



# PROCEEDINGS

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**IDENTITY, TRADITION AND CULTURAL INTERFERENCES  
SYMBOLISM OF THE ROMANIAN BLOUSE „IA”**

**3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION**

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## The Romanian Academy in Rome and the historical archive of the L.U.C.E National Institute

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A redoutable instrument of information, communication and mass propaganda of the Mussolini fascist regime, the Istituto Nazionale L.U.C.E (L.U.C.E National Institute) – acronym for L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa; Educational Film Union – was founded by Royal Decree n. 1985 on November 5<sup>th</sup> 1925 as a parastatal body dependent on the Council of Ministers. Based in Rome, this famous Italian public film agency corporation had as its core mission the production and distribution of photo-cinematographic materials for didactic and informative purposes. Today, its rich and diverse patrimonial inheritance, entirely preserved in the Archivio Storico L.U.C.E. (L.U.C.E. Historical Archive), represents an invaluable source of visual evidence that reconstructs the political, socio-economic and cultural context of fascist Italy.

By carefully examining this heterogeneous documentary corpus, relatively little known and studied (especially regarding artistic and cultural initiatives), the present paper identifies and subjects to primary analysis those audiovisual materials that bring to attention the Romanian Academy in Rome during the directorship (1929-1940) of Emil Panaiteescu (1885-1958). The predominant focus is on investigating the communicative purposes and directorial visions used to document the activities of this renowned academic institution, in order to be presented within the “Giornali L.U.C.E.” (L.U.C.E. newsreels).

### Figure/Scheme:



Sequence from *Mostra d'arte all'Accademia di Romania a Valle Giulia*, Giornale L.U.C.E. B 1097, 19.05.1937. @ Archivio Storico L.U.C.E / Digital copy from the Accademia di Romania, Roma.

**Keywords:** The Romanian Academy in Rome; Istituto Nazionale L.U.C.E; Archivio Storico L.U.C.E;

Giornali L.U.C.E; interwar period

## **A contribution to the study of weddings and wedding customs in Kosovo and Metohija in the interwar period**

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Kosovo and Metohija in the interwar period were part of the Yugoslav state. The Serbian and Albanian population made up the majority in this area, which was characterized by traditionalism, national separation, transport disconnection with other parts of the country and insufficient state control. Social life in Kosovo and Metohija has attracted the attention of numerous ethnologists who have collected valuable material on it. Attention was drawn to folk rules - the village community and its role in life, the organization of the family cooperative and life in it, clan and tribal life, artificial kinship (godparents, blood brothers, blood sisters), wedding customs. Ethnologists Vladimir Bovan, Milenko S. Filipović, Grigorije Božović, Vidosava Nikolić-Stojančević, Mitar Vlahović, Milisav Lutovac and others have dealt with the topic of weddings and wedding customs in Kosovo and Metohija. In my paper, I will contribute to the research of customs in marriage as one of the significant customs in the area of Kosovo and Metohija in the interwar period. The wedding was the most complex of all rituals and customs, because it included many elements from folk life, mythological beliefs, superstitions, elements of magic, customary law and elements of oral folk art. Everything at the wedding was determined by a single oral scenario, which had been created for centuries. However, the circumstances in society between the two world wars were not conducive to maintaining customs as they were during the Turkish rule, because society in the cities had no regard for traditional relations. The school, through its teachers and professors, and the church, through the clergy, also acted towards changing customs. However, the population of Kosovo and Metohija lived conservatively, primarily in rural areas, was slow to change, and was preoccupied with a variety of customs and beliefs that persisted until World War II.

**Keywords:** Customs, Family, Kosovo and Metohija, Tradition, Wedding.

## The social expression of popular costume in the vision of Simion Mehedinți

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The 20th century begins under the fervent auspices of the affirmation of nations. For the Romanian nation, the ideological current of the Pasoptist revolution is kept fresh by winning independence on the battlefield and in winding diplomatic agreements and by affirming identity and sovereignty based on the monarchical principle. A constellation of intellectuals supports the path of the Romanian nation towards the perfection of unity within natural borders. Among them, the geographer and sociologist Simion Mehedinți is the personality who touches the sensitive chords of the "Romanian soul" through careful analysis of the rural - urban, respectively national - universal polarities. The folk costume has, in this context, profound identity values. Currently, the identity values remain unchanged, as the distinguished scholar assures us of the perpetuity of the social structure of the family. Yesterday and today, therefore, the folk costume is a living, patrimonial expression, which is part of the national being.

**Keywords:** identity, village, folk costume, tradition, nation

## The role of local public administration in the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage in rural areas

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Intangible cultural heritage represents the expression of a community's identity, reflecting customs, traditions, crafts, social practices, and artistic expressions passed down through generations. In the context of globalization and rural depopulation, local public administration becomes a key actor in preserving and promoting these values. The article analyzes the responsibilities and initiatives of local administration in Romanian rural areas in support of intangible cultural heritage, while also proposing strategic directions to improve these efforts.

Local administrations, as public authorities with competences in the cultural field at the community level, can act as mediators between traditional communities and national or international institutions. Local authorities have the responsibility to identify, support, and valorize the cultural elements specific to their locality.

Local public administration plays a central role in the process of conserving and enhancing intangible cultural heritage in rural areas, being the only institutional structure capable of mobilizing resources, involving the community, and ensuring the sustainability of cultural initiatives. Through well-grounded strategies and active collaboration with local and regional actors, a balance can be achieved between modernization and the preservation of cultural identity.

Organizing exhibitions, parades, craft fairs, or folkloric events that include traditional costumes is an active way in which local authorities can contribute to revitalizing interest in traditional attire and transmitting it to future generations.

Local administrations can collaborate with schools, cultural centers, local museums, and cultural associations to initiate temporary or permanent exhibitions of authentic folk costumes, originating from rural households or private collections.

