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**Cuvinte cheie:** comunicare rituală, bocet, ceremonialul funebru, secvențe ritmice

### **Bocetul: Expresivitate și comunicare rituală**

#### **Rezumat**

Comunicarea rituală la nivelul unui grup sau, în cazul general, la nivelul unei comunități bine definite se poate realiza prin cuvânt, gest și acțiune. Nu trebuie însă să tragem concluzia că prin comunicare vom înțelege numai cuvânt, deoarece există anumite ritualuri ce au drept interdicție de bază chiar folosirea cuvântului. În lucrarea de față vom lua în discuție o formă de comunicare rituală ce utilizează cuvântul, și anume ne vom îndrepta atenția asupra bocetelor ce sunt o componentă importantă în cadrul ceremonialului funebru performat în Maramureș. Bocetele transmit suferința, furia și plânsul într-o formă ritualizată a unor secvențe ritmice, sincronizând structuri verbale complexe, cu gesturi specifice. Focalizându-ne atenția pe aceste structuri verbale complexe, scopul nostru este de a identifica, din perspectiva stilistică, anumite constante ale exprimării ce pot fi întâlnite în bocetele din Maramureș.

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## **The Funerary Song: Ritual Expression and Communication**

### **Summary**

Ritual communication in a group, or, generally, at the level of a well-defined community is realized through words, gestures and action. Nevertheless, we should not draw the conclusion that by communication we will just mean words, as there are certain rituals which have as main interdiction the very use of words. This paper will take into consideration a form of ritual communication that uses word, that is, we will specifically deal with the funerary songs, which are an important component of the funerary ceremonial performed in Maramureş county. Funerary songs transmit suffering, anger and crying in the ritualistic form of a series of rhythmical sequences, thus synchronizing complex verbal structures with specific gestures. Focussing on these complex verbal structures, our goal is to identify, from a stylistic perspective, certain constants of expression which may be encountered in the Maramureş funerary songs.

## The Funerary Song: Ritual Expression and Communication

In the case of archaic communities we have to notice the fact that the rite represented an essential action within the functioning of society, without which no sequence of a member of the group's life could pass by. What is more, absolutely all cultural conceptions referring to the important phases of human life, especially with the first levels of cultural evolution, insist upon the moments which place the individual in direct relation with the group. These moments are, mainly, birth, puberty, marriage and death, all being marked ritualistically by rites of passage. These have the role to mark and fulfil the transition from one level to another. As Van Gennep<sup>2</sup> states, rites of passage have a three-folded structure: separation from the old state, reintegration in the new state, and between these there exists a margin period. The concept of margin is common to all rites of passage, not only to the funerary ones, as any passage is fixed on terminal, mortuary representations. Marginality represents each sequence which determines and finalizes separation.

The interaction of one member of the group with the group he is part of, or of groups amongst themselves, in a ritualistic context, cannot be carried out without communication, no matter the form it may take. We cannot speak about a social contact if the act of communication is absent. This means that the social structuring of communicates cannot be fulfilled without communication, either, and thus, it would be absurd that the ritual context should be an exception; the more so, as this context imposes a modified, special state of mind, which asks for an intense participation of the social actants. Yet, in the religious, thus sacred, context, a ritual communication is established. It can appear under the form of gesture, word, and action at the level of the group, or even at the level of a well-defined community. This does not mean at all that by communication we understand only word, as there are quite a few rituals that have as main interdiction the use of word (for instance such is the moment of the cutting of the fir tree in the case of the funerary ritual, when the use of words is forbidden). In this paper we will shed light to a ritual form of communication which is relevant for the first category, that is, we will refer to funerary songs, which are an important part in the sequences of funerary ceremony performed in Maramureş county.

During our field research, we have come to the conclusion that funerary poetry can still be met quite frequently during the funerary ceremony in this part of Romania, especially in the villages that are part of what is called the Historical Maramureş, or in the Lăpuş County, and less in other areas.

