folklore in relation to the actual folklore of other european countries, where there is not a so well represented cult of the dead.⁶⁸

Withing the funeral custom, for Hunedoara's woodlanders, there can be distinguished several categories of rites, which I have grouped, using for a better systematic presentation, as in the case of the other rites of passage, the established method of Van Gennep, as it follows:

Preliminary rites of passage that include the foreboding death signs and man's spiritual preparation for *the great passing*;

Liminary rites of passage related to the actual course of the entire funeral ceremonial from the time of death and until burial;

⁶⁶ M. Eliade, *The Sacred...*, p. 61.

⁶⁷ Ernest Bernea, *Civilizația română...*, p. 49.

⁶⁸ *Obiceiurile de înmormântare fac parte din fondul cel mai stabil al valorilor documentare și estetice, cu profunde semnificații în ceea ce privește profilul spiritual și specificul etnic.* - Oprea Gheorghe, Larisa Agapie, *Folclorul muzical românesc*, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, București, 1983, p. 237.

Postliminary rites of passage and apotropaic rites - integration into the world of the dead and rites meant to protect the dead from all enemies they can encounter on the way, for as long as his great passage lasts to its destined place and protect the community from the bad the deceased could cause by coming back, especially as a ghost.

I have dedicated a special chapter to, in the context of funeral rites, *vigil and wake games*. The wake or looking after the deceased should be seen as an independent sequence in the burial ritual. According to the dictionary definition, *the wake* termed the action of *watch* (latinescul *pervigilium – night watch*),⁶⁹ meaning *to guard something, to be careful*⁷⁰The body of each man who died of natural causes usually rests for three days and two nights before burial. Therefore, during these two nights it is practiced, in all Romanian inhabited areas, the so-called *vigil*, which gathers the entire village community, men and women, young and old, friends and relatives of the deceased.

In traditional communities, someone's death was an event that concerned everyone, reason to which during funeral preparation, and, hence, the three days of wake, the entire community would join as a form of solidarity with the family grieving the loss of someone close. Along with the other funeral ceremonial elements, the wake highlights the unity between the living and the dead, and testifies to the kinship system durability and robustness found in the Romanian traditional society.⁷¹ During *vigil*, preserved in the woodland villages after the traditional order, those who came to watch the dead dance, play mask games, play other entertaining games, tell tales, play card games, eat, drink and discuss people and community current affairs. In a certain manner, during *vigil*, people celebrate, and the purpose of this party is not only to banish watchers sleep, but also mark, within the passage ceremonial, the moment of separation from the dead, as a last party of the living with the deceased.

The chapter ends with a presentation of the funeral repertoire (*songs and wails*), as well as some traditions specific to the woodlanders are: *song of dawn and song of the fir tree*.

Compared to the nuptial repertoire, the funeral one appears more uniform and archaic in its ritual structure, as Romanian folklore kept a number of funeral songs of a considerable

⁶⁹ According to Gh. Guțu, *Dicționar Latin-Român*, revised and added edition, Scientific Publishing House, București, 1993, p. 304.

⁷⁰ **wake**, -s, s.n. – **1.** *Watching the deceased, at night, before funeral*. See *The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, edited by The Romanian Academy – Institute of Linguistics *Iorgu Iordan*, Second edition, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, București, 1998, p. 852.

⁷¹ Online source: <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/datini- obiceiuri-superstitii/traditii- obiceiuri-moarte-96915.html>

antiquity, *pre-Christian, being, after C. Brăiloiu's opinion, perhaps the most archaic in our popular literature.*⁷²

⁷²Ovidiu Bârlea, *Folclorul românesc I. Momente și sinteze*, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1981, p. 447.

CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps nothing better defines the profound spiritual essence of the Romanian people as our ancient customs and traditions enshrined for generations. In the context of multiple popular customs that *break* the linear flow of time and put man in contact with meta-historical spiritual realities, birth, wedding and funeral traditions are, in my opinion, elements that best define, by their length, complexity and time continuity, the Romanian folkloric ethos.

The traditional woodland villagers lived in close communion with nature, in a sacred world, where they unfolded their tradition based on ancestral traditions and rituals that gave purpose and meaning to each stage of life. Mircea Eliade says that rites of passage *reflect a specific conception of human existence: at birth, man is not yet complete; he must be reborn for the second time and reaches its completion by passing from an imperfect state, embryonic, to the complete, adult, state. In other words, we can affirm that human existence reaches completion following a series of rites of passage, of successive initiations.*⁷³

To Hunedoara's woodlanders, accessing a higher existential stage occurred only after the fulfillment of symbolic ritual acts and their acknowledgement by all of the village community members. These ritual events, therefore, having a strong social character, express the individual's willingness to be integrated into a new existential order, already established by predecessors. However, through these events, the woodland villages peasants surpass, what some sociologists have valued as simple social events, and integrate in a unique and original manner into the sacred space, without which the Romanian village universe cannot be imagined.