They can also provide financial or logistical support to artisans who make traditional costumes, by allocating non-refundable funds or offering free spaces to promote traditional products. Additionally, they can facilitate their participation in profile fairs, both at local and national or international levels. In conclusion, local public administrations have both the responsibility and the capacity to become active actors in preserving folk attire as a form of emotional and identity-based heritage, contributing through coherent policies and initiatives to the revitalization and perpetuation of traditional values in rural communities.

**Keywords:** public administration, intangible cultural heritage, cultural identity, tradition preservation, rural areas.

## Şezătoarea (the evening-gathering) as a form of traditional social manifestation

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In Romanian tradition, the evening-sitting - “şezătoare”- is a small gathering specific to the rural environment, which usually takes place on winter evenings. Those who participate in the şezătoare work, sing, tell stories, tell jokes, riddles and play certain social games. The annual cycle of the gathering takes place after the end of agricultural work.

The custom of şezătoare is an old Romanian tradition, with deep roots in the history and culture of our people. Indeed, it is not just a simple gathering, but an expression of the Romanian identity and traditional values. Through the şezătoare, the village people found a way to combine work with good will. At the weaving workshops, women were busy spinning hemp, flax, and wool, and because they worked in a community group, it was done with more pleasure and profit.

If, half a century ago, these customs were sacredly preserved by the elders, today you can hardly find them among the villagers. Only in some houses do older women occasionally take care of the carding and spinning of wool, the weaving of cloth on the loom for shirts, quilts, canvases, rugs, and special blankets and carpets. In the past, several gatherings could be organized in a village, and girls and women were in charge of these evening-sittings. The gatherings were generally for spinning, not for sewing. Here were sewn shirts for the future grooms of that year, as well as shirts for mothers-in-law. However, young girls, in general, sewed less often at these gatherings, they mainly spun. The explanation has to do with the competition between young women regarding the clothes they made for the holidays. Because every girl had to make a new shirt for Easter (since every member of the family had to have a new shirt) she did not want to show it off beforehand. Consequently, the girls did not bring the shirts with them to the şezătoare to work on them there and so be seen by the other girls. They kept it a secret, so as not to have the pattern stolen, because Easter was a kind of fashion parade for the villagers, when the most ingenious patterns on the girls' shirts were proudly displayed.

**Keywords:** “şezătoare”, village, work, shirt

## Ia – the silent alphabet of Romanian tradition and the Authentic Romania Festival born from love of nation, homeland, art and beauty

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Since 2016, the “Authentic Romania” Festival has been organized annually in Hobița, in the commune where Constantin Brâncuși was born. June 24, International Ia Day, is marked annually in Peștișani, through extensive events that gather sparks from the folk treasure trove from all over the country, brought by craftsmen, folk music performers, instrumentalists, creators and keepers of the most valuable elements of Romanian folk culture. The purpose of the “Authentic Romania”-Hobița Festival is to promote the elements inscribed by Romania in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, as a living expression of local communities. Through this festival, we develop and bring back to the light of the present Romanian culture, art and traditional values by creating bridges between the past and the future, between generations, between the public and private sectors, between the national and European dimensions. We want to bring to the forefront the intangible cultural heritage that can support the development of local cultural and creative potential, to share value and creativity among community members and also to ensure the transmission of knowledge across generations. Thus, the voices of the past and present, of the inhabitants and artists, will be valued and appreciated, and creative initiatives will be encouraged on multiple levels of cultural action. Through the organized actions, the "Authentic Romania" Festival supports the process of raising awareness among the younger generation in relation to the specific heritage of the Romanian cultural fund, stimulating interaction between generations and changing mentalities.

**Keywords:** Authentic Romania, Hobița, Brâncuși, traditions, folk costume

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## The romanian blouse – a living symbol of affective memory and community belonging

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The Romanian blouse (*ia*) represents a profound identity marker that goes beyond its aesthetic and clothing function, becoming an emotional bond between generations, spaces, and times. In the current context of globalization and migration, the folk costume becomes a catalyst for reconnecting with one's roots, facilitating the symbolic reconstruction of the native space and the revitalization of rural values. This article analyzes the *ia* as an element of affective heritage, reflecting on how it revives the rural childhood, affirms community belonging, and redefines identity within the contemporary imagination.

The Romanian *ia*, this piece of textile heritage, plays an essential role in the revaluation of rural life and ethnocultural identity. Through childhood remembrance and the act of wearing an *ie*, the individual symbolically reconstructs the native village and the connection to the authentic values of the past.

The *ia* thus becomes a bridge between personal and collective memory. For many who have migrated to big cities or abroad, wearing an *ie* is not merely an aesthetic or festive gesture, but a form of identity reaffirmation, an emotional connection to their origin. In this context, the *ia* acts as a living symbol, capable of bringing back into the present the enduring values of the community: solidarity, simplicity, and respect for tradition.

In the collective imagination of the diaspora and new urban generations, the native village has become a mythical, pure, idealized space. The *ia* actively contributes to this symbolic reconstruction, being often worn at cultural events, in retro-themed photographs, or identity campaigns. Thus, the *ia* becomes an active instrument for reaffirming values and roots.

The childhood village, in the imagination of those who wear the *ie*, is associated with values such as hospitality, the cyclical rhythm of nature, simplicity, and human communion. The *ia* thus becomes a form of expressing the aspiration toward an authentic and balanced lifestyle. Through educational projects, sewing workshops, and festivals dedicated to folk costume, communities contribute to keeping this form of cultural and emotional expression alive. In this sense, the *ia* is not a museum artifact, but a “living archive” that preserves symbols, emotions, and identities.

