

**СИМВОЛІЧНА ОСОБЛИВІСТЬ ВЕСІЛЬНИХ
ТРАДИЦІЙ В ОЛТЕНІЇ****Габрієла БОАНДЖІУ**Інститут соціально-антропологічних досліджень
ім. “К. С. Ніколеску-Плопшор”, Крайова (Румунія)
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THE WEDDING IN OLTENIA****Gabriela BOANGIU**“C.S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor” Socio-Human Research Institute,
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Боанджю Габрієла. Символическая особенность свадебных традиций в Олтении. В работе Арнольда Ван Геннепа “*Les rites de passage*” осуществлено типологию обрядов. Свадебные обряды влияют на изменение статуса, формирования личности молодых людей, интегрирование их в более многочисленную общину села. В статье освещены особенности проведения свадебных обрядов в Олтении по сравнению с другими румынскими регионами. Этапы свадьбы очень богаты на символические особенности, кроме того, можно выделить многочисленные обряды, касающиеся молодежи до брака, ограничительные обряды или ритуалы агрегации. Теория Арнольда Ван Геннепа может и в дальнейшем помогать осуществлять новые этнологические исследования.

Ключевые слова: обряды перехода, свадьбы, символические представления, ментальность.

The work of Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, classified the typology of rites, establishing a specific interpretation of them, in the scientific environment. The rites of passage specific for the wedding imply the change of status, of becoming for the young couple, integrating them in the more ample community, represented by the village. The present article puts forward a wider perspective over the rites of passage, specific for the wedding from Oltenia, as compared to other regions from Romania, and integrating the vision of Van Gennep on addressing the rites of passage.

In the case of the wedding, it is interesting for our theme the stage of the matchmaking and of the dowry, along with all the symbolic representations and practices that are related to the dowry. “In its traditional forms, the marriage cannot take place randomly: the young people attend certain events from the social life of the village, do some specific works together, help each other, work in groups, go to evening sittings, parties or horas. At New Year, for example, the groups of young boys that go carolling from one house to the other, have specific wishes for the young boys and girls that have reached the age for getting married. Using allegorical forms, these wishes talk about the happy marriage and the duties of the future spouses”¹. Therefore, the weddings were preceded by a lot of social practices that used to represent the fundament for the young people to know each other better, to set the date of the wedding, to choose the godparents etc. The wooing (matchmaking) represented a very important stage within these family union. It was the moment when the families of the bride and groom met, when decisions referring to the future of the new family were made, the young couple knew each other better, gifts were exchanged, the dowry was established. “The wedding in Maramureș, as Timiș Nicoară from Baia

Mare informs us, represents a special event, not only for the young people who join their life and efforts to make a home, or for their parents, but for the entire village. The two young people – the bride and the groom – are seen by the entire village from the moment they “hold hands” (are engaged) and until the wedding is over. In the past, there were more often situations in Maramureș too, in which some marriages were arranged by the parents of some young people, marriages conditioned by wealth or “the noble kin” (...). Especially the parents of the girl had to promise the boy land and cattle, as a dowry”².

The stage of matchmaking represents a constitutive part of the wedding ceremony, “if the young couple decides to get married, the girl goes to her mother, confessing that a certain boy wants to make her his bride, to woo her, and she secretly advises with her mother how to prepare the wedding. The boy, the lad, also tells his father. His father, if he likes the girl, because he usually knows her too, tells his son: Good, let’s send the matchmakers” (Meițoiu 1969:97)³. As an example of a wedding, at Ivești, Vaslui, some time ago, they would send the matchmakers “with a leader heading them, all riding horses and neatly dressed, wearing their best clothes, they would stop next to the girl’s house and say the following wedding ovation or speech:

“Good morning,
Good morning honest householders!”
“We thank you
Great hunters
But why are you wandering
And what are you seeking”
“Why we are wandering
And what we are seeking
We do not have to
Account for
Because we have crossed countries
And we have crossed seas

¹ Pop M. “Sensul unei solemnități tradiționale” [The meaning of a traditional solemnity], *Scântea*, 24th of November 1966 *apud* Meițoiu, I. “Spectacolul Nunților” [The weddings show], Bucharest, The Central House of the Folkloric Creation, 1969, P. 18.