By reviewing the most representative ritual events specific to the three moments of crossing through life, as they occur in Woodlanders Country, I followed not only a purely descriptive display – such a scientific endeavor has been made before – but also a contextual analysis of rites that, seen in their deepest essence, inevitably lead towards the world of *homoreligiosus* – image and resemblance of God. In this regard, I tried, to the extent that such connections are relevant, to present rites of passage in traditional woodland village under a double perspective, sacred and profane alike, knowing that, the man of traditional cultures sees the expression of some rites of passage such as birth, wedding or death, as true hierophanies which sought accession, not only in *societas*, but also in *communitas* (in the profound

⁷³ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane*..., p. 103.

communion of faith that is the Church). This is the reason why biological birth did not make sense until the fulfillment of successive rites of separation from the profane world and integration into the world of God, by receiving a name in the Sacrament of Baptism, the family union was not fully recognized and accepted without going through the Wedding stages, while the final separation from the living world and integration into *haia lume* (*the other world*) was achieved only by funeral rites strict observation. Without relating to deity, all these stereotypical events could not have been properly decrypted and interpreted and I would have risked providing a linear display, which would have lacked the very essence of religion leading to these events.

It is important to remind that traditional events specific to the three rites of passage overlap with the Orthodox Church religious ordinances – majoritarian in all woodland villages – which has a number of religious services for each moment, as shown in the three chapters. Some of these popular events, encountered in the country's other ethnofolkloric areas, though not accepted by Church, part of pre-Christian religious background, were not removed by the church hierarchy, but are tolerated or were given a Christian shape and interpretation. It is the case of numerous funeral traditions: the coin placed in the deceased hand to pay crossing the Styx becomes, for Christians, a pretext to pay *air customs* (although not even this interpretation is fully supported by the Church), while vigil games are much more attenuated under the spectacular side and converted into a moment of relevant events remembrance of the deceased life and community prayer for his soul.

Searching and reaffirming the primary meanings that generated rites of passage specific traditions, I consider that they will have the chance of perpetuating over centuries, resisting the media spectacular cheap and without purpose invasion, the new woodlanders generations face. Reaffirming the primary meanings of these traditions, ultimately religious, although not entirely Christian, is therefore, in my opinion, the only way to defend traditional community in relation to dissolution external influences.

Traditions, ceremonies and rites, as any folklore fact, reflects a particular human conception of life and world and cannot be separated from the socio-cultural, historical, religious or economic context in which they live. Worthy of the past and their traditions, proudly putting on the traditional clothing on holidays enshrined from father to son, Hunedoara's woodlanders have a desire to perpetuate their traditions, although many of their meanings are not known anymore.

Along with changing the socio-cultural context of the traditional woodland village, we are witnessing a change in the structure or the purpose of traditional customs. For example, young woodland women give birth to their children at the maternity and do not turn to midwives to assist them in giving birth through empirical techniques for an easy birth, but they keep the tradition of choosing a *family* midwife, for taking the child out of maternity and bringing him, at the right time, before the priest, to receive Christian baptism.

Few of the interviewed informants were able to explain the reason they practice a certain birth, wedding or funeral tradition, most of them were content to say that *so it is right* or that *so they have learned from their ancestors*. This is the reason why I chose – in writing the present paper – to provide hermeneutical applications to ritual events lived with such intensity by local people.

Beyond the ethnographic presentation of the three rites of passage, summing up, I can acknowledge that Hunedoara's woodlanders express in birth, wedding and funeral specific events, of Life as a whole, a thinking and feeling unity where the ancestors tradition and experience dictate the existence. Quoting one of the researchers, after Romulus Vuia, focused on the nearly exhaustive presentation of this unique ethnographic area in our country, we can admit that: *Hunedoara's Woodlanders kept until present traces of a spiritual and social life specific to the "beginning". This land's great mystery is the fact that his inhabitants kept their identity until present, although this is the place where a millennial industrial activity was held and which they attended, together with locals, and people of other cultural areas and ethnic groups. One of the most archaic human communities has survived all history attempts with simple solutions, emerged from its own tradition.*⁷⁴

Despite the industrialization of the area and the fact that the road infrastructure has significantly developed in recent years, communication with the so-called modern world – where traditions reference is relative – is more easier, I express my conviction that Woodlanders Country will preserve, over centuries, the thought and folkloric sensitivity treasure which provides its identity and will unveil new cultural valences to future generations.

