


**ARCHAIC ELEMENTS OF VEGETATION CULT
IN TRADITIONAL CUSTOMS OF THE POPULATION
OF UKRAINIAN-ROMANIAN BORDERING ZONE OF BUKOVINA**

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Abstract. *The article is based on the written sources of the 15-19th Centuries, materials of archives and museums of Ukraine, Romania, Republic of Moldova, ethnographic surveys and anthologies, monographic descriptions of villages, folklore collections, and diaries of expeditions to the Romanian and Ukrainian villages of the Northern and Southern Bukovina. The authors try to determine the role and current state of preservation of the vegetation cult elements in the spiritual culture of the Ukrainians and Romanians. The geographical area of study is defined by the fact that the authors recognize Bukovina (both its Northern and Southern parts) as a single ethnographic zone that was shaped during the hundreds of years-long cohabitation of two autochthonous peoples.*

Keywords: *Vegetation cult, traditional customs, foretelling the weather, pluvial rituals, matrimonial divinations, worship trees, folk medicine.*

Rezumat. *Elemente arhaice a cultului plantelor în obiceiurile tradiționale a populației ucraineano-română din zona de contact a Bucovinei. În articolul prezentat în baza surselor scrise din secolele XV-XIX, materialelor din arhivele și muzeele Ucrainei, României, Republicii Moldova, chestionarelor etnografice, antologiilor etnografice, monografiilor satelor, culegerilor folclorice și materialelor cercetărilor expediționale organizate în satele românești și ucrainene din nordul și sudul Bucovinei. Autorii încearcă să determine rolul și starea conservării elementelor specifice cultului plantelor în cultura spirituală a ucrainenilor și românilor. Limitele teritoriale ale studiului au fost definite de faptul că autorii recunosc în Bucovina (deopotrivă partea nordică și cea sudică) o singură zonă etnografică ce s-a conturat de-a lungul sutelor de ani de coabitare a acestor două popoare autohtone.*

Résumé. *Éléments archaïques du culte des plantes dans les coutumes traditionnelles de la population ukrainienne-roumaine de la zone de contact de la*

Bucovine. L'article ci-joint, à la base des sources écrites des XV-ème –XIX-ème siècles, des matériaux des archives et des musées de l'Ukraine, de la Roumanie, de la République Moldavie, des questionnaires ethnographiques, des anthologies ethnographiques, des monographies des villages, des collections folkloriques et des résultats des recherches expéditionnaires organisées dans les villages roumains et ukrainiens du nord et du sud de la Bucovine, les auteurs essayèrent de déterminer le rôle et l'état de conservations des éléments spécifiques au culte des plantes dans la culture spirituelle des Ukrainiens et des Roumains. Les auteurs reconnaissent en Bucovine (la partie de nord, mais aussi, celle de sud) une seule zone ethnographique qui s'est contournée le long des centaines d'années de cohabitation de ces deux peuples autochtones. Cela contribua à définir les limites territoriales de l'étude.

INTRODUCTION

The modern social and cultural practice of humanity is characterized by the dynamic transformational processes. That is why its contents, structure, and placement on the line of evolutionary development need to be scientifically defined. Understanding of the contemporary spiritual culture of any people seems to be a problem of great importance. The topic of this paper considers one of the aspects of this culture, namely, the vegetation cult in the traditional ceremonialism of the Romanians and Ukrainians of Bukovina, which preserved until now. The geographical area of the study is defined by the fact that we recognize Bukovina (both its Northern and Southern parts) as a single ethnographic zone that was shaped during the hundreds of years-long cohabitation of two autochthonous peoples: the Ukrainians and Romanians.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE PROBLEM

Common principles of the interrelation of the national and worldwide development of ceremonies and customs were revealed by Wilhelm Wundt who is considered to be a founder of the experimental psychology.¹ He assumed that each mythological cycle and evolution of customs depends on specific conditions, however, along with specific features, they are subdued to common spiritual laws of development. This – according to James George Fraser – is appropriate to the animism as a belief that the natural powers (including herbs) possess a spiritual essence, intellect, ability to act and potency. He provided

¹ Wilhelm Wundt, *Die Volker Psychologie Probleme*, Leipzig: Engelmann, 1911, 116 S.

numerous examples of the vegetation cults of various peoples (the Germans, Swedes, Greeks, Romans, Japanese, Bulgarians, Southern Slavs, etc.) that worshipped trees in sacred oak-woods.²

Edward Burnett Tylor devoted seven of fifteen chapters of his well-known book "The Primitive Culture"³ to the topic of animism and introduces numerous examples of vegetation cults from all the continents. Reviewing the works of Edward Burnett Taylor and James George Fraser and criticizing the methodology of the research of animism, Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski, in his monograph "Magic, Science, and Religion and Other Essays" concluded that magic and religion should be considered as specific types of behaviour or pragmatic mindsets that are based on common sense, feeling and will.⁴ Studying specific features of thought, mythology and ritual behaviour of "primitive" communities, Claude Levi-Strauss revealed principles of mind and cognition which were functioning in various traditional systems, in the cultural life of peoples.⁵ Edward Evans-Pritchard, in his turn, collected plenty of evidence from peoples of the Northern Sudan (Nuer, Zande, Anuak, Luo, Shilluk, Bedouins), which allowed him to conclude that their magic and rituals were based on reasonable thinking. In his study of the Nuer people, there is a valuable description of how they survived in difficult environmental conditions and in which way their survival influenced an emergence of the animistic beliefs.⁶

It is widely accepted by scholars that the traditional daily customs preserved much better on the periphery rather than in the core territory of a certain nation. In this context one may interpret the territory of Chernivtsi region and the whole Bukovina as either a "Ukrainian-Romanian ethnic bordering zone" which is a "unique folklore reserve" (Oleksandr Kurochkin)⁷ or an area of the "Slavic - non-Slavic interference" that belongs first of all to the so-called archaic zones (Nikita

² J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough a study in magic and religion in three volumes*, London: Maximilian and Co Limited, 1900, vol. I, 512 p.; vol. II, 496 p.; vol. III, 520 p.

³ Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*, vol. I, London: Bradbury, Evans, and Co, 1871, 426 p.

⁴ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essay*, Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1948, 344 p.