The Romanian *ia* is more than just a heritage clothing item – it is a form of lived memory, a symbol of roots, belonging, and a world that, although seemingly lost, remains alive in the hearts of those who evoke it. In a social context marked by mobility, identity ruptures, and uncertainty, the rediscovery of the *ia* as a form of cultural resilience becomes an act of recovery and reaffirmation of the communal self.

**Keywords:** *ia*, affective memory, identity, imaginary heritage, origins.

## The romanian ia, from a clothing object to a sociological phenomenon

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In the complex landscape of the Romanian material and immaterial cultural heritage, the IA - the traditional shirt with distinctive embroidery - occupies a privileged place, transgressing the boundaries of a simple clothing item. Although its visual representations are omnipresent in contemporary Romanian culture, the sociological dimensions of this phenomenon remain insufficiently explored in the scientific literature. This article offers an in-depth analysis of the transformations that this clothing item has undergone over time, from a functional piece of popular clothing to a symbol of identity and a contemporary sociocultural phenomenon.

The “IA” is analyzed from an interdisciplinary perspective, following its transformation from a simple traditional clothing element into a complex sociological phenomenon with profound cultural, economic and identity implications. The research explores how this cultural artifact has transcended the boundaries of primary clothing functionality, becoming a national symbol, a mediator of cultural memory and a tool for identity negotiation in the context of globalization. Through methodologies specific to cultural anthropology, sociology and cultural studies, the article highlights the processes of recontextualization, resignification and recommodification of the language in different historical periods and social contexts.

The article includes the following essential components:

- An abstract that synthesizes the interdisciplinary approach and the main conclusions of the study
- An introduction that contextualizes the importance of ia in Romanian cultural heritage
- A rigorous theoretical and methodological framework, referencing relevant theories and detailing the research methods used
- A historical analysis of the evolution of ia, from its origins to the post-communist period
- An extensive section on ia as a contemporary sociological phenomenon, exploring the dimensions:
- Institutionalization and patrimonialization
- Recommodification and cultural economy
- Resemantization and identity politics
- Communitarianization and cultural activism
- An analysis of the main social actors involved in the phenomenon and their legitimization strategies
- An exploration of contemporary challenges and perspectives for the evolution of the phenomenon
- Conclusions that synthesize the multiple functions of ia in contemporary society
- A comprehensive bibliography with relevant works in the field

The conclusions emphasize the strategic role of ia in contemporary dynamics of construction identity and its potential to facilitate intercultural dialogue.

**Keywords:** Romanian language, cultural heritage, national identity, tradition, social representation.

## **“Ia” – symbol of the Romanian costume**

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The central and iconic element of Romanian folk costume, recognized for the beauty and complexity of its embroidery, will always remain the “Ia”. This is more than a blouse, it is a cultural identity card, a testimony to the ingenuity and artistic talent of the Romanian people. It reflects the history, traditions, beliefs and even the landscape of a certain area. Due to its inestimable value, the “Ia” was included on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2022, which represents an important step for the recognition and preservation of this unique piece of clothing. The “Ia” remains a symbol of Romanian authenticity, tradition and beauty, being appreciated not only in Romania but also internationally. Today, the “Ia” is experiencing a revival, with fashion designers integrating it into their collections, and more and more people wearing it with pride, either in its traditional form or reinterpreted in modern styles.

In this passage of time, “Ia” has proven beyond any doubt that its dense and symbolic embroideries, as we find them in Oltenia, represent a testimony to the cultural wealth and craftsmanship of Romania.

**Keywords:** “Ia”, values, culture, tradition, identity, folk costume, UNESCO;

## The Importance of Keeping the Romania Blouse Alive

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Traditional clothing is one of the most visible and cherished symbols of a nation's identity. For Romania, the "ie", or Romanian blouse, stands as a timeless testament to the artistic expression, history, and cultural continuity of the Romanian people. Beyond its aesthetic beauty, the blouse tells stories of generations of women, regional traditions, and resistance through art. In an increasingly globalized world, where cultural homogenization threatens smaller identities, preserving the Romanian blouse is not merely about fashion - it is about safeguarding a vital part of the nation's soul. This article examines the historical significance, cultural symbolism, social impact, and contemporary relevance of the Romanian blouse and argues for its preservation and revitalization as a matter of national pride and global cultural diversity.

The Romanian blouse is more than a garment, it is a living artifact, a bearer of memory, identity, resistance, and beauty of our country. To keep it alive is to recognize the value of cultural depth in a shallow, digitized, and fast-paced world. It is to honour the women who embroidered their lives into threads, and to ensure that future generations know the richness of their roots and the importance of keeping it alive.

**Keywords:** Romanian blouse, historical significance, cultural symbolism, diversity.

## Promoting the Romanian blouse Ia - promoting romania

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The Romanian folk costume is like a document, which has both historical and social but also and artistic value. The Romanian blouse „ia” is a component of the Romanian folk costume, whose origins lie in the clothing of the Thracians, Getae and Dacians. Through the motifs and symbols embroidered on the „ia” (the shirt worn by women), it "speaks" to us about past history but also current history, communicates to us the belonging to a Romanian community, to a region of the country, expresses states of mind and events in the life of Romanians. It is made of white linen, cotton or borangic cloth. It is adorned, on the sleeves, chest and neck, with embroideries representing Romanian folk motifs. The Romanian „ia” has accompanied Romanian women throughout their entire lives, being worn every day, but also at festivities and ceremonies.

It is a work of art, through traditional motifs, through the profound symbols sewn on the „ia”, so that each „ia” tells a story, about the region it comes from, about the event it participated in, about the social status of the „ia” wearer, about the state of mind of the one who made it, etc.

On June 24, the Universal Day of the Romanian „ia” is celebrated. Since the Romanian „ia” is an element of Romanian identity, promoting the Romanian „ia” means promoting Romania.

The paper presents the ways of promoting the Romanian „ia” over time but also why it is important to promote Romania, even through our Romanian „ia”.

