

UNIVERSITATEA BABEȘ-BOLYAI CLUJ NAPOCA
Facultatea de Studii Europene

**TRADITIONAL FAMILY RITES IN THE AREA OF
CODRU
ETHNOLOGICAL MONOGRAPH**

(Summary)

COORDONATOR
Prof. Dr. Ion Cuceu

DOCTORAND
Rareș Olosuteanu

CONTENTS

I MONOGRAPHIC STUDY

Argument

Chapter 1 – Overview of the ethnological area of Codru.....	page 6
1. The geographical area and borders	page 6
2. Historical landmarks	page 21
3. Administrative-territorial organization and social structure	page 33
4. The household	page 36
5. Costumes	page 50
6. Dance and music	page 53
7. Religion and beliefs	page 56
Chapter 2 - Rites of birth in the ethnographic area of Codru	page 65
1. Rites and beliefs about conception and pregnancy	page 67
2. Birth –mother and baby	page 70
3. Confinement and postliminal and incorporation rites of the newborn and mother	page 74
Chapter 3 - Marriage and bridal ritual in the Codru area	page 85
1. Practices before marriage	page 85
2. The wedding	page 106
3. The new family and new relationships established in the social environment	page 137
4. Ritual wedding songs	page 140
5. Wedding discourses	page 144
6. Ceremonial wedding cheering	page 159
Chapter 4 - Burial rituals and beliefs undergoing death in the Codru area	page 161
1. Beliefs about foretelling death and preparatory practices	page 162
2. Death and the dead – the vigil	page 167
3. Communion meal and the cult of the dead	page 174
4. Mourning	page 183
- Theme and typology	
- Reasons for mourning in the area of Codru	
5. Funeral lyrics	page 186

Chapter 5 - Conclusions on the dynamics and evolutionary trends of the traditional rituals from the ethno-folk area of Codru pag.189

II CORPUS OF TEXTS, INTERVIEWS, LIFE STORIES

Chapter 6 - Faith, mythical representations and narratives related to pregnancy, birth, baptism, godfatherhood pag.206

Chapter 7 – Bridal folklore in the area of Codru page 208
- Wedding discourses
- Ritual Songs
- Ceremonial cheering

Chapter 8 - Funeral folklore in the Codru area page 301
- Mourning repertoire
- Funeral lyrics

III THE CODRU AREA IN PICTURES

Chapter 9 - The village of the Codru area page 385
Chapter 10 - Birth page 403
Chapter 11 - Wedding page 405
Chapter 12 - Funeral page 416

IV CRITICAL APARATUS OF THE MONOGRAPH

Dialect glossary and archaisms page 419
Index of investigated localities..... page 426
List of informants page 430
List of gatherers page 435
References page 436

KEYWORDS

forest, ethnology, wedding, birth, funeral, ceremonial, ritual

This paper has **four parts** of which the first three weigh heavier in importance and part four contains the critical apparatus, particularly important as well because it contains the summary of the relevant elements for the researchers who will want to continue and develop the current theme.

Thus, the **first part** is the most important, given the range it covers in the whole theme, but this is not random as the paper aims to analyze in detail the main life-family events of the individual of the Codru area.

The first part is divided into five chapters, beginning with an overview of the area corresponding to **the first chapter**.

The presentation comprises the following perspectives: the geographical area and its overall potential, the defining cultural and ethnographic elements of the Codru area, the historic landmarks that developed the local ethos, the family - household, clothing, occupations and spiritual pursuits, the holidays throughout the year that merge with the rituals, practices and beliefs embedded in the moments I have chosen as a theme of study.

Located on the mountainside of the Codru peak, situated at the joint of the counties of Satu Mare, Salaj and Maramures, the communities of the Codru area are characterized by a consistent culture, clearly defined by unique elements, and material and spiritual output that ultimately define the psycho-social specific. Paradoxically, the communities of the Codru area were able to communicate and create a strongly defined cultural unity with specific features, without manifesting in an autarchical manner, but being open to acculturation, by this undergoing the Romanian national ethnologic ensemble. I am referring here to a fact somewhat atypical, namely the natural borders set by the relief with an average elevation of 700 m high, richly wooded, that united its inhabitants instead of separating them, as it is the case in many other instances. Furthermore, over time, the Codru peak has been both a natural and administrative border depending on the administration of the macro-region (Transylvania) to which it belonged. To this, I think I am right when I say that at least in the last hundreds of years the inhabitants of this mountainside have never been under the same administrative territorial unit. However, not even this fact has prevented this cultural unit from setting up as a hallmark of the Romanian tradition.