⁵ Claude Levi-Strauss, *La pansee sauvage*, Paris, Presses Pocket, 1962, 347 p.

⁶ Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1940, 271 p.

⁷ О. Курочкін, *Українські новорічні обряди: "Коза" і "Маланка" (з історії народних масок)* [Ukrainian New Year's rituals: "Goat" and "Malanka" (on the history of folk masks)], Опішне, 1995, с. 99.

Tolstoi).⁸ Romanian scholar of the Ukrainian origin Ion Reboșapcă confirms this originality and assumes that the northern part of Romania remains the most conservative zone, where the Ukrainian folklore survived. He refers to the Carpathian region inhabited by the Hutsul population of Bukovina and Transylvania.⁹ Valentyn Zelenchuk, while revealing the ethnic border between the Ukrainians and Eastern Romanians and an area of their ancient mingled inhabitancy (northern part of Bukovina and Bessarabia), argued that the cultural and historical specificity of the region was formed as early as in the 13-14th Centuries.¹⁰

A lot of competent scholars, including Aleksandr Veselovskiy¹¹, Aleksandr Potebnia¹², Theodor Burada¹³, Petru Caraman¹⁴, Valentyn Zelenchuk¹⁵, Yurii

⁸ Н. Толстой, *О соотношении центрального и маргинального ареалов в современной Славии* [On the correlation of the central and marginal areas in modern Slavia], in *Ареальные исследования в языкознании и этнографии*, Ленинград, Наука, 1977, с. 56.

⁹ І. Ребошапка, *Народження символів. Аспекти взаємодії обряду та обрядової поезії* [Birth of symbols. Aspects of interaction of ritual and ritual poetry], Бухарест, Крітеріон, 1975, с. 10.

¹⁰ В. Зеленчук, *Население Бессарабии и Приднестровья в XIX в. (этнические и социально-демографические процессы)* [Population of Bessarabia and Dniester area in the 19th c. (ethnic, social and demographic processes)], Кишинев, Штиинца, 1979, с. 41, 51-52.

¹¹ А. Н. Веселовский, *Разыскания в области русского духовного стиха. VII, Румынские, славянские и греческие коляды* [Researches in the field of Russian spiritual verse. VII, Romanian, Slavic and Greek carols], Санкт Петербург, СБОРЯС, т. 32/4, 1883, с. 97-292.

¹² А. А. Потевня, *Объяснения малорусских и сродных песен* [Explanation of the Little-Rusian and related songs], Варшава, Типография М. Земкевича и В. Ноаковского, 1883, Т. 1, 280 с.; 1887, Т. 2, 809 с.

¹³ Т. Burada, *Rămășițe românești în Galiția* [Romanian antiquities in Galicia], "Епока", București, 1896, № 304, А. II, Ser. II, p. 2.; Idem, *O călătorie la români din gubernia Kamenitz-Podolsk* [Trip to Romanians of the Kamianets-Podilsky governorate], Iași, 1906, 14 p.

¹⁴ P. Caraman, *Obrzęd kołędowania u Słowian i u Rumunów: studjum porównawcze* [Slavic and Romanian ritual of carolling: comparative study], Krakowie, Polska Academia, 1933, 630 p.; P. Caraman, *Datina colindatului la români, slavi și la alte popoare. Studiu de folclor comparat* [Ritual of caroling among the Romanians, Slavs and other peoples. Comparative folklore study], Ediție îngrijită de S. Ciubotaru, București, Minerva, 1983, 635 p.

¹⁵ В. С. Зеленчук, *Очерки молдавской народной обрядности* [Essays on Moldovan folk customs], Кишинев, 1959, 260 с.; В. С. Зеленчук, *Население Бессарабии и Поднестровья в XIX в. (Этнические и социально-демографические процессы)* [Population of Bessarabia and Dniester area in the 19th c. (ethnic, social and demographic processes)], Кишинев, Штиинца, 1979, 287 с.; В. С. Зеленчук, А. В. Орлов, *Украинско-молдавские этнокультурные взаимосвязи* [Ukrainian-Moldovan ethnic and cultural relations], "Всесоюзная сессия по итогам полевых этнографических и антропологических исследований 1982-1983 гг." Тезы докл., Черновцы, 1984, Ч. 1, С. 1-9.

Popovich¹⁶, Adrian Fochi¹⁷, Magdalena Laszlo-Kuŕiuk¹⁸, etc. studied the interference of the spiritual culture elements of the Eastern Romanians and Ukrainians. Some aspects of the cross-penetration process of the Eastern Romanian and Ukrainian cultures on the lands of Bukovina were revealed by Grigore Bostan¹⁹, Mihai Cioară²⁰, Vsevolod Naulko²¹, Oleksandr Kurochkin²², Georgiy Kozholianko²³,