² Meițoiu I. “Spectacolul Nunților” [The weddings show], Bucharest, The Central House of the Folkloric Creation, 1969, P. 20–21.

³ Ibidem, P. 97.

And through towns and villages we have passed
 But we haven't accounted for
 But if you are asking us,
 Allow us a few moments
 To tell you our true reason...
 Our young emperor
 George the praised by all
 Woke up early morning
 Combed his raven hair
 Put on his new clothes
 Saddled his horse
 Blew his trumpet
 And called for us all
 And at dawn break
 We went hunting
 Into the Upper land
 The western one
 Till our horses rested
 Because they lost their horseshoes
 And we descended
 A beautiful hill
 And we saw the mountains and their fir-trees
 The sky above with the stars
 The glens with the violets
 And we spied the trace of a beast
 Some said it was a fairy
 A good wife for George...
 Other hunters
 Much more clever
 Said it was the trace of a deer
 To be spouse for George
 But our George,
 Who is your guest,
 Riding a horse
 As great as Bucephalus
 Stood on his feet
 Breathed deeply
 Gazed around him
 All over the fields
 And witnessed how the deer
 Transformed into a beautiful
 And lovely flower as well...
 And seeing that it neither blooms
 Nor bears fruit
 Nor likes the place
 But it only parches,
 Sent us the messengers
 Riding nice horses
 With braided manes
 And tinned hoofs
 And he gave us silver pickaxes
 To pull up the flower
 By the root
 And plant it in our George's garden
 The flower to like the place
 To not parch
 To bloom there and to bear fruit,
 But on our way here
 Our flower transformed again
 Into a beautiful deer
 Delightful and fair-haired...
 And we traced her
 Drinking and cheering
 Shooting our pistols...
 Until we saw
 A lovely bright star
 Falling over
 Straight on your house
 And we followed the star

And stopped at your house
 To ask for the deer:
 To give it to us
 Otherwise we won't leave..."

(This is the moment when everybody takes the bottles out and puts them on the table. The girl's father steps in front of them, telling something like this: *Maybe, you, honest hunters, might have mixed up the traces and arrived at our house by mistake, because we know nothing about your game.* Then, the matchmakers pretend they want to leave. But the host stops them.) The head pretends to be cross, and says: *Then, if this is your wish, let's leave at once!* The bride's father, because he doesn't want the matchmakers to leave his house, lures them to stay: *Because our forefathers' tradition says to welcome you as our guests for this night, maybe the game will come any moment from now...*⁴.

This wedding ovation, because this is the similar form kept for the beginning of the wedding, not only for matchmaking, reminds of an ancient mental horizon, which includes old symbolic representations. The girl is suggestively imagined as a "beast", a "fairy", "a deer/To be spouse for George", a "lovely flower", "a lovely bright star". All these metamorphosis talk about old symbols. The hunting is in itself a symbolic one. The taming of the game, the bringing of the "flower", with its roots, into the garden of the wooer, "The flower to like the place/ To not parch/ To bloom there and to bear fruit" depict a miraculous wedding, the continuity of some families that are about to become related. The transplanting of the flower into the garden of the groom for bearing fruits talks about the rite of aggregation⁵, postliminal rite, on integration of the bride into a new family, that of the groom.

The matchmaking represents an essential stage in the wedding imaginary, when the young couple's parents meet, "first the parents were laying heads together (without the young couple), along with some close relatives, and then the children met too and exchanged handkerchiefs (today wedding rings)"⁶, "with the father, or other relatives. They have to haggle with"⁷, "they were haggling about what to give to the girl. Of great importance was the land"⁸, "they were usually going only on holidays, and only in the evening. They don't go on fastening days, this is a bad omen", "just the well-off were making a marriage contract", "the dowry was bargained"⁹. "They were discussing the dowry and about the wedding. Sometimes a document was drawn-up"¹⁰. The discussion about the dowry was representing a necessary stage in the economy of the wedding, "after they have agreed, a marriage contract was drawn-up, written by a person from the family, both for the groom and the bride, they were given to each other and they were kept by the in-laws. This was called agreement"¹¹, "often, it was made a dowry certificate", "it was drawn up a marriage contract, in the presence of two witnesses"¹². As a marriage portion, it was given land, cattle, ducats, a place to build the house on, clothes, carpets, a dowry chest, "the chest was usually taken on Sunday, when the wedding procession was heading towards the church. In the chest, there were shirts. On the chest there were placed rugs, counterpanes made of oakum and wool, pillows, towels. After the things for dowry had been brought inside the house, the bride