**Keywords:** Romanian blouse „IA”, traditions, promotion, Romania

## Şezătoarea Basarabiei – ways to revitalize traditional shirts in a contemporary way

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For many years, the "Şezătoarea Basarabiei" community has been actively reviving the authentic and original tradition of Moldovan Romanian traditional costumes. They undertake various initiatives to gain a deeper understanding of these traditions, create garments based on time-honored patterns, and proudly wear the blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (altiță) as part of the authentic traditional costume. This endeavor represents a natural civic response to the perils that marginalize traditional handmade creations, some of which have been practiced for millennia in social life. This community has taken on the responsibility of rescuing the traditional shirt from potential disappearance, recognizing it as an essential element of authentic traditional costume.

Out of the female traditional costume (quite a rich one, according to us, since it served as cloth and distinction mark for hundreds and thousands of years), society ad reference item the blouse with altiță, or ia, as youngsters especially hurry to call it.

The gatherings of "Şezătoarea Basarabiei" bring together a diverse group of individuals, including teachers, doctors, museum curators, engineers, lawyers, stay-at-home mothers, and retirees. The shirts created within the community adhere to the specific materials, rich repertoire of old techniques, and original ornamental motifs. These creations are highly valuable in keeping the tradition of folk costume alive in the Republic of Moldova.

Throughout history, the blouse with „altiță" has held paramount significance, regarded as the most beautiful festive garment worn by women and girls. Its rich tradition stretches back nearly 2000 years, as evidenced by ancient monuments like the Adamclisi in Romania and Traian's Column in Rome, Italy. The "Şezătoarea Basarabiei" community plays a pivotal role in perpetuating the legacy of the blouse with embroidery on the shoulder (altiță) by meticulously adhering to traditional materials, techniques, and designs. They prioritize the use of hemp, linen, and cotton fabrics, adorning them with embroidery threads of wool, silk, cotton, and linen, along with gold and silver metallic threads and sequins. 19th-century shirts serve as a wellspring of inspiration in this endeavor.

The community has revitalized the practice of functional pleating, along with a multitude of intricate and artistically expressive techniques. They have rescued from oblivion various ornamental motifs and compositions that have shaped the historical identity of this shirt.

In the cultural landscape of the Republic of Moldova and the broader Romanian region, the contribution of each seamstress is invaluable. They have mastered the art of shirt tailoring, stitching techniques, and the artistic principles of garment decoration, passing on their knowledge to the younger generations. Some shirts are reconstructed based on multiple antique ornaments.

The sources for these shirts have been meticulously gathered from across the Bessarabian region and from museums abroad, encompassing photographic images, sketches, original shirts, or fragments thereof. This approach has enabled the identification of representative shirt styles from various localities in northeastern Romania, capturing both the richness and local diversity of these garments. The exhibition showcases the priceless treasure of traditional Bessarabian Romanian costumes, bringing them back into the spotlight as a prestigious emblem of identity, but the traditional blouse with altiță, has the function of social cohesion, affirmation of identity, patriotic feelings, transmission of values to the young generation, stimulating the civic spirit, encouragement of cultural diversity.

**Key-words:** blouse with altiță; folk crafts, embroidery, romanian port

## Ritualistic roles of the blouse with altiță: an ethnological and symbolic perspective

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Beyond its aesthetic and utilitarian value, the blouse with altiță has played and continues to play a crucial role in various rites of passage and traditional ceremonies, acting as a medium of symbolic communication, an element of magical protection, and a deeply rooted identity marker within the traditional worldview. Also known by the generic name "Ia" in its feminine form, it represents one of the most refined and complex expressions of Romanian folk art. Its rich ornamentation, elaborate embroidery techniques, and chromatic harmony have established it as a symbol of national cultural identity. However, the profound significance of the blouse with altiță far transcends its aesthetic or utilitarian dimension. It is, in essence, an object imbued with ritualistic and symbolic functions, a mediator between the sacred and the profane, between the individual and the community, between the present and ancestral heritage, reflecting beliefs, values, and a specific worldview of traditional Romanian society.

Firstly, one of the most important ritualistic roles of the blouse with altiță is that of magical protection. Its ornamentation is not random; every stitch and every motif has a well-defined role in safeguarding the wearer from malevolent forces, the evil eye, illnesses, or other misfortunes. Numerous ethnological studies have highlighted the apotropaic nature of geometric motifs, such as the cross, the rhombus, or the spiral. These were believed to have the power to "break" negative energies or deflect them. It's no coincidence that the embroidery is strategically concentrated on certain areas of the blouse: the altiță (shoulder), the râuri (vertical stripes on the sleeve). These are considered entry or exit points for spirits or energies. The dense ornamentation in these areas acts as a symbolic "armor," blocking access for nefarious forces. The blouse with altiță plays a fundamental role in rites of passage, marking changes in social status, age, or community roles. These include birth, baptism, puberty, marriage, and death. In addition to magical protection and its role in rites of passage, the blouse with altiță also functioned as a visible marker of the wearer's social status, age, ethnic belonging, and even wealth. The complexity of the embroidery, the quality of the material, and the abundance of ornamentation could indicate differences in social status. For example, a married woman often wore a more richly ornamented "ie" than a young girl. Motifs and colors also changed according to age, reflecting life stages. Each ethnographic zone has a distinct embroidery style, with specific motifs, colors, and cuts. Wearing a blouse with altiță allowed for the immediate recognition of the wearer's geographical origin and local identity. This strengthened community cohesion and a sense of belonging. A richly embroidered, handmade blouse was proof of the diligence and talent of the woman who made it, or the prosperity of the family that could afford to acquire it. Thus, the blouse was not merely an aesthetic object, but also an indicator of social values and personal virtues. Therefore, the blouse with altiță, a true masterpiece of Romanian folk art, is much more than a simple piece of clothing. It is a complex cultural artifact, deeply integrated into the ritualistic and symbolic roles of traditional society. From its apotropaic function, protecting against malevolent forces, to its crucial role in rites of passage that mark life stages, and to its status as a social and regional identity marker, the blouse represents a window into a worldview where the sacred and the profane harmoniously intertwined. The in-depth study of the blouse with altiță, through the lens of ethnology, folklore, and anthropology, allows us to understand not only its clothing history, but also the mentality, beliefs, and values of a people.