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- ¹⁶ Ю. В. Попович, *Еще раз о происхождении обычая "соркова"* [Once more on the «sor-кова» ritual's origin], "VIII конференция молодых ученых Молдавии (тезисы докладов). Молодые ученые в решении задач научно-технического прогресса", Кишинев, Штиинца, 1972, с. 60-61; Ю. В. Попович, *Молдавские новогодние праздники* [Moldovan folk feasts], Кишинев, Наука, 1974, 183 с.
- ¹⁷ A. Fochi, *Coordonatele sud-est europene ale baladei populare românești* [European south-eastern parallels of the Romanian folk ballad], București, Editura Academiei RSR, 1975, 270 p.; A. Fochi, *Datini și eresuri populare de la sfârșitul secolului al XIX: Răspunsurile la chestionarele lui N. Densușianu* [Folk customs and superstitions in the late 19th c.: answers on N. Densușianu's survey], București, Minerva, 1976, 392 p.
- ¹⁸ M. Laszlo-Kuŕiuk, *Încă o dată despre colinda românească și cea ucraineană* [Once more on Romanian and Ukrainian carol, "Romanoslavica", București, 1990, A. XXVIII, p. 85-96.
- ¹⁹ Г. Бостан, *Персонаже украинене ын драма популярэ молдовеняскэ* [Ukrainian characters in Moldovan popular drama], "Лимба ши литература молдовеняскэ", 1967, № 1, п. 7-11; Г. Бостан, *Очерки молдавско-русско-украинских литературных связей (с древнейших времен до середины XIX в.)* [Essays on Moldovan-Russian-Ukrainian literary connections (from the earliest period to the mid-19th c.)], Кишинев, Штиинца, 1978, 236 с.; Г. Бостан, *Типологическое соотношение и взаимосвязи молдавского, русского и украинского фольклора* [Typological correlation and inter-relations of Moldovan, Russian and Ukrainian folklor], Кишинев, Штиинца, 1985; Г. Бостан, *Молдавско-русско-украинские фольклорные взаимосвязи контактных зон (в контексте исторической родственности устно-поэтических традиций)* [Moldovan-Russian-Ukrainian folklore inter-relations in contact zones (in context of the historical connections in field of oral-poetical traditions)], Автореферат диссертации на соискание ученой степени доктора филологических наук из специальности 10.01.09 – Фольклористика, Москва, 1987;
- ²⁰ M. Cioară, *Zona etnografică Rădăuți* [Ethnographic zone Rădăuți], București, Editura Sport-Turism, 1979, 156 p.
- ²¹ В. И. Наулко, *Развитие межэтнических связей на Украине (историко-этнографический очерк)* [The development of inter-ethnic relations in Ukraine (historical and ethnographic outline)], Киев, Наукова думка, 1975, 275 с.
- ²² О. Курочкін, *Буковинська новорічна "переберія"* [Bukovinian New Year's "pereberia"], "Народна творчість та етнографія", 1992, № 3, с. 25-33.
- ²³ Г. К. Кожолянюк, *Етнографія Буковини* [Ethnography of Bukovina], Чернівці, 1999, Т. 1, 384 с.; 2001, Т. 2, 424 с.; 2004, Т. 3, 392 с.

Lucia Berdan²⁴, Vasile Buzilă²⁵, Ștefan Purici²⁶, Alexandrina Cernov²⁷, Maria Cuceu²⁸, Ion Ghinoiu²⁹, etc. Although, there are no special research works, devoted to the vegetation cult in this area.

The aim of this paper is to outline the vegetation cult elements in a zone of co-residence of the Ukrainians and Romanians in Bukovina. To achieve this goal, we have used several types of sources. Among them are literary writings of the 15-19th centuries, materials of archives and museums from Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova, ethnographic surveys, ethnographic anthologies, monographic descriptions of villages, folklore collections (the late 20th - early 21st centuries), diaries of expeditions to the Romanian and Ukrainian villages of the Northern and Southern Bukovina that were organized in the early 21st century.

RITUALS AND CUSTOMS RELATED TO THE CULT OF PLANTS

Even tenuous overview of the source materials confirms the existence of the archaic elements of the vegetation cult in the spiritual culture of the multi-ethnic

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- ²⁴ L. Berdan, *Totemism românesc. Structuri mitice arhetipale în obiceiuri, ceremonialuri, credințe, basme* [Romanian totemism. Mythical archetypical structures in rituals, ceremonies, beliefs and fairytales], Iași, Editura Universității A.I.Cuza, 2001, 292 p.
- ²⁵ V. Buzilă, *Frunzarile verzi utilizate în obiceiurile de la începutul verii* [Green plants used in the rituals in the beginning of summer], "Anuarul Muzeului etnografic al Moldovei", Iași, 2004, A. IV, p. 123-164.
- ²⁶ Ш. Пурич, *Північнобуковинські румуни та південнобуковинські українці у періоді 1989-2001 рр.* [Romanians of Northern Bukovina and Ukrainians of Southern Bukovina in 1989-2001], "Етнічні взаємини на території Євроregionу «Верхній Прут»: Матеріали Міжнародної наукової конференції", Буковинський політологічний центр та Каринтійський інститут національних меншин, Чернівці, 2004, с. 151-165; Șt. Purici, *Aspecte ale problemei minorităților naționale în Bucovina istorică între anii 1918 și 1940 (I)* [Aspects of problem of the ethnic minorities in the historical Bukovina in 1918-1940 pp. (I)], "Analele Bucovinei", București, Editura Academiei Române, A. IV, 1997, p. 130-141; Șt. Purici, *Relații româno-ucrainene în epoca contemporană* [Contemporary Romanian-Ukrainian connections], "Glasul Bucovinei", Cernăuți-București, 2003, N 3-4, p. 32-40;
- ²⁷ A. Cernov, *Românii din nordul Bucovinei (Ucraina): interferențe lingvistice și culturale* [Romanians of Northern Bukovina (Ukraine): lingual and cultural inter-relations], "Glasul Bucovinei", Cernăuți-București, 2005, N 2, p. 29-43.
- ²⁸ M. Cuceu, *Ritualul agrar al cununii la seceriș. Studiu etnologic* [Rural ritual of the harvest time. Ethnological essay], Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2003, 292 p.
- ²⁹ I. Ghinoiu, *Zile și mituri. Calendarul țaranului român 2000* [Days and myths. Calendar of the Romanian peasant 2000], București, Editura Fundației PRO, 1999, 234 p.

population of Bukovina during both the traditional period and modernity. One may refer to the Simion Florea Marian's work "Romanian popular botany in 12 volumes and herbarium" which is preserved in his Memorial and Documentary Fund in Suceava. Hand-written materials of Marian devoted to the popular botany consist of 12 school copybooks (10 sheets in each), which contain information about 525 species of plants. Among the recipes of popular pharmacy, one can find the descriptions of customs, beliefs, ballads, fairy tales, incantations, and magical practices connected to the herbs. The author carefully described every plant, mentioning the indigenous names which were used in different ethnographic areas of Romania. He pointed out the habitats of the plants, the way of their usage in different spheres of life and the ethnographic context (beliefs, customs, incantations) as well. Such widespread plants as hazel, cornflower, cannabis, fern, poppy, black cherry, hawthorn, wormwood, pepper, elder, tobacco, garlic, etc. are mentioned in these ethnographic materials.³⁰

Animistic views. In the published version of the above-mentioned fundamental work, one can find evidence confirming the existence of the animistic beliefs of the Bukovina inhabitants. Let's mention only one of the numerous examples. It touches upon the crocus flower (saffron) which Romanian popular name is Brândușa.

"They say that a long time ago there was a king's daughter named Brândușa. That girl wasn't so pretty, but she considered herself the prettiest in a world. That is why she allowed nobody to see her face, fearing that someone could put the evil eye on her.

