

THE HUTSUL ETHNICITY (ETHNIC GROUP WITH MEDIEVAL ORIGINS) IN THE ROMANIAN SPACE. THE TRANSFER OF A HUTSUL HOUSEHOLD IN THE NATIONAL VILLAGE MUSEUM

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Abstract: Along with the ethnographic natives, the attention of the Village Museum in Bucharest was focused, from the outset, on minority representation in the Romanian space, with their traits of life and the evolution of their material culture, spiritual experiences and last, but not least, with links regarding mutual cultural connections with the native population and other inhabitant minorities. Although a modest share and a hard custom culture, Guzuls' ethnicity is real from a historical and folkloric point of view that could not be ignored by specialized museums and research institutes in history. The motivation for this research has been undertaken in Northern Moldavia, an area where the minority has been most present, the results of this research can be pursued today in exhibitions open in our museum and in specialized publications.

Keywords: minority, Guzuls, vernacular architecture, ethnography, "strengthened detour", customs, the National Village Museum.

Following the expansion project of the National Village Museum, started in 2006, the South of the Open Air Exhibition has been enriched with valuable monuments, mirroring development indicatives of Romanian traditional architecture.

Among other objectives included in the cultural recovery plan for the sector, there is the aim of arranging a "minorities' alley" – a projection of the ethnocultural landscape of the Carpathian-Danubian-Pontic space. Along with the minorities present within the mentioned geographical limits, there is a modest share of the Guzul¹ ethnicity which, along with the Romanian one and other inhabiting nationalities (German, Hungarian, Hebrew, Ruthenians,

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¹ Austrian statistics from the late 19th century indicated some 25,000 Guzuls mixed with Ukrainian population (see Mircea Grigoroviță, *Din istoria colonizării Bucovinei*, București, 1996, p.37.). A census in 1930, conducted in Breaza Commune, records one Guzul (see Mihail Camilar, Village card). It is possible, however, that among the 946 Ukrainians recorded during the same census, many Guzuls can be found. Overall, in 2002, a new census identifies approx. 17,000 Guzuls declared either Ukrainians or Romanians.

Poles, Armenians), coexist in the areas of Bucovina and Maramureș, and which historiographically has, not without apprehension, a Slavic origin; Bukovina charters calls the Guzuls “Russians”, assigning them this national consciousness. When they declare their Slavic affiliation, are they clearly denying another origin, or they just do it because this is how they were born, this is how they have known their parents and relatives who, during the Habsburg administration (19th century), used the Ukrainian language as the official language in the Province? The Ukrainian language taught in schools could, of course, with the implementation of the Slavic civilization, later constitute its own ethnic support. The few Guzuls found in the studied area have Slavic features, this seems to be confusing for the local authorities regarding their historical origin, this idea is supported by anthropological studies like the one conducted in 1904 by J. Weisbach, I. Kopernicki and Fedir Vovk, which underlines that the Guzuls are in stark contrast to the Slavic race, having blackish facial skin, dark hair and eyes of the same colour with the hair².

About the ancient Guzuls, there are other opinions, according to which they are the descendants of the Vandals, the Alans (or Alani) and even the Slavic Dacians. Ioan Nistor considers them Ruthenians who went from Pocutia to Moldavia, since they settled here speaking an Ukrainian dialect called Malorus³. On their Cuman origin, historians have focused such as Kochkov N., E. Kaluzneacki or Em. Grigorovitză⁴, the Carps also being a lineage from which the Guzuls could originate; this theory is supported by onomastics, by the frequency of the names Carp, Karpiuk or Karpov found among Guzuls. From the Carps, as allies of the Goths (Gutan, Gutul – Hutan, Guzuls), to the Dacians who borrowed the name to the “Goths”, there was only a step to attribute a Romanian affiliation to this ethnicity. On the same Getic-Dacian basis, the hypothesis regarding the kinship of Guzuls and Uții was built, referring to the old settlement Utidava from Transylvania, as the geographer Ptolemy recorded in his writings.