The funerary behaviour of the members of a community contains a series of practices which have as a goal the exorcizing of fear and of the sorrow of the living, having, thus, a clear apotropaic function. By practicing funerary rituals, the emotions are channelled in a circumscribed activity, in which their free expressions play a very important part. Thus, the free expression of emotions is facilitated by funerary songs, these ritualistic forms of crying, which focus the actants' attention, until they are deeply absorbed in the performed act, inducing a state which, in some cases, can appear to be analogous to a trench. This is how a gradual dissipation of emotions takes place, and how they activate a "homeostatic [function] as a biochemical valve of the accumulated tensions".<sup>3</sup>

The ritual and psychological functionality of the funerary song imposes a specific stylistic

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<sup>2</sup> Arnold Van Gennep, *Riturile de trecere*, Editura Polirom, Iaşi, 1996

<sup>3</sup> I. Benga, O Benga, *Ritualul funerar și valențele sale terapeutice*, in the vol. *Cercetarea antropologică în România*, C. Papa, G. Pizza, F. M. Zerilli (Coord.), Editura Clusium, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 169

structure. Many times, after the introductory formulas, the middle ones appear, inserted at the end of each motif, imposing, thus, the appearance of intervals, which are necessary for crying and rhythmical lamenting. There are cases in which within the structure of the funerary songs, they introduce a final formula, but this, in some situations, re-iterates the introductory formula or a contextual one. The formulations at the beginning of the funerary songs, frequently contain the plea that the deceased should rise from his coffin:

Scoală-te, din copârșeu,  
Scoală, că-i de sãmânat grâu,  
Și-ți pune cotu' pe masă  
Și te fă gazdă de casă!

.....  
Scoală, Ștefan, nu dormi,  
C-o vinit pretinii tăi,  
Că ț-o vinit să te vadă,  
Nu le dai scaun să șadă.

Scoală-te, mămuca mea,  
Ian scoală-te și te uită  
La cununa ta cea multă,  
Cum stau rând pă lângă tine (...)  
Ian scoală-te, din sălaș,  
Zină la mine de mas.

Rise from your coffin,  
Rise 'cause there's wheat to seed,  
Put your elbow on the table  
And be the host in your house!

.....  
Get up, Ștefan, and don't sleep,  
Cause your friends have come,  
They have come to see you,  
And you don't give them a seat<sup>4</sup>.

Get up, mommy dear,  
Please get up and look here  
At your plenty a wreaths,  
As they all stay around you (...)  
Come get up from this bed of yours,  
And stay with me, in my house<sup>5</sup>



Înmormântare; foto: Felician Săteanu

<sup>4</sup> *Antologie de folclor din județul Maramureș*, Baia Mare, 1980, p. 224 (D. Pop, 1978, text 361, Băița de sub Codru)

<sup>5</sup> *Antologie.....*, p. 228 (T. Papahagi, 1925, CCCXXV, Săcel)

Other times, these formulas contain the name of the deceased and the way he/she is related to the mourner:

Uă! Tătuică și hăi ta! (Dragomirești)	Oh, my daddy, and hey, dad! (Dragomirești)
Vai, uncheș bunucule (Ungureni)	My good dear uncle (Ungureni)
Vai, bunuc și vai bunuc!	Oh, dear granddad, dear granddad!
Tătuț, te-ai pus în sălaș (Ungureni)	Daddy, you've put yourself in your death bed (Ungureni)
Țucu-te, măicuța mé (Ariniș)	I'll kiss you, my darling mum (Ariniș)
Ștefănuță, fătău meu (Băița de sub Codru)	Ștefănuță. my darling boy (Băița de sub Codru)
O, Ionucă, țucu-te (Vălenii Șomcutei)	Oh, Ionucă, I'd kiss you (Vălenii Șomcutei)

The funerary song is, generally, a monologue, with a specific structure, in which the 1st person alternates with the second and even the third, often. Dialogue is seldom remarked, even if there were certain cases in which, by a coming back in time, the deceased is shown as 'speaking' with those who do not want to take him to the grave:

Ien deschide-ți gurița	Hey, just open your mouth
Și grăie cu careva,	And talk to someone
Grăi batăr cu tătuca,	Talk at least with dad,
Că rău îl doare inima.	Cause his heart hurt badly <sup>6</sup> .

In fact, the dialogue in funerary songs is filled by rhetorical interrogations. The dramatic character of the expressions grows very much when these rhetorical interrogations are accompanied by invocations addressed to the earth, to death, to the moon, or the sun, etc. The invocation of death is often disguised in a kind of scolding it, using a very vehement tone:

Mânțe-te focu moarte,	May you death burn in hell,
Mult ești tu fără dreptate.	Cause you are so unjust <sup>7</sup> .
Focu te bată de moarte,	Burn, you death,
De-aș pune mâna pă tine,	Cause if I could catch you,
N-ai mai omorî pă nime;	You'd never kill anyone;
Te-aș întide-nt-un ocol,	I'd bury you in the yard,
Pă nime să nu omori.	So that you'd never kill again <sup>8</sup> .