⁴ Meîtoiu I. "Spectacolul Nunților" [The weddings show], Bucharest, The Central House of the Folkloric Creation, 1969, P. 100.

⁵ Van Gennep, A. "Riturile de trecere" [Rites of Passage], Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 1996, P. 22.

⁶ Ghinoiu, I. (coordinator), "Corpus de documente etnografice. Sărbători și obiceiuri. Răspunsuri la chestionarele Atlasului Etnografic Român", Vol. 1, Oltenia, Bucharest, Editura Enciclopedică Publishing House, 2001, P. 64.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem, P. 65.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Ibidem, P. 67.

¹¹ Ibidem, P.70.

¹² Ibidem.

was sharing gifts to the relatives of the groom: towels, shirts (similar with the nowadays custom, there are things bought from the market). After that, they were coming out of the house, having them around their neck, and they dancing *Aidea – doiu* (the bride's hora). They would circle the house three times with the groom and once without him, having amidst them a bucket of wine. After that, the bride would invite her relatives and guests to have a sit and eat. They would serve mutton broth and steak. After dancing and having fun, her guests would step aside, for the groom's guests to be asked to eat. Nowadays, it is the same, or the things are bought in the week before the wedding: furniture, cooker, blankets, carpets¹³.

"The wedding chest (with the chest's box – a small box placed in the trunk, where the necklaces were kept) was taken once with the bride. The chest had all the clothes (her garments). It was taken into a cart, pulled by oxen, to the groom's house", "a woman called *pochinzel* (approx. guardian) – was the one who would put the chest into the cart, then take it off and guard it during the transportation. A *pochinzel* was a young, unmarried woman, whom the groom and the bride would trust"¹⁴.

The engagement, or the conferring of the bride¹⁵ is the next stage in the economy of the wedding: "Few days after *meeting* or *association*, which means after the young couple's parents have fully agreed on the *dowry*, it comes the conferring or the engagement"¹⁶. The young man, along with his family and other guests, with musicians, would go to the girl's parents, to become engaged with her. The parents of the girl, also amidst guests, relatives, neighbours, either close the gates, in order to perform a special ceremony, or open them widely, to receive the young man, with all his companions. If the gates are closed, a *colăcar* (approx., a messenger, a man who symbolically bears a loaf of round-shaped bread) says an ovation, in which it is mentioned the symbolic hunting of the bride – fairy, flower, star, by the emperor, which is the groom. After the ovation has been said, the parents of the girl open the gates widely and receive with great pomp the young man and the entire precession. Meanwhile, the girl is hiding, and, instead of her, it is brought before the groom either an ugly old lady, or a lad dressed-up as a woman, saying that this is the empress. So, until the fiancée is actually brought, the others make a lot of jokes. As concerning these ceremonial moments, Van Gennep asserts that: "The rite in which the bride or the groom is replaced can signify, in some cases, as in the opinion of Crawley, removing the danger of <inoculation>; nonetheless, according to the detailed description, I believe that the rite is imagined, most of the times, to avoid the weakening of the interested groups (sexual age class, family etc.), trying to offer or to unify individuals of a less general social, and especially economic, value (little girl or old woman, boy etc.), a fact also evidenced by the mocking remarks said to the replacing people, and the protests of the bride's and groom's friends and relatives". These replacements make the connection with a preliminary rite, that of separation¹⁷. After these ritual elements, the young man goes to the girl, takes her hand and they sit at the head of the table, next to the godparents.

