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## FOLK CALENDAR OF ROMANIANS IN BUKOVYNA

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### НАРОДНИЙ КАЛЕНДАР РУМУНІВ БУКОВИНИ

У статті розглядаються головні свята народного календаря румунів Буковини. Досліджено пантеон покровителів свійських тварин, хліборобів, захисників великої рогатої худоби від нечисті і диких тварин, полів – від граду і шкідливих комах, а також річний цикл хліборобських і скотарських свят.

Folk calendar as a combination of beliefs and knowledge, according to which the Romanians of Bukovyna lived till the beginning of the 20th century, existed alongside official and church ones. Customs, rites and holidays connected with chronology, seasonal changes were an essential part of their ethnic culture. Unlike church one, where every holiday is connected with a particular apostle, archangel, saint, martyr etc and official one, which was a systematization of days by weeks and months, folk calendar, formed during centuries, contained specific features of social and economic life, reflected its social system, family relationship, outlook, psychology and moral peculiarities. Hence, folk calendar pointed peasant the most suitable time for agricultural work, sheep flocks shaping and dismissal, sheep going and returning from mountain pastures etc. The exactness of folk calendar is based on the space chronology: solstice (Christmas, Ivan Kupala's holiday), equinox (cuckoo's holiday, snake's holiday), Moon's phases etc. The majority of folk holidays and rites were laid on biorhythms and cycles of animals', birds', reptiles' and plants' reproduction: "Sheep wedding" or "Rams' releasing" (27th of October) – a day of sheep mating; Autumn Philipii (end of November) – the start of wolves mating season etc.

Folk Calendar of Romanians of Bukovyna became the most important part of ethnographic materials, collected in the second half of the 19th – beginning of the 20th centuries by such scientists as B. Khazhdeu<sup>1</sup>, S. Marian<sup>2</sup>, E. Nikulitze-Voronka<sup>3</sup>, D. Dan<sup>4</sup>, A. Gorovei<sup>5</sup>, T. Pamfile<sup>6</sup>, N. Densushanu<sup>7</sup>, M. Lupesku<sup>8</sup>, T. German<sup>9</sup> and others. The main stages of agricultural and cattle-farm workers' calendars of Romanians in modern Storozhynets, Hlyboka, Novoselytsia and Gertsia districts of Chernivtsi region as well as in modern Suchava povit of Romania can be traced on the basis of these sources.

These issues were also researched by M. Salmanovych<sup>10</sup>, V. Zelenchuk, Yu. Popovych<sup>11</sup>, E. Rikman<sup>12</sup>, G. Kozholianko<sup>13</sup>. Some aspects of this issue were highlighted in their works. At the present moment we should declare the absence of integral research of folk calendar of Bukovynian Romanians.

We will try to consider the main cycles of holidays of agricultural and cattle-farm workers' calendars of Bukovynian Romanians in this article.

Agricultural New Year of Bukovynian Romanians (as well as of eastern Romans) started from the Forty Martyrs' Day (March 22nd), which was also called "Dragobetele" ("Dragobetele"), "Donation to plough" "Sâmbria plugului"<sup>14</sup> in folk calendar of Romanians. The main agricultural rites of this day were the first going out to field with plough and start of truck crops planting.

Bukovynian Romanians had some characteristic customs of the preparatory character before the first going out to field with plough. So, some days before the first tilling a peasant was taking his plough through the fire purifying it from evil magic. Before leaving the yard he yoked oxen, hanging traistra (ethnic bag) with food between them, went around them thrice, burning them with incense and sprinkling with blessed water<sup>15</sup>. After that the mistress poured the rest of water in front of oxen or on them, oxen and ploughmen were given bread with salt, pot with incense and axe were put in front of oxen and they with a plough had to go across them. In Nyzhniy Horodnyk the pot with incense was broken on oxen's horns. During the rite the master was kneeling and making the sign of the cross over the cattle with the whip-handle. When a master was going out with plough through the gate the mistress took hen's egg and threw it under left hand to oxen or in front of them, believing that if the egg fell down on the ground and didn't break – the plough wouldn't break while tilling. Before going out to the field a ploughman with a plough was going around his household or house thrice<sup>16</sup>.