Once upon a time, the Sun wished to look at her face to make sure that she is really so beautiful as they say about it, but she turned away and veiled her head to hide her face. The Sun got angry about her pride and assuredness and, damning her, said:

You considered yourself a Flower among the girls, so be the flower hereafter!

And when he said this, she turned into a flower that has the same name that she possessed while being a girl – Brândușa. And because Brândușa in her pride not allowed even the Sun to look at her face, even nowadays, being a flower, she doesn't blooming during the summer heat, but only in spring when the weather is cool.

But she is blooming under the sun rays as well because she is sorrow about what she did when she was a girl. But she never can look at the sun".³¹

³⁰ Memorial and documentary fund of the House-Museum of S. F. Marian in Suceava (Romania). Fund of manuscripts, № 3. Manuscript *Romanian folk botanics* (12 volumes and herbarium).

³¹ Simion Florea Marian, *Botanica poporană română* [Romanian folk botanics], Suceava,

Forecasting the weather. Peasants of Bukovina believed that the plants could be helpful in forecasting the weather. By the gnarls on oaks, that were considered to be a kind of seers, they foretold the weather, wealth, hunger, etc. during the year. In particular, “if in autumn the white worms appear in the gnarls on the oak leaves the next year will be fruitful, but if there is a cobweb inside - there will be a hunger and diseases”; “if there are a lot of gnarls on the oak leaves - there will be an early and snowy winter, if it is wet inside the gnarls - the next year will be rainy, if it is dry inside - the summer will be arid”. To know if the next year will be rainy or arid, they opened the gnarls on the oak leaves in the day of “Archangel Despite” (“Ciuda lui Arhanghel”) festival: “if they found a cobweb inside - bad year; if insects - rainy; if worms - good; if the gnarls are empty - the plague epidemic is possible”³². They watched other herbs as well: «if the roses blooming on “St. Mary’s Day” or if there is plenty of snowdrops – it will be a long fall»³³, «if there are plenty of mushrooms, it will be a hard winter»³⁴. Romanians of Bukovina were sure: if one will gather the guelder rose before “Life-Giving Cross Day” he/she could invite the intense cold.³⁵ One was able to foretell the duration of winter by the length parsley’s root pulled in autumn.³⁶

The custom to foretell the weather with the help of a “calendar” made of onion, which was performed on New Year Eve, is of special interest. The peasants took twelve “saucers” of onion, each meaning certain month, and put an equal quantity of salt over every “saucer”. They left the onion “calendar” until the morning, watching on the humidity that appeared on each “saucer-month”. Acting in this way, they defined the rainiest and most arid months of the next year.³⁷ This custom was recorded as early as in the late 19th century. by the Romanian

Muşatinii, 2008, vol. I, p. 247-252.

³² T. Gherman, *Metereologia populară. Observări, credinți și obiceiuri* [Folk meteorology. Observations, beliefs and rituals], București, Paideia, 2002, p. 44-45.

³³ V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor pe Suha Bucovineană. Obiceiuri și credințe* [Ethnography and folklore of the Suha Bucovineană. Rituals and beliefs], Iași, Unirea, 2002, p. 342-343; D. Dan, *Credințe populare bucovinene* [Folk beliefs of Bukovina], "Gazeta Bucovinei", 1894, A. 4, N 74, p. 2.

³⁴ D. Tochiță, *De la lume adunate și-napoi la lume date. Culegere de folclor din Pătrăuții de Sus și Pătrăuții de Jos* [Collected from people and returned to people. Folklore collection from the villages Pătrăuții de Sus and Pătrăuții de Jos], Suceava, Alt Univers, 2005, p. 81.

³⁵ D. Dan, *Credințe populare bucovinene* [Folk beliefs of Bukovina], "Gazeta Bucovinei", 1894, A. 4, N 84, p. 1-2.

³⁶ Idem, "Gazeta Bucovinei", 1894, A. 4, N 74, p. 2.

³⁷ Idem, "Gazeta Bucovinei", 1894, A. 4, N 99, p. 1.

ethnographer Simion Florea Marian in some villages of Bukovina with Romanian-speaking population.³⁸ It survived until nowadays and is widespread among the Eastern Romanian population of the region.³⁹

The way of foretelling the weather with the help of onion “calendar” was observed among both the contemporary Ukrainian population of Bukovina⁴⁰ and inhabitants of the Khotyn district of Bessarabia during the 1870s.⁴¹ This custom was plasticized by the Bukovinian Germans as well. They put the “saucers” of onion with a grain of salt on a wooden panel on which 12 squares were drawn, equal to the number of moths in a year. Such custom was also recorded among the Ukrainians of Bukovina.⁴²

Pluvial rituals. The herbs played a magic role in the pluvial customs as well. In the late 19th century, Dimitrie Dan recorded the custom performed by the Romanians of Bukovina to throw the nettle in the well.⁴³ In our opinion, this custom is not typical as for rituals aiming to trigger the rain. Throwing the nettle with its stinging leaves is rather a ritual that aims to harm the potential danger (in this particular case - the force of nature approaching the guarded space). It’s about the contamination of the pluvial actions, during which the population used nettle on the analogy of the customs aiming to defend from storm and hail.

There was a custom widespread among the Romanians of Bukovina, accord-

³⁸ S. Fl. Marian, *Sărbătorile la români. Studiu etnografic* [Romanian feasts. Ethnographic essay], Ediție îngrijită și introd. de I. Datcu, București, Editura "Grai și Suflet – Cultura Națională", 2001, Vol. I, p. 71.

³⁹ Materials of ethnographic expeditions of Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (1997-2005). Expeditional material collected from local inhabitants of Chernivtsi region of Ukraine and Suceava district of Romania (MEE YFCNU 1997-2005); Arhiva Științifică Centrală a Academiei de Științe din Moldova [Central scientific archive of Academy of Sciences of Republic of Moldova]. – F. N 19. – file. № 339., p. 6 (CSA ASRM).

⁴⁰ Г. К. Кожолянко, *Етнографія Буковини* [Ethnography of Bukovina], Чернівці, Золоті литаври, 2004, Т. 3, с. 130.