One characteristic of the funerary song in Maramureș is represented by the frequency of parallelisms. These are the result of the repeating of some syntactic structures, so that the effect is that of rhythmicity and expressivity. The most oftenly reported are the synonymous parallelisms, integrated in the various sequences of the funerary song, the result being that the tension among the present audience is very much amplified:

<sup>6</sup> *Antologie...*, p. 223 (Iuliana Chindriș, 30, IEUD, 1930)

<sup>7</sup> *Antologie...*, p. 223 (Iuliana Chindriș, 30, IEUD, 1930)

<sup>8</sup> *Antologie...*, (col. Dumitru Iuga, inf. Veronica Pop, Bogdan Vodă)

Gura ta ce(a) graitoare	On your speaking mouth
Pus-ai mare-nchizătoare,	You have placed a great lock
Uă, Gura ta ce(a) desfatată	Oh, your much delighted mouth
Pus-ai cheie și lacată.	You have closed and locked away <sup>9</sup> .

Or, in another funerary song in the same village:

De li-i neagră camașa	If their shirt is black and spoiled
Trimat-o că o-oi spala	Send it here, cause I'll wash it
Cu un pranecuț de brad	With a fir-tree little bat
În lacrimi pân-oi fa vad;	In my tear, till I'll cry a river;
Cu un pranecuț de tisă	With a yew tree little bat
În lacrimi pân-oi fa plisă.	Till I'll make from tear a lake <sup>10</sup> .

The same type of structure appear in another funerary song, in the Codru area, in the case of children who remained orphans:

Pruncii tăi cei mădăriți	Your much loved little children
Mult or umbla năcăjiți,	Will be wandering in despair,
Pruncii tăi cei ninerăți	Your so much loved little children
Mult or umbla supărați.	Will be wandering in sorrow. <sup>11</sup>

The antonymous parallelisms highlight the contrasts within the context of a formulation which contains metaphorical elements:

Țucu-te, pom încărcat,	I'd kiss you, loaded tree
Da tânăr te-ai scuturat!	Whose fruit's been shaken oh, so young!
Țucu-te, floare-nflorită	I'd kiss you flower in blossom
Și de tânără veștejită.	Who's been withered oh, so soon! <sup>12</sup>

Enumeration parallelism can be met in many verses, and they multiply the tension of the expressions. This happens in a funerary song, collected by Tache Papahagi in 1925:

Unde soare șohan nu-i;	Where there's never any sun;
Nici soare, nici răcoare,	Neither sun, and nor cool breath,
Numa-ntunecare mare.	Only a deep and hard bleakness <sup>13</sup>

In almost each sequence of the funerary song, one can identify the repetitions, which are loaded with expressivity, these proving the fact that the impulse of the mourner (conscious or not) is to accentuate her emotions at the departure from the deceased. Every second or third line (even more often in some cases), she uses interjections, some times carrying strident sonorities, other times just whispered, which indicate physical suffering, but also the psychic tension that becomes overwhelming:

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<sup>9</sup> Elisabeta Faiciuc, *Dragomirești între tradiție și modernism*, Editura Limes, Cluj Napoca, 2008, p. 646

<sup>10</sup> E. Faiciuc, *op. cit.*, p. 651

<sup>11</sup> D. Pop, *Folclor din zona Codrului*, Baia Mare, 1978, p. 359 (inf. Florica Dragomir, 66, Urmeniș, 1974)

<sup>12</sup> D. Pop, p. 307

<sup>13</sup> *Antologie de folclor din județul Maramureș*, Baia Mare, 1980, p. 218

Oi! De mine hăi, mamă,  
O, mândră casă ai avut.  
Oi! Și-a-ce nu ți-o plăcut?  
Vai! Ți-ai băgat meșteri din sat,  
Să-ți facă alta de brad,  
Vai! Fără uși fără ferești...

Oh, my goodness, mother dear,  
What a nice house you had.  
Ah, and why didn't you like it and?  
Oh, why did you ask the village craftsmen,  
To build you a fir tree house,  
Oh, without any doors and windows...<sup>14</sup>

In the structure of the Maramureș funerary song, one can frequently meet anaphora as a stylistic device, which means that certain words from the beginning of each line are repeated, as we may see in an example from Dragomirești:

Nici-s mere, nici is nuci,  
Nici nu Ț-or cânta pui de cuci;  
Nici îs mere, nici îs pere,  
Nici Ț-or cânta rândunele.