⁷⁴ Rusalin Işfănoni, *Op. cit.*, p. 323.

REFERENCES

A. General references

1. *** *Bible or Holy Scripture*, Printed under the direction and care of the Blessed Teoctist Priest, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, with the approval of the Holy Synod, Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 2006;
2. *** *Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language*, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, București, 1998;
3. *** *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, Michael Ferber, Codex Publishing House, București, 2011;
4. *** *Dictionary of Romanian proverbs and sayings*, composition, foreword Grigore Botezatu and Andrei Hîncu, Litera Internațional Publishing House, București-Chișinău, 2001;
5. *** *History of Romanian Literature. Folklore. Romanian Literature in feudal times (1400-1780)*, vol. I, second edition, revised, acad. Al. Rosetti and co., Academia Republicii Socialiste România Publishing House, București, 1970;
6. *** *Învățătura de credință ortodoxă*, Doxologia Publishing House, of Mitropolia Moldovei și Bucovinei, Iași, 2009;
7. *** *Molitfelnicul cel Mare*, printed with the blessing of Preasfințitului Calinic, bishop of Argeș, Credința Strămoșească Publishing House, Iași, 2010;
8. *** *Molitfelnicul Mic*, Reîntregirea Publishing House, Alba Iulia, 2006;
9. *** *Penticostarul adică sfintele slujbe de la Duminica Paștilor până la Duminica Tuturor Sfinților*, printed with the approval of the Holy Synod and with the blessing of Prea Fericitului Justinian, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 1973;
10. *** *Pidalion*, Sfinta Mănăstire Neamțu Printing House, 1844;
11. Alexandru, Ion, *Imnele iubirii*, anthology by Ion Buzăși, Galaxia Gutenberg Publishing House, Târgu-Lăpuș, 2009;
12. Alecsandri, Vasile, *Poezii alese*, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1990;

13. Apolzan, Lucia, *Carpații – Tezaur de istorie. Perenitatea așezărilor risipite pe înălțimi*, Științifică și Enciclopedică Publishing House, București, 1987;
14. Aristotel, *Politics*, translation by El. Bezdechi, Cultura Națională Publishing House, București, 1924;
15. Barbăneagră, Paul, *Sacred Architecture and Geography. Mircea Eliade and the Rediscovery of the Sacred. Films by Paul Barbăneagră*, translation and adaptation of texts by Mihaela Cristea and Tolcea Marcel, foreword and glossary by Marcel Tolcea, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2000;
16. Băieșu, Nicolae și colectivul, *Folclor din Țara Fagilor*, Hyperion Publishing House, Chișinău, 1993;
17. Bălan, Ioanichie, *Călăuză ortodoxă în Biserică, vol. I*, with the blessing of I.P.S. Teofan, Bishop of Moldova and Bucovina, third edition, Mănăstirea Sihăstria Publishing House, 2010;
18. Bălan, Ioanichie, *Călăuză ortodoxă în familie și societate, vol. II*, with the blessing of I.P.S. Teofan, Bishop of Moldova and Bucovina, third edition, Mănăstirea Sihăstria Publishing House, 2010;
19. Bănățeanu, Tancred, Focșa, Gheorghe, Ionescu, Emilia, *Arta populară în Republica Populară Română. Port. Țesături. Cusături*, State Publishing House for Literature and Art, Sibiu, 1957;
20. Berg, I., *Dictionary of words, phrases, famous quotes*, Scientific Publishing House, București, 1968;
21. Bernea, Ernest, *Civilizația română sătească*, Vremea Publishing House, București, 2006;
22. Bernea, Ernest, *Sociologie și etnografie românească*, Vremea Publishing House, București, 2009;
23. Bîrlea, Ovidiu, *Folclorul românesc I. Momente și Sinteze*, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1981;
24. Bîrlea, Ovidiu, *Folclorul românesc*, vol. II, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1983;
25. Brâncuș, Grigore, *Vocabularul autohton al limbii române*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 1983;
26. Bria, Ion, *Dictionary of Orthodox Theology, A-Z*, printed with the blessing of the Blessed Teoctist Priest, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Second Edition Revised and

supplemented, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 1994;

27. Buhociu, Octavian, *Folclorul de iarnă. Ziorile și poezia păstorească*, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1979;

28. Cartoian, Nicolae, *Cărțile populare în literatura românească*, Romanian Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 1974;

29. Călinescu, George, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent*, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1982;