**Keywords:** blouse with altiță, ritual, symbolism, magical protection, identity.

## Promoting and valuing traditional folk costume in Technology Education classes in pre-university education

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In the context of globalization and an increasingly digitalized society, the preservation and transmission of national cultural values are becoming a major challenge for the education system. Romanian traditional folk costume, with its rich symbolic, aesthetic, and historical value, is an essential component of the national cultural heritage, a living testimony to the creativity and ingenuity of the Romanian people. Beyond its intrinsic beauty, folk costume represents a repository of knowledge, techniques, and beliefs passed down from generation to generation.

The Technology Education discipline, by its applied nature and focus on developing practical and creative skills, offers a suitable pedagogical framework for the authentic promotion and valuing of traditional folk costume. By integrating it into the curriculum, we can move beyond a purely theoretical and abstract approach to culture, transforming it into a concrete, participatory, and relevant experience for students. Integrating folk costume into Technology Education classes is justified by multiple psycho-pedagogical benefits: developing transversal competencies; stimulating critical thinking and entrepreneurial spirit; strengthening cultural identity. Direct contact with folk costume contributes to the formation and consolidation of national and local identity consciousness. Students better understand their roots, value cultural heritage, and develop a sense of pride and belonging. Furthermore, it fosters the development of practical skills and fine motor skills; and cultivates responsibility and respect for tradition. For an effective integration of traditional folk costume, the following methodological directions are proposed: studying traditional materials and technologies; practical creative workshops; mini-embroidery projects; fashion design inspired by folk costume; making simple clothing elements: creating simple pieces such as a stylized "ie" (blouse), an embroidered handkerchief, or a traditional belt, using simplified techniques; transdisciplinary activities and collaborative projects such as research projects, exhibitions, and thematic celebrations, organizing mini-exhibitions in school with students' works, or participating in cultural events dedicated to folk costume (e.g., "Ia Day"); collaborations with folk artisans; and utilizing digital resources. Implementing this approach may encounter certain challenges, such as the lack of specific material resources, time allocated in the school curriculum, or the expertise of teaching staff in ethnography. Therefore, several recommendations are necessary, such as ensuring training programs that equip teachers with knowledge of ethnography, symbolism, and traditional embroidery techniques; creating guides, auxiliary manuals, and digital resources dedicated to promoting folk costume in Technology Education classes; developing sustainable partnerships between schools, ethnographic museums, cultural associations, and folk artisans; and encouraging the autonomy of teaching staff in adapting content and methods to integrate relevant activities related to local heritage. The promotion and valorization of Romanian traditional folk costume within Technology Education classes represent an effective strategy for the students' patriotic, cultural, and professional education. By transforming the study of tradition into a practical and creative experience, we contribute not only to preserving a fundamental element of national identity but also to developing essential competencies for the students' future, preparing them for a world where innovation and respect for values complement each other. Thus, folk costume becomes not a relic of the past, but an inexhaustible source of inspiration and learning for future generations.

**Keywords:** folk costume, technology education, cultural heritage, competencies, pre-university education, valorization.

## Archetypes and the collective unconscious in the "Ia" embroidery - a jungian perspective on traditional motifs

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When we talk about ornamental archetypes according to C.G. Jung, we refer to those motifs, symbols, and forms that recur in folk art (and beyond), being considered visual manifestations of universal psychic structures present in the collective unconscious. Carl Gustav Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, postulated that the collective unconscious is a layer of the psyche containing "primordial images" or archetypes, common to all people, regardless of culture or personal experience.

These archetypes are not specific images, but rather dynamic patterns that manifest in various symbolic forms. In popular ornamentation, including the embroidery of the blouse with altiță, they become visible through the repetition of certain motifs that seem to resonate deeply with human experience. For example, the 8-pointed star or octagon, rosettes, the circle, and the square are often associated with the archetype of the Self, symbolizing totality, integrity, and the psychic center of the individual. The Self is the central archetype of the psyche's order and totality, representing the potential for integrity and the unification of the conscious and unconscious. It is the goal of the individuation process, the process by which a person becomes a whole, distinct, and indivisible being. As the Swiss psychologist Marie-Louise von Franz, a close collaborator of Jung, mentions, "the symbol of the Self often appears in the form of a circle, square, or other mandala forms." Often placed centrally on the chest or sleeves, it suggests that the wearer of the "Ie" carries their own psychic center openly, as an affirmation of their essential identity. The spiral motif, present in a multitude of variants, from simple to double or triple spirals, is another powerful archetype. Jung interpreted the spiral as a symbol of psychological development, evolution, and the dynamism of life. Representing the continuous movement from center to periphery and vice versa, the spiral illustrates the cycles of nature – birth, growth, decline, and rebirth – and, by extension, the process of individuation. The presence of the spiral in the "ie" embroidery can be understood as an unconscious recognition of the ebb and flow of existence, of the constant transformation that the human being undergoes. The Tree of Life, although stylized, frequently appears in traditional ornaments, including the "ie" embroidery. This universal archetype, present in almost all cultures worldwide, symbolizes the connection between heaven and earth, the upper world and the lower world, life and death. It represents fertility, growth, knowledge, and the connection with ancestors and cosmic forces. In the context of the "ie", the Tree of Life can suggest a deep connection of the wearer to their roots, to ancestral heritage, and to a broader cosmic order, offering a sense of belonging and continuity.