Around the area of Strehaia, Mehedinți County, the engagement was done 2-3 weeks after the matchmaking, on a Sunday or another holiday, there was brought food, unleavened bread, drinks, but if they were wealthier, they would bring earrings for the girl, or bracelets, the wedding rings, an opportunity for setting the wedding date¹⁸.

The wedding preparations began, in Oltenia, about a week before, and the wedding would last for almost three days: "for three days is the wedding celebrated, on Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The preparations begin on Friday. In the past, they used to slaughter the animals, but they don't do this anymore. The adorned fir-tree was decorated by the young people on Saturday, when the musicians used to arrive. There was poured water into a bucket in which there was put the top part of a fir-tree, and the youngsters would start to decorate it and then would dance around it"¹⁹. Another field informer tells us that: "on Saturday, the wedding tent is installed, there are made preparations, the musicians play in the yard, the girls and the boys adorn the fir-tree, and after that the table is laid, they eat and the musicians, along with the best man, go through the village, to invite people to the wedding. On Saturday they lay the table and dance until two or three in the morning"²⁰. The decorating of the fir-tree belongs to a preliminary ritual, the separation of the bride from the community of the unmarried young people.

Roman Ioana, a woman from the village of Bârboi, Grecești commune, Dolj County, confessed us that "on Sunday morning, the wedding party go with the bride to get water, to water the bride. The bride puts on her wedding dress and, along with the best man, with a bucket hanging on a stick, and they walk this way, with an unenamelled bucket and pieces of cloth, there used to be woven cloth, made of floss-silk, but there aren't anymore, now, they put towels. And they go to a well with the musicians and other people following them. At the well, the bride [according to other version, the best man] takes out three buckets of water, to splash them in four places – towards the East, West, South and North. The fourth bucket is filled with water and they take it home. After that, they go and take the godfather, got to the church and get married. It is laid the table, then, after eating, the wedding presents are given. In my time, when I was a child, they used to give food too, but it isn't like that anymore, they give only money now"²¹.

Back in the past, the wedding ceremony used to be more ample, the preparation of the groom implied a ritual shaving, and in Mehedinți the groom used to be helped by either the bride, if she had already moved into the groom's house during the engagement period, or by a maiden, friend with the groom's family, who would help him to shave²². The bride was accompanied by her mother, the godmother and other young girls, who would help her to get dressed and to put the veil and the wrath on her head. The shaving of the beard and the covering with the veil are also rites of separation, as Van Gennep was mentioning²³. In Mehedinți, after putting on the veil, the bride performs few sympathetic and fertility rites: she gazes through the chimney, to have beautiful black-eyed children, or she stirs

¹³ Ibidem, P. 72.

¹⁴ Ibidem, P. 74.

¹⁵ Marian S.F. "Nunta la români. Studiu istorico-comparativ etnografic" [The wedding at the Romanians. An ethnographic historic-comparative study], Vol. I, II, Bucharest, SAECULUM VIZUAL Publishing House, edition supervised by Iordan Datcu, 2009, P. 119.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Chicet I. "Nunta în Mehedinți" [The Wedding in Mehedinți], Craiova, "Scrisul Românesc" Foundation Publishing House, 2010, P. 39.

¹⁹ Field informer Florea Maria, 66 years old, from the village of Bârboi, Grecești commune, Dolj County, field research done in March 2016.

²⁰ Field informer Maria Victoria, 87 years old, from the village of Bârboi, Grecești commune, Dolj County, field research done in March 2016.

²¹ Field informer Roman Ioana, 55 years old, from the village of Bârboi, Grecești commune, Dolj County, field research done in March 2016.

²² Chicet I. "Nunta în Mehedinți" [The Wedding in Mehedinți], Craiova, "Scrisul Românesc" Foundation Publishing House, 2010, P. 61.

²³ Van Gennep A. "Riturile de trecere" [Rites of Passage]..., op.cit., P. 107-130.

the fire, to have as many children as the hot ashes²⁴. At the end of the wedding, the godmother takes off the veil of the bride, replacing it with a scarf specific for the wife, her new status, an aggregation ritual, of integration among the young wives.