Neither are they apples, nor walnuts,  
Neither will cuckoo chicken sing for you;  
Neither are the apples, nor pears,  
Neither will sparrows sing for you<sup>15</sup>

Full of dramatic tones, and loaded with metaphorical expressions are the 'sung' funerary songs, which are present at the death of a youth, or a young virgin; in such situations we will talk about a wedding-funeral, and the young dead are presented, metaphorically, as white flowers, indicating the purity of their age, and the colour of their nuptial attire. The funerary ceremony has several elements borrowed from the nuptial ceremony. If the deceased is a lad, he will have a flag with black ribbons, a ornamented traditional hat, and in the funerary procession the flag and the maids of honour will categorically be present. If the deceased is a lassie, she will wear a bride's wreath. Metaphorical expression in the funerary song accentuates the dramatic and tragic tones of the funeral-wedding:

Ștefănucă, Țucu-te,  
Că te-ai născut sâmbăta,  
Te-ai logodit duminica.  
Cu frumoasa carpina,  
Sus în codri născută  
Și p-a ta samă crescută,  
Cu mireasa lutului,  
Din fundu pământului.

Ștefănucă, I'd kiss you  
Cause you were born on Saturday  
You got engaged on a Sunday  
With a beautiful deer-fairy  
Born up in the mountains  
And raised only to get you,  
With the bride of clay,  
Coming from the heart of the earth<sup>16</sup>.

The same metaphorical expression we will identify in another funerary song, which has a protagonist a un-wedded girl:

O, Măriucă, Țucu-te,  
Miercuri sar-ai credințat,  
Și de știre nu ne-ai dat,  
Cu ficioru lutului,  
Din fundu pământului.

Oh, Măriucă, my darling girl,  
On Wednesday you got engaged,  
And you didn't let us know,  
With the clay's lad,  
Coming from the bottom of the earth.

<sup>14</sup> Inf. *Buda Maria*, 74 years old, Lăpuș, 2008

<sup>15</sup> E. Faiciuc, p. 649

<sup>16</sup> Dumitru Pop, p. 312 (inf. Cornelia Brândușe, 41, Băița de sub Codru, 1974)

O, Măriucă, țucu-te,  
Colacii de la nănași,  
Ți-i țucă păstă sălaş.  
O, unde ți-i mirele,  
Să-ț gătească carăle!

A funerary song dedicated to a young lad, collected in Rogoz, in the Lăpuș county is extremely beautiful and expressive:

Vai, puiuț, dragu tatii,  
Vai, bine te-ai însurat,  
Fată din sat n-ai luat.  
Da din poarta ceriului,  
Pă fata-mpăratului.  
Soarele ți-i nănaș mare  
Și lunița nănașița,  
Găinușa sococița  
Și fuștenii fecioreii  
Și stelile fetile  
Și lucenii gordoneii.

Oh, Măriucă, my darling girl,  
Your godparents' braids,  
Will be spread upon you bed.  
Oh, but where's your groom,  
To prepare your carts!<sup>17</sup>

Oh, my boy, my dear lad,  
Oh, you married really well,  
You didn't take a village lassie  
But one from the heaven's gates  
The king's daughter herself.  
The Sun is your godfather  
And the Moon your godmother  
The Pleiades your cook  
And the constellations  
Your best men  
And the stars  
Your maids  
And daystars  
Your  
Flower children<sup>18</sup>.

The funerary ceremonial was, and still is in some villages in Maramureș, as well as in other traditional communities, a regulated form of accommodation to a life situation that is very traumatic, and which appears in the lives of men, once a member of the group leaves this life. The efficiency of the rite, which is performed in such situations, consists in the presence of certain behavioural and psychological strategies, alongside cognitive ones, directed towards facing the traumatic event. The funerary songs - very important elements in the unfolding of the ritual, come to support and deepen these behavioural strategies, which are, in fact, meant to re-establish the equilibrium of the community, which was seriously damaged, by re-instating the existential order within the group.

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<sup>17</sup> Pop, p. 305 (inf. Maria Vaida, 59, Băsești, 1961)

<sup>18</sup> *Antologie de folclor din județul Maramureș*, Baia Mare, 1980, p. 225 (col. P. Bilțiu, inf. Nistea Ioana, 93, Rogoz, 1979)

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