⁴¹ С. Кульчицкий, *О суевѣріяхъ, обычаяхъ и повѣріяхъ жителей села Ставучанъ Хотинскаго уѣзда* [On superstitions, rituals and beliefs of the village Stavuchan of Khotin district], "Кишиневские епархиальные ведомости", 1873, N 7, p. 316-317.

⁴² Т. Григорійчук, О. Масан, *Деякі особливості традиційної культури німців Буковини (остання чверть XVII – початок XX ст.)* [Some specific features of traditional culture of the Germans of Bukovina (late 17th — early 20th cc.)], "Буковина – мій рідний край", Чернівці, 2000, Т. 3, p. 80-82.

⁴³ D. Dan, *Credințe populare bucovinene* [Folk beliefs of Bukovina], "Gazeta Bucovinei", 1895, A. 5, N 23, p. 2.

ing to which the pregnant women threw poppies into the well.⁴⁴ In the villages located in the Suha Bucovineană the girls dressed in long shirts danced around the well and threw the poppies inside of it.⁴⁵ In Cireş (Storozhynets district) there was a custom, according to which the “immaculate” child threw the poppy seeds, blessed on Easter Day, into seven abandoned wells.⁴⁶ As it is confirmed by our researches, the records of the custom of throwing the poppy seeds into a well are fragmentary. The ritual was widespread mostly in the foothill and mountain districts of Bukovina (Storozhynets, Cireş, Păltinoasa, Suha Bucovineană).

This custom is recorded in the neighbouring Ukrainian area, where it is well preserved.⁴⁷ The elements of the ritual purity are still visible there (in the village Mărițeia Mare of the Suceava district a virgin girl participated in the custom); the magical number of wells in which the blessed poppy seeds were to be thrown was three. There was a ritual text in the village of Mykhalchia (Storozhyntsi district) which was proclaimed by the little girls who were throwing the poppy seeds blessed on “St. Macovei Day”, saying the following: “God, I ask you for rain”.⁴⁸

Basing on the sources, one may conclude that the Ukrainians of Chernivtsi region and the nearby area used to conduct a lot of rituals near the wells or connected to the well-water. Among them, the following rituals are to be noted: throwing into a well the crown of field flowers gathered by a little girl (Zelenyi Hay, Zalishchyki district of Ternopil region); putting on water surface some ritual artefacts (Kostrizhivka, Zastavna district) or plants, which were used on the “Green Week” and so on.

Rituals aiming to protect from natural disasters. To mitigate the hail the Eastern Romanian population of Bukovina brought the blessed linden to the yard (Korovia, Hlyboka district, Chernivtsi region), while the Ukrainians did the same with the willow branches (blessed on “Yew Sunday”, a week before Easter).⁴⁹ The most widespread elements used by the Romanians of Bukovina for burning and fumigating with an aim to protect from hail, windstorms and other natural disasters were the willow branches and buds, usually blessed during the “Green

⁴⁴ *Sărbători și obiceiuri. Răspunsurile la chestionarele Atlasului Etnografic Român. Moldova* [Feasts and rituals. Answers on surveys of the Romanian ethnographic atlas. Moldova], București, Editura enciclopedică, 2004, T. IV, p. 349.

⁴⁵ V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 342.

⁴⁶ CSA ASRM, F. N 19, file. N 248, p. 196.

⁴⁷ Т. Колотило, *Про засуху в етнобаченні подолян* [Dry season in the ethnic views of Podolians], "Берегиня. Всеукраїнський народознавчий кварталник", 2006, N 50, p. 36.

⁴⁸ MEE YFCN 1997-2005.

⁴⁹ MEE YFCNU1997-2005.

Week" ("Yew Sunday"). In some places, other plants were burned as well, including the blessed linden, cornflower blessed on "Epiphany Day", birch or maple branches, blessed on "Yew Sunday" and so on.⁵⁰

One may note that the branches of the blessed trees (willow, linden, etc.) are mentioned not only in the context of fumigation ritual but in other rituals aiming to mitigate the natural cataclysms as well. With protective purposes, they were usually put under the roof or used as a decoration of dwellings. In Krasnoyilsk peasants put the branches from the side of a house from which the thunderstorm or hail was expected to come. Inhabitants of Roșa village (now the outskirts of Chernivtsi) used the "thunder herb" («Iarba tunului» – «*Sempervivum* L. Hauswurz»), which was kept in boxes on the roof, with a protective purpose.⁵¹

The blessed branches were actively used in rituals aiming to mitigate hail, thunderstorm, lightning, etc. In particular, there were rituals in which the branches blessed on "Green Week" were used as a menace to black clouds approaching the village.⁵² This action had to be performed before the clouds cross the village boundaries. Sometimes peasants threw burning branches on the yard⁵³ or stuck the branches on the boundaries of a sown field. It is a case of magical "enclosing" of habitable space which was widely used by the Eastern Romanian population in rituals aiming to protect from insects and as well as in the folk medicine. The rituals representing the motif of "burning" a danger are well known

⁵⁰ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; D. Dan, *Credințe populare bucovinene* [Folk beliefs of Bukovina], "Gazeta Bucovinei", 1895, A. 5, N 12, p. 1; T. Gherman, *Metereologia populară ...*, p. 128-129; A. Gorovei, *Credinți și superstiții ale poporului român* [Beliefs and superstitions of the Romanian people], Ediție îngrijită de I. Datcu, București, Editura "Grai și suflet – Cultura națională", 1995, p. 88; S. Fl. Marian, *Sărbătorile la români. Studiu etnografic* [Feasts of Romanians. Ethnographic essay], Ediție îngrijită și introducere de I. Datcu, București, Editura "Grai și Suflet – Cultura Națională", 2001, Vol. II, p. 184-186; I. Iețcu, *Pârtești de Jos 1415-2000* [Pârtești de Jos 1415-2000], Suceava, Cuvântul nostru, 2000, p. 164-165; T. Pamfile, *Sărbătorile la români. Studiu etnografic* [Feasts of Romanians. Ethnographic essay], Ediție și introducere de I. Datcu, București, Saeculum, 2005, p. 21; E. Niculiță-Voronca, *Datinele și credințele poporului român* [Rituals and beliefs of the Romanian people], Ediție îngrijită de V. Durnea, Iași, Polirom, 1998, Vol. II, p. 159;

⁵¹ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; A. Gorovei, *Credinți și superstiții ...*, p. 274; D. Dan, *Credințe populare bucovinene* [Folk beliefs of Bukovina], "Gazeta Bucovinei", 1895, A. 5, N 12, p. 1; E. Niculiță-Voronca, *Datinele și credințele ...*, Vol. 2, p. 159.