As it appears at first glance, the cultural coverage of the Codru area is difficult to fit geographically, as it has a core and a relative range of diffusion towards the neighbouring areas: Tara Oasului – to the north, Tara Chioarului and Salajului Valley – to the east, the Plains of Satmar and Ier – to the west and Bihor area – to the south-west. This very type of diffusion allows us to treat the area as both a stand-alone entity, with specific and unique features, and also as having a pretty sharp dose of interconnection with the great Romanian and universal cultures. This study sought to emphasize the defining features of the area, but I came to notice that in many situations its particularity lies rather in its form of manifestation than in the functional principle of a ritual or custom, the latter having a regional spreading area or, as I have said before, a universal spreading area (at least in the Christian European area).

It is important to see here that the strongest interference that I have found comes from Chioarului Valley and Salaj Valley, the latter raising doubts about its belonging to the same ethnographic area. Tara Oasului, due to its geographical location and geological limits set by the relief and the Somes River is less visible to the people of the Codru area as regards their cultural manifestations. Besides, this aspect is highlighted and is caused by the very economic exchanges. Most of the commercial relations of the people living in the Codru area are with the towns of: Cehu Silvaniei, Somcuta, Baia Mare, Zalau, Tasnad, Arad and Satmar. The economic exchanges were both a spreading and gathering means for some elements of traditional, regional and national culture. Another important factor was the young people leaving for the main urban centres to study.

On the other hand, the villages from the Plains of Satmar and Ier used to be inhabited exclusively by Hungarians, thus providing the people from the Codru area with access to the Western culture: Catholic and Calvinist. Another opening towards the Western culture was provided by the contact with the Swabian population settled in the villages at the foothills of the Codru area. The latter strongly influenced the architecture that later set the specific style in the area, clothing, especially women's garments, e.g. the apron, and the vest and shirt took over bright colours like shades of burgundy, blue and green with multicoloured embellishments (see photo of the costume of Solduba), notably different from the neighbouring ethnographic areas.

Regarding the national value of the passage rites practiced in the Codru area, it is important to note that they follow the prototype that applies for the entire Romania so that rites can be at times almost identical in geographically opposite areas but authenticity is never lost.

This phenomenon was far ahead observed by professor Ion Şeuleanu who stated in one of his papers dedicated to weddings that:

'From one folkloric area to another, throughout the country, the traditional bridal ceremony looks spectacularly similar, especially to the amateur eye. The scenario is unitary and eye-catching, as well as the practices and objects involved with implied meanings. Anyways, the structures remain the same. This can be explained and is strongly illustrated by other Romanian customs. The base for the aforementioned similarities lays in the historical experience, with its fundamental common data, elements of the same primary vital background. All these have turned into a Romanian mentality and view upon the world, a sign of unity from both genetical-ontological and cultural-spiritual perspectives of all Romanians.

Unity does not preclude variations, the possibility that on a general-common basis features would appear not only in regions, but sometimes locally. This phenomenon of variety in unity, noted by the specialists, is a characteristic of our entire folk creation. I think it is the evidence of infinite openness towards the universe, of the ability to receive life differently.¹

I will focus first on Arnold Van Gennep's principles and the structure he proposes regarding the main stages of separation, threshold and incorporation rites.

I have discussed all these stages of life of the people from the Codru area: birth, marriage and death, in **Chapters 2, 3 and 4.**

For example, birth has a number of preliminal preparations that assure both the mother and fetus against malignant profane interventions from the community through a series of rites of separation that take the form of prohibitions and make them stand out from the group. Other separation rituals were the first bath and cutting the newborn's tuft that, as I will show below, is a sacrificial ritual.

Separation is even more obvious within the rituals of marriage, where the young couple perform a series of activities that separates them from their former social class. An important moment in the separation is şiratăul (party held on the eve of the wedding), a moment of separation by definition, as we have seen in the dedicated chapter.

