

## **WATERCROSSING OF THE WEDDING PROCESSION**

**MILANA ČERNELIĆ**

Filozofski fakultet  
Odsjek za etnologiju  
10000 Zagreb, Ivana Lučića 3

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*The article deals with the rite of watercrossing, known mostly in the eastern parts of Slavonia, Vojvodina, partly in the Romanian territories, in the Vlach regions of northeastern Serbia and sporadically in southeastern Serbia and Bulgaria. The analysis of the elements of the rite indicates that we are dealing with a typologically analogous rite regionally limited to the northeastern parts of the South Slav territories. The result of the study points to the possible mutual permeation of different cultures, those of the settled Slav peoples and the autochthonous Romance speaking population of the Balkans.*

The house represents the central place of social life, including the magical and symbolic rites in traditional wedding customs. We are dealing with two centres of equal importance at the same time, with two territories occupied by representatives of two wedding parties that have a certain role connected both to their own territory and to the one belonging to the other party during the whole period of the wedding ritual. Consequently, these two wedding parties each occupying its own territory, whose microcosm is symbolized by the house, stand as two opposed sides in relation to one another. In the context of the wedding ceremony their final intention and purpose is to diminish and gradually reduce the opposition and join one another as wedding ritual reaches its end. To attain that connection, both sides have to overcome a number of obstacles standing on their way. Most of these obstacles are connected with house as the place of their family cult. Our interest is focused on the part of the house which represents the border-line that one wedding party has to cross in order to join the other. Many ritual proceedings take place on the threshold of the house, which is therefore considered to be a sanctified place. *The reason for this may be the fact that in rural architecture the threshold signifies a border-line dividing the domestic, kinship and family cult from the outside world of opposed, hostile and evil forces. Various apotropaic means are used in order to*

*prevent their influence and entrance within the space of the house* (Komorowsky, 1976: 237). The threshold itself is not necessarily the borderline between the inside and the outside world. According to the conceptions of different ethnic groups that border-line can be moved either outside or inside the household territory, i.e. from the yard gate to the door of a particular room inside the house. The notion of the border-line can therefore be variously understood, the important fact being the existence of the border with various symbolic rites taking place around it.

*Watercrossing* is one among the many obstacles that the wedding procession has to overcome in obtaining the right to enter the house. A trough or pail full of water is placed in front of the house. The wedding party or some of their representatives are obliged to throw coins into the water in order to be allowed to enter the house.<sup>1</sup>

This symbolic rite in the wedding customs is known mostly in the eastern Pannonian area, particularly in Slavonia, most frequently in its eastern parts, in Vojvodina (both to the Croats known as Bunjevci and Šokci and to the Serbs), and sporadically in the Romanian territories specifically the Romanian part of the Banat district and among the Romanian population in southeastern Hungary in the neighbourhood of the city of Battonyá and in northeastern Serbia. Besides, it is customary among the Croatian ethnic groups in Hungary - Šokci in Mohač in the Baranja district and Bunjevci in some villages in southern Hungary and in the village of Erčin near Budapest. The rite of "watercrossing" is also the custom in two isolated districts of the above mentioned areas: the village Sićevo in the Nišava district and the city of Vranje with its surroundings in southeastern Serbia.<sup>2</sup>

The rite of *watercrossing* in the Pannonian area with its population of different origins is quite similar, although there are some differences in details from place to place. In northeastern and southeastern Serbia it has certain specific elements, but basically it is the same rite.

If the whole territory of the *watercrossing* rite is taken into account, an interesting distribution between either the bride's or the bridegroom's or the household territory of both parties can be perceived. In eastern Pannonia *watercrossing* mostly takes place in front of the bride's house, either when the

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<sup>1</sup> The rite of "watercrossing" has been tackled in a two broader studies and in an article concerning the question of the origin of the Croat ethnic group Bunjevci (Černelić 1991:45,72,132; Černelić 1997; Černelić 1999:187-188).