⁵² T. Gherman, *Metereologia populară ...*, p. 128-129; E. Niculiță-Voronca, *Datinele și credințele ...*, Vol. 2, p. 159; T. Pamfile, *Sărbătorile la români ...*, p. 21; V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 365.

⁵³ E. Niculiță-Voronca, *Datinele și credințele ...*, Vol. 2, p. 159.

among their Ukrainian neighbours. They also plasticized the ritual of fumigation, using for that purpose blessed willow, linden, fern, maple branches; dried timber fungus gathered on the willow tree; after-grass, which was previously laid under the tablecloth on Christmas Eve; blessed cloth, which was used to dry the painted Easter eggs and so on. In some places, the blessed herbs were stuck into the thatch.⁵⁴ While the burning of the blessed branches was more peculiar for the Eastern Romanian population, for the Ukrainians it was much more inherent to use a variety of plants (fern, maple, timber fungus gathered on the willow tree, after-grass that was previously laid under the tablecloth on Christmas Eve, etc.). The blessed willow branches were used as the main element for burning by both Eastern Romanians and Ukrainians of Bukovina.

There is no doubt that the vegetation cult is clearly visible in such pluvial rituals as “Kaloyan” and “Paparuda”.⁵⁵ The rituals connected to herbs are widespread in the complex of matrimonial fortune telling (seeds of cannabis, cherry branches, black cherry, garlic, poppy seeds), in rituals directed against demons; hazel and other plants were used in pluvial rituals such as “Drăgaica”.⁵⁶

Worship trees and grass. The “maialul” ritual based on the worship trees survived in Bukovina. It is performed in “St. Jeremiah’s Day” that is celebrated on May 1. On that day the peasants chopped the conifer tree and cut off all the branches excepting the head. They decorated the body with geometrical motives (rhomboids) and colourful stripes, stuck the tree in the ground near the gates of the household and left it until the end of the harvest time. They established a similar pillar called “maialul” in the field as well. There was a festival on the occasion of this ritual.⁵⁷

In this context, one must note that the game in which the youngsters are climbing on the pillar to get prizes remains popular even nowadays among the Eastern Romanian and Ukrainian population (Tărăsăuți, Banyliv-Pidhirny, Chernivtsi region).⁵⁸

⁵⁴ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005.

⁵⁵ А. А. Мойсей, *Аграрні звичаї та обряди у народному календарі східнороманського населення Буковини* [Rural customs and rituals in the folk calendar of the Eastern Romanian population of Bukovina], Чернівці, 2010, 320 с.

⁵⁶ А. А. Мойсей, *Магія і мантика у народному календарі східнороманського населення Буковини* [Magic and mantics in the folk calendar of the Eastern Romanian population of Bukovina], Чернівці, 2008, 320 р.

⁵⁷ R. Vulcănescu, *Coloana cerului* [Sky column], București, Editura Academiei, 1972, p. 104-106.

⁵⁸ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005.

The Eastern Romanian population of Bukovina believed that the herbs gathered on certain calendar dates have special healing and magical power. Women and girls gathered the forest herbs before the sunset on feast days. "Sânziană" was one of such days when they gathered medical plants and yellow field flowers called sânziană. The flowers were blessed in the church in some places. Girls twined crowns from sânziană and presented them to their age-mates who possessed Ivan name; they threw these crowns on the roof with an aim to foretell the future.⁵⁹ There was a belief in some villages that if someone wears the crown on the feast day, he/she will have no headache during the year.⁶⁰ Wise women often gathered herbs to make tinctures, ointments, restorative drinks, but mostly for making medicinal baths.⁶¹

The forest herbs could be gathered on other calendar dates as well. In particular, in Crasna it was on "St. George's Day". The herbs were added to the fodder for livestock together with an Easter cake on Easter holiday.⁶² All-heal and wormwood were to be gathered before the "Green week". Women attached some stalks to the infant's shirt's closing, worn these herbs near the breast or used them to wipe the udder to protect from *iele*.⁶³ They also used to gather medicinal plants and bless them in the church on the "Feast of Cross" celebration.⁶⁴ On that day women gathered cornflowers and preserved them near the icons throughout the year. The cornflower was used in the decoration of cross which the priest gave to all parishioners to be kissed. Everyone tried to get even a small stalk. This cornflower, together with ones gathered with own hand, was used in healing illnesses, in foretelling the future and in fumigating the house to protect it from evil.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; *Fundu Moldovei o așezare din ținutul Câmpulungului bucovinean* [Fundu Moldovei - settlement of Câmpulungu district], F. Lucău-Dănilă, D. Rusan, 2000, p. 388; I. Ieșcu, *Părtești de Jos ...*, p. 166.

⁶⁰ *Folclor din Țara Fagilor* [Folklore from the land of Beeches], Alcăt. de N. Băieșu, G. Bostan, G. Botezatu, I. Buruiană, V. Chisăliță, V. Cîrimpei, D. Covalciuc, I. Filip, A. Hâncu, E. Junghietu, S. Moraru, Chișinău, Hyperion, 1993, p. 102-103.

⁶¹ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; *Cupca, un sat din Bucovina. Monografie istorică* [Cupca - the village in Bukovina. Historical monograph], Partea I. (anii 1429-1944), P. Ciobanu, R. Prelipean., V. Slănină, *Câmpulung Moldovenesc*, Amadoros, 2004, p. 309; V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 366-367; D. Tochiță, *De la lume adunate ...*, p. 79.

⁶² *Folclor din Țara Fagilor ...*, p. 94-97.

⁶³ S. F. Marian, *Botanică românească...*, p. 89.

⁶⁴ A. Gorovei, *Credinți și superstiții ...*, p. 275; P. Herescu, *Superstiții* [Superstitions], "Șezătoarea", 1894-1895, A. 3, p. 49-50; I. Ieșcu, *Părtești de Jos ...*, p. 164; D. Tochiță, *De la lume adunate ...*, p. 79.