Actually, the whole preliminal ceremony and repertoire to marriage, starting with the girl's parents' consent, the match-making and marriage proposal define the separation of the two, as they exchange specific marks that remove them from the social group they formerly belonged

¹ Şeuleanu Ion, *Poezia populară de nuntă*, Editura Minerva, 1985, page 61

to. The actual religious wedding contains a certain amount of separation practices. Literary oral productions abound in such motifs, as, for instance, the hunting motif, which requires withdrawal of the young groom and his group in seeking the bride, then there is the pardoning uttered by the speaker on behalf of the groom and bride (rhymes of separation of the newlyweds from their former status and social group / the family), as well as cheering performed on the way to church.

The funeral ceremony is also marked by rituals of separation, having, among other objectives, the last separation of the deceased from the worldly space and ensuring his/her full alignment to the new world, the world beyond. In this sense, the room where the deceased is kept has the windows and mirrors covered, the departed is removed from the room with the feet forwarding towards the entrance, he/she is taken a tuft of hair to be put at the attic beam and he is under surveillance every night.

The threshold rituals are present in all the events I have presented so far, from birth to death, as they are the most favourable moments to manipulate the sacred because the initiate is in a neutral status, between the world he has just left and the world he is about to enter, towards which he has not yet defined a status.

Thus, the transition from fetus to the born baby is magical, but because it carries a certain degree of intimacy, it is not especially highlighted, as it happens in the presence of two persons: the mother and the midwife, the latter having powers of a healer in the full sense and not just medical knowledge. As I have said, the time of birth has a maximum charge of sacred meaning, it is an archetypal gesture; the midwife must operate under sacredness to alleviate both the birth and baby's destiny. Therefore she is the one who sees the baby and examines it anatomically and magically, in other words, whether it is human or belongs to the world of ghosts. She is the one who cuts the umbilical cord, which makes the transition from fetus to child; the cord is loaded with complex meanings, it is used for good omen and to influence the destiny. She also bathes the newborn for the first time, just a good time for destiny setting, and takes care of its protection by providing a burial place for the placenta in an isolated spot. Another significant moment is the custom of passing the child through the window, a ritual similar to the threshold ritual.

Regarding the bridal ceremony, which is generous to us as it goes public and very theatrical, it reveals precisely the very moments of transition. By transition moments I mean transition from maiden to wife that is reiterated throughout the ceremony in at least two of its episodes. The first and most important instance pertaining to the God-man relationship is held in

the church, during the wedding ceremony. It should be stressed that the moment belongs to the Christian ritual and contains all the biblical meanings as well as a few moments that are outside the church tradition, i.e. the practices commonly used when entering and exiting the church. A second liminal moment takes place at home and it's called 'descalcitu miresei' – undoing the bride's hair and putting on the 'zadie' - the headcherkief. The headcherkief has mainly social meaning and marks the shift of the bride's status into the social group. Once the bride becomes a woman, she will no longer wear 'plantici' (ribbons) and 'struturi' (hair decorations), hence her outfit will become sober, highlighting her new family responsibilities.

The transition is also highlighted in the burial rituals but in a softer formula, reiterated in several moments of the ceremony that reaches multiple existential levels.

The first transition of the deceased is leaving the social micro group that is the family separation. The moment takes place at home, with the family. Before the deceased is taken outside for the extended religious ceremony, he is accompanied by the family and close ones (relatives and friends) in the house. I have identified a series of particular rituals connected with the transition, like the custom of taking the deceased out with his legs coming forward, breaking vessels under the bier, slamming the door and crossing oneself while crossing the threshold with the coffin, which besides the apotropaic value have the meaning of final and irrevocable separation from family and home.

Another level of manifestation of the liminal ritual is the social existence, as a member of the village community. Its area of manifestation is the living space, symbolized here by the garden and barn, the places intended for socialization: dancing – suggestively called the 'barn dancing', 'habe' and 'claci' (both meaning evening sitting of village women). The transition from being a member of a social group to the world beyond is first marked by a Christian religious rite, then by a series of archaic customs of transition or parting, like, for instance, the tradition of giving each other a small bread over the coffin, most likely a stylized manifestation, a takeover of the same custom that used a bird, symbolizing the flight through the heavens. The separation from the social group also happens at the large wooden gate called 'vrajnita', where the two worlds go apart. Moreover, the entire route to the cemetery is a transition; each cross-road is a place where the worlds meet and is marked by a moment of prayer.

Not in the least, the separation is both individual and ontological, a division of the human from its self, of the soul from its body, usually marked at the moment of burial. It is, say, the

return of the individual, of its bodily structure or mundane existence to its matrix by throwing earth over the coffin, into the pit.

