

and history of folklore studies to reveal the imaginary, ritual, and narrative framework of the “geographical reality of the Carpathians.” The author presents a marginal space, made up of less accessible facts, a space exposed to dangers that the large public is unaware of, a space where “the real intertwines with the imaginary.” We follow both the physical map, and the mental map articulated by people who participated in Laura Jiga Iliescu’s research and who guide us through the Carpathian space of past times.

The interviews in the book have a strong narrative character which, together with the rituals described and the legends collected, lead to the creation of a rich folklore corpus. This corpus is meticulously supported by numerous bibliographic and especially archival references analysed hermeneutically that complete the thorough documentation process. We note that the regional language of the research participants often requires a translation into everyday language to be accessible to a reader that is not an ethnologist. For example, “to talk to a girl/boy” once meant

“to have a romantic relationship.” The author tries to map the rites analysed and the legends associated with these rites with the help of toponyms, for a better understanding of how they operate. Sometimes, the thread of the field investigations starts from the oral or folkloric toponymy to reach cartographic representations.

This book remains a testimony of the current existence of lesser-known rituals, whose presence still survives at least in the memory of some older generations. Laura Jiga Iliescu uses the narrative of the interviews to make these rituals accessible to a heterogeneous audience.

## NOTES

1. *Nedeia* is a popular rural festival organised in the Summer on the top of a mountain, either on a religious feast, or on a patron saint of the church from a village near the mountain.
2. Pieces of bread sprinkled with wine that are traditionally blessed by the priest usually before the Easter Vigil Mass. Traditionally, Orthodox Christians eat *Paști* in the morning on an empty stomach during the Bright Week.



## Shepherding. A Total Social Fact

Review by Ciprian Voicilă

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The volume *Păstoritul carpatic. Tradiție și continuitate* [Shepherding in the Carpathians. Tradition and continuity], coordinated by Lucian David and Ionuț Semuc (2022) presents the practice of shepherding from an interdisciplinary perspective: historical,

sociological, economic, cultural, political, and religious. This is the only methodological approach capable of describing the complexity of shepherding. “Shepherding has always had a distinguished place in the occupations and the cultural expressions of the Romanian

communities,” remarked Sabina Ispas in the foreword of the book (p. 10). The book is arguing that shepherding can be described as a “total social fact” (Mauss 1997). This is a fact that reveals the economic, sociological, cultural, and religious mechanisms of a social system or a human community.

In the Chapter “Elemente de continuitate ale păstoritului carpatic” [Elements of continuity of Carpathian shepherding], Lucian David reveals the cultural and social role played by the temporary swarms (*roiuri*) of the Romanian shepherds (*bârsani* —*săceleni*, *brăneni*, *covăsneni*, *brețcani*) in disseminating the Romanian language, customs and traditions in other geographical and cultural areas, such as around the Black Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Ionian Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Ponto-Caspian steppes, beyond the Dniester River and the Prut River, reaching as far as Crimea and the north of the Caucasus. At the same time, the book shows the ways in which local farmers who trade dairy products and meat or who are engaged in the practice of agritourism can capitalize on this heritage (material and immaterial). The reader learns from this chapter many things that can stimulate their interest and curiosity, including the types of shepherding settlements, the description of a shepherding typology, and that swarms—the “advanced phase of transhumance”—can be internal or external.

The Chapter “Creșterea animalelor și paștile. Relații de interdependență la nivelul peisajelor culturale din România” [Animal Husbandry and Grasslands. Relations of interdependence at the level of Romanian cultural landscapes] signed by Anamaria Iuga, Cosmin Marius Ivașcu, and Alina-Sorina Biro sheds light on the solid connection—refined over millennia—between shepherding practices and the management of semi-natural pastures, especially hayfields. The reader discovers the historical, cultural, and ecological significance of hay and animal husbandry specific to different ethnographic regions of Romania, especially Maramureș and Bucovina. The article is based on field research conducted over 11 years.