<sup>2</sup> At this point it would be unnecessary to quote all the sources that confirm *watercrossing*. We shall deal with them later in the presentation of the particular elements of the custom.

bridegroom's wedding party comes to take the bride to the church for the marriage ceremony<sup>3</sup> or after the marriage ceremony when they return to the bride's house<sup>4</sup>. *Watercrossing* takes place in front of both houses in the neighbourhood of Đakovo in the eastern parts of Slavonia, and among the ethnic group of Bunjevci in and around Sombor in Bačka and Vancaga in southern Hungary, as well as in the village of Svinjica among the Serbian population of the Romanian part of Banat.<sup>5</sup> In the Pannonian region, *watercrossing* is sometimes practised in front of the bridegroom's house mostly among the Croats in Vojvodina, but also among the Serbs and Romanians.<sup>6</sup> In northeastern Serbia, among the Vlach and Serbian population, the territories of both houses can be place for the *watercrossing* rite, in most cases the bridegroom's house,<sup>7</sup> being preferred to the bride's (Pantelić 1970:133,138; Pantelić 1975:133-134). In Sićevo in the Nišava district, as well as in Vranje and the surrounding area in southeastern Serbia *watercrossing* takes place in front of the bridegroom's house (Mihailović 1971:94; Vukanović 1972:183-184). There are two interesting variants of the *watercrossing* rite: among Bulgarians in Trakia and Minor Asia the wedding party members throw coins in the vessel full of water when the bride is leaving her house and among the Rumanians the bride is dancing around the wooden vessel full of water, in which coins have been thrown, before the wedding party takes her to thr church for the marriage ceremony (Vakarelski 1935:374; Comisel 1968:173).

*Watercrossing* in front of the bridegroom's house in Serbia partly corresponds to data concerning various population in the eastern Pannonian

<sup>3</sup> Bogišić 1874:238 (Nova Gradiška and Slavonski Brod sorrounding); Petrović EZ FFZ NR 47 (Vukojevci, Koška) and 145; Markovac 1935:249; Filakovac 1906:118; Šalić 1990:95; 30th International..., 1996:46; Bonifačić Rožin IEF 929; Demir Sem. rad - EZ FFZ; Marković Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Perić Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Sinožić Sem. r. EZ FFZ; Šarić Sem. r. EZ FFZ; Balen Sem, r. - EZ FFZ; Krečak-Paun Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Adžaga Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Černelić: Field notes, 1983 (Baja); Bellosics 1909:403; Sarosác 1968:115; Deisinger NMB EA 4023 (Erčin).

<sup>4</sup> Štiglmayer Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Lukić 1924:326; Lukić ONŽO HAZU sign. SZ 128d; Marković 1986:37; Krpan 1990:201; Toldi 1994:120; Njikoš 1970:53; Domaćinović EZ FFZ SR 114; Kravić EZ FFZ SR 101; Stojanac EZ FFZ SR 161; Škarić 1930:106; Karadžić 1867:314; Bosić 1989-1999:269); Dimitrijević 1969-1970:92; Šibalin, Dipl. r. - KH FFP SJP.

<sup>5</sup> Karalić ONŽO HAZU sign. NZ 121d; Vinkešić 1991:21; Černelić EZ FFZ NR 87; Černelić: Field notes, 1983; Mamuzić 1872:268; Pantelić 1971:65.

<sup>6</sup> Petrović EZ FFZ NR 92 (Šaptinovci); Kegalj Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Premuž Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Lasić Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Kesejić EZ FFZ SR 31; Kesejić ONŽO HAZU sign. NZ 72; Bartolović 1944:31; Rajić 1919:46; Erdeljanović 1930:238; Černelić EZ FFZ NR 87 (Bajmok); Bosić 1992:69; Popov 1969-1970:62; Hocopán 1983:307.Petrović 1931:105.

<sup>7</sup> Petrović 1931:105; Bošković-Matić 1962:154; Milosavljević 1913:174; Đorić... 1977:132; Pantelić 1981:271.

area, particularly the Romanians or population living together with the Romanian ethnic element. Only in the village of Otok in eastern Slavonia, the rite takes place in front of the best man's house, where the wedding feast continues the following day (Lovretić 1897:445).

Apart from the above coincidences with the Romanian populated area, there is no regularity regarding the precise location of the wedding house territories. The *watercrossing* rite moves from the house of one of the families to the other. Similarly, there are variations in the location of the border-line in the household area of both wedding parties. The trough with water is usually placed in front of the house. Most accounts give a more precise location of the trough; i.e. in front of the house door, in fact in front of the threshold. It can also be placed on the threshold itself and in front of the yard gate. In Varoš and Gornji Andrijevcu in eastern Slavonia, the trough is placed in front of the door to the room and in Erčin near Budapest in front of the kitchen door (Lukić 1924:326; Krpan 1990:201; Deisinger NMB EA 4023).