Following the scheme proposed by Arnold Van Gennep, which is a universal formula in assessing rituals, symmetrical with the evolutionary theory in biology, I should note that the incorporation into the new status appears in the family rituals of the Codru area.

The category of rituals regarding the newborn is more visible as it goes public, the more so as it engages people of the community. Most rites of incorporation, or what has remained of them (as they rather fall into the category of ritual practices than in the rituals themselves), have a strong character of omen and enhancer, except for the rite of baptism, which was kept as such due to the will of the church. In one of them the child is aged 7 – I shall not discuss here the symbology of number 7 - and brought to the market to untie the navel and throw it into the dust that is a symbolic gesture for social incorporation, as the market along with the barn and home garden are thought to be the most important social place in the village universe. I saw that the custom according to which the child is "hidden" under a different name in order to protect him from fatal diseases contains a hint of incorporation rite.

As in the case of preliminal and liminal rituals, marriage comprises a very broad and varied range of incorporation rituals regarding the couple and each of them separately (the bride and the groom), both as a member of the family micro-group and as members of the village community. It begins with the simple garments specific of each age and goes on with a series of obligations and prohibitions of the new status. Thus, men will have to wear a 'clop' (hat) after the wedding and women a 'zadie' (headcherkief), they will no longer attend occasional activities such as the barn dancing, haba (evening sitting of village women), carolling etc. only under the new status and, of course, within a new formula.

Then there come a series of incorporation ritual duties for godparents and parents that start during the bridal ceremony and are periodically refreshed. They are especially marked by giving ritual gifts, aspect that I will resume later in this paper.

Not in the least, remarkable are the ritual gestures of incorporation to the extended social group. I would first mention here the bride's dance that implies her dancing with every participant at the event, male or female, young or older, very meaningful for the rite of incorporation that sets no sexual boundary.

The funeral ceremony is no poorer in ritual incorporation practices, on the contrary, in this case they continue with commemorative moments such as the requiem and other practices related to the cult of the dead comprised in the holidays over the year.

One important moment within the funeral ceremony is certainly the communion meal, which is a ritual meal to honour or rather on behalf of the deceased, where the entire community is invited after the deceased is buried, deliberately or out of hygienic reasons. In fact this is the first meal served symbolically by the deceased in the new status. Arnold van Gennep noted:

*"As dinner with a friend creates a special bond of belonging to his family, the same happens when taking food to the world beyond, it is the incorporation to the world of the dead and forgetting about the living [...] with no way back but with particular procedures of separation."*²

We have seen therefore that specific, sometimes unique utterances, family rituals: birth, marriage and death from the ethnographic area of Codru, underwrite to the universal structure proposed by the French anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep that I have adopted in this paper as a work scheme because I thought it to be the most effective and enlightening to my presentation. However, it is not by far the only possible key to the analytical approach.

In **Chapter 5**, I sought to both utter conclusions about the evolution of the studied rituals and show other possible ways of scientific investigation.

Thus, another perspective that rises is that of initiation rituals, which Van Gennep considers a part of this category, where it is not the scheme / structure of events that matters, but the very characters. What I mean to say by this is not nearly that Van Gennep's scheme doesn't matter from the perspective of initiation rites, on the contrary, it becomes more obvious and necessary in the scientific inquiry, and its perspective makes characters more apparent as they are the main beneficiaries of the ritual. Therefore, one could identify a certain teleology of the ritual that is not accordingly to Van Gennep's just to pleasure one or for any other aesthetic reason.

From this perspective, the rituals analyzed in this paper are par excellence rites of passage initiation. I have personally seen a rite of passage. Their initiation component is apparent, the change that occurs in the status of the character is ontologically qualitative and not quantitative cumulative like in the celebration of ages (e.g. the coming of age). From this perspective, the

² Arnold van Gennep, *Formarea legendelor*, Editura Polirom, Iași 1997, page 89

rites of passage take on existential meanings and the social group itself becomes the character of this process. Thus, birth, marriage and death are but parts of the individual's way from the state of the unborn's chaos to a full being in a transcendent dimension, where rituals are meant to indicate the path to the neophyte.