30. Chevallier, Jean, Gheerbrant, Alain (coordinators), *A dictionary of Symbols. Myths, dreams, habits, gestures, forms, shapes, colors, numbers*, translation by Michaela Slăvescu and Laurențiu Zoicaș (coord.), Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2009;

31. Clemente, Constandin, *Datini la Români*, Corvin Publishing House, Deva, 2007;

32. Cojocaru, Nicolae, *Istoria tradițiilor și obiceiurilor la români, vol. III, perioada modernă și contemporană. Nașterea. Nunta. Însmormântarea. Obiceiurile ocazionale*, Etnologică, București Publishing House, 2012;

33. Coman, Mihai, *Bestiarul mitologic românesc*, Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, București, 1996;

34. Coșbuc, George, *Fire de tort*, fourth edition, Litera Internațional Publishing House, București, 2004;

35. Cuceu, Ion, *Dicționarul proverbelor românești*, Litera Internațional Publishing House, București – Chișinău, 2006;

36. Dancuș, Mihai, *Zona etnografică Maramureș*, Sport Turism Publishing House, București, 1986;

37. Eliade, Mircea, *A History of Religious Ideas*, vol. I, Universitas Publishing House, Chișinău, 1992;

38. Eliade, Mircea, *A History of Religious Ideas*, vol. II, Universitas Publishing House, Chișinău, 1992;

39. Eliade, Mircea, *Sacred and Profane*, translation by Brândușa Prelipceanu, Humanitas Publishing House, București, 1995;

40. Eliade, Mircea, *The Art of Dying*, Moldova Publishing House, Iași, 1993;

41. Eretescu, Constantin, *Folclorul literar al românilor – o privire contemporană*, Compania Publishing House, București, 2004;
42. Evseev, Ivan, *Dicționar de simboluri și arhetipuri culturale*, Amarcord Publishing House, Timișoara, 1994;
43. Evseev, Ivan, *Dicționar de magie, demonologie și mitologie românească*, Amarcord Publishing House, Timișoara, 1998;
44. Ferber, Michael, *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, Codex Publishing House, București, 2011;
45. Ghinoiu, Ion, *Mică enciclopedie de tradiții românești*, edition edited by Valeria Filimon, Agora Publishing House, București, 2008;
46. Ghinoiu, Ion, *Obiceiuri populare de peste an. Dicționar*, Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, București, 1997;
47. Ghinoiu, Ion, *Panteonul românesc. Dicționar*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 2001;
48. Ghinoiu, Ion, *Popasuri etnografice românești*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 1981;
49. Ghinoiu, Ion, *Sărbători și obiceiuri românești*, Elion Publishing House, București, 2002;
50. Gibson, Clara, *Cum să citim simbolurile – Introducere în semnificație simbolurilor în artă*, Litera Publishing House, București, 2010;
51. Goga, Octavian, *Poezii*. Anthology and afterword by Mircea Popa, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1972;
52. Guțu, G., *Dicționar latin-român*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 1983;
53. Herodot, *Histories*, vol. II, fifth book, Terpsichora, Scientific Publishing House, București, 1964;
54. Humbert, Pont, Catherine, *Dictionary of symbols, rites and beliefs*, translation by Nicolae Constantinescu, Lucman Publishing House, București, 1996;
55. Kernbach, Victor, *Dicționar de mitologie generală*, Albatros Publishing House, București, 1995;
56. Lapteș, Marcel, *Timpul și sărbătorile țaranului român*, Corvin Publishing House, Deva, 2009;