These judgments generally reflect anthropological and narrative research without having anything in common with the written information, especially related to genealogy and linguistic⁵ sources that can, if not fully explain the problem, at least eliminate certain assumptions in analogy to biological features. Of course, in light of the recent papers published in

² Ioan Rebușapcă, *Limba Huțulilor din Bucovina*, in *Pagini din Istoria și Cultura Bucovinei. Huțulii o minoritate din Bucovina*, Suceava, p.57.

³ Ion Nistor, *Românii și rutenii în Bucovina*, București, 1915, pp.30 și urm.

⁴ Emanuil Grigorovitză, *Huțanii Carpaților*, in „Deșteptarea“, nr. 69, 70, 1902, p.3.

⁵ Historians such as A. Ficker, I. Nistor, R. F. Kaindl, J. Janow and others have professionally approached the study of the Hutsul ethnicity origin, insisting on the report of unit, features and linguistic peculiarities.

ethnography, one may consider it more of a speculative than an analytical approach. We will do a speculative exercise, following this minority's lineage up to one of the most aggressive Asian nomadic populations.

For example, during the Mongol war journey through Europe, after the great battle of Legnica, in April 1241, the Polish Silesia became the space that hosted the Mongolian rear guard after leaving the Polish territory, subsequently Pocutia and Galicia became penetration areas of the "undefeated" in Bucovina Mountains after the Polish incursions in Moldavia, started by King John III Sobieski at the end of the 17th century. However, if we accept the origin of Asian Guzuls and their association with the Mongols, the question which arises is this: why did they not settle in areas in Eastern Moldavia, where the presence of the Mongolians is even earlier, as documents mention them as overlords of the South-East of Moldavia until the late 14th century⁶? Also, a hasty and easy to follow judgment can also be influenced by the common features related to the main occupations of the subjects (the Guzuls and the Mongols too were great horse breeders and the horse breed whose genetics they perpetuated can be of Mongolian legacy, the Guzul breed being a small, robust and highly resistant one to environmental conditions and food), as well as the specific habits of the Nomadic populations that are shown in the frequent Guzul conflicts with the owners of land they illegally occupied. But these are only hypotheses that cannot serve as historical support, both in terms of documentary and analysis, as professional rigor is preventing us to treat them as facts; however, they may be admitted if their presumptive nature is mentioned, and they may constitute landmarks for the profound research of this phenomenon.

As for the theories which related the Guzuls with the other migratory tribes, namely the Vandals and the Alans, they can be easily countered by the historical documents that indicate completely different integrating areas for these Germanic and Iranian tribes⁷. It seems that the inclusion in the group of Slavic languages prevails in most specialists' opinions, especially in the conditions of the subordination of the considerations that converge to the idea of Slavonic ethnic self-identification, supported by certain economic or political aspects. We shall merely join the expositions that designate them as coming from the mass of several ethnic groups, but refraining, without

⁶ See Victor Spinei, *Moldova în secolele XI-XIV*, București, 1982, pp. 326-328.

⁷ Although, after the 5th century, the Alans were merged in the mass of the Germanic conquerors, their ethnic origin was very different from that of European migrants. See reference works of historians Lucien Musset, *Invaziile. Valurile germanice*, trad. Ecaterina Lung, București, 2002; Pierre Riché, Philippe Le Maitre, *Invaziile barbare*, trad. Ecaterina Lung, București, 2000; Félix Martroye, *Genséric, la conquête vandale et la destruction de l'Empire d'Occident*, Paris, 1907 – regarding the migrations of Germanic and steppe tribes in the first millennium of the Christian era.

scientific certainty, from bringing them closer, by their features, to Romanians or other people, as the same research does.

We have to admit, however, that we do not intend to solve the problem of this minority's identity or of the causes of its immigration on this side of Northern Romanian space boundaries⁸ (although the case analysis represents an important cultural contribution to the awareness of an unchallengeable ethnic alterity), but only to draw the attention on the tools used by those who write ethnographic monographs; not within this presentation which, moreover, aims to identify Guzul's architectural specificity and its representation in the Village Museum.