Another archetype is that of the Great Mother Goddess. From a Jungian perspective, this archetype refers to the universal maternal principle, which can be both nurturing and protective, as well as destructive. It symbolizes fertility, creativity, nature, the earth, and genesis. Ornamentally, we find it in floral motifs or stylized feminine figures. The hero archetype represents the struggle for individuation, overcoming obstacles, courage, and transformation. We find it in stylized zoomorphic or spiral motifs. The shadow archetype and the Anima archetype offer a window into the collective unconscious. These "ornamental archetypes" are not merely decorative; they are living symbols, imbued with profound meanings. Studying them through a Jungian lens allows us to appreciate not only their aesthetic beauty but also the psychological depth of our cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** blouse with altiță, ritual, symbolism, folk costume, ethnology, magical protection.

## Traditions and cultural interferences in the context of globalisation

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The identity of a people is rightly established by the antiquity of the cultural wealth, of the traditions, which have been preserved over time. It is said that over 100 small peoples have disappeared in Russia. They did not physically disappear, but when they forgot their language, their traditions, they melted into an amorphous mass called "rosiane" today, losing their identity. Cultural traditions are the surest way of perpetuating a people over time. There are various ways of transmitting them over time. For some peoples this was done predominantly in written form. For the Pelasgo-Thracian-Dacian-Romanian people these were transmitted through various coded forms: the enigmatic Cucuteni pottery with its wonderful ways of nonverbal communication; the Miorita phenomenon; the impressive Romanian art with its inexhaustible range of decorative elements, of sacred symbols descended from the Carpathian-Danubian Neolithic.

In this context, within the 19 editions of the International Symposium "Cucuteni 5000 REDIVIVUS: exact and less exact sciences", organized at the Technical University of Moldova and universities in Romania (2006-2024), there was always a separate section "From the history of the arts", through which scientific research in the fields of Cucuteni ceramics, Miorita, Iea, etc. was promoted. Extremely important in terms of promoting Romanian traditions were the 5 editions of the Festival of Port, Dance and Popular Song "Hora care ne unește", held within the cultural program of the Symposium on both banks of the Prut. Truly, as the great Eminescu said, "Without the cult of the past, there is no love of country". Let us know it, honor it, value it, promote it, in order to step confidently into tomorrow.

**Keywords:** cultural traditions, Cucuteni pottery, ie, miorița.

## Handkerchief – traditional ornament in the context of the Gorj folk costume

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The ia and the handkerchief remain those symbols that reflect not only the aesthetic side, but also the essence of the Romanian soul, a link between tradition, creativity, spirituality and social connection. They are witnesses of a rich and dynamic culture, continuing to reflect the national identity.

The handkerchief and the ia are part of the soul of the Romanian woman who sewed with unknown threads of longing for love, which comes from afar from the world of distant ancestors, preserving the archaic fragrance of the nation.

The handkerchief worn on holidays or work days fully translates a whole range of meanings from all life cycles, being present in human life from the cradle to death and remaining to rot like a withered banner in the fir or birch tree at the cemetery.

Although the roots of the ia and the handkerchief are deep in tradition, they have evolved, reinterpreted and adapted to modern styles, maintaining their relevance in contemporary society, either as a symbol of elegance or as a reminder of traditions with the same authentic essence.

They remain those symbols that reflect not only the aesthetic side, but also the essence of the Romanian soul, a link between tradition, creativity, spirituality and social connection. They are witnesses to a rich and dynamic culture, continuing to reflect the national identity.

Batista and her are part of the soul of the Romanian woman who sewed with threads of unknown longing for love, which comes from far away from the distant world of her ancestors, preserving the archaic fragrance of the nation.

**Keywords:** ia, handkerchief, tradition, soul, spirituality

## “IA” between symbol and semnification

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“IA” the blouse, the embroidered or embroidered shirt, is a symbol of Romanian identity, a source of inspiration for many painters and fashion designers. The blouse has its roots in the Thracian, Getic and Dacian period (Cucuteni culture).

Henri Matisse celebrates the Romanian blouse “IA” through a work that is exhibited at the Georges Pompidou National Center for Art and Culture in France (La blouse roumaine). Matisse is attracted to the stitches characterized by symbols - magical or beneficial symbols.

The most common symbols are the cross, which represents people's faith in God (divine protection), and is also a symbol of balance, the spiral, which can be considered the passage of time, a symbol used during the Cucuteni period. Other common symbols are the fir tree - signifying life, wisdom, abundance and health.

The circle is a symbol of power and wisdom, representing the wheel of time and at the same time signifying the sun, the sunflower, finding its finality in the warmth and life that the sun brings to Earth. The snail or spiral represents the cycle of life, rebirth, the ear of wheat brings prosperity and peace, also signifying cyclical. We also find stars, grapes, bells, ram's horns, the rooster and the eye, four-leaf clover. The stars bring the wearer closer to divinity, the grapes symbolize eternal life, the bells herald each important event, the ram's horns give the feeling of security, protection, fertility and regeneration, the rooster protects from bad luck and drives away evil spirits, the eye, in combination with other elements, is considered to be constantly looking around and drives away negative energies, the rarely seen four-leaf clover symbolizes luck. The floral motifs signify vigor and freshness. The tree and its branches signify durability, life and wisdom. The vine leaf brings plenty and abundance. Specialists say that the authentic one is the unfinished one, the creators, considered priestesses, believed that perfection does not belong to man but to God. In addition to the elements presented, we cannot fail to take into account various geometric shapes present and not chosen at random: rhombuses, squares, circles symbolize the right path in life, social ascension and spirituality. They can be read in the key of principles and values deeply fixed in the Romanian traditional culture. The geometric or stylized motifs enrich the lines with lines that symbolize the right path in life, the hooks that attract well-being, the spirals with spiritual charge, true magical symbols meant to bring luck and protect against bad luck and evil.