Moreover, all stages of initiation rites comprise specific characters – for example, the neophyte and the master, together with adjacent characters and the necessary tools. Therefore, relations are born: newborn / midwife, postpartum female / midwife, grooms / speaker, grooms / godfathers, deceased / mourner, deceased / priest etc. Their structure follows the pattern: master / disciple. We also encounter many situations during rituals, like the shift between master and its disciple (e.g. When saying forgiveness prayers and wedding discourses, sometimes the performer explicitly uses the phrase "so he says through my mouth") where the first makes sure that the ritual initiation is accomplished.

Going by this logic of multiple keys of interpretation and considering the initiation rituals to be rites of passage, we could propose a bolder interpretation, that of the rite of passage as a sacrifice or consecration rite in the ritual meaning of the term.

From this point of view rituals should be treated as the action that aims at creating the sacred. In this case I am referring to characters, using the terminology by Mauss and Hubert³: sacrificed - "*the subject who receives the benefits of the sacrifice or stands its effects*"⁴; sacrificer or intermediary who through manipulative actions upon the sacred is able to carry out the sacrifice without major risks; and the tools.

There would be one more very important element without which sacrifice can't take place and which is apparently missing from our interpretation - the victim or the sacrificed is the element that connects God and the sacrificer, it is the vehicle of the sacred. Indeed, at a quick glance, the victim to be sacrificed is totally lacking, but at a deeper glance over the symbolism we can see enough elements pointing to the victim's substitutes. It is true that in the dissolution process of family rites some basic elements were lost and others turned into symbols, which fact does not mean that these rituals were originally incomplete or we got the paradigm wrong.

On the other hand, the victim of the sacrifice is not absolutely necessary to be an animal; it can be an object or plant. We see therefore the victim of sacrifice hidden within gifts and

³ Marcel Mauss; Henri Hubert, *Eseu despre natura și funcția sacrificiului*, Editura Polirom, Iași 1997

⁴ Marcel Mauss; Henri Hubert, quoted, page 51

offerings, many of which are symbolic and fragmented or it happens that the victim's function was forgotten.

I have aforementioned the custom according to which small breads are passed over the coffin, the bread being a substitute for a bird, the gesture having a deep sacrificial meaning. The entire ensemble of common dining tables is remnants of sacrificial rituals par excellence that are to be encountered in all three main moments of life.

It is true that not all offerings are sacrifices, as Marcel Mauss shows in his study dedicated to gifts.⁵ The gift implies some reciprocity and when the exchange partner is the divinity, the swap becomes sacrifice. It is important to note that there is no free sacrifice in the traditional thinking, the word itself suggests a purpose, one that transcends the daily profane in order to obtain the status of sacred.

The life of the individual in the traditional village of Codru, as well as anywhere else, is a constant and linear flow. In fact, the very perception of time in the archaic consciousness, as shown by Mircea Eliade⁶, is the heterogeneity, the swing of the individual between the profane and mythical time, as life itself is a permanent reinforcement of the primordial origins through archetypical gestures. The archaic man lives his cyclical life, a temporal and temporarily sequence of eternity, translated into a dialectic paradigm under different sub-cycles occasioned either by the yearly holidays or the series of initiation rituals related to one's own existence (birth, marriage and death), the latter being the subject of this study. I think that in order to understand accurately and profoundly the meanings of the family rites in the Codru area it is necessary to see them as technical elements of the initiation process, in which "The Big Year" is the very human life seen as a cosmic cycle. In fact, unlike the modern man filled with the existential anxiety of his insignificant condition, the man living in the Codru area is well anchored in the universal stream of time, he knows he comes from somewhere, and when he dies, he does not simply disintegrate, but goes to another existential dimension.

The mentality that I have presented above appears in the practices and beliefs of the people from the Codru area at the major life moments like: birth, marriage and death that show

⁵ Marcel Mauss, *Eseu despre dar*, Editura Polirom, Iași 1997

⁶ See Mircea Eliade, *Mitul eternei reînțarceri*, in Eseuri, Editura Științifică, București 1991 and by the same author *Tratat de istorie a religiilor*, Editura Humanitas, București 1992, chapter „Timpul sacru și mitul veșnicului reînceput”

that these people are deeply rooted in the universal values that they express in a customized manner.

As to what concerns the time problem in the traditional culture of the Codru area, the cyclicity of time is not smooth, but each cycle has its roughness giving the impression of an uneven time - each stage is marked by various setbacks and magic rites with various functions (usually of the omen type or apotropaic).

