
WEDDING TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS OF THE AROMANIANS OF DOBROGEA

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Abstract: *TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS ARE A SET OF CONCEPTIONS, TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS THAT REMAIN THROUGHOUT HISTORY WITHIN BOTH SOCIAL AND NATIONAL GROUPS AND THAT ARE TRANSMITTED BY WORD OF MOUTH FROM FATHER TO SON, CONSTITUTING FOR EACH SOCIAL GROUP ITS SPECIFIC FEATURE. EACH HABIT PRESENTS VALUABLE CHARGES AND DEEP MEANINGS REGARDING BOTH HUMAN LIFE AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE AND THE SURROUNDING WORLD.*

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INTRODUCTION

Depending on the geographical area of the country, we encounter a multitude of wedding customs, traditions and superstitions that are held especially for the luck and success of the road that the newlyweds begin to travel together. In other words, these wedding customs, traditions and superstitions mainly refer to the smooth running of the life of the newlyweds, abundance, good cheer, understanding and luck.

MAIN TEXT

Wedding or marriage is the second biggest event in human life, after birth. In the popular view, the wedding or marriage is understood as a transition to another stage of life, a stage that marks the entry of young people into social life, among people.

An Aromanian wedding involves a lot of pomp and gaiety, and wedding traditions and customs were and will be indispensable. On the other hand, they also have the role of amusing both the bride and groom. Most Aromanian wedding customs have been passed down from generation to generation, so some of them are very old.



In the old days, the most beautiful weddings of the Aromanians were certainly held in the villages. There, even in our times, traditions and customs compete in importance, and the streets of the villages resound with gaiety and good cheer. The atmosphere is authentic through play, song, chatter, but also the indispensable traditional practices.

Among the Aromanians, like all peoples, the most important traditions are those related to the main events in a person's life, namely baptism, wedding and funeral. The Aromanian wedding takes place with great pomp, marking the transition to life as a couple and the moment of responsibility for young people. Practically, until the moment of marriage, the young man participates in an initiatory journey that prepares him for founding a family. The traditions and customs related to this event highlight the joy of forming a new family and have the role of blessing the couple's journey in life.

George Marcu states that vis-a-vis the customs related to the engagement, they are similar in most Aromanians, being practiced with more interest by the villagers and villagers. The folklorist tells us that "one of the main conditions ... is the moral-social dress of the two young people and their families". The girl is married, negotiations are held with the girl's parents, by the boy's friends and relatives in case of engagement, and for the wedding the boy's parents will even go to ask for the girl. Upon acceptance, the girl receives the "sem n'icu" (small sign), represented by an object made of a precious metal attached to a multi-colored cloth. The participants in this custom are few, only close family members of the two young people taking part. When the girl's request is formalized, a proper ceremony is held at the girl's home, during which the girl will receive the "big sign" from her future in-laws (jewellery, rings, gifts for the girl's parents), and in this context the future custodians shake hands, congratulate and hug each other. After all this there is a party during which specific songs are sung and danced.

After the engagement, it is customary for both families, relatives and relatives to go home to congratulate them "pi urari". On the occasion of the religious holidays before the wedding date, the boy's close relatives usually visit the "Jesuit" to get to know each other. On this occasion the betrothed receives gifts and many sweets as a sign of joy.

At the wedding, both families prepare their event. The dowry is arranged at the girl's home and relatives are expected on Friday evening. The mother-in-law, one Sunday before the wedding, invites the "sisters" the bridesmaids to the wedding with a red apple in which she stuck a coin. Surats are close relatives of the bride and are odd in number. On Saturday evening at the groom's house the customs are performed. The "aprnidu aluatlu" surats are sung during which all the participants throw a penny into the bowl of flour. The money is divided between smiles. Next comes the *furtati*, or knights of honor, to shave the groom. During this time they sing, after which money from the participants of the event is placed in the towel. The great mother-in-law has prepared the beautifully decorated white cloth and a stick with the sign of the cross on the top. The big nose sews the bottle and then puts three apples on top of it. From that moment the godfather presides over the wedding. Certain specific songs are sung. The godfather is brought to the groom's house with a procession led by the groom, knights of honor and music. Next is the meal and the party.