The traditional Romanian motifs are each a story, each drawing succeeding according to its connection with other elements such as age, social status or occasion. These stories are found in particular but also generally in the life of the Romanian family and village.

**Keywords:** IA, tradition, motifs, values, divinity

## National identity and memory: 240 years since the martyrdom of Horea, Cloșca and Crișan

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Undoubtedly, the commemoration of 240 years since the death of the hero-martyrs Horea, Cloșca and Crișan is a moment of profound reflection on what these historical figures represent for our national identity and memory. Through commemorations, authorities and other public and private institutions can bring to the fore a past, which, although often tragic, can be "tamed" and better understood, can be reinterpreted and put under other contemporary historical approaches, which go beyond the positivist paradigm and focus on studies of the memory or individual and collective mind of a historical period.

The causes and conduct of Horea, Cloșca and Crișan uprising, as well as the gruesome execution of these leaders, have been written a multitude of books, studies and articles, have given birth to heated historical debates, but the most important thing is how these heroes remain embedded in national consciousness. Therefore, the study investigates the relationship between national identity and memory, the way in which an important event becomes ritualistic with a strong official character, which emerges from the pressing historical time and enters the present detached and into a much more changing future.

**Keywords:** national identity, memory, remembrance, heroes-martyrs, Horea, Cloșca and Crișan.

## George Barițiu – reflections upon the home industry in the Transilvania Journal

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The dramatic political situation of the Romanians in Transylvania, especially after the year 1867, imposed on them finding new ways and means to promote the national values. One of these ways was impelling the development of the household industry, therefore of the Romanian national costume. The articles published in Transylvania magazine, the press corps of ASTRA written by George Barițiu, insisted on the necessity of maintaining this industry within the context of the major economy. Through this, they are preserved both the pure Romanian values and the national consciousness. Preserving the national identity is connected to the developing and the promoting of the household industry.

**Keywords:** economy, household industry, Romanians from Transylvania, women, national costume, national identity.

## **Signs, symbols and belonging: decoding the visual language of the romanian blouse “ia”**

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The traditional Romanian blouse, also known as the *ia*, is a fundamental element of Romanian folk culture, embedding a rich symbolic language within its embroidered structure.

This article aims to explore and decode the signs and symbols sewn into these garments, focusing on their origin, meaning, and role within local traditions. Symbols such as the sun, the cross, the tree of life, the rhombus, or the spiral are not merely decorative motifs but visual codes that reflect the beliefs, aspirations, and values of rural communities. Through an interdisciplinary approach that combines ethnology, cultural anthropology, and semiotics, the study analyzes how these signs convey messages related to identity, protection, fertility, and the connection with divinity. The research also highlights regional differences in the use of motifs and how they contribute to shaping a unique cultural diversity.

Decoding the symbols on the *ie* is not only an academic exercise but also a step toward preserving and rediscovering an ancestral language that continues to inspire contemporary creations. Thus, the traditional Romanian blouse stands as a living document of collective memory and cultural continuity.

Keywords: symbols, traditional, signs, symbols, *ia*

## The romanian blouse "ia" – an identity symbol between tradition and contemporary reinvention

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The Romanian blouse, commonly known as the "Ia," is one of the most visible and enduring symbols of Romanian traditional culture. It transcends geographic and social boundaries, being present today in art galleries, fashion runways, national branding campaigns, and social media networks. The purpose of this article is to examine how the "Ia" has evolved from the everyday garment of rural women into a sophisticated symbol of contemporary cultural identity.

Historically, the "Ia" was an integral part of the traditional female costume worn in various regions of Romania, from Maramureș and Bucovina to Oltenia and Dobrogea. Handmade from natural materials like linen or hemp, the blouse was adorned with hand-stitched embroidery, whose placement followed precise rules passed down through generations. Each motif and color combination had significance: crosses, spirals, floral or geometric patterns had protective, magical, or identity roles. The blouse was not merely a clothing item but a visual form of communication, reflecting the woman's status, age, ethnographic area, and even specific life events (engagement, wedding, mourning). The 20th century marked a paradigm shift: from a utilitarian object, the "Ia" became a cultural symbol. Queen Marie of Romania played a significant role in promoting the blouse, wearing it in official and diplomatically symbolic contexts. Additionally, 20th-century visual art – such as Henri Matisse's painting "La blouse roumaine" (1940) – contributed to the internationalization of the symbol. The blouse continued to be revalued during the communist period, though often with idealized or artificial folkloric accents. The traditional costume was used in festive manifestations, often losing its regional authenticity and the spontaneity of individual expression.

The 21st century brings renewed public attention to the "Ia," but in a different register: creative reinterpretation. Fashion designers from Romania (Ingrid Teodosiu, Adriana Matei) and abroad (Jean Paul Gaultier, Dior) have incorporated elements inspired by the traditional blouse into their collections. This phenomenon helps reposition the "Ia" as a luxury item with universal value.

Keywords: "Ia"; symbol; traditional; blouse; value

## **The art that unites: explorations between ceramics and the romanian blouse „ia”**

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This article explores the interdisciplinary connections between two emblematic expressions of Romanian cultural heritage: traditional ceramics and the Romanian blouse, known as "ia." By examining their shared visual language—motifs, color palettes, and symbolic meanings—this study highlights the deep-rooted relationships between textile and ceramic arts. Through comparative analysis and case studies, the paper investigates how artisanal techniques and aesthetic principles intersect across mediums, offering insight into the transmission of cultural identity through craft. Furthermore, it emphasizes the contemporary relevance of these traditions by analyzing how modern artists and designers reinterpret them in innovative ways. The research underscores the unifying potential of art to bridge disciplines, generations, and communities, proposing a holistic understanding of Romanian folk art as a living, evolving system. Ultimately, this study contributes to broader discussions on cultural sustainability, heritage preservation, and the power of interdisciplinary artistic collaboration.