57. Lapteș, Marcel, *Anotimpuri magico-religioase. Schițe etnografice*, Corvin Publishing House, Deva, 2011;
58. Meîtoiu, Ioan, *Spectacolul nunților. Monografie folclorică*. Foreword by acad. D. Panaitescu – Perpessicius, Comitetul de Stat pentru Cultură și Artă, Casa Centrală a Creației Populare Publishing House, București, 1969;
59. Moise, Ilie, *Folclor românesc: note de curs*, Alma Mater Publishing House, Sibiu, 2001;
60. Mușlea, Ion, *Cercetări etnologice zonale*, critical edition, notes and a glossary by Ion Cuceu and Maria Cuceu. Introductory study by Ion Cuceu. European Studies Foundation Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2004;
61. Neveanu, Popescu, Paul, *Dicționar de psihologie*, Albatros Publishing House, București, 1978;
62. Nițu, George, *Elemente mitologice în creația populară românească*, Albatros Publishing House, București, 1998;
63. Oișteanu, Andrei, *Ordine și Haos. Mit și magie în cultura tradițională românească*, second edition, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 2013;
64. Olinescu, Marcel, *Mitologia românească*, critical edition and preface by I. Opreșan, Saeculum Visual Publishing House, București, 2008;
65. Oprea, Gheorghe și Agapia, Larisa, *Folclor muzical*, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, București 1983;
66. Pamfile, Tudor, *Mitologie românească*, edited edition and preface by Iordan Datcu, Grai și Suflet – Cultura Națională Publishing House, București, 2000;
67. Papadima, Ovidiu, *O viziune românească a lumii*, folklore study, final edition revised by the author, and foreword by I. Opreșan, Saeculum I.O. Publishing House, București, 2009;
68. Păcală, Victor, *Monografia comunei Rășinariu*, Archidiocesan Printing House, Sibiu, 1915;
69. Pop, Mihai, *Obiceiuri tradiționale românești*, revised edition, afterword by Rodica Zane, Univers Publishing House, București, 1999;
70. Pop, Petruța, Marinela, Baba, *Obiceiuri de nuntă din Transilvania*, Altip Publishing House, Alba Iulia, 2012;
71. Popa, G., Vasile, *Folclor din Țara de Sus*, edited edition by Maria Luiza Ungureanu, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1983;

72. Radosav, Doru, *Sentimentul religios la români – o perspectivă istorică* (sec. XVII – XX), Dacia Publishing House, Cluj – Napoca, 1997;
73. Riviere, Claude, *Socio-antropologia religiilor*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 2000;
74. Ruxăndoiu, Pavel, *Folclorul literar în contextul culturii populare românești*, Grai și Suflet-Cultura Națională Publishing House, București, 2001;
75. Secoșan, Elena, Paul, Petrescu, *Portul popular de sărbătoare din România*, Meridiane Publishing House, București, 1984;
76. Sevastos, Elena, *Literatura populară*, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1990;
77. Stahl, H., Henri, Stahl, H., Paul, *Civilizația vechilor sate românești*, Scientific Publishing House, București, 1968;
78. Stăniloae, Dumitru, *Reflecții despre spiritualitatea poporului român*, Elion Publishing House, București, 2002;
79. Taloș, Ion, *Gândirea magico-religioasă la români. Dicționar*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 2001;
80. Theodorescu, Barbu and Păun, Octav, *Folclor literar românesc*, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, București, 1967;
81. Tiberiu, Alexandru, *Muzica populară românească*, Music Publishing House, București, 1975;
82. Todoran, Isidor și Zăgrean, Ioan, *Teologia Dogmatică – manual pentru Seminariile Teologice*, second edition, Arhidiecezana Publishing House, Cluj, 1997;
83. Romulus Urs, *Lăpugiu de Sus. Trecut și prezent, un sat pentru viitor. 575 de ani de la prima atestare documentară (1439-2014)*, Corvin Publishing House, Deva, 2014;
84. Văduva, Ofelia, *Magia darului*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 1997;
85. Voronca, Niculiță, Elena, *Datinile și credințele poporului român adunate și așezate în ordine mitologică*, Saeculum Vizual Publishing House, București, 2008;
86. Vuia, Romulus, *Caiet de artă populară. Portul popular al pădurenilor din regiunea Hunedoara*, State Publishing House for Literature and Art, București, 1958;
87. Stănescu, Florea, Gheorghiu, Adrian, Petrescu, Paul, Stahl, Paul, *Arhitectura populară românească – Regiunea Hunedoara*, Technical Publishing, București, 1956;
88. Vuia, Romulus, *Studii de etnografie și folclor*, vol. II, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1980;

89. Vulcănescu, Romulus, *Coloana Cerului*, Socialist Republic of Romania Publishing House, București, 1972;
90. Vulcănescu, Romulus, *Măștile populare*, Scientific Publishing House, București, 1970;
91. Vulcănescu, Romulus, *Mitologie română*, Socialist Republic of Romania Publishing House, București, 1987.

