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## *Contributions to the birth ceremony in the land of Lăpuș*

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Focused on our field research, the present study is about the research of birth customs in several localities of Țara Lăpușului, an ethnographic area of particular interest, due to the archaicity and conservatism that are specific to it.

In the first part, I dealt with the prenatal period, in which we emphasized the rites related to the desire of newly founded families to bring children into the world, as well as the relief of the birth performed during the wedding ceremony. We then dealt with pregnancy, with the rites intended to ensure the smooth progress of the pregnancy, as well as the prohibitions that the pregnant woman must respect. In the second part of the study, we dealt with the birth itself, which begins with rites to ease the birth performed by the midwife. We gave due space to the first bite, but also to the rites performed after the birth, with openness towards the function of integration and ensuring a beneficial destiny for the newborn. We analyzed the ritual prescriptions related to the first swaddling, as well as the rites related to the period of care of the baby by the midwife.

We reserved a large space for baptism, the basic ceremonial sequence in the birth ceremony, in which we emphasized the repertoire of rites, especially those of great antiquity – baptism in the sun, moon, stars and tree. We have not omitted the predeterministic beliefs that have the bearish form of manifestation. We dealt with Christian baptism, the baptismal table, the response to the gifts, as well as a ceremonial sequence of great importance – the ritual washing of the midwife's hands by the granddaughter.

We gave space to the period of praise, characterized by prophylactic and apotropaic rites. The study ends with the care of the newborn, characterized by rites related to rocking, making, washing and drying the child's diapers, but also apotropaic. We focused on the treatment of some common diseases in children: the bad cry, the bad disease, the pitcher, the goiter. We reserved space for a rite meant to prevent the death of children in the family, which is the ritual sale of the child through the window. We did not omit the traditions related to ensuring the physical beauty of the newborn, the beliefs related to the child's behavior and the change of teeth. Finally, we made considerations about the function of birth customs in the Land of Lăpuș.

**Keywords:** midwife, rite, godmother, child, granddaughter, cup, spells, baptism, meal.

*Contributions to the study of mythology after the answers of the Maramureş correspondents to Ion Muşlea's questionnaires*

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Our research is focused on the answers of the correspondents from Maramureş to Ion Muşlea's questionnaires, which provide us with information about two categories of mythological beings, some complex, and the second group of lesser importance. In our research, we reserved a wider space for complex mythological beings: the Forest Girl, around whom a real mythology was embroidered, the Night Man, the Marțolea, the Undead, the Werewolf. I have reproduced information, even being brief, related to the secondary mythological beings: the Fantastic Peoples, the Lunatic, the Merciful, the Death, the Plague, the Smeul, the Dragon. In our research, we gave importance to new and rare information, emphasizing their purpose to complete the mythological substratum of the beings represented in the answers of the correspondents.

In our research, synthesizing the information, we first analyzed the beliefs about the origin of these evil beings, those that reflect the way they are imagined in the people, their characteristic features, evil actions and means of defense and confrontation. In order to render the mythological substratum of these demons as complex as possible, we have reproduced legends and stories, some of which arouse special interest.

The study of this compartment of Maramureş mythology reveals to us a complex, archaic and synthetic universe of thought, in which myths, beliefs, superstitions, legends, the cult element of fire and hearth, water, earth, elements from nature, elements of popular cosmogony, of magic and sorcery.

**Keywords:** forest girl, demon, assaults, evil, spells, correspondents, questionnaires, information.

## *The Language of Birds in the Romanian Fairy Tale*

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The idea of a primordial language, spoken / understood by both man and animals, a secret language to be given by consecration / initiation only to the chosen one and which offers the initiate a higher type of knowledge, fascinated. Present in the myths, stories and literature of the world, such a language would represent „the key to access to the ancient memory of a culture and a civilization still largely unknown” (Ph. Walter). When approaching this subject, the specialists speak, without a doubt, of a *prehistoric language*, born and used long before the Indo-European’s historical language: a language with a common heritage of archaic beliefs and conceptions, lost and later translated into cultural products such as this motif of the *language of birds / animals*, reminiscent of a magical thinking that fell into the (almost) fixed structures of the imagination. We have many cases in classical mythology in which this primordial language re-composes the concrete, ideational universe of an original period, in which the fusion of meaning and significance is restored (Eve-serpent dialogue mentioned by the Old Testament, Tiresias, Melampus for ancient Greece, Finn – Ireland, Taliesin

– Wales etc.).