Keywords: ia, traditional, ceramics, arts

## Folk Costume Days in Europe: Consolidating Potential

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In the world of globalization and digital unification, we are increasingly turning to our origins. Folk costume is not just an aesthetic of the past, but a powerful symbol of identity. That is why in many countries the so-called folk costume days are emerging and becoming increasingly popular – holidays when people wear traditional attire to feel a sense of belonging to their roots. One of the most famous such holidays in Europe is the Ukrainian Vyshyvanka Day, which inspires other nations to find a source of unity in national costume.

In Ukraine, Vyshyvanka Day is traditionally celebrated on the third Thursday of May. The holiday originated in 2006 as a student initiative, but quickly grew into a nationwide and even international movement. People all over the world wear embroidered blouses as a sign of solidarity with Ukraine, its culture and the struggle for freedom. Embroidered blouses have become not just a symbol of ethnic heritage, but also a form of cultural resistance that unites Ukrainians regardless of geography.

Romania also has a national clothing holiday – Ziua Iei, or Ia Embroidered Blouse Day, which is celebrated every year on June 24. Ia is a traditional Romanian embroidered blouse that came into fashion in pre-Christian times and has become a symbol of femininity, dignity and connection with nature. This holiday was initiated by Romanian enthusiasts in 2013 within the framework of the online community La Blouse Roumaine, which unites supporters of authentic culture. Today, Ia Day is celebrated not only in Romania, but also in countries with a Romanian diaspora – Italy, France, Canada. On this day, women wear Ia, publish photos on social networks, hold cultural events, marches, exhibitions. Ia is not just an ethnographic artifact. It is a cultural code recognized by UNESCO as part of the intangible cultural heritage. Like the Ukrainian vyshyvanka, the Romanian shirt is a way to declare: we are here, we are, and we preserve ourselves.

In Scotland, the celebration of “Tartan Day”, which falls on April 6, unites the Scots of the diaspora – from Canada to Australia. People dress in traditional kilts, parades, games and concerts take place. As in the previously outlined cases, traditional clothing here is a tool for preserving cultural memory and consolidating the national community.

In Latvia and Estonia, during the summer solstice holidays, traditional costumes are an integral part of the rituals. In Georgia, as part of the celebration of Independence Day, a fashion show of traditional clothing is often held, symbolizing the connection between generations.

Despite the difference in cut, colours and styles, a common European vector is visible in all these traditions – the desire to preserve cultural uniqueness in the conditions of integration. National clothing festivals are not only folklore, but also a dialogue between cultures. For example, when Poles wear their national costumes, and Ukrainians wear embroidered shirts, during cross-border festivals, this creates a space of mutual respect and recognition of diversity as a value.

Therefore, national clothing festivals can become platforms for cultural diplomacy. After all, they create bridges between diasporas and the homeland, form a positive image of the country in the international context, promote dialogue between nations through acquaintance with authentic forms of culture, and realize common European roots – through ornament, fabric, craft.

In the future, one can even imagine a European Day of Folk Costume, when each nation would show its cultural heritage – not as a “museum exhibit”, but as a living, modern tradition.

**Keywords:** vyshyvanka, ia, kilt, intercultural dialogue, folk costume.

## Wearing the romanian ie reactivates cultural codes

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### Abstract

The Romanian *IA*, an essential piece of the traditional female folk costume, is an element of intangible heritage that transcends its utilitarian function and becomes an identity vector for Romanians. The *IA*, a centuries-old symbol of identity, has in recent decades regained its status as a key element in the revaluation of intangible cultural heritage. This article explores how wearing the *ie* activates and recontextualizes deep cultural codes in contemporary social and identity contexts, serving simultaneously as a form of cultural resistance and identity affirmation. It also offers an analysis of these codes, grounded in the premises of cultural anthropology and the sociology of symbols. The analysis addresses semantic, anthropological, and sociological dimensions, focusing on the transformation of the *ie* from a clothing item into a bearer of collective meanings.

Wearing the *ie* activates multiple semantic registers: from the aesthetic, associated with the beauty and harmony of the ornaments, to the identity-related, reflecting belonging to a community, geographic area, or age group. Cultural codes are expressed through recurring symbols (the ear of wheat, the sun, the diamond, the cross), which visually translate fundamental values: fertility, protection, continuity, the sacred.

In this sense, the *ie* can be understood as a sartorial text, the reading of which reveals deep cultural layers transmitted across generations.

After a period of marginalization during communism, the *ie* has regained public attention and has been revalorized in various contexts: festivals, contemporary art, fashion, cultural education. Campaigns such as *La Blouse Roumaine* or *Universal Day of the Ie* have contributed to the collective reappropriation of this symbol, stimulating the reactivation of cultural codes such as:

- **National identity** – wearing the *ie* becomes an act of affirming one's roots;
- **Affective memory** – the *ie* reestablishes the connection with the village, traditions, and grandparents;
- **Cultural resistance** – in a uniform world, the *ie* signals difference and authenticity;
- **Traditional femininity** – the *ie* reflects the Romanian aesthetics of gentle and dignified femininity.

### Conclusions

The Romanian *ie* is not merely a piece of clothing but a cultural palimpsest imbued with meaning. The cultural codes reactivated through wearing the *ie* allow for a symbolic reconnection with one's roots and an adaptation to contemporary challenges such as globalization, migration, and the loss of identity. Wearing the *ie* is, in this sense, a gesture of memory, an act of reaffirmation, and a form of cultural education.

**Keywords:** cultural codes, reactivation, meanings, reconnection. roots.



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