B. Selective references

1. ****Antologie folclorică din ținutul pădurenilor*, Editura Muzicală a uniunii compozitorilor din R.P.R., București, 1959;
2. ****Comuna Vețel studiu monografic complex*, conducted by a team of authors led by Nicolae Edroiu, Eurodidact Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2002;
3. ****Înmormântarea și parastasele cuvenite în scrierile părintelui Nicodim Mândiță*, Agapis Publishing House, București, 2004;
4. Bachelard, Gaston, *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, translation by Irina Mavrodin, Univers Publishing House, București, 1995;
5. Bara, Ioan, Sebastian and co., *Județul Hunedoara: monografie*, second edition, revised and added, vol. I-III, Emia Publishing House, Deva, 2012;
6. Bărăian, Monica, Alina, *Secularizarea morții*, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2008;
7. Berdan, Lucia, *Fetele destinului. Incursiuni în etnologia românească a riturilor de trecere*, „Al.I. Cuza” University Press, Iași, 1999;
8. Bernea, Ernest, *Moartea și înmormântarea în Gorjul de nord*, edited edition by Rodica Pandele, Vremea Publishing House, București, 2007;
9. Bogariu, Corneliu, *Curs de folclor muzical*, part I, Corvin Publishing House, Deva, 2007;
10. Bran, Atanasie, *Monografia județului Hunedoara*, Matinal Publishing House, Petroșani, 2001;
11. Braniște, Ene, *Liturgica Specială pentru facultățile de teologie*, Lumea Credinței Publishing House, București, 2005;

12. Brăiloiu, Constantin, Ispas, Sabina, *Sub aripa cerului*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 1998;
13. Bunea, Ioan, *Predici la Botez, Cununie și Învmormântare*, third edition, Limes Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2013;
14. Burada, Teodor, *TeodorDatinile poporului român la învmormântări*, Tipografia Națională Publishing House, Iași, 1882;
15. Căliman, Ion, *Ceremonialul riturilor de trecere*, Excelsior Art Publishing House, Timișoara, 2011, (electronic edition);
16. Chirica, Neculai, Răceanu, Viorel, *Sub cerul purpuriu al Hunedoarei – File din istoria de ieri și de azi a Municipiului Hunedoara*, without publishing house, 1976;
17. Chișescu, Nicolae, prof., Todoran, Isidor, Pr. Prof., Petreună, Ioan, Pr. Prof., *TeologiaDogmatică și Simbolică*, vol. II, manual for theological faculties, Renașterea Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2010;
18. Ciaușanu, Gh., F., *Superstițiile poporului român în asemănare cu ale altor popoare vechi și noi*, critical edition, preface and thematic index by I. Oprișan, Saeculum I.O. Publishing House, București, 2007;
19. Ciorogaru, Ioan și Mateș, Miron, priest, *Muncelul Mic, satul care nu vrea să moară – monografie*, (without publishing house), Deva, 2007;
20. Comișel, Emilia, *Antologie folclorică din Ținutul Pădurenilor*, Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor din R.P.R., București, 1964;
21. Constantinescu, Nicolae, *Etnologia și folclorul relațiilor de rudenie*, Univers Publishing House, București, 2000;
22. Dorondel, Ștefan, *Moarteași apa –rituri funerare, symbolism acvatic și structura lumii de dincolo în imaginarul țăărănesc*, foreword by Marianne Mesnil, Paideia Publishing House, București, 2004;
23. Drăgoi, priest, Eugen, *Înmormântarea și pomenirile pentru morți*, fourth edition printed with the blessing of P.S. Dr. Casian Crăciun, Bishop of Dunărea de Jos, Dunărea de Jos Diocese Publishing House, Galați, 2002;
24. Edroiu, Nicolae (coordinator) and co., *Vețel, Studiu monografic complex*, Eurodidact Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2002;

25. Evdokimov, Paul, *Woman and the Salvation of the World*, translation by Moldoveanu Gabriela, foreword by Clement Oliver, Christiana Publishing House, București, 1995;
26. Evdokimov, Paul, *The Sacrament of Love*, translation by Moldoveanu Gabriela, Christiana Publishing House, București, 1994;
27. Floca, Octavian and Șuiaga, Victor, *Ghidul județului Hunedoara*, County Printing House, Deva, 1936;
28. Ghinoiu, Ion, *Lumea de aici, lumea de dincolo*, Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, București, 1999;
29. Golban, Vasile, *Estetica ceremonialului social în obiceiuri*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, București, 1983;
30. Gorovei, Artur, *Datinile noastre la naștere*, Cronicar Publishing House, București, 2002;
31. Iacob, Oliviu, *Poezia riturilor de trecere*, Altip Publishing House, Alba Iulia, 2007;
32. Ispas, Sabina, *Cântecul epic-eroic românesc în context sud-est European. Cântecul pețirii*, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1995;
33. Ișfănoni, Rusalin, *Pădurenii Hunedoarei*, Mirabilis Publishing House, București, 2006;
34. Kahane, Mariana, Georgescu, Stănculeanu, Lucilia, *Cântecul Zorilor și Bradului. (Tipologie Muzicală)*, Music Publishing House, București, 1988;
35. Kligman, Gail, *The Wedding of the Dead: Ritual, Poetics, and Popular Culture in Transylvania*, translation by Mircea Boari, Runa Petringenaru, Georgiana Farnoaga, West Paul Barbu, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 1998;
36. Kräutner, Hans-Georg, *Munții Poiana Ruscă. Ghid turistic*, Sport-Turism Publishing House, București, 1984;
37. Lapteș, Marcel, *Taina ursitoarelor*, Corvin Publishing House, Deva, 2013;
38. Lardellier, Pascal, *Ritual connection theory. Anthropology and Communication*, foreword by Alain Caillé, translation by Valentina Pricopie, Tritonic Publishing House, București, 2009;
39. Marian Florea Simeon, *Înmormântarea la români. Studiu etnografic*, Saeculum Vizual Publishing House, București, 2009;
40. Marian, Florea, Simeon, *Nașterea la români – studiu etnografic*, edited edition by Jordan Datcu, Saeculum Vizual Publishing House, București, 2009;
41. Marian, Florea, Simeon, *Nuntala români. Studiu istorico-comparativ etnografic*, vol. I, Saeculum Vizual Publishing House, București, 2009;