The *quorum* of myths in the examples mentioned in this study is still amazing, rich, complex. The clairvoyance, the access of the pauper hero to a higher level of knowledge thanks to this initiation, the essence of the myth relocated in the fairy tale, are all these a simple literary decal, inspired by an anonymous fairy tale creator in the fantastic epic for a greedy imaginary audience? Certainly, not. • The construction of the myth at the level of the fairy tale, often very close to the classical myths; • Investing in this imaginative episode with symbolizing intent; last but not least, • The ubiquity of a specific interdiction, I believe I take this motive literally out of the realm of traditional narrative arbitrariness, integrating it into that of the intentionality of (symbolic) consciousness.

**Keywords:** imaginary, phenomenology, hermeneutics, Romanian fairytale, the Language of Birds.

*Folk love lyrics from the Sălaj – Codru area*  
*– the folkloric pair of lovers –*

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The Romanian folk lyric gives the interested reader a complex, interesting and all-encompassing image of the issue of love, which, through richness, variety and artistic sophistication, fully confirms the native endowment of the anonymous creators and reveals the virtues, delicacy and soulful beauty specific to the Romanian peasant. In the present study, the author limits himself to the presentation of the specific faces of the pair of lovers, two partners of dreams, joy, happiness and often sufferings caused by love. The reference quotes come only from collections originating from Sălaj county and Codrului County, a territory that is currently divided between Maramureș, Satu Mare and Sălaj counties. Like the biblical bride and groom in the famous Song of Songs, our lovers mutually discover their beautiful and pleasant faces, which are attracted by uncontrollable mysterious forces. The situation of falling in love appears in images that reproduce particularly strong organic states, sometimes even the sensation of illness and the fear of death are present. He, *mândrul, badea, drăguțul* feels that love burns him and can bring him death. She, *drăguța, mândra, nana, lelea îndrăgostită* suffers from love's disease as well. With all the waves of suffering, love brings young lovers beautiful moments of love. She gives birth to the song: Don't be surprised that I cry, / Because I'm young and I love. / *Bade*, if you didn't love me, / I would never cry. Cunning, hypocrisy and other human flaws are categorically rejected and the two can no longer meet.

Only mutual physical attraction can be the foundation of a valid erotic relationship. The beloved, the proud, is metaphorically identified with a flower on earth and with the moon in the sky, and *badea*, the proud, seen as a beautiful fir tree and bright like the sun.

Instead of conclusions, as is always the case, the author comments on the lyrical text *Așé-i prúda* sometimes, a comment that he reproduces in full and proposes to the reader to comment on a lyrical poem dedicated to the proud, *Că, miucăță, faço lui*, a text that is reproduced in entirety.

**Keywords:** She = *drăguța, mândra, lelea, nana (iubita)*; El = *badea, drăguțul, mândrul (iubitul)*

*The family and ordinance. Customs realated to the pregnant woman. Demografic study*

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Maramureș is a unique destination, located in the heart of Europe, which has carefully preserved the culture, traditions and lifestyle of the peasant from the past. The region is the place of a testament to the traditional, romantic era of simplicity and moral values that we read or hear from our grandparents today. Few habits have changed over the centuries that have passed. Families remain in the same village as their ancestors. The handicrafts and traditions are passed on from generation to generation. Hand-woven clothing is still worn with pride. The church is still the soul of the village. Neighbors know each other and help each other. Maramureș is considered by many the soul of the typical Romanian village. In this context one can notice how the woman had to have a special education to be able to raise her family in the eyes of fellow villagers. With its picturesque settlements, Maramureș concentrates everything that life means in the country. Traditional culture was formed through the experiences of countless generations and conveys deathless values.