In most cases every member of the wedding party must pay for *watercrossing*, in order to step over the threshold of the house, which in this case means entering foreign territory. The obligation sometimes concerns only the best man, e.g. in the villages of Sikirevci and Nuštar in eastern Slavonia and in Gara and aja among the Bunjevci in southern Hungary.<sup>8</sup> In the village of Vancaga among the Bunjevci in southern Hungary, the *watercrossing* fee is paid by the best man and another wedding attendant called **stari svat**, which is also sometimes the case in northeastern Serbia (Černelić: Field notes 1983; Milosavljević 1913:174). In the village of Dvorište in Gornja Resava it is an obligation of all the wedding attendants (Bošković- Matić, 1962: 154). In villages near Sl. Brod in eastern Slavonia and in and around Sombor among the Bunjevci, the best man is the first to drop a coin into water, before the other wedding guests do the same (Toldi 1994:120; Černelić EZ FFZ NR 87). In some other places he has different obligations. In the Danube valley to the east and southeast of Belgrade, he has to pay for the bride; in Varoš in eastern Slavonia and in some villages in Srijem he pays for himself and for the newlyweds, and in Vrbica and in Retkovci in eastern Slavonia for himself, for some of the important wedding attendants, as well as for the bridegroom in Vrbica and for the musicians in Retkovci.<sup>9</sup> In Koritna in eastern Slavonia the best man pays for the newlyweds and the bridesmaids, each member of the wedding party pays for

<sup>8</sup> Marković 1986:37; Domaćinović EZ FFZ SR 144; Šibalin 1972; Černelić: Field notes, 1983.

<sup>9</sup> Petrović 1931:105; Lukić 1924:326; Stojanac EZ FFZ SR 161; Filakovac 1906:118; Šalić 1990:95; Moser EZ FFZ SR 181.

himself (Perić Sem. r. - EZ FFZ). In Koška (near Našice) in the region of Podravina in Slavonia, only the older guests pay for the "watercrossing" (Petrović EZ EFZ NR 47). Among the Bunjevci in the village of Erčin near Budapest only the wedding honoured attendant called **diver** has to pay for the *watercrossing* before he enters the kitchen of the bride's house (Deisinger NMB EA 4023). Among the Šokci in Bođani in Bačka the same is expected of the guests coming only to the wedding dinner and of the women who bring gifts in food, while in the neighbouring village of Bač these women do not have to pay to come in but to get out of the house (Kesejić EZ FFZ SR 31; Kesejić ONŽO HAZU sign. NZ 7a; Bartolović 1944:31). Similarly, in northern Banat the ferry toll (i.e., an imitation of crossing the water by ferry) is paid by the so called **debele kume**, that is the women from the best man's household, who bring gifts for the newlyweds to the wedding feast (Popov 1969-1970:62). The bridegroom's father is the first who has to drop a coin into the water, to be followed by **stari svat** and rest of the wedding guests in the Negotin area, while in Vranje and its surroundings the bride does not enter her new home before her father-in-law has thrown money for her into the water trough (Pantelić 1970:133; Vukanović 1972:183).

In most places and regions in eastern Pannonia, the trough with water symbolizes one of the rivers of the area and the money that is thrown into the trough symbolizes the crossing of either the rivers Sava, Drava or Danube. The river Morava has the same connotation only in Homolje in northeastern Serbia (Milosavljević 1913:174). According to the data on Slavonia and Srijem in general, the trough with water symbolizes the sea (Stojanović 1891:231). Instead of crossing a specific river, it is only specified that the ferry toll has to be paid among the Šokci in Bač, among the Bunjevci in Subotica, Bačka and in northern Banat.<sup>10</sup> The other possibility is for the best man to pay for the bride's transportation to her new home, as is done in the Danube valley to the east and southeast of Belgrade (Petrović 1931:105).

In the eastern Pannonian area in particular, besides the through with water there are sometimes other, additional obstacles, such as a stick,<sup>11</sup> a ladle<sup>12</sup>, an oar (Marković 1986:37; Kesejić EZ FFZ SR 31), a poker (Filakovac 1906:118; Stojanac 1881:231) or a broom (Vinkešić 1991:21-22; Stojanac: EZ

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<sup>10</sup> Bartolović 1944:31; Kesejić EZ FFZ SR 31; Rajić 1919:46; Popov 1969-1970:62.

<sup>11</sup> Markovac 1935:249; Lovretić 1897:455; Sarosács 1968:115; Deisinger NMB EA 4023 (Erčin); Pantelić 1971:65,68; Bošković-Matić 1962:154.