⁶⁵ S. F. Marian, *Mitologie românească* [Romanian mythology], Ediție îngrijită de A. Olteanu,

Protective abilities of plants. According to the popular beliefs, the plants were able to transfer their healing power to humans or animals, to bring prosperity, health and so on. On “Yew Sunday” the Romanian women stroke several times their children and livestock with the blessed willow branches.⁶⁶ In Fundu Moldovei (northern part of Bukovina) they touched the eyes of children and domestic animals to improve their eyesight and to protect them from diseases.⁶⁷ In Stălinești (Novoselytsia district) they touched the children’s ears with blessed branches to avoid earache.⁶⁸ While performing this ritual they used to say: «Be happy and handsome for many years!» / «Să fiți norocoși, peste ani frumoși!». The blessed willow was placed near the icons and under the roof.⁶⁹ They believed that these branches will protect the house from natural disasters if someone will eat a small piece of bud.⁷⁰ This custom was widespread among the Ukrainians of Bukovina. They also blessed the willow branches, touched their natives with them, saying “Joke strikes, not me, Easter will come in a week”.⁷¹ In Ukraine, children ate pussy willow to prevent the sore throat. Apart from the Eastern Slavs, this custom is known to the Poles, Czechs and partly to the Southern Slavs.⁷²

To be vivacious throughout a year, the Eastern Romanians used to strike each other with nettle in the morning of “St. George’s Day”. Boys could strike girls and vice versa, spouses could strike each other, etc. (Tărășăuți and Pătrăuții de Jos of Chernivtsi region, Leorda Suceava, Suha Bucovineană).⁷³ In particular, the inhabitants of Dumbrăveni tried to be the first to put nettle near each other’s beds before the sunrise, to make them healthy and strong throughout a year.⁷⁴

București, Paideia, 2000, p. 32.

⁶⁶ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; *Cupca, un sat din Bucovina ...*, p. 306-307; V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 364-365; D. Tochiță, *De la lume adunate ...*, p. 79.

⁶⁷ *Fundu Moldovei o așezare ...*, p. 388.

⁶⁸ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005.

⁶⁹ *Sărbători și obiceiuri. Răspunsurile la chestionarele ...*, t. 4, p. 330-332.

⁷⁰ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005.

⁷¹ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; В. Петрюк, *Обряди і звичаї Мамаївців* [Rituals and customs of Mamaivivtsi], Чернівці, Зелена Буковина, 2003, с. 73.

⁷² *Славянские древности. Этнолингвистический словарь*, под ред. Н. И. Толстого [Slavic antiquities. Ethnic and linguistic dictionary edited by N. I. Tolstoi], Москва, Международные отношения, 1995-2004, Т. 1, с. 336-338.

⁷³ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 366; M. Huțanu, *Istoricul comunei Leorda* [History of Leorda commune], Botoșani, Axa, 2000, p. 103; I. Iețcu, *Pârtești de Jos ...*, p. 162-163.

⁷⁴ *Sărbători și obiceiuri. Răspunsurile la chestionarele ...*, Т. 4, p. 319-321.

On “St. George’s Day” they inserted willow rods in pieces of turf and put them on the pillars of gates, doors, windows, etc.⁷⁵ In some localities of Bukovina there was a common belief that God “opens” the earth this day and it remains open until “St. Dmytro’s Day”. The branches were used to heal diseases; they were added to fodder for livestock to increase the milk yield and protect it from evil; they were put under the hens to protect “chicken in eggs in time of thunder”.⁷⁶ Before the sunrise on “St. George’s Day” women used to sow cornflowers (girls sowed special “loving” cornflower) to attract happiness at home.⁷⁷

There is still existing tradition to decorate on “Yew Sunday” the corners of dwelling, doors, windows, gates with blessed willow branches.⁷⁸ The inhabitants of Stălinești girt themselves with “joking” rods to prevent the radicular pain. Girls worn crowns of willow leave to make the hair beautiful. In Tărășăuți there was a custom to plant the blessed willow rods.⁷⁹ In other villages, the rods were put in the outhouse to protect from diseases or tied them to trees aiming to improve fertility.⁸⁰ The similar tradition survived among the Ukrainians of Bukovina. They used the blessed rods to heal the illnesses; swallowed pussy willow to prevent the sore throat; brought rods to the graves of their natives, put them into the ground in a kitchen garden and preserved the rods which left in the house behind the home icons to keep out the ill luck.⁸¹

The custom to decorate the household with the blessed plants was performed on other festive days as well; in particular, on “St. Jeremiah’s Day” - with birch rods⁸² and on “Trinity” - with willow. This was made with a prophylactic aim - against diseases, hail, etc.⁸³ In Molnița (now Hertsa district) willow was used to decorate the house, thus it wasn’t brought inside, because, as they believed, it could cause true lice.⁸⁴ In Fundu Moldovei and Vatra Moldoviței

⁷⁵MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 364-365; S. Fl. Marian, *Sărbătorile la români ...*, vol. III, p. 142-143; *Sărbători și obiceiuri. Răspunsurile la chestionarele ...*, t. 4, p. 319-321.

⁷⁶S. Fl. Marian, *Sărbătorile la români ...*, vol. III, p. 142-143.

⁷⁷*Folclor din Țara Fagilor ...*, p. 94-97.

⁷⁸MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 364-365.

⁷⁹MEE YFCNU 1997-2005.

⁸⁰I. Ieșcu, *Părtești de Jos ...*, p. 162-163.

⁸¹MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; В. Петрюк, *Обряди і звичаї Мамаївців ...*, p. 73.

⁸²*Sărbători și obiceiuri. Răspunsurile la chestionarele ...*, t. 4, p. 319-321.

⁸³MEE YFCNU, F. 19, file. 248, p. 99; V. Buzilă, *Frunzarii verzi ...*, p. 129.

⁸⁴V. Buzilă, *Frunzarii verzi ...*, p. 131; *Sărbători și obiceiuri. Răspunsurile la chestionarele ...*, T. 4, p. 330-332.