Visitors to these lands have the unique opportunity to come back in time, to be witnesses of times and a simpler life. The sources of information used are to a great degree part of the local oral history. Villagers found a purpose through order, they obtained the motivation needed for life. Their minds were opened to see the deeper meaning of things.

**Keywords:** Maramureș, woman, cultural values, the work, family, birth, children, traditions

## *General aspects concerning the evolution of the portable firearms in the European space*

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The goal of this article is to serve as a general presentation or introduction into the history of portable firearms and their evolution over the ages. While we are mostly referring to firearms in general, we do have a small emphasis on the ones that were used for hunting wild game. We start by showcasing the first types of handheld firearm mechanisms such as *hand-cannons*, *culverines* and we move towards the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and into the 15<sup>th</sup> to showcase the rise of the *matchlocks* and the first *wheellocks* muskets. Appearing during an age when technological advances were rife, these two particular firearms were the forefathers of the rifle as we know it today. While clumsy to operate they still provided an advantage for the user, being during warfare or hunting for that matter. Some examples of such firearms still exist in various museum and private collection around the world. Next we move towards the invention of the *flintlock*, a firearm that set the standard for about two hundred years. Invented during the 17<sup>th</sup> century this weapon slowly became the norm of every army, but also every hunter in Europe (given he could afford to own one). Another great innovation for portable firearms was the mechanism that allowed the loading of the powder and eventually of the full metal jacket rounds through the breech of the firearm. This particular kind of mechanism is still in use today on the majority of the hunting rifles. While the progress of portable firearms was at times slow, it was nonetheless steadily advancing alongside the progress regarding ballistics. All of these innovations regarding portable firearms also changed the way men have been hunting for the last few centuries.

**Keywords:** firearms, evolution, hunting, wheellock, flintlock

*Havas Béla Antal*

*A Great Anonymous of Cluj, „the Best Portraitist of Transylvania”*

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When we are talking about an icon, especially when it is already a legend like the miracle-worker of Nicula, researching some accounting records does not seem to promise anything spectacular, especially when you do not expect them to tell an unknown part of its history. However, such an untimely and unprecedented discovery can turn them into important and decisive sources for confirming working hypotheses. The discovery we are talking about *is an irrevocable confirmation of the last pictorial intervention on this Holy Icon, before the famous „restoration” of the 90s*, which brought great doubt about its authenticity and caused tons of ink to flow, heating up the spirits.

What's more, the discovery also bears the name of the person who made it: *Havas Béla Antal*. A painter, of whom almost all art history specialists have heard, but about whom many can say... nothing, and who as „the best portrait painter of Transylvania” is not mentioned in any lexicon or art album, perhaps because the peculiarity of his work is... perfect anonymity!

**Keywords:** Havas, icon, monastery, Nicula, painter

*The image of the rural mountain space in communist Romania seen through life  
lense/perspective of the Goia family*

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Social history, a field that developed especially in the 1950s and 1960s, represents even today a bridge between factual, objective history and the lives of individuals, marked by subjectivity and affectivity. The present article starts from two elements: the analysis of a place of memory – namely a village shop – and, respectively, of an interview granted to Mrs. Delia Gligor, an elderly lady living in Baiade Arieș, Alba County, Romania. Together, these two elements provide a revealing overview of the history of Vidra de Sus village during the 20th century, but also of the political regimes that marked Romania over a period of almost 100 years. Vidra de Sus is a mountain village in Alba County, now known as Avram Iancu. From this perspective, one can note the extent of the impact exerted by the political regime changes, on the one hand, on a family, and on the other hand, on the entire community of Vidra de Sus. At the beginning of the 20th century this family advanced socially and materially on the village hierarchy towards the wealthier categories, by opening a shop. With the communist regime, however, their main source of income, the shop, was confiscated and replaced by a post office, which has led the former owners to each look for other occupations to survive. Finally, the year 1989 puts an end to the communist regime, but not to the difficulties that the Goia family was going through – from this moment they had to fight to regain their former properties so that they can lead once more, after almost 50 years, a quiet life.