42. Marian, Florea, Simeon, *Nuntala români. Studiu istorico-comparativ etnografic*, vol. II, Saeculum Vizual Publishing House, București, 2009;
43. Măndiță, Nicodim, *Priveghiul creștinesc*, Agapis Publishing House, București, 2004;
44. Măndiță, Nicodim, *Vămile Văzduhului și mărturii despre existența lor*, printed with the blessing of Prea Sfințitului Părinte Galaction, Bishop of Alexandria and Teleorman, Agapis Publishing House, București, 2005;
45. Mims, Cedric, *When We Die: Book About Death*, translation by Paul Octav Ciucă, Orizonturi Publishing House, București, 2006;
46. Mitrofan, Părintele, *Viața repausaților noștri și viața noastră după moarte*. Translated from French by Mitropolitul Iosif, foreword by Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, vol. I, Anastasia Publishing House, București, 1993;
47. Necula, Nicolae, *Tradiție și înnoire în slujirealiturgică*, vol. III, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 2004;
48. Nițescu, Elena, Olivia, Lac, Mircea, *Oameni, locuri și tradiții*, Emia Publishing House, Deva, 2010;
49. Petresc, Dorin, Goțiu, Olivian, *Mânerău, evoluția istorică a unei străvechi vetre de locuire din Ținutul Hunedoarei (monografie)*, Corvin Publishing House, Deva, 2006;
50. Pistori, Rozalia, *Hunedoara - un colț de lume românească*, Promun Publishing House, Arad, 2007;
51. Pleșu, Andrei, *Despre îngeri*, Humanitas Publishing House, București, 2003;
52. Rădulescu, Adina, *Rituri de protecție în obiceiurile funerare românești*, Saeculum Publishing House, București, 2008;
53. Rus, Dumitru, *Județul Hunedoara, ghid turistic*, Sigma Plus Publishing House, Deva, 1998;
54. Schmemann, Alexandre, *For the Life of the World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, translated from English by pr. prof. dr. Aurel Jivi, second edition, Basilica Publishing House, București, 2012;
55. Sicoe, Ioan, Jianu, Nicu, *Județul Hunedoara. Zonele etnografice*, Edited by „Avram Iancu” Cultural Society in România – Deva Branch, Deva, 2008;
56. Sperl, Ingo, *Țara fără dor. Funcția psihologică a bocetului românesc*, Univers Publishing House, București, 2000;

57. Stăniloae, Dumitru, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. 3, printed with the blessing of Prea Fericitului Părinte Teoctist, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, second edition, Institutul Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române Publishing House, București, 1997;
58. Suciu, Alexandru, *Nevoia actuală de ceremonial și ritual*, Lux Libris Publishing House, Brașov, 1998;
59. Suiogan, Delia, *Simbolistica riturilor de trecere*, Paideia Publishing House, București, 2006;
60. Șeuleanu, Ion, *Nunta în Transilvania*, Viitorul Românesc Publishing House, București, 2000;
61. Șeuleanu, Ion, *Poezia populară de nuntă*, Minerva Publishing House, București, 1985;
62. Van Gennep, Arnold, *The Rites of Passage*, translation by Berdan Lucia and Vasilescu Nora, Polirom Publishing House, Iași, 1996;
63. Vlad, Alexandru, *Monografia Comunei Ghelar, județul Hunedoara*, Emia Publishing House, București, 2003;
64. Vuia, Romulus, *Portul popular din Țara Hațegului. Bazinul de la Hațeg*, Meridiane Publishing House, București, 1962;
65. Vuia, Romulus, *Țara Hațegului și Regiunea Pădurenilor. Studiu antropogeografic și etnografic*, Ardealul Institute of Graphic Arts Publishing House, Cluj, 1926.