On Sunday morning, the procession that goes to the bride's house is prepared to be brought to the groom's house. The godfather is brought with a procession and music and starts for the bride's house. The Cossacks, arriving at the bride, are greeted by the bride and one by one they are invited into the house and she kisses the hands of the elderly and receives a penny. The groom and groomsmen are seated separately at a table near the entrance. At that table are placed a cake with a piece of raw meat "păltare", sweet rice with raisins, many sweets and "yrambolui pie", a pie made especially for the groom. The mother-in-law puts a metal spoon on the chest of the groom and the groomsmen next to the flower. All this time at the table where the in-laws and godfathers are sitting, they sing.



After that, the little mother-in-law places at their table a bottle of strength beautifully decorated with flowers and bows next to another equally beautifully decorated bottle of strength brought by the big mother-in-law. From them it is poured into two new cups, drinks are exchanged and these cups are drunk by the two father-in-laws with crossed arms. Before, everyone faces the east and makes the sign of the cross. After that, the great father-in-law takes out the "arâvoana" which is also a penny or a gem made of precious metals sewn onto a handkerchief folded in four. It is received by the girl's father, he gently touches the chin and forehead, the same gesture is done by a few more people, after which the little mother-in-law takes it and usually puts it around the bride's neck. After the meal is served, the bride is brought to sit next to the groom and the hora begins.

But the godfather may have a surprise. It is customary for a child of the bride's relatives to steal the hlambura and hide it. The wedding is impossible without a wedding ceremony, that's why the godfather asks for it by paying a negotiated sum of money in exchange for it. The Cossacks came prepared to take the dowry as well. The big father-in-law has to pay a little boy who symbolically objects. A big party is held and the bride plays in the lead followed by her family and close relatives. After that, the godfather enters the stage and the groomsmen together with the bride's relatives and the choir continues for a few rounds.

After that the bride is taken into the house, as is the groom who is always accompanied by two knights of honor. The "hirtuseare" takes place, it is an emotional moment for the bride's family, the parents and close relatives take turns saying goodbye to the bride and entrusting her to the groom. Mother-in-law and aunts give gifts to the son-in-law, usually a towel. Farewell songs are sung. When she leaves her parents' house, the bride makes the cross three times facing the east, she is accompanied by two young people, brothers, cousins, and the mother-in-law puts a gift on their shoulders. The bride steps out of the house with her right foot. The bride is taken to the groom, who is ready to leave.

The little mother-in-law takes care to pour water before the bride and after, on the road that crosses it until the exit from the parental yard. This constitutes a purification ritual of the new path that the bride treads in life with the groom. It is customary for a group of young people to stand in the way of the groom. He pays, and then I can go to the church for the religious wedding. The bride is taken to the groom's house and is awaited with much love. A white woolen fabric is placed over the threshold. At the entrance, the first to arrive at the groom's house take from the previously prepared coil, over which there is a white wool caer from which they tear off a little and put it on the ear.

The first thing the bride does when she enters the groom's court is to kiss a little boy. After that, he throws over his head, a red apple with a penny stuck in it, whoever catches it cuts it into slices and distributes it to the people around. At the threshold of the house stands the great mother-in-law who is ready to receive the bride and groom. She must have something white on her head, she has prepared a little lard, two loaves of bread, a cup of water and a large white towel. The bride, after making the sign of the cross three times, also makes the sign of the cross with lard on the door frame. The mother-in-law puts the two loaves of bread on each side, gives her the cup of water in her right hand and wraps the two bride and groom with the towel and at the same time pulls them both over the threshold, stepping right. In the groom's house, the bride is always accompanied by an aunt who has sweets with her. These are given by the bride to the groom's aunts. The party that follows is started by the godfather and all the participants sing and dance until dawn.

On Monday morning, the bride pours water for those in the house to wash their faces. They are preparing for the visit of the godmothers and buygeadz (bride's relatives). The godfather and the knights of honor bring sweets and serve them to those present. The table is set and there is a party. In the evening, the bride goes to the river. A purification ritual takes place this time by the two newlyweds. The groom fills a cup of water from a bucket and gives it to the bride and she pours it. This is done three times, after which the bride fills the cup three more times and gives it to the groom



to pour. Around them are those close to them and some try to sprinkle the groom with water from the bucket.

CONCLUSION

The wedding ends after the godfather removes the wine bottle, hands the cloth over to the mother-in-law and the three apples on the wine bottle are cut and distributed to those present. Two small pieces are cut from the lower part of the tail of the chlambura by the groom. With the remaining one, he pretends to hit the bride, thus trying to have his authority recognized. The remaining piece is kept in the house. In the old days it was used as a fork for spinning wool. The wedding ends with great joy and fulfillment, the newlyweds start together in life on the same path.



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