**Keywords:** lieux de memoire, oral history, social history, Vidra de Sus, nationalization

*Analysis of microclimate factors at Turda History Museum: relative humidity and temperature*

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This study presents a detailed analysis of the relative humidity and temperature, as factors of the indoor microclimatic conditions in the Turda History Museum. Museum collections may evade the harmful impact of environmental factors thereon only through a rigorous control and strict monitoring of such factors. In this particular case, the climatic data (obtained by monitoring the relative humidity and temperature in the exhibition space), analyzed in conjunction with other aspects, such as the visiting hours (the period when the museum is open to the public), the periods with a large influx of visitors, as well as the outdoor weather conditions point to the existence of two distinct periods. A period of low relative humidity, generally below 50% extends from November, once heating is turned on, until April, followed by a period when the relative humidity values return to normal limits that extends from May to October.

**Keywords:** microclimate, relative humidity, temperature, thermos-hygrometer, cultural heritage.

## *Influența Soarelui și a Lunii asupra vieții comunităților neolitice*

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Pământul face parte din sistemului solar, precum și din univers. Aceștia influențează Pământul. Corpul ceresc cel mai apropiat e Luna, care are o forță perturbatoare majoră asupra Pământului. Corpul central din Sistemul nostru solar este steaua Soarele, conținând 99% din întreaga masă a sistemului solar. Soarele are cel mai mare efect asupra Pământului. Fără Soare nu am avea viață, iar fără Lună nu ar fi evoluat treptat viața pe Pământ în forma actuală. Soarele și Luna au cea mai mare influență asupra Pământului, astfel și asupra vieții pe Pământ. Contribuind la dezvoltarea și susținerea vieții pământești, strămoșii noștri din neolitic venerau Soarele și Luna. Mai mult, societățile neolitice au dezvoltat calendare solare și lunare pentru a prezice și reglementa ciclurile economice și rituale. Controlul predictiv al schimbărilor sezoniere permite o predicție mai precisă a momentelor critice ale perioadelor ciclice și fazelor de vegetație ale plantelor, inclusiv momentele adecvate pentru plantare și recoltare. Această lucrare prezintă influența Soarelui și a Lunii asupra vieții unor comunități neolitice de pe teritoriul României.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Arheoastronomie, neolitic, Soare, Lună, calendar agrar// Archaeoastronomy, Neolithic, Sun, Moon, agrarian calendar

## *Rings for hunting bows and accessories*

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The paper analyzes a series of rings from the early Neolithic that each have a single link. Starting from Vinča A, double rings appear, and then, at the end of phases B or perhaps during the Tisa culture, a workshop for making rings with 2–3 rings was discovered at Cioka. The author believes that they served specialized hunters, as in our times they are gloves with three fingers to provide more safety when handling the bow. In the work, references are also made to other hunting sticks – the boomerang – reported in Măgura and Turdaş, these with three arms arguing with the recent boomerangs from commercial where they have three arms. The work ends with references to examples from ethnology about the ring.

**Keywords:** ethnoarchaeology, rings, hunting, bow, boomerang.

*The sacred liquid – living water*

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Water is the origin of life, a means of purification and the element of regeneration. It is the symbol of fertility, wisdom, divine grace. As the origin and vehicle of any form of life, it represents the vital breath and can become the support of any energy. It can be endowed with antithetical properties, it can be purifying, or poisonous. Water can be structured according to the actions performed on it (prayer, magic formula), or the interference with the surrounding energies (objects, animals, plants). Ritual washings have a special place in all rites of passage, or initiation. The water used in these ceremonies is “living water”, endowed with magical powers. Immersion in the ritual water represents a symbolic death and at the same time a return to the beginning, to the origins, a new birth in a cleansed body. Romanian fairy tales and legends remind of various creatures, which bring “living water” to the hero who is in trouble. Also, bathing in living water rejuvenates the elderly and energizes the young.

**Keywords:** ethnoarchaeology, Neolithic, sacred water, living water, symbol.