One major conclusion of the chapter is that local people have been developing traditional management practices over many generations and these practices can significantly influence the productivity and quality of pasture lands. The study highlights the strong interdependence between grazing and the production of hay, which in the past played an important role in the development of biodiversity— notable in these geographical-cultural areas. This interdependence between grazing and the production of hay can, in the present, contribute to the conservation of biodiversity. A small example of the interdependence between animal husbandry in a traditional system and the variety of flora and fauna that we find in the mountain meadows,

[U]sing butterflies as indicator species, Sally Huband<sup>1</sup> found that in the Moieciu de Sus area there is a remarkable richness of these insects in the meadows with traditional management, while in areas with intensive management or in abandoned areas they recorded a very small number of butterflies and plant species. (p. 61)

The Chapter “Aspecte ale vestimentației tradiționale păstorești. De la document la obiect etnografic—structuri și semnificații” [Aspects of the traditional shepherding clothing. From document to ethnographic object—structures and meanings] signed by Georgiana Onoiu is based on the analysis of traditional clothing questionnaires from the archive of the C. Brăiloiu Institute of Ethnography and Folklore, the examination of some traditional objects and textiles from the “Dimitrie Gusti” collections at the National Museum in Bucharest, and the relevant literature. The chapter focuses on the region Mărginimea Sibiului that is a representative area for shepherding. We learn a lot about the shepherds’ clothing culture—*gluga* [hood], from the Latin *sagulum*, *ițarii* [trousers], *gheba* [cloak], *bunda* [woolen jacket], *chimirul* [wide leather waist belt], *căciula mocănească* [hat], *straița* [bag], *opincile* [sandals], *chepeneagul* or *pelerină păcurărească* [shepherd’s cloak].



In the Chapter “Transhumanța ca patrimoniu cultural imaterial” [Transhumance as intangible cultural heritage], Ioana Baskerville demonstrates the relevance of transhumance as intangible cultural heritage, as Italy, Austria, and Greece inscribed in 2009 the practice of “Transhumance, the seasonal droving of livestock along the migratory routes in the Mediterranean and the Alps” in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The purpose of the research is to expand the nomination file—a decision already taken as early as 2022. The research argues how necessary it is to understand the phenomenon of transhumance not only as cultural heritage but also to create a cultural model of shepherding, which can be described using certain attributes that are specific to Romanian transhumance. This approach also has a pragmatic purpose: the safeguarding of this type of shepherding and of other shepherding systems in the world.

The contribution of researchers Iulian Vlad, Mirela (Stanciu) Cărătuș, and Marius Laurian Maței to the collective volume is the study “Transhumanța, parte integrantă a pastoralismului național românesc. Element ocupațional plurivalent, economic, ecologic, social și cultural-identitar” [Transhumance, an integral part of Romanian national shepherding. Occupational element with multiple values: economic, ecological, social, and cultural identity]. This chapter gives a series of technical details about transhumance and describes its complexity and its cultural relevance.

[T]ranshumance represents a basic and ancient animal husbandry activity, with millennial roots in the nation’s history, which through its forms of practice played an essential role in maintaining the national and linguistic cohesion of the Romanian people (...) [being] the messenger of the local rural culture and civilization. (p. 104)

Transhumance can be defined as “the periodic migration of large and small her-

bivorous animals—sheep, cows, horses from the mountains to the plains, in search of food, with different patterns of transition-evolution and migration” (p. 106). Duration and route are two key concepts in the analysis of transhumance,

[T]he duration and the route traveled during transhumance represent important criteria to classify the transhumance practices, in which shepherds with flocks of sheep, donkeys, and dogs follow certain roads that date back many hundreds of years. These routes have been passed down to each generation of shepherds, for those who continued these shepherding practices. (p. 107)

From this chapter we learn that “the most suitable breed for transhumance is Turcana with its varieties” (p. 104). Using the old anthropological tension between nature and culture, the authors define the essence of transhumance and the prospects of this socio-cultural phenomenon, as announced right in the definition,

[T]he connection of the shepherd with the mountain is practically the essence or purpose of transhumance, a key element of current practices. The shepherd adjusts his techniques to exploit sheep in balance with the environment. The essence of shepherding and transhumance is the inseparable link between man, animal, and the environment. Hence, the purpose, causation, and the prospects to continuing such extensive practices of sheep farming. (p. 104)

The end of the chapter includes an important practical section where the authors design a management strategy for Romanian shepherding while identifying the risks of transhumance.

In the Chapter “Terminologia construcțiilor păstorești din sudul țării” [Terminology of shepherding constructions in the south of the country], Alina Bojoga analyzes the vocabulary of the shepherd. It is a specialized language



based on a set of words “distinctive, usually used and known only by those who practice shepherding” (p. 142). The author notes that some of the 153 terms discussed are known throughout the entire southern regions of the country, in Oltenia, Muntenia, and Dobrogea regions. For example, words like *stână* [sheepfold], *târlă*, *strugă* are polysemantic terms, the oldest terms that belong to the basic language of this occupation. Alina Bojoga explains that other terms have a wider distribution, such as the words *obor*, *țarc*, *covercă*. But most terms are distributed over a limited area or even sporadically, such as the terms *cătun*, *băcie*, *surlă*, *umbrar*. Several layers of this terminology can be identified. The first layer originates from Latin, the second layer is borrowed from other languages, especially Slavic, and the third layer consists of words derived from Romanian.