Beyond this reference to cosmos of the individual from the Codru area, like in any traditional society, the major life events are altered into a magico-mythical, timeless register through various manipulative, sacral means commonly called rites as the events are far from being ordinary and because they are intended to be given a mystical meaning. I do not aim to define or redefine the ritual, but I must say that we share the views according to which the ritual is a manipulation of the sacred or it makes the sacred while it repeats a paradigmatic primary gesture in order to help the individual cross over the space and time dimensions.⁷

When it comes to birth, wedding and funeral as a package of rites that arose from the local mythical or regional universe that repeats primary paradigmatic gestures, we cannot fail to notice that actors have their roles and the manipulation of the sacred requires the use of many instruments and rules dominated by "taboos".

I aim to present in my thesis paper these rituals and their evolution, because contrary to some common precepts, the popular culture is dynamic and not a living museum as some think of it. So, the Romanian peasant, and implicitly that of the Codru area, is not stuck in a traditional culture of several thousands or hundreds of years ago, on the contrary, their beliefs, rituals, magic practices etc. are the outcome of cultural development under specific processes of acculturation and cultural syncretism. Therefore, I believe that the village of the Codru area is dynamic, in a process of development. But this culture dynamics has some disadvantages when seen with the eyes of those who would like it frozen in an idyllic image, within a frame under the colours of the interwar period. That period was otherwise prolific in specialized research also because key informants of folklore gatherers after WWII were individuals who assimilated knowledge in that period. This disadvantage comes from the capacity of the people of the Codru area to adjust and assimilate new elements of exogenous culture.

⁷ Aurel Codoban – *Sacru și ontofanie*, Editura Polirom, Iași 1998, page 105

Leaving aside our modern trauma related to communism, I think the following phrase is graphic: "Since with the communists to power, there are no ghosts."⁸

I would like us to imagine the communists like any other cultural element of novelty that interposed and assimilated into the local culture has brought about major changes in the components of the old register, either by giving them away or forgetting their meaning and significance. In other words, in a new culture, a rationalist one, accepted as such by the people of the Codru area, one of the important elements from all of their beliefs (in ghosts) had to disappear. Ghosts have ceased to exist and their function as well by redefining the phenomena under the new science. I must also add to this idea another graphic example: one informant, while telling us about the death signs and describing for us the singing of the owl, he said: "*yes, that was a long time ago, it can sing now [ironically - but it won't be the same - Ed].*"⁹

Here I must pay tribute to functionalism and see (by analogy with a biological principle, namely that "the function generates and maintains the body") that in the traditional culture, rites last as long as they function: "the function generates and maintains the ritual". I consider useless any further arguments in this respect; however some examples can be probative. For instance, the custom of cheering ('iui'), as part of a ritual, tends to be practiced outside the modern context where the bridal procession is made by car, or during the funeral procession, the suite would not stop at crossroads on the way to the cemetery, as chapels in village cemeteries ceased this tradition together with the ritual practices related to the presence of the deceased in his house, and so on. Examples like these are many, the ones above were chosen randomly.

It is important to mention that in the process of dissolution, the first to be affected are the elements of ritual as they progressively move to other registers (for example, the games for children - 'bâza', a basic game practiced in the past during the vigil for the deceased while now it has become a game of children: the children hit their partners from behind, by turn, with their palm in the palm from under the armpit of the one who is 'bâza' at that moment, and he has to guess who was the one that hit him while all the others shout: 'bâzzzz!'), often putting on spectacular forms aided by "cultivating" traditions (festivals, concerts, folk creative centres etc.) based on the same principle through which folk art became "handicraft".

⁸ Informer Nechilă Andrei, aged 83, Oarța de Sus, in 1986

⁹ Informer Ionian Ioan, aged 68, Iegheriște, gatherer Olosuteanu Rareș, in 2012

Nowadays, the moment of conception and, moreover, even the idea of bringing a child into the world and the whole process of procreation is placed in a controlled, medical framework; as well as the birth of a child in itself is already seen in terms of bodily existence and sexuality through the means of modern technology, with no trace of sacred mystery (the only mystery left is probably the one related to microbiology, genetics and related sciences). The situation is no different in the case of marriage and death. Giving up on the speaker who was the most important manipulator of the sacred within the bridal ceremony and the taking over by families and grooms of the "directing" process led to the loss of any ritual resorts of the ceremony that has been simplified down to the point of an ordinary party and fashion session. I shall not mention here the consequences that come out from the mortuary chapels, so appreciated by the locals. By placing the deceased in the chapel immediately after his death (which often occurs in the hospital) and the new companies specialized in preparing the deceased (embalming, dressing, setting the coffin and laying the deceased into it etc.) have permanently ceased a series of rites that used to be practiced at home: preparation and the vigil for the deceased and the phases of the funeral all the way to the cemetery.