<sup>12</sup> Šalić 1990:95; Toldi 1994:120; Bogišić 1874:251 (Stara Pazova); Karadžić 1867:314; Černelić: Field Notes, 1983.

FFZ SR 161) placed either in front of the trough filled with water or in front of the door in order to prevent the wedding procession to cross the water and enter the house. Some of these articles are sometimes used to imitate rowing: this is done in the village of Retkovci in eastern Slavonia, in Slavonia and Srijem, in Subotica in Bačka, in northern Banat, and in the Danube valley to the east and southeast of Belgrade.<sup>13</sup>

In different places and different regions, different persons try to prevent the wedding procession from entering the house. Differences of that kind apply first of all to the main regions of the *watercrossing* rite - eastern Pannonia and northeastern Serbia.

The wedding participants are forced to jump over the trough filled with water before they enter the house among the Bunjevci in the village of Gara in southern Hungary and Sićevo in the Nišava valley in southeastern Serbia, while in Svinjica in the Romanian part of Banat they have to jump over a stick that is placed in front of a pail filled with water (Šibalin 1972; Mihailović 1971:94; Pantelić 1971:65).

Most of the data we are dealing with lack the information as to who is the beneficiary of the money thrown in to the water. Nevertheless, the information we have indicates certain regional regularities. In eastern Pannonia the money belongs either to the kitchen maid or to the women of the household.<sup>14</sup> Money collected in the *watercrossing* belongs to the bride in Mohač and Erčin, among the Šokci and Bunjevci in Hungary, among the Serbian population in the Romanian Banat, in the Negotin and Bor areas in northeastern Serbia and in Vranje and its surroundings in southeastern Serbia.<sup>15</sup> In Otok in eastern Slavonia the money belongs to the bagpipe player and bridesmaid, while in the Sombor area, among the Serbs, it belongs to the bride's friends (Lovretić 1897:455; Dimitrijević 1969-70:92).

All the details of the custom mentioned here definitely point to the imitation of crossing the river with all the symbolic implications of its dividing function. The symbolic connotation of the river has been transferred to the household territories of the wedding parties and has been applied in wedding customs to convey specific symbolic meanings.

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<sup>13</sup> Rajić 1919:46; Popov 1969-1970:62; Petrović 1931:105; Filakovac 1906:118; Stojanović 1881:231.

<sup>14</sup> Karalić ONŽO HAZU sign. 121d; Kravić EZ FFZ SR 101; Stojanac EZ FFZ SR 161, Bosić 1989-1990:269.

<sup>15</sup> Sarosács 1968:115; Deisinger NMB EA 4023; Pantelić 1971:65,68; Pantelić 1970:133,138; Pantelić 1975:134; Vukanović 1972:183.

Data concerning *watercrossing* are usually brief and concise. Some descriptions of the rite are quite colourful in picturing the imitation of real watercrossing. In northern Banat the rite is accompanied with a lot of humorous dialogue, the women step into the trough and the ferrymen row with a shovel instead of an oar, imitating the ride on a ferryboat and making waves by standing on the end of the trough while being splashed with water from the other end. The whole game ends with the ferrymen's announcement to the crew to get out on the shore (Popov 1969/70:62). Among the Romanians in southeastern Hungary the wedding procession led by the bestman and the bride refuses to pay until a bridge is made over water. The guardians improvise a bridge with weeds or broomcorn stalks, but this does not satisfy the best man and his party. Finally, a piece of cloth is placed over the water. The bride is now satisfied and she enters the house after having picked up the cloth (Hocopán 1972:183-184).

As the southernmost point of southeastern Serbia in Vranje and its surroundings, where we find an analogous rite, the *watercrossing* procedure and some details of the rite are somewhat different. In front of the bridegroom's house the bride cannot step over the threshold of the yard gate before her father-in-law drops money into the trough with water placed there. In addition, he is expected to promise to give her a part of his property. He shakes out gold coins from his pouch afterwards, placing the belt into the trough. Next, the father-in-law takes the bride's hand, she jumps over the trough and, led by her father-in-law, enters the yard and proceeds to the kitchen threshold, where he hands her over to the women of her new home. Afterwards the wedding party drops another coin into the trough for the bride. In the region of Vranje *watercrossing* is connected with a custom of different meaning, i.e. the obligation of the father-in-law to give a gift to his daughter-in-law before she enters her new home. It is interesting to note that a similar custom is known in eastern Pannonia, though it is not connected with *watercrossing* (Černelić 1991:131).