In the Chapter “Termeni păstorești moșteniți în dialectul aromân” [Shepherding terms inherited in the Aromanian dialect], Nicolae Saramandu and Manuela Nevaci highlight the large percentage of autochthonous terms of Latin origin in shepherding terminology. The important conclusions of the article are: (1) shepherding represented the predominant occupation of the local population, while the Romans settled in Dacia worked in agriculture; (2) The unity of shepherding terminology in the Romanian and Italian languages reveals the continuity of the Latin language, which is present in all Romance languages; (3) Thanks to the Romanian shepherds who lived north and south of the Danube River, a series of shepherding terms of Latin origin have been transmitted to other languages—Greek, Bulgarian, Slovenian, Serbian, Polish, Czech, Hungarian, and Ukrainian.

Daniela Băbu starts from the premises that the human brain is a collection of traces of the environment where the human being lives (Candau 2006) and that the in-depth study of memory is relevant for other scientific fields. In the Chapter “O perspectivă asupra reprezentării memoriei și rememorării. Experiența trăită și transmisă: copilăria și prima

transhumanță văzute prin ochii unui ultim oier al unei familii de ungureni din Novaci, Gorj” [A perspective on the representation of memory and remembering. Experience lived and transmitted: childhood and first transhumance seen through the eyes of the last shepherd of a family of *Ungureni*<sup>2</sup> from Novaci, [Gorj County], the author puts together her father’s stories (Gheorghe Băbu who was a shepherd for over 50 years), following his biography: origins, birth, childhood, first steps as a shepherd, first transhumance, and survival techniques in the Romanian Plain.

Laura Jiga Iliescu’s chapter, “Documente de teren referitoare la religiozitatea cotidiană a ciobanilor în munte. Exemple din Carpații Meridionali” [Field documents regarding the daily religiosity of shepherds in the mountains. Examples from the Southern Carpathians], is the result of the selection and systematization of her own transcriptions of the recordings made between 2011 and 2018, when she studied the daily life of shepherds in the Carpathian Mountains. Laura Jiga Iliescu describes the religiosity specific to this socio-professional category, marked by isolation from any church institution, but attached to Christian values. The religiosity of the shepherds appreciates nature as a mediator between man and God. A remnant, we could say, of what Mircea Eliade called in the work *Aspects of myth* (1978) “cosmic Christianity.” The author orders her documents using the pattern of rites of passage (Van Gennep 1996). The documents shed light on the spatial and temporal framework of the shepherds. The separation from the village is a “ritualization of the departure” that includes sprinkling the flocks and shepherds with holy water and putting symbolic food, including bread, salt, water, and garlic in the shepherds’ bag. When “opening the sheepfold,” shepherds used to sprinkle the sheepfold with holy water and say prayers. During the time spent on the mountain, in isolation, shepherds used to fast so that bears would not eat their sheep. Finally, the chapter documents the time shepherds descended the mountains and returned to their everyday domestic life (p. 224-5).



In the Chapter “Creștinismul cosmic la sărbătoarea pastorală Ruptu Sterpelor” [Cosmic Christianity at the *Ruptu Sterpelor*<sup>3</sup> shepherding celebration], Ciprian Coc describes the celebration that traditionally takes place in the north of Romania when the sheepfold is prepared for the beginning of the shepherding summer. In this period, shepherds who are baptized Orthodox Christian perform a rite with ancestral, pre-Christian, roots: they stick the knife or ax into the soil of the sheepfold “to sacralize the space, by fixing a center.” In another sequence of the ritual, a priest officiates the Holy Liturgy next to a tree in the shape of a cross—the Cross placed in front of the sheepfold, “a column of the sky like a *holy pillar* that represents the heart of the settlement, the sheepfold in our case, and establishes the contact divine–profane between worlds” (p. 254). The liturgical ritual of blessing the sheep has a beneficial effect on the entire nature. Therefore, in the ritual, ideological distances and contradictions are suspended (Christianity takes over the remains of some pre-Christian symbolic practices) and ethnology and anthropology confirm the existence and efficacy of the cosmic liturgy. The cosmic liturgy has been described in all its mystical and symbolic aspects by Saints Dionysius the Areopagite and Maximus the Confessor.