However, I think we should not mourn the disappearance of some traditions, beliefs, customs and popular creations as this is a natural phenomenon. No one, and much less the villager himself, wants to remain frozen like in a museum as traditions are elements of novelty and avant-garde.

New times run by different rules born from the need to optimize labour productivity that is not attuned to the sinusoidal (hopping) time, cyclic, full of prohibitions and exonerations of the traditional villager. This entailed the impossibility to strictly adhere to the old rules of the restrictions set by the holidays. The very holiday is reduced to a moment of rest and fun, as a reward for the hard work and not a time of introspection, of connection to the cosmos and divinity; the resting time is a means of expressing honour and thank to God. In other words, the holiday belongs now to the man, who consequently makes of it his own way; it belongs no more to the deity who rules its anniversary through prohibitions and exonerations.

Even the personal time of the stages of life has got a different rhythm; it is now closely linked to the social-professional life and lesser linked to the individual. In the past human life was divided between the stages of development of the individual, from birth to puberty and into the adult life that started with a group dance called 'hora', then came the military service for men

as a moment of initiation like the similar rituals practiced by primitive tribes (it is frequently said in the area that "he is no man who has never served in the army"). Life reached its climax with marriage, followed by the moment of death when the deceased was prepared for his last journey. The life of the modern man of Codru is marked by additional events with comparable value, but of professional nature, such as starting school, graduating, getting a first job and retirement.

The second part of this paper is made of the folkloric repertoire collected from the area under study and structured on the Van Gennep's logic I have embraced for the first part of this paper dedicated to the analytical study.

Regarding the literary productions specific to birth, we are facing a bizarre but explicable phenomenon, namely that the inventory is rather scanty, almost absent. Thus, the main popular creations related to birth come down to lullabies and to a limited range of items of ritual initiation that are long gone into children's games, to which I have not referred to because I am not sure they were used as rituals. By explicable phenomenon, I meant earlier that birth contains no spectacular elements due to its high level of intimacy, which is why, even if there were chants or ritual lyrics to facilitate birth, they would be the first to disappear with the modernization of the people of Codru. On the other hand, it is quite possible that these elements did not exist, since birth required a special effort from participants. Health care, in the modern sense, did practically not exist as both mother and midwife had no favourable state for artistic events. Nor the period after birth was marked by fervid events as the degree of survival was uncertain in the conditions that infant mortality use to have a high rate, sometimes accompanied by the mothers' death at birth.

Regarding other moments in the life of the individual, they have a rich and diverse inventory of literary genres and some of them take up the form of cultivated literature, such as the lyrics. The bridal and funeral folklore is a vast source of symbols and feelings of the most diverse, from the slapstick comedian to drama.

The third part is dedicated to the family rites in pictures.

Just like in the case of literary productions, images from birth are scanty, most likely for the same reasons. However, as expected, the wedding is best represented especially because the photographers from different times have developed this concern. As I have said before, the moment of birth has a higher degree of privacy, and the funeral is far from a happy time, therefore, many families thought that photo snapshots is ill-timed, almost indecent. Interestingly,

for funerals there is no ritual or magical reason to prohibit the taking of pictures, probably due to the high spreading speed of this technology as compared to the responsiveness of magical thinking.

Another noticeable phenomenon that is justified by the level of technology is that the wedding as a complex and sumptuous ceremonial has been much exploited recently. If old pictures were snapshots of family groups (especially in the interwar period), with the village modernization, especially since the 70s, they focused more and more on the wedding as it was more profitable (more settings, more participants, more pictures).

Given the thesis approach, it omits catching family moments through modern technology like video film-making, first at weddings, now at baptism and funerals. This technology would have been useful in assessing their dynamics, although it does not bring knowledge to the topic of this study because it has began particularly in the last two decades of the past millennium and now the studied rituals came into dissolution.

The last part of this paper is dedicated to the critical apparatus that indicates the sources of information starting with informants, continuing with gatherers, localities index and ending with the bibliography.

I believe that the glossary of terms, although less exhaustive, will make known the regional terms and for some of them I will approach the etymological perspective.