

ȘTEFAN MARIȘ, România

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Symbolic Elements in the Funerary Rituals in Cupșeni (Maramureș County)

This study is dedicated to an analysis of a few symbolic elements I have identified within the funerary ritual, which is still enacted in the village Cupșeni, the Maramureș County. As well as in other areas, the sequencing of the ritual comprises several significant moments, starting with the separation of the soul from the world of the living, and ending with its reintegration with the world of the forefathers.

The magic-ritualistic inventory is much focussed on, which can be identified in the coffin, beside the corpse, and noticing that all the objects that are signalled to appear there are *seven*: *seven* threads of cotton that are necessary for the realization of the light of the body, *seven* "corners" of the ritualistic bread, *seven* coins, *seven* grains of incense, etc.

Number *seven* also appears during another ritualistic sequence of the funerary ceremony: the road from the dead person's house to the cemetery. On this way they read *seven* Evangelic texts, and *seven* children are give *seven* special bread loafs which have money inside.

In such a community, as the one in Cupșeni, we can speak about a practice of the *peasant's Christianity*, which is especially performed, as they are less capable of explaining things in discourse.

As a conclusion, we may state that in order to approach culture through the perspective of rituals and symbols that are connected to the idea of death, one must design an image that might function as a real 'grid' according to which one might decipher the profound significations of a civilization. In our case, these significations belong to a rural civilization, to the peasant's culture.