The fact is that they also live in our country, in some places in Maramureș (Bistra, Repedea, Vișu de Sus, Ruscova, Rona de Sus, etc.) and Bucovina (certified here since the 18th century⁹ - Brodina, Cârlibaba, Moldova-Sulița, Breaza, Izvoarele Sucevei, Vatra Moldoviței, etc.), areas dominated by mountains and forested slopes. Many of the historical writings record them spreading within Bucovina mountains, deforesting and clearing places where they were to settle, often entering disputes with monasteries or with the lord whose lands they occupied¹⁰. Their migration to Moldavia is connected to the whereabouts of some tasks more accessible here than in Galicia, the Polish historian Jozef Buszko¹¹ indicating a ratio of at least 1 to 4 between Galicia and Bukovina, in relation to the obligations towards landowner subjugated peasants.

The relations between the natives and most of the minorities present in the Romanian space can be defined as symbiotic. But ethnological research has established relationships which rather reflect tensions and mutual distrust between Romanian and the ethnic Guzuls in the first period after their establishment in Bucovina. Without generalizing, of course, the determination with which the Guzuls avoided to settle down in crowded villages, preferring the highlands, confirms, to some extent, an orientation outside the collective concerns. Moreover, their main economic activities - cattle and horse breeding - were easier to place on hillsides and along tributaries of large rivers. Endogamy is another practice that supports the

⁸ See in this regard: Nistor Ion, *Românii și rutenii din Bucovina*, București, 1915; Dumitru Rusan, Marcel Zahaniciuc, *Zona etnografică Câmpulung Moldovenesc*, Câmpulung Moldovenesc, 1996; Elnora Cuddeback Folkmar, Daniel Folkmar, *Dicționar de rase sau popoare*, trad. Marian C. Ghilea, 1911 etc.

⁹ Ioan Iosep, *Contribuții istorico-geografice privind evoluția așezărilor omenesti din Obcinile Bucovinei*, in Yearbook of the National Museum of Bucovina, Suceava, 1993, p.221.

¹⁰ George Bogdan-Duică, *Bucovina - Notițe politice asupra situației*, Sibiu, 1895, p.147.

¹¹ See in *Galiția, 1859-1914*, Varșovia, 1989.

social seclusion of the Guzuls in Bucovina, but not a definitive one, as this usage was also outlined within other minorities.

In the context of quasi-general disappearance of the Hutan communities, the conservation of the material and spiritual values of this minority has become a priority. Consequently, a team of curators from the National Village Museum¹² undertook a research in 2010 in the north of Moldavia, to identify and purchase a household and its related inventory to represent the minority in our museum. The studied space included the ethnographic area Câmpulung Moldovenesc, especially the geographical space between Obcina Mestecăniș and Obcina Feredeului, obține (high hills) that frame the Moldova river, on the banks of which the areas called Pojorâta, Fundu Moldovei, Breaza, Moldova-Sulița and Izvoarele Sucevei were developed.

Two types of Hutan traditional households were found in the studied area: the farm with double yard, specific to the villages located along the valleys, where the habitable area is separated through a fence from the economic zone composed of a stable, hay stacks, henhouses, the cart and the annex with agricultural tools, and the household with "reinforced yard" specific to the remote areas of the mountain peaks, away from centre of the village. This latter type of household reflects an organization that seeks to reflect the everyday needs, oriented according to access roads (where they exist), the source of water or the cardinal¹³ points. However, it is difficult to fit the Hutsul architecture in a special or unitary note. In our opinion, it has not inherited, but it has borrowed (or adapted) the building systems encountered in the settling areas of this ethnicity constituting an archetype that has guided the Guzuls' architectural model. The horizontal crowns model, the usage of "German" joints for the wall beams, the covering made of shingles, the transition from single cell house to houses with two rooms and a stoop disposed on the front side are just some of the elements that reflect the Guzul structural harmony, also present in the artistic projection from the rest of Bucovina, on the antithetical pole being the "defensive" character of the Hutsul households, closed with a "yard" whose form is most often irregular. This type of architecture, adopted since the establishment of Guzuls minority in this area, has not much changed nowadays; changes are

¹² The team was composed of Ala Movileanu and Constantin Pătrașcu; with the same occasion the household that was subsequently transferred to the museum was identified (research results were published in the Bulletin Monuments Commission, no.1-2 / 2011, art. *Huțulii și gospodăria cu ocol întărit*); in order to identify the household inventory and to dismount the household, the museographers Peter Terescenco, Florian Dumitrache and the architect Nanu Cristian joined the team.