In Chapter “Nedeia mocănească a voineștenilor—trecut și prezent” [*Nedeia mocănească*<sup>4</sup> of the citizens of Voinești—past and present], Florentina Teacă analyzes the feast of Saint Elijah—*Sîntilia*—the best known and most beautiful local tradition of the shepherds of Voinești, Covasna County. In ancient times, on this day of celebration young shepherds descended from the mountains to choose their future wives. Nowadays, on *Sîntilia* local people perform a show that imitates the traditional wedding and mirrors ancient traditions.

In the study “Păstoritul din Mărginimea Sibiului. Trecut, prezent și viitor” [Shepherding in Mărginimea Sibiului. Past, present, and future], the authors Radu Săgeată, Mihaela Persu, Bianca Mitrică, Nicoleta Damian, and Irena Mocanu analyze transhumance from a

historical and cultural point of view and focus on the way recent social changes, such as the policies of planned economy and collectivization during the socialist regime and post-socialist modernity and free trade have changed the practice of transhumance. Thus, we learn that transhumance gained momentum in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, becoming a specific form of shepherding economy. With the development of shepherding, deforestation intensified to provide more space for pastures and hay fields. Then, social and historical changes brought by the two World Wars and the collectivization and centralization of the economy during the socialist regime made transhumance lose its scope and significance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Currently, the authors show that in the region of Mărginimea Sibiului transhumance is practiced only in the villages of Poiana Sibiului, Tilișca, Jina and Rășinari.

In “Păstoritul în Mărginimea Sibiului. Modificare de peisaj cultural” [Shepherding in the Mărginimea Sibiului. Changing the cultural landscape], Ilie Moise uses the tools of ethnology, history, geography, and architecture to perform an interdisciplinary analysis of this region that includes eighteen localities. The scope of his study is twofold. On the one hand, the author makes a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural characteristics of the Romanian village. On the other hand, he studies how the forces of modernization and globalization have pushed the traditional village in crisis.

As the title reveals, Rodica Popa Comaniciu analyzes “Tradițiile și sărbătorile oierilor mărgineni în pendulările transhumanței” [Traditions and celebrations of the shepherds from Mărginimea Sibiului during circular transhumance]. Traditionally, transhumance included taking sheep to the mountains, shearing the sheep, bargaining with the shepherds, and tying up the shears. In this context, transhumance is seen as “the polar star that guided the shepherds on the path to physical and spiritual fulfillment” (p. 339). One of the important feasts was *Nedeia*<sup>5</sup> that happened during the summer religious celebrations. Once it was over, the shepherds would descent



to the plains with the sheep and return the sheep to their owners close to the feast of Saint Parascheva, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October.

In the Chapter “Etno-medicina veterinară a oierilor transhumanți din Mărginimea Sibiului: mărturii ale sătenilor din Jina, Poiana Sibiului și Tilișca” [Ethno-veterinary medicine of transhumant shepherds from Mărginimea Sibiului: testimonies of villagers from Jina, Poiana Sibiului, and Tilișca], Marin Constantin offers us information on traditional veterinary healing practiced by transhumant shepherds from southern Transylvania. These practices have been documented in a series of life stories collected in 2016 from the villages of Jina, Poiana Sibiului, and Tilișca. We learn that Romanian shepherds have been inheriting from older generation “ethno-medical” knowledge and practices that used to cover a range of diseases. Each practice is a solution that answers a question that arises in a critical situation: how do you diagnose sheep and how do you treat them? What are the medicinal plants, what disease are these plants good for, and in what dosage? What criteria do you use to determine which sheep to slaughter? The author’s conclusion is that the healing of sheep has an empirical character. The science of healing sheep comes from the inhabitants of Romanian villages in southern Transylvania, who engaged in seasonal shepherding.

In the Chapter “Păstoritul din Rășinari—între mobilitate și stabilitate” [Shepherding from Rășinari—between mobility and stability], Andreea Buzaș presents a case study of the recent transformations in Rășinari village. In this village, important personalities for the Romanian and European culture were born, such as doctor and explorer Ilarie Mitrea, poet Octavian Goga, and philosopher and essayist Emil Cioran. Andreea Buzaș highlights the modernization of economic, social, and political life in Rășinari, starting with the Union of the Principalities in 1859 and continuing with the completion of the unity of the Romanian state in 1918. Andreea Buzaș documents the way agrarian reforms, modernization of crafts, transport, and industry, reorganization of rural

houses and of the rural habitat, and the changes in the local architecture affected the traditional practices. The author observes the salutary role of ethnographic museums in the conservation and valorization of traditional practices.