C. *Studies published in magazines and periodicals*

1. Bîrlea, Ovidiu, *Bocetele și verșurile funebre din Ținutul Pădurenilor (Hunedoara)*, chapter from *Monografia folclorică a Ținutului Pădurenilor, vol. II, Folclorul obiceiurilor*, in „Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei” (between 1971-1973), Cluj Napoca, 1993;
2. Boda, Gherghina, *Informații de arhivă despre câteva localități pădurenești (sec. XX)*, in *Sargeția II Magazine (XXXVIII)*, new edition, Dacian and Roman Civilization Museum Publishing House Acta Musei Devensis, Deva, 2011;
3. Bulacu, Mihail, *Sfânta Taină a Cununii în învățătura de credință creștină ortodoxă*, „Glasul Bisericii” Magazine, no. 5-6/1971;

4. Chiselev, Alexandru, *Nunta ca rit de trecere în societatea tradițională. Perspectivă trans-europeană*, article published in „Anuarul Muzeului Literaturii Române”, III Year, Junimea Publishing House, Iași, 2010;
5. Copăceanu, Emanuel, *Viața după moarte în folclorul nostru*, „Altarul Banatului” Magazine, no. 7-9/1992;
6. Eretescu, Constantin, *Măștile de priveghi: origine și funcționalitate*, „Etnografie și Folclor” Magazine (extras), tom 13, 1;
7. Ghinoiu Ion, *Adăposturi geomorfe ale sufletului (II)*, „Miorița” Magazine, no. 16-17, 2012;
8. Graur Tiberiu, *Jocuri de priveghi în Munții Apuseni*, in *Anuarul Muzeului etnografic al Transilvaniei*, Cluj, 1973,
9. Ișfănoni, Rusalin, *Cântecul Bradului*, „Izvorașul” Magazine, Journal of popular culture, New Edition, no. 4, founding director Gh. N. Dumitrescu- Bistrița, Rm. Vâlcea, 1993;
10. Papadima, Ovidiu, *Aspecte ale realității oglindite în lirica populară; Cântecul de leagăn*, „Revista de folclor” Magazine, year V, no. 3-4, București, 1960;
11. Secoșan, Elena, *Pădureni Hunedoarei*, „Sargetia” Magazine, XVI-XVIII, County Museum Deva, 1982-1983;
12. Simion, Prot. Dr., Radu, *Ce punem pe morminte*, „Mitropolia Banatului” Magazine, no. 2/1988;
13. Știucă, Narcisa, *Condiția nou-născutului și tentația sacrului*, „Studii și comunicări de etnologie” Magazine, tom XIV, (new edition), Imago Publishing House, Sibiu, 2000;
14. Vulcănescu, Romulus, *Gogiu, un spectacol funerar*, „Etnografie și Folclor” Magazine, București, tom. 10, 6, 1965;

D. Online references:

- <http://centruldecreatiedeva.ablog.ro/2010-07-07/nunta-padureneasca.html#axzz2K3TY6zqN>;
- Chiselev, Alexandru, *Nașterea ca rit de trecere în cultura tradițională. Perspectivă trans – europeană*, p. 1, studiu publicat pe site-ul <https://www.academia.edu>;
- <http://hunedoara.omgforum.net/t834-comuna-bătrâna-comunitate-tradițională>;
- <http://padureni.wordpress.com/harta>;
- <http://www.artatraditionala.ro/zilelesapt.php>;
- <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/datini-obiceiuri-superstitii/traditii-obiceiuri-moarte-96915.html>;

- <http://www.descopera.ro/cultura/6439292-strigoii-din-mitologia-romaneasca-intunecata-poveste-a-mortilor-vii>;
- <http://www.e-antropolog.ro/2011/01/239/> Nașterea ca rit de trecere în cultura tradițională;
- <http://www.primaria-batrina.ro/potential/comunitati.php>;
- <http://www.rasfoiesc.com/hobby/muzica/REPERTORIU-FUNEBRU96.php>;
- <http://www.toplita-hunedoara.ro/localizare/localizare.htm>;
- <http://www.transilpedia.ro/zone-etnografice/tinutul-padurenilor>.

E. Other references

- The newborn register in Bătrâna village between 1851-1881 and 1882 – 1906;
- The newborn register in Găunoasa village between 1851-1906, fond: Civil Status Registry Collection – National Archives Hunedoara County Department.