

**NUNTA – CEREMONIAL COMPLEX
(SIMILITUDINI LA ROMÂNII DIN TIMOCUL BULGĂRESC,
DIN BASARABIA ȘI DIN ZONA OLTENIEI)**

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*The Wedding – A Complex Ceremonial (Similarities between
the Romanians in the Bulgarian Timoc, in Bessarabia and in Oltenia)*

Our paper is based on field research conducted in the Bulgarian Timoc and in Oltenia and on data from interviews with informants in The Republic of Moldova.

The syncretism expressed by gesture, word, dance and song purifies the space, thus marking the moment of separation and of aggregation. We shall bring arguments to support this assertion.

Social memory is considered the main identity fuel whereas the past is a living presence through the social frameworks of memory which orders recollections, depending on the sensitivity of the moment. The reading grid applied to a memorial narrative is based on the criterion of lifelikeness not of truth while social identity is seen in an interactionist manner, as a social construction.

We have considered two identity groups, one chosen on family grounds (the Ghiorghievs of the Rabova village, Bulgaria) and one on affinity (bearers of folk music) and also on family grounds (members of the *Ethnos* folk group in Chișinău). As for Oltenia we have selected sequences with similarity of response as shown by informants in the neighbouring areas of Romania.

The wedding ceremony is perhaps best interpreted in terms of symbolic interactionism when referring to marking elements that lead to the idea of cultural identity for the Romanians in the neighbouring areas of Romania. According to this, the symbols attributed to objects and gestures as well are constructed by social interactions involving community members. The family is a unit of interacting personalities. Roles are built as a result of negotiations within the family. Relatives by marriage and blood relations ultimately form the identity micro-group.

The wedding illustrates the core symbols of the rites of passage. Some of the sequences in the wedding ceremony are identical to the Romanians in Bessarabia, Oltenia and the Bulgarian Timoc: payment for bringing the bride from her own home village to the village of the groom (Boișoara-Vâlcea, “the customs”; Cruglic-Odorhei in Basarabia, from the beginning of the twentieth century – “the fox”), initiation trials (“the pole” in Desa-Dolj and in Plaiul Cloșani, “the gourd” in Basarabia), “forgiving” (in Oltenia, in the Chișinău area and in the Bulgarian Timoc village of Rabova), “the hopping dance of the mothers-in-law” (in Dolj and Rabova-Timoc). The wedding ceremony remains the crest of the rites of passage, unrepeatable in regard to the intensity of emotional experiences and unforgettable as to the originality of habits.

The whole complex of rites, customs and cultural habits shows the unity of Romanians everywhere, their preservation being representative for the integrative force into a new state, wedlock for life.