Having come to the field with plough some ploughmen made one furrow, then unharnessed oxen, gave them something to eat, ate themselves, believing that it would bring them good harvest. During tilling they were fumigating the first furrow, mixing seeds with the shell of blessed Easter eggs. To have a good harvest while making the first furrow they put some bread and salt in it<sup>17</sup>. The start of field work was forbidden on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, in particular sowing some cereals while new Moon, because ears would be empty<sup>18</sup>. The objective of this rite was ploughman's success, amulet from evil spirits ("morois" or "strigois"), and good harvest.

On the 40 Martyrs' Day peasants planted vegetables, in particular garlic, onion and seedlings of cabbage, believing that vegetables planted on this day wouldn't be eaten by caterpillars, insects and beetles. They would give harvest 7 or 40 times as large, wouldn't rot in autumn, would implant better, for since this day the ground hasn't frozen any more. Before making beds for onion and seed-plots for cabbage women bowed 40 times and gave alms of 40 kalachiks (small white loafs) and the same amount of candles and only after this they planted truck-crops<sup>19</sup>.

To protect sowings from birds Romanians of Bukovyna made special rites, the most widespread was "Sowings setting" ("Legarea grânelor"). This rite was carried out last Sunday before Lent.

Bukovynian Romanians, besides some ritual actions, connected with the protection of their sowings and having good harvest of truck and field crops, were involved in some other rites aiming to make sterile trees ripen or stimulate good harvest of fruit. One of the most widespread of such kind was "Sterile Tree" ("Pomul sterp"). It was conducted on different holidays: Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve or Epiphany, Good Friday etc. Characters in this rite were the owner of the garden, two men, man and a woman, a woman<sup>20</sup>. According to this rite man and a woman came up to the sterile tree, the woman asked the man: "The tree asks you not to chop it, for it is going to ripen next year. It will give as many fruit as much dough I have on my hands"<sup>21</sup>. In the village of Tarnavka the tree wasn't threatened by axe, but it was shaken with the hands with dough on them<sup>22</sup>.

In mythological views of Bukovynian Romanians such patron saints were considered to protect farmers and fields from hail, birds, caterpillars and insects: St. Trif the Crazy ("sf. Trif cel Nebun"), St. George, St. Oleksiy, St. Illia etc.

One of the most essential and archaic elements of the Romanian agrarian rites and customs was the rite of rain calling and stopping, which under the civilization impact is partly preserved till nowadays. Bukovynian villagers were aware of some individual protecting actions from hail, storms etc. One of such rites was fixed in the village of Bogdeneshty in the southern part of Bukovyna. Women lured a pregnant woman to the well and poured a bucket of water on her head. If a pregnant woman was offended they believed it would be raining soon<sup>23</sup>. To stop the rain people burnt a candle and incense, they put the candle on the window sill and kept it there till the hail stopped. They were burning incense in the house. It should be mentioned that the candle blessed on the Easter Day to stop the hail, was used in many villages of Bukovyna<sup>24</sup>. So, in the town of Siret the candle was used together with the cross, blessed on Easter Day and incense was burnt. In some Bukovynian villages people were going around their household with the candle, in the village of Kam'iana it was used together with the knife, which was kept with the blade up and were fumigating with the smoke of different flowers, blessed on the Easter Day. In the village of Mykhal'cha (northern part of Bukovyna) the cross bun, blessed on the Easter Day, was put in every corner of the field to

prevent hail<sup>25</sup>. In other cases church riveting hammer was stolen and dropped into the well or river<sup>26</sup>. The similar rite existed with the icon, stolen from some house or church and dropped into the well or river. The same rite was carried out with the stolen utensil, which was dropped into the well or tied to the willow or tree. The utensil had to be in the water with the outlet directed towards the spring. The most widespread was the rite, performed by the priest who was going to the field together with the religious procession (a group of people with the icons in their hands) and was praying near the well<sup>27</sup>. It should be mentioned that going out of the priest together with the religious procession still exists almost in every Bukovynian village nowadays.