¹³ Mihail Camilar, Maria Camilar, *Contribuții la cunoașterea gospodăriei tradiționale huțânești din Bucovina*, in "Studii și materiale" XXVIII, Ethnography, Folk Art, Vol. 2, 2005, pp.142-144.

noticed, as I mentioned, just in terms of housing and the arrangement of the outbuildings on the farm, a natural evolution in fact, found in all Romanian rural area.

Yet, we cannot talk of too many similarities when we enter this ethnic group's house. The costumes or fabrics that organize the interior are characterized by vegetable and floral decorations, lacking the regularity and symmetry specific to the Romanians from Bukovina and beyond. Even in terms of colour there are differences; while black and white dominate the Moldavian ornamental compositions (aspect emphasized after the First World War, many women being in mourning for the husbands lost on the front), the Guzuls' costume is distinguished by the usage of tones of two primary colours (red and yellow) and a secondary (orange), but also by certain symbols, during the holidays, designed to highlight the social position of the wearer¹⁴. For example, the Hatchet or "Toporekul" is the weapon to which were entitled only the wealthy who could pay 5 crowns to the Austro-Hungarian administration for this festive privilege. Gica Ilieși tells us that the Hatchet (Baltagul) is considered the ethnic brand of Guzuls¹⁵. Also the Guzuls competed to decorate the apparent wood by notching, pyrographing or fretting.

The arrangement of the interior Guzul space does not essentially differ from the Romanian one: banks with backrest and bedding stuck to the wall, dowry with "hump" (found in the traditional Romanian houses of the Arad area), decorative and used ceramic placed in wooden dish shelves, utensils used in domestic textile industry, textiles and towels are placed according to their natural functionality in the house. As Michael Camilar¹⁶ observed, as a distinct note from Romanian houses interior, we find in our research the lack of iconographic inventory, even though this minority shares the same faith with the natives. But a presence almost without exception in Guzuls family was the gun powder horn ("poroșnețul"), the Guzuls being skilled hunters, a piece of exceptional artistic value, a proof today to be seen in our museum (see photo 1).

Based on the findings from the field, the research stopped on a construction from the Breaza Commune, Porcescu Village, Suceava County. It is a farm built in the first half of the 20th century (in the 30s) by some Procopiuc Ion, a Guzul ethnic, located at an altitude of about 1000 m, that can be accessed from the valley of Tătărcuța, a stream crossed by a forest road.

¹⁴ Idem, *Etnodemografie și etnocivilizație huțulă pe cursul superior al Sucevei (XVIII-XX)*, p.9.

¹⁵ In *Huțulii în Bucovina*, Bucovina, 2000, p.36.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

The household is made of a house, a stable and two annexes that include shelters for wood arranged on both sides of the extension of the western wall of the house. The house, built of softwood (pine and spruce), is built on a low pedestal, made of river rocks from the stream beds in the area, that protects the walls from moisture. The walls are made of beams carved on both sides, which reinforces our belief that the house's exterior was prepared from the outset to be plastered (see photo 2). I have mentioned this because originally, in an archaic form, the wall beams were hewn only on one side (exposed to the interior), the outer insulation being obtained by covering the spaces between beams with dried moss.

The house plan has three rooms (two rooms and a pantry) and a partial porch, disposed next to the living room (see photo 3). This last room is called "hata" by the Guzuls and is the space for the entire household chores, bedroom, kitchen, work room (see photo 4). The functions of the clean room, or "veleka hata", are reduced to hosting guests and, where appropriate, suitors (see photo 5). The porch accommodates the harness and a few tools that the host wanted near hand, while the pantry ("clich") is the storage space for clothes and food. The large stove with stovetop and "rulă"¹⁷ from the kitchen and the stove without stovetop from the guest room - added to the same wall and communicating with a unique chimney smoke – are the home heating systems.

The house walls were plastered on a network of obliquely arranged slats, with a mixture made of sand and lime, an operation that, besides obtaining better insulation against cold winds of winter, imprints the house an aesthetically pleasing aspect. Only the back of the house retains the appearance of wood, the beams being lined with thin planks, vertically arranged. The figurative patterns fretted at the top of the wooden skeleton enclosing the porch and the porch parapet harmoniously complement the exterior volumes of the house. After plastering, the facades are adorned with white plaster reliefs, as one can see today at the ethnographic museum in Bucharest (see photo 6).