The joyful feasting atmosphere is also created by the groom's guests, who come to take the bride, the godparents and other guests. Isidor Chicet considers that the wedding party has a protective role as well, for the young couple, they are cheering and loudly manifest their joy, not letting the evil spirits to come near the bride and groom²⁵. In Oltenia, when the wedding party reaches the house of the bride, there are recited, by *colăcer*, the messenger, the wedding ovations: "The first messenger (says): "Good day to you!" The bride's father (answers): "We thank you for your wishes!, and asks them: "But what's the great matter/ For which you are hurrying so? The messenger answers: "What sort of question is this/ About our hurried arrival?!/ And these bunches of people/ Why are they looking as if we were wolves?!/ What's with all these youngsters? And all the crowd/And all the girls, as if they saw bears/ And they gape at us/ Haven't they seen people before/ And are they afraid of us eating them?!/ (...) Or you might think that if you frighten us/ We will answer to you?!/ (...) We aren't afraid of crowds/ We bear names of brave people,/ We aren't afraid of masses/ Because we know what to tell you./ And if you want and it pleases you/ To answer to you peacefully./ Take us easily/ To talk calmly./ (...) That's why, without jesting/ Listen to what we say:/ That young emperor or ours/ He who wants only the best for you/ One early morning,/ As it is his habit/ Around the daybreak/ Wishing to go hunting,/ He woke up, he dressed nicely./ Took his arms, as he should have/ And grabbing his horn suddenly/ Blew it once/ And gathered a lot of his soldiers/ All of them on horses/ All sharp and skillful/ And shooting their rifles:/ To go hunting on the hills/ And over the mountains (...)/ And riding a while/ Holding their shooting rifle/ They got to a well,/ And spied the trace of a beast/ Where all of them dismounted,/ To look around, to better gaze/ What kind of trace was that? To take a guess./ (...) Some said that was the trace of a fairy./ To hold our emperor daily./ Others said it was made by a flower queen./ To be the bride for him// So as much as they talked,/ The emperor began to think/ That he would like to know/ Where was the fairy coming from/ All the way to the well?!/ And he left at once,/ Following her a long way/ Until he reached your yard/ Along with our party,/ Where he saw a flower/ As a bright star shining,/ Which would just grow up/ And would just bloom nicely, / But wouldn't bear fruits/ Because the earth is not good// Therefore the emperor/ Called a meeting/ That the beautiful flower/ That smells so sweet/ To be moved from here/ And taken to his highness court/ Where she will like the place./ To grow and to bloom./ To sprout with children/ To show her fruit/ And everyone to love her dearly (...)/ And to give us the flower at once/ That shiny star./ Along with your answer/

We kindly ask you (...)”²⁶. This wedding ovation talks about the symbolism of an emperor's wedding, as Van Gennep was asserting, in which the bride and the groom are princesses and princes²⁷, it is a text that uses a symbolic fundament for the rites of aggregation, of integration of the bride into her new family (...)

There is also the custom, when the wedding attendants are leaving with the bride and the dowry, that the groom to be stopped by the bride's guests and not let him go until he gives his mother-in-law a significant gift²⁸, this custom being found in the village of Busulețul, today Grecești commune, Dolj County.

The young couple says on the threshold the *Requests for Forgiveness* to their parents, a limitation ritual, in order to receive the blessing from their parents and godparents, for example: "Good morning, honest guests/ Honest godparents./ Honest in-laws/ In a few words./ Asking for permission/ Your daughter is requesting/ With great humility/ To give her your blessing/ And on Friday/ To give her your forgiveness/ To excuse and bless her/ Because the parents' blessing/ Makes stronger the children's house”²⁹.

After the church ceremony, the wedding party gets to the house of the groom, where the mother-in-law meets her daughter-in-law with a teaspoon of jam, a sympathetic rite, in order to give the bride assurance that the living together will be sweet, then she spins her three times, for the bride to side with her home³⁰. After that, the bride and groom are tied around their heads with a floss-silk towel, to enter the house together³¹, an aggregation ritual, of integration of the new family.