(now Suceava district), the willow was used to decorate the household on "Ascension Day". It was also used to heal the chest cold and wounds. In particular, in Boroaia and Udești in the southern part of the region, they built fires from blessed willow rods. Ashes and firebrands were used to heal wounds and pimples. The inhabitants of Calafindești (southern part of Bukovina) used to decorate the household with willow and beech rods.⁸⁵ The dwelling's floor was covered with wormwood (Cupca, Chernivtsi region).⁸⁶ Sometimes the willow rods were used to decorate graves of the natives.⁸⁷

The Ukrainians of Bukovina plasticized such customs during the "Green week". They decorated their households with the blessed rods of linden⁸⁸, ash tree, hazel⁸⁹ in the same way, covered floor with fern, mint⁹⁰, lovage⁹¹, etc. The custom to decorate household with birch rods on "Green week" was well known to the Germans of Bukovina.⁹²

Transfer of supernatural abilities. In popular beliefs of the Eastern Romanian population of Bukovina the plants were used as an instrument to get the hidden treasures, acquiring supernatural powers. Especially, the Romanians of the Dorna area believed that the fern is blooming in the night before "Sânziană" and the one who saw this soon will find hidden money, gold and get an ability to read thoughts.⁹³ The inhabitants of the Suha Bucovineană believed that the one who will find and carry this flower on Sânziană could become invisible.⁹⁴ According to the beliefs of Romanians from the Siret zone, the fern blooming before "St. Basil Day". It could be used in healing and foretelling the future.⁹⁵

According to popular beliefs, it was possible to get the supernatural abilities from Iarba-mare (lat. *Inula Helenium L.*). They searched it on "Holy Forty Day" and on "St. George's Day", pulled it together with root, brought home, chapped it, added offal, salt and then used as supplementary food for cows. The plant protected from evil creatures (strigoi, witches, etc.), increased milk yield. The

⁸⁵ *Sărbători și obiceiuri. Răspunsurile la chestionarele ...*, T. 4, p. 330-332.

⁸⁶ *Cupca, un sat din Bucovina ...*, p. 309.

⁸⁷ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; *Cupca, un sat din Bucovina ...*, p. 309.

⁸⁸ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005; В. Петрюк, *Обряди і звичаї Мамаївців ...*, p. 74.

⁸⁹ В. Петрюк, *Обряди і звичаї Мамаївців ...*, p. 74.

⁹⁰ MEE YFCNU 1997-2005.

⁹¹ В. Петрюк, *Обряди і звичаї Мамаївців ...*, p. 74.

⁹² V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 367.

⁹³ S. F. Marian, *Botanică românească ...*, p. 67-68.

⁹⁴ V. Diaconu, *Etnografie și folclor ...*, p. 366-367.

⁹⁵ S. F. Marian, *Botanică românească ...*, p. 67.

locals preserved the plant's root throughout a year and believed that this grass could help to avoid illnesses, even such dangerous as plague and cholera.⁹⁶

In the popular calendar, the plants were used in various rituals performed on "St. Basil Day", i. e., they put the straw under the tablecloth. After dramatic rituals, the inhabitants of Suceava district use to hook the ritual masks on the branches of fruiters to get protection from evil spirits and to improve fertility throughout a year.⁹⁷

CONCLUSION

Being one of the main elements of nature, the plants became an important attribute of beliefs and rituals of the Eastern Romanian and Ukrainian population of Bukovina. The plants and their parts (roots, branches, leaves, buds, flowers, bodies, fruits, etc.) were widely used in folk customs and believed to possess special properties. In popular mythology they were considered as animated objects; their blooming was associated with life, health, and happiness. Main vegetation periods were marked by calendar dates (Christmas - rituals aiming to force the infertile trees to be fruitful and to get large harvest of crops; "Holy Forty" - breaking the first furrow and start of the garden plants setting; "St. George" - the emergence of first leaves, gathering black cherry, sowing the "loving" cornflower by women and so on; "Sânziană" - feast of yellow field flower). In the calendar customs, the plants perform the life-giving, prophylactic and apotropaic functions; they are widely used in rituals and magic. People believe that the plants have some magical and supernatural abilities, i. e. to fulfil wishes, grant invisibility, protect against evil spirits, find treasures, etc.

In general, one may define several characteristic features of the vegetation cult in customs and rituals of Bukovina: 1) deification of plants (worship trees, faith in magical power of different herbs that could transfer their supernatural abilities to human beings, became an instrument helping to find the hidden treasures and so on); 2) the plants helping to solve the problem of co-existence in the natural environment (foretelling the weather, pluvial rituals, preventing natural cataclysms, etc.); 3) plants could protect dwelling, household, and ground; 4) plants play a great role in saving the health and life of humans, foretelling the future (folk-medicine, matrimonial divination).

⁹⁶ Ibidem, p. 72-73.

⁹⁷ R. Vulcănescu, *Coloana cerului ...*, p. 65.

While analysing the elements of the vegetation cult in traditional rituals of the Romanians and Ukrainians of Bukovina, one may conclude that they have common features: the custom of “sowing” on New Year’s Day; the first ploughing a field; decorating a households with willow rods on “St. George’s Day”; rituals against witchcraft; gathering the medical plants on “St. John the Baptist Day”; belief that the fern is blooming before “St. John the Baptist Day”; similar matrimonial divinations; custom to put straw and hay under the tablecloth on Christmas; rituals aiming to renew the fertility of the fruitless trees; rituals of the “first” and the “last” sheaves; “onion calendar”; bypassing the fields with a priest; throwing ritual plants in wells. The existence of common rituals may be explained by the long-time co-residence of both peoples in the same geographical and historical conditions similar level of the social and economic development, identical conditions of housekeeping and cultural development, which determined the typological similarity of rituals. One cannot neglect the unifying role of the Orthodox Church that simplified ethnic contacts and convergence.

There were differences as well: *didukh*, custom to “burn the grandfather”, “*kaloyan*”, “*pparuda*”, “sowing” and “harrowing” cannabis, divination using the black cherries, sowing the “loving cornflower”, ritual with crowns, put on water surface on “St. John the Baptist’s Day”. This confirms the fact that their ancestors belonged to different economic and cultural models. The cultural mutual influence between the Eastern Romanian and Eastern Slavic population became apparent mostly in the sphere of material culture (building, planning and making the interior of the dwelling, clothes, food), thus in the field of spiritual culture, there were only some borrowings of ritual and folklore elements. Finally, it is important to note, that the ethnic and cultural borrowings between the Eastern Romanians and Ukrainians were mutual.