Besides, Bukovynian Romanians were also aware of some manipulation with sharp metal things: they buried blunt edge of axe, the sharp end was directed up<sup>28</sup>; cut the cloud crosswise with the sharp end of axe<sup>29</sup>; thrust knife into the ground<sup>30</sup>; threw out bread spatula and poker into the yard<sup>31</sup>; put broom and poker or two logs crosswise in the yard<sup>32</sup>.

These individual rites have some common features with analogical rites of some Slavic nations. Hence, with the same aim the Ukrainians of Polissia stole the cross and earthenware crockery and dropped them into the well, poured the water on the pregnant woman near the well, burnt "hromnycha" (protecting from thunder) candle during hail<sup>33</sup>. N. Tolstoi considers the ritual of bread spatula throwing out common Slavic one. It was preserved in many districts of Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Homel', Rivne and Brest regions. The Bulgarians, Serbs, Poles, Russians and Slovenes knew the rite of throwing out of sharp metal things with the blade up to cut the rainy cloud; the Serbs, Croats, Poles were striking church bells during storm<sup>34</sup>.

The idea of cycling and stability can be traced in the Bukovynian Romanians' outlook. The village life was to some extent predicted. The dependence existed only on some natural cataclysms (excessive humidity of the ground, drought, storm, hail etc.), which was a rare thing on their territory. Consequently, person's inner world was exactly defined, stable and related, first of all, to nature. In this very context the rites of calling the rain during drought and while excess humidity of ground played an important role in every day life of the Romanian peasant. Throughout centuries these rites of evident pre-Christian origin filled its functional niche in the agricultural calendar. Complex research of these rites allowed establishing pantheon of the "rulers" of hail and snow storms in the outlook of Bukovynian Romanians – St. Peter, St. Ioan, St. Foka etc, as well as year holidays, observed aiming to prevent hail from fields and pastures. The rites of calling out and stopping the rain should be considered together with agrarian customs and rites as they are interrelated.

Folk cult of Saints – rulers of cattle and cattle-farm workers in the calendar rites of Bukovynian Romanians could be observed in the form of celebrating cattle-farm workers' days to protect cattle, pigs, horses, sheep and goats from wild animals (wolves and bears in particular), snakes, illnesses as well as resistance to evil spirits' magic (strigois) and bearers of esoteric knowledge (wizards and witches), who could take "mana" (milk) from cows and sheep.

Cattle-farm workers' calendar as a constituent part of folk calendar and closely related to "shepherd's" and "wolf's" calendars began in autumn in the period of sheep and other cattle mating. The process of domestic animals reproduction divides cattle calendar into two symmetrical seasons: "sterile" winter lasting from the day of St. Dmytro (November the 8th) till the day of St. George (May the 6th) and "yielding fruit" summer (between the days of St. Dmytro and St. George). The mid or strength of winter was established by Winter Tsyrvovii (Circovii de Iarnâ) falling on July 29–31, and the mid of summer – Summer Tsyrvovii (Circovii de Varâ) – July 29–31. Their celebration was fixed at the crossing of the 19th and 20th centuries not only in the villages of Borka, Broshteny, Farkash (the southern part of Bukovyna)<sup>35</sup>, but in Moldova, Transylvania, Banat, Muntenia etc.<sup>36</sup> As the most productive season for sheep falls on summer, in I. Gina's opinion the villagers shifted the cattle New Year from the beginning of winter (Autumn Philipii, Wolf's Day, St. Andrew, St. Nicholas) to the beginning of the cattle summer (St. George, St. Mark Bychachyi (the Bull), St. Arminden)<sup>37</sup>. The majority of autumn-summer celebrations of the cattle-work farmers' calendar were not changed. We should mention the holiday of St. Andrew among them, because Bukovynians believe that St. Andrew protected cattle from wild animals, "strigois", which could take milk from cows and sheep<sup>38</sup>; Autumn Philipii had similar function of cattle protection from wild animals. The date of Philipii celebrating varied within November 24th and December 1 – 2<sup>39</sup>.