The Romanian folklore registers numerous variants of some epic songs that talk about a profound mental Romanian horizon, about allegories of death as a wedding, or about assumed testaments voiced in moments of great ordeals, in the same time full of numerous metaphors, essentially symbolic. This is the case of the epic song *On top of the green mountain*, analysed by Radu Niculescu³² in his work „Spre o poetică a baladei populare românești. Două studii de caz” [Towards the poetics of the Romanian folk ballad. Two case studies], where “the subtype chosen by Radu Niculescu falls in the category of the creations similar to the ballad *Miorița* [The Little Ewe], because sometimes the heroine, sensing that she is near death, asks to be buried *In the sheepfold/ Where the lambs will play*, having the trumpet next to her head and the record next to her soles”³³. There can be noticed two essential characteristics of the plot: “the menacing represented by the Turks or dragons, for the sheepfold, and the mixture between real and fantastic, specific for the fairy tales”³⁴.

The structure of the ballad is made of six episodes, the author analysing, in parallel, the compositional and thematic profile of the carolling song version, not only that of the epic song. In the first episode, there is depicted the splendid, ideal

²⁴ Chicet I. “Nunta în Mehedinți” [The Wedding in Mehedinți]..., op. cit., P. 63.

²⁵ Ibidem, P. 77.

²⁶ Moanță I. Edition supervised by, Orații, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1974, P. 45–53.

²⁷ Van Gennep A. “Riturile de trecere” [Rites of Passage]..., op. cit., P. 107–130.

²⁸ Chicet I. “Riturile de trecere” [Rites of Passage]..., op. cit., P. 77.

²⁹ Ibidem, P. 240.

³⁰ Ibidem, P. 86.

³¹ Field informer Bumbăcescu Cornela Daniela from the village of Busu, 43 years old, Grecești commune, Dolj County, field research done in March 2016.

³² Radu Niculescu. *Spre o poetică a baladei populare românești. Două studii de caz* [Towards the poetics of the Romanian folkloric ballad. Two case studies], Sfântul Ierarh Nicolae Publishing House, Brăila, 2012, P. 318.

³³ Ciubotaru, S. Review for the work of Radu Niculescu, *Spre o poetică a baladei populare românești. Două studii de caz* [Towards the poetics of the Romanian folkloric ballad. Two case studies], Sfântul Ierarh Nicolae Publishing House, Brăila, 2012, in “Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Moldovei” [The Annual of the Ethnographic Museum of Moldova], N. XIII, Iași, Palatul Culturii Publishing House, P. 335.

³⁴ Radu Niculescu, *Spre o poetică a baladei populare românești. Două studii de caz* [Towards the poetics of the Romanian folkloric ballad. Two case studies], Sfântul Ierarh Nicolae Publishing House, Brăila, 2012, P. 341.

landscape, where the pastoral life unfolds. The second episode introduces the characters “They graze them on a mountain/ And milk them on the other/ And sheer them on another/ The brother is a shepherd/ And his sister stays on the sheepfold”³⁵. The silence of this idyllic space is broken by the signs that announce unwanted visitors that are noticed due to the darkening of the sky, “the brother knows the identity and the intentions of the group that is coming. The dragons, the lions or the Turks are difficult-to-be-pleased matchmakers”³⁶. The fourth episode (*The Refuse*) presents differences in the ballad version, as compared to the carol: “1. the request of the matchmakers; 2. The rejection of the request by the brother; 3. his counteroffer; 4. The rejection by the matchmakers of the counteroffer”³⁷. “What is obviously detached in subsidiary is the strange fact that the dowry is given for impeding the taking and the wedding of the girl. Reminding of the animosity between father-in-law and son-in-law, from the context of the ballad called *Letimului*, the conflict between the brother of the girl and the presumed brothers-in-law, is not to be ended the same way. It is also peculiar that the matchmakers are willing to renounce all the goods that are offered, in favour of the bride. The bargaining of the dowry takes a negative turn: “I won’t give you my sister/ As long as I hold my head on shoulders! / I’ll give you hundreds and hundreds/ Of sheep and rams./ Rams with curled horns/ That spill gold out of them.” “We want none of what you have/ Nothing but your sister”³⁸.