In northeastern Serbia, the *watercrossing* rite is accompanied by the bride splashing the wedding party while they drop coin into the water. This happens in the Negotin area among the Vlachs and in the village of Crnajka among the Serbs, while in the village of Sikovi members of household splash everyone who does not want to pay for the *watercrossing* (Pantelić 1970:133,138). Similarly among the Šokci in the village of Bođani in Bačka ferry women threaten to splash everyone who avoids paying (Kesejić EZ FFZ SR 31). As noted in the description of the *watercrossing* imitation in northern Banat, women standing on one end of the trough cause the water to splash at the other end and in the neighbourhood of Slavonski Brod splashing is accompanied with turning over of the through (Popov 1969/70:62; Demir Sem. r. - EZ FF). In

Gnjilane in the province of Kosovo, the pail filled with water is placed in front of the bride's house. Here the wedding attendants are not obliged to pay in order to cross the water, but only splashes are exchanged before the procession enters the house (Kus - Nikolajev 1935:262). Among the ortodox Albans the bride's mother welcomes the bridegroom at the door; he is kissing her hand, while she sprinkles him with water from vessel held for the purpose, with a dipper made of flowers. The bridegroom is throwing money into the vessel (Hahn 1853:145).

In some regions of northeastern Serbia and Bulgariathe custom of overturning a vessel full of water is connected with the *watercrossing* rite. A few correlations of these two rites, as well as splashing the wedding guests, point to the need to analyse them and find out to what degree these rites correspond to one another in their regional diffusion and their meanings. In the neighbourhood of Bor, in Zlot the bride alone, and in Oštrej the young couple or the groom alone, turn over a vessel full of water into which the wedding party has previously dropped a coin (Pantelić 1975:133-134; Đorić...1977:132). Among the Serbs in Krivelj, in the Negotin area, the vessel is turned over by the bridegroom or the best man, while among the Vlachs the bride spills the water from the vessel (Pantelić 1970:133, 138). Similar variant of the custom appears in the region of Trakia and Minor Asia in Bulgaria: wedding party members throw coins in the vessel full of water and the bride topples it with the foot, when she is leaving her home (Vakarelski 1935:374). In Ljeskovac and Trnova surroundings in Bulgaria it happens during the ceremony of taking off the bride, s headwear and the children collect the coins which are scattered around (Bogišić 1874:260). Similarly in the village of Sikirevci in eastern Slavonia, water from the trough is spilt after the best man has paid for *watercrossing* (Marković 1986: 37). In the region of northeastern Serbia the rite of overturning a vessel full of water appears in several variants unconnected with the *watercrossing* rite (Pantelić 1970:139; Pantelić 1978:372, 378).

The above examples have a limited distribution even in the northeastern Serbia, where a combination of rites with different meanings are practised most frequently. Some customs similar to the offering of water are also known in some souhern parts of the Balkan peninsula, confirmed only in isolated sources in eastern Hercegovina, Albania, and the northern Pind in Greece. In some regions of eastern Hercegovina the bride uncorks the container for carrying water and throws money in it in front of the bridegroom's house (Bratić 1903:391; Lilek 1898:25-26). In the region of Popovo polje she is taking out of the container an apple with coins stuck in it and leaves it upon the opening of the container (Mićović 1952:195). Among the ortodox Albanians the bride's mother welcomes the bridegroom at the door, having a vessel with water in her



hand; the bridegroom is throwing money into the vessel (Hahn 1853:145). Among the Vlachs in northern Greece the groomsman throws money in the jug and then topples it with the foot, when the wedding procession is coming to take the bride away (Wace - Thompson 1972:115). Data concerning these areas are specific and different from the Pannonian and northeastern and southeastern data. Some elements of the *watercrossing* rite can be recognized: a vessel full of water into which a coin is thrown in front of either the bride's or the groom's house. But the important difference is the absence of crossing as an element of the custom. The money that either the bride, the bridegroom or the groomsman throws into the water is a gift to the house they are supposed to enter and the rest of the wedding participants have nothing to do with it. These elements make the the basic difference between two customs that have a few elements in common, which could mislead us to regard them as identical.