St. George (sf. Gherghe) began a range of cattle holidays of the Bukovynians Romanians.

It falls on May the 6th and it is one of the most important holidays of the cattle year. Of great importance was the eve of St. George Day which was called "St. George the Cow" (sf. Gherghe a vacilor), "Selection" (Alesul), "Miniketoaria" ("Mânicătoarea") or "Trembita" (Hutsul trumpet) ("Buciumul"). On this day villagers chose the place to build a sheep fold, built fence, kolyba (tent for shepherds), barrier for sheep milking<sup>40</sup>, chose sheep, cattle, pigs shepherds, horse-herds etc. They made some ointment or sheep lard used by shepherds as a preservative from witches, they began selecting mature sheep among dry one and finished the selection on the St. George Day. On this day they made "alive" fire through which they drove away the cattle and they themselves jumped over it<sup>41</sup>. We can't but mention that similar sense had the eve of this holiday in some provinces in Romania<sup>42</sup>. On the St. George Day in the morning when the cattle was for the first time driven away to pastures in the village of Novi Frativtsi some custom was fixed by S. Marian. According to this custom a ten-years-old boy climbed on the gate, putting one foot on one of the rails and another foot in the other rail to make cattle go under him. The objective of this custom was to protect cattle from "strigois" making them unable to take milk from them<sup>43</sup>. On this day they separated mature sheep from dry one, and lambs from sheep<sup>44</sup>, milked sheep for the first time and made first fresh sheep curds ("ca"), which was donated to the church to increase sheep milk<sup>45</sup>. On this day "surmlinnia" (special trumpet blowing) of sheep was started lasting till St. Dmytro Day and was of protective and purifying origin, sheep and lambs were marked<sup>46</sup>.

We should point out that Ukrainians of Bukovyna considered St. George to be a patron-saint of shepherds. Ethnographic notes of G. Kupchanko, made in the region of Kitsman<sup>47</sup>, as well as one of the folk songs in the collection of poetry by Yu. Fed'kovych testify to this fact<sup>48</sup>.

Thus, the analysis of ethnographic data of the cattle calendar of Bukovynian Romanians allows reproducing the year cycle of cattle-farm workers holidays: St. George the Cow (May 6), St. George (May 6), St. Mark the Bull (May 8), St. Jeremy (May 14), John the Baptist's Head Finding (June 7), St. Summer Peter (July 12), St. Prokopi (July 21), Summer Tsyrvovii (July 29 – 31), Makovey the Bear (August 14), St. Vavil (September 17), Tekla's Day (October 7), St. Kirik (October 9) (begins the cycle of "Berkariiia"), Pokrova's day (October 14), St. Paraskeva (October 27), St. Dmitriy (November 8), St. Phillip the Lame (November 9), Sheep's Holiday (November 24), cycle of Martyniiv-Philipiiv (November 25–26), Vovideniia (December 4), St. Andrew (December 13), St. Nicholas (December 19), St. Ihnat the Pig (January 2), St. Winter Peter (January 29), Winter Tsyrvovii (January 29 – 31), cycle Trifu-Candlemas Day (February 14 – 15), St. Kharlampiy (February 23), St. Oleksiy (March 30), Annunciation (April 7) and also moving holidays of St. Toader and Lent Monday – the first week of Lent etc.

Patron saints of cattle and cattle-farm workers were St. George, St. Dmitriy, St. Ieremiia, St. Peter, St. Philip, St. Andrew, St. Ignat, St. Vavil etc.

During cattle holidays Bukovynian Romanians pursued the whole complex of preventive and protective actions. Their objective was to protect cattle from wild animals (wolves and bears in particular), evil spirits and bearers of esoteric knowledge (witches and wizards) and diseases as well.