In the Chapter “Toponimia localității Tilișca în raport cu transhumanța” [Toponymy of the Tilișca locality in relation to transhumance], Andra-Florina Popa argues that “the name of the place expresses the socio-cultural realities<sup>6</sup> and indicates the main occupation of the inhabitants of Tilișca” (p. 384). The village of Tilișca is situated in the cultural area of Mărginimea Sibiului, an “ancient hearth of Dacia” (p. 384). In ancient times, local people practiced transhumance by taking their sheep during winter to the warmer parts of Romania. This is still practiced today, although many have settled in Dobrogea, Bărăgan, or Banat regions where they established farms for animal husbandry. The glossary of place names in Tilișca shows the strong connection between shepherding and the toponymy of the locality. Other examples are: *Cotroana*—mountain for sheep, *Creața*—hay meadow, *Staule*—sheepfold, and so on.

In the summer of 2000, Lucian David and Ionuț Semuc studied in Mărginimea Sibiului an advanced phase of the movement of sheep: *roirile* (“swarming”). In the chapter “Memorie și discurs. Roiri mărginene către vestul României” [Memory and discourse. Swarming from Mărginime towards the West of Romania] the two researchers argue that after the Second World War swarming took place from the Mărginimea Sibiului to the west of the Romanian territory.

In the Chapter “Roiri pastorale în urma transhumanței oierilor transilvăneni din Poiana Sărată în Basarabia și Crimeea—cercetări de teren și arhivă, 2019” [Shepherding swarming following the transhumance of Transylvanian shepherds from Poiana Sărată to Bessarabia and Crimea—field and archive research, 2019], Ligia Fulga and Carmen Marin discuss a research project initiated by the Ethnographic Museum of Brașov regarding “the lifestyle, mentality, and cultural traces transhumance has left in time



and space, in relation to migration areas – the south of the Republic of Moldova” (p. 411). In 2019, the research focused on Poiana Sărată, an important area that used to be a former border area between Transylvania and Moldova, which had been founded by shepherd families from Betcu and the surrounding villages. The authors identify the descendants of the Poenari-Mocani families who settled in Crimea and Bessarabia, as a result of transhumance. These families “made a significant contribution in the field of migration, from an economic and political point of view, as a compact community with distinct identity elements—lexis, customs, and shepherding activity” (p. 411).

Constantin Ittu claims that the purpose of his study, “Oieri din Mărginimea Sibiului transhumanți în Caucaz, Astrahan și Omsk” [Shepherds from Mărginimea Sibiului and their transhumance in the Caucasus, Astrakhan, and Omsk], is “to understand not only the life of the shepherds in Mărginimea Sibiului from

the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also to understand the phenomenon of transhumance—a practice with a wide area of development, transmitted from one generation to another in the heart of mountain communities.” The spaces covered by this type of transhumance start from the Romanian shepherd villages and go as far as the legendary lands of the Caucasus, Astrakhan, and Omsk.

The last chapter of the volume is a review by Ioana Crețu of the book “Transhumanța” [Transhumance] (2015) signed by Nicolae Stan Petruțiu. The book is a description of life during transhumance, whose main characters are the shepherds from Mărginimea Sibiului.

In the afterword of the volume, Sabin Fărcaș concludes that “All is not lost yet. We still have authentic Carpathian shepherding, and we still have young shepherds to carry the tradition forward, but we must make all the necessary efforts to preserve it” (p. 449).



## NOTES

1. See Huband (2007).

2. *Ungureni* is the local name of the Romanian population from Transylvania (mainly shepherds) that migrated, due to transhumance, in Walachia (southern part of Romania), especially in the regions of: Vâlcea, Gorj, Mehedinți, and Buzău due to the difficult life and the oppression they faced. Although this type of migration started in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, an intense wave occurred in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Constantinescu Mircești 1976).

3. The Spring ritual usually called “Milk Measurement,” when the baren sheep are separated from the milking sheep, and each owner is measuring the milk of the sheep he/she owns, and, according to a local calculus formula, they would know how much milk they would receive all summer. The celebration has several

names, one of them is *Ruptul sterpelor* [Separation of the Baren Sheep].

4. *Nedeia* or *Nedeea* is a local shepherd community’s feast that is organised on the top of a mountain (situated at the border of different regions). It takes place on a summer religious feast day. *Mocan* is a local name for shepherding communities.

5. See the previous note.

6. The name of the village, Tilișca, derives from the word *tilincă* (wooden pipe), an instrument used by shepherds. Thus, the name of the village indicates that the main occupation of the population was shepherding.

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