The hipped roof structure, with an abrupt steep, adapted to an area with frequent rain and snow, is covered with shingle.

The stable, built in *Blockbau* technique with beams about 14 m long, is divided into two spaces, with numerous stalls, arranged mostly along the rear wall, and an attic over the entire surface for keeping the hay. On the front, there is an opening in the roof through which the hay was thrown in the attic. Although the sheepfold is a less common annex to the Guzuls household, given that pastoralism was not a traditional activity to the Guzuls, the Breaza household has two annexes attached to the side walls that serve as

¹⁷ Regionalism designating a heating oven.

shelters for sheep, the eastern¹⁸ one having a door that connects the paddock behind the stable.

The unit was not closed through the walls of the buildings that made it up, the fencing being completed by a "zaplaz", forming so-called "reinforced yard" specific for the households isolated on mountain slopes. The entrance in the household is through a gate with three pillars, of rectangular cross-section, joined at the top by a small ridged roof structure covered with shingle. The gate does not have decorative elements, as in the traditional Romanian architecture, especially in the typical households from the conglomerate villages¹⁹. In front of the house, there is a closed fountain, built on several river slabs with a wooden rim, four rectangular section pillars and vertical lathing between the rim and the shingled roof.

The dismantling of the household was done in adverse weather conditions, the blizzard making difficult to mark, record and dismantle the wooden elements (see photo 7). The actual dismounting of the house and the annexes began only after the structural elements of the constructions (beams, soles, windows, doors, framing, flooring, etc.) were successively marked in order to remount them in the same position in the new location. Then the removal of the shingle, the dismounting of the roofs, ceilings and beams that made up the walls of the household were the coordinating steps of the above mentioned action (see photo 8, 9). The shingle roof, uncollectible material, was dismounted relatively smoothly, the removal of the remaining elements being made with difficulty because of the tension created by the care with which they had to be dismounted, but not damaged.

Without going into the technical details of this action, we only note that the household was lowered down the mountain with a horse-drawn sleigh (see photo 10), loaded in heavy machinery and then successfully transferred and remounted in the museum, the only architectural element that reminds of a household on the hill of Răchitiș being the "faiervant" (the wall added to the stove) that still reigns in mid debris of a house that (see photo 11), remounted in the Village Museum, will mirror across generations the presence of a minority architectural ensemble in the Romanian space.

¹⁸ We mention that the cardinal points above correspond to the construction in the field, not to the relocated position in the museum's open-air exhibition.

¹⁹ The decorative symbols present on the gate posts and not only, who once had precise meanings, lost their semiotic value in the 20th century, becoming simple aesthetic motifs, aesthetics which has no longer priority on the mountaintop.

The Hutsul Ethnicity (Ethnic Group with Medieval Origins) in the Romanian Space. The transfer of a Hutsul Household in the National Village Museum

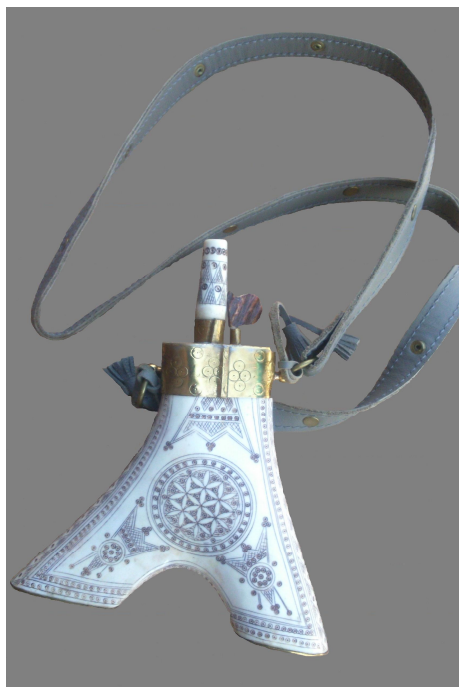


Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8

The Hutsul Ethnicity (Ethnic Group with Medieval Origins) in the Romanian Space. The transfer of a Hutsul Household in the National Village Museum



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11

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