The biggest threat for cattle was wolves. We should mention the following protective actions against wolves: making ritual fires and fumigating, making some magic signs in the shape of cross, different exorcisms etc. The most efficient rite was making "alive" fire. The following practice was fully described by S. Marian. Cattle was fumigated by the smoke of this fire, villagers also were burning sheep excrement and driving cattle through its smoke, jumping themselves over it. The objective of this custom was the protection of cattle, sheep and their offspring from illnesses, wild animals, and magic<sup>49</sup>. In the mountain territories of Bukovyna "alive" fire was made during the first cattle driving to the pastures. The branches of Scotch pine and fir trees were put in this fire and sheep were driven through its smoke. Villagers believed that their cattle would be protected from any danger throughout the year<sup>50</sup>. It should be pointed out that in Bukovyna on the St. George Day and on Easter day "alive" fire was made not only in the households, but also in the sheep-folds<sup>51</sup>. As usual before sheep coming into the fence of sheep-fold two "alive" fires were made and sheep were driven through their fire for first milking to make them protected from wild animals and evil magic<sup>52</sup>.

Fire was widely used in Yuriy's rites in the Hutsul villages of Bukovyna as well, where cattle were driven through the smoke of the fire and all present were jumping over the fire<sup>53</sup>. R. Kaindl also

wrote about fire usage during St. Yuriy Day in Bukovynian Hutsul Land: “On the eve of St. George Day a great fire was made in front of the house. They burnt garbage, litter collected in the household during winter”<sup>54</sup>. The fire was made to protect domestic animals during cattle season.

The practice of making magic signs-crosses was also observed in Bukovyna. In particular, on St. Andrew and St. George Days villagers made the so-called “spreads” from garlic, birds’ excrement and black oil and used them for painting some sacred limits (door, windows and gate) in the shape of signs-crosses and also made signs on cattle to protect them from evil spirits and wild animals<sup>55</sup>.

The widespread rite to protect sheep from magic was “surmlinnia” (playing a special trumpet). Some fellows and shepherds were playing trembitas (special trumpets) believing that while you were laying no evil spirits could take milk from sheep. To make an effect stronger, masters were applying garlic on the door of sheep-fold. Garlic was blessed together with Easter bread on the Easter day<sup>56</sup>. In the village of Medeyu (southern part of Bukovyna) masters put pieces of turf on roofs, gates, under the buckets for milk, vessels for making curds. It was being done for increasing offspring of cattle and milk yield. For this very purpose they also used pieces of turf and willow branches in the Ukrainian villages of Bukovyna and Bukovynian Hutsul Land during St. Yuriy celebrations<sup>57</sup>. In Bukovynians’ opinion turf and willow of St. George Day had the protective force. Witches, who were taking milk according to Bukovynian Romanians beliefs, were afraid of turf and couldn’t do any harm next cattle year.

We should also single out such an antidemonic rite against witches and other evil spirits as making a spread or sheep lard on the reverse side of a chair or a board by mistresses-sheep owners in the afternoon on the eve of St. George Day. The spread was sent to shepherds. They applied it on sheep to prevent witches and wizards from taking milk<sup>58</sup>. Hence we could state that Bukovynian Romanians had the whole complex of preventive actions and measures directing at neutralizing evil spirits’ magic.

The cycle of cattle-farm workers holidays, reflecting the core of fighting for existence, played an important role in the life of cattle-farm workers and shepherds, but its ritual shaping and essence part have been preserved partly at present, though most of them has lost their original magic meaning. This calendar covering the whole calendar year reacted to seasonal changes in the life of wolves and bears, periods of evil spirits acting as well as some peculiarities of sheep, goats and other cattle breeding and pasturing. The research of the given calendar allows establishing pantheon of patrons of cattle-farm workers and cattle for Bukovynian Romanians as well as the year cycle of cattle-farm workers’ holidays.

The basis of the Eastern Romans’ (Bykovynian Romanians are included) agricultural and cattle-farm workers’ calendars were established in pre-Christian times in the process of interrelation between a man and nature, based on the astronomical, meteorological and other observations passing from one generation to another one. Given calendars expressed the concept of ploughman’s and cattle-farm worker’s outlooks, the system of their beliefs in the agricultural sphere, attempts to interact with annual phenomena of the agrarian cycle, co-existence with other cycles of the folk calendar holidays.

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