The fifth sequence coincides with the denouement, the kidnapping of the shepherdess is preceded by the requests of the girl, to her brother, to cut her locks of hair, to take her earrings and put them on the milking buckets, announcing in this way, through degradation, the decease of the departed one. These represent few elements of a separation ritual, where the familiar environment becomes sensible to the leaving of the girl towards the other world. The sequence has similarities with the testament from the ballad *Miorița*: “The horned sheep/ Shall cry for me on the mountain/ Shall look for me and not see me,/ Shall mourn for me, and not find me”.

Radu Niculescu considered the folkloric creation “a moment of art, an episode, of exquisite sensitivity of our pastoral ballad, being in the same time a revealing document on addressing the moral profile of the Romanian people”³⁹.

The elements that are present in the ballad, and refer to a metaphoric testament, remind of the ballad *Miorița* and the testament of the shepherd from this ballad is considered to be the central episode of the ballad, as Adrian Fochi mentioned in his work “Miorița – tipologie, circulație, geneză, texte” [The Little Ewe – typology, circulation, genesis, texts]⁴⁰, “representing a permanently present episode, in all the analysed variants. Therefore, the conclusion is that the lack of this episode from the composition of the ballad demonstrates its automatic cancellation. One ought to also consider the special accentuation of this episode, in the ideological and artistic interpretation of the ballad, as much as in the attempt to determine the main lines in the historic evolution of the text. The other three episodes that make the ballad, to a certain respect, have the role to enhance the content of the shepherd’s testament, creating the dramatic perspectives and the lyrical atmosphere; they comment, plunging into the typical reality of the pastoral life, but also reaching the top levels of the artistic generalisation, which is eternally human,

as regarding the commitment of the human being to his work, to the natural environment, to what represents the basic values of the humanism, in the folkloric acceptance. Nonetheless, the keystone on addressing the interpretation of the ballad is the theme that introduces the episode and justifies it from the point of view of the epic development. It is the *theme of the shepherd’s reaction* when finding about the complot staged by his companions. This theme genetically belongs to this episode, but due to the process through which the ballad progresses to reach its actual form, under the circumstances of this new approach, it serves as a liaison with the anterior episodes, appearing even as a direct and logical continuation of them”⁴¹. Thus, the centrality of the episode that represents the testament of the shepherd places the ballad within an archaic mental horizon, with profound symbolical representations as regarding the thresholds of life and death, of the continuity into a familiar horizon, of the integration into the universal harmony, of continuously remembering of its ideals.

The wedding embodies an ancient ceremony with deep significations in the Romanian mentality, during the process being identified numerous rites of separation, limit or aggregation, the separation of the bride and groom from the group age of the unmarried people, of threshold, liminal, but also postliminal, of integration among the other families in the village community. The typology of the rites, as imagined by Van Genep, still represents a starting point in the analysis of the archaic mental horizon.

Боанджіу Габриела. Символічна особливність весільних традицій в Олтенії. У праці Арнольда Ван Геннепа «*Les rites de passage*» здійснено типологію обрядів. Весільні обряди впливають на зміну статусу, формування особистостей молодих людей, інтегрування їх у більш чисельну громаду села. У статті висвітлено особливості проведення весільних обрядів в Олтенії в порівнянні з іншими румунськими регіонами. Етапи весілля дуже багаті на символічні особливості, крім того, можна виділити численні обряди, що стосуються неодруженої молоді, обмежувальні обряди або обряди агрегації. Теорія Арнольда Ван Геннепа може і надалі допомагати здійснювати нові етнологічні дослідження.

Ключові слова: обряди переходу, весілля, символічні уявлення, ментальність.

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³⁵ Ibidem, P. 241.

³⁶ Ibidem, P. 356.

³⁷ Ibidem, P. 280.

³⁸ Ibidem, P. 289.

³⁹ Ibidem, P. 341.

⁴⁰ Fochi A., “Miorița – Tipologie, circulație, geneză, texte” [The Little Ewe – Typology, circulation, genesis, texts], Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 1964, P. 223.

⁴¹ Ibidem.