Otherwise the custom of overturning a vessel full of water is found in some regions in Bosnia, eastern Hercegovina, southern Dalmatia (including Dubrovnik and Boka kotorska), in southern Serbia and Macedonia<sup>16</sup> The already mentioned example of the combination of the *watercrossing* rite and the rite of overturning a vessel full of water in eastern Slavonia is interesting, because otherwise these two rites exist as two separate rites in eastern Pannonic area. The rite of overturning the vessel full of water is sporadically known in eastern Pannonia: among the Bunjevci and Sokci ethnic groups in southern Hungary and in the regions of Banat and Srijem in Vojvodina.<sup>17</sup> Interesting variants of the rite appear on the territory of the western and northern Pannonic area.<sup>18</sup>

As we have seen, the *watercrossing* rite is regionally limited to eastern Pannonia, northeastern Serbia, as well as to southeastern Serbia and Bulgaria, where it has been only sporadically confirmed. The custom is also known among some Croatian ethnic groups in Vojvodina and Hungary. Having such territorial diffusion, it is characterized by certain regional differences, insufficient, however, to point to any typological diversity of the custom. The result of the

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<sup>16</sup> Drobnjaković 1937:86; Lilek 1898:59; Hangi 1906:187; Palunko 1908:260; Delić 1907:281; Semiz 1903:595; Kajmaković 1959:123; Bonifačić Rožin IEF 729; Lamza EZ FFZ SR 15; Diversis 1973:69; Raguž Sem. r. - EZ FFZ; Vukmanović 1976:281; Antonijević 1971:150; Stojančević 1958:446; Đorđević 1958:469; Pavlović 1928:232,236.

<sup>17</sup> Batinkov Dipl. r. - KH FFP SJP; Sarosács 1968:118; Bota 1954:133; Kravić EZ FFZ SR 101.

<sup>18</sup> Stojanović 1881:57; Đorđević 1984:299-301; Drganc 1935:216; Cajnko 1986:182; Ivančan-Lovrenčević 1969:22.

analysis indicates that we are dealing with a typologically analogous custom regionally limited to the northeastern parts of the Southern Slavic territories, according to the available sources.<sup>19</sup>

The focus of the rite is on the border crossing that is symbolized by water. As we have seen, the name of the trough or vessel filled with water is quite often the name of a river. This rite is closely linked with a custom taking place on the way between the two houses. Sometimes the wedding procession has to cross a bridge over a river or brook and drop a coin into the water. The meanings of these rites might be close, but at this point our interest is focused on *watercrossing* in front of the house, which is obviously an imitation of real *watercrossing* in a natural environment. The offering given to the water could be incorporated into the meaning of the rite of *watercrossing* though in this case it has a secondary connotation.<sup>20</sup> The rite of *watercrossing* may have other connotations, too, therefore other possible symbolic and magical, as well as the mythological aspects of the rite might as well be analysed.

On the one hand, it would be necessary to find out if the *watercrossing* rite is known among other than the South Slavic or Romanian Pannonian population, or possibly among the other Slavs. At the same time, the presence of *watercrossing* in some southeastern Slavic territories points to the need to investigate the extent of its traces in the southern and southeastern parts of the Balkan peninsula. On the other hand, it would be necessary to find out to what degree some data on customs from other southern Balkan regions correspond to *watercrossing*. We classified them as typologically different from *watercrossing*, because they lack its basic element, i.e. crossing over the water that stands as a symbol of the border dividing the outside from the inside world of a household territory. Besides, certain elements confirmed in some southern and southeastern Balkan regions, such as splashing the wedding guests and overturning the vessel with water, have also been part of the rite of *watercrossing* in some places. All these coincidences, however rare they might be, are very interesting examples of permeation of various ritual procedures. The characteristic distribution of the specific rites connected with water points to the fact that their origin should be sought among the native population of the southeastern Europe.

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<sup>19</sup>The Romanian, Albanian and Greek sources, as well as the Macedonian and the Bulgarian, are quite certainly insufficient, not concerning only the native population, but also the Vlach groups inhabiting certain regions in the area.

<sup>20</sup>E. Schneeweis mentions the rite of *watercrossing* as one of many proceedings taking place in front of the bride, s and the bridegroom, s house, reducing its meaning to protection from hostile demons and evil spirits (1961:71).

The study of *watercrossing* rite appears to be one of the possible answers to the already posed questions concerning the ethnic, cultural and historical processes on the expanse of the southeastern Europe. It is one among many customs that have pointed to the possible mutual permeation of different cultures: those of the settled Slavic peoples and of the autochthonous Romance speaking population of the Balkans (Černelić 1999). As such, it brings us one step closer to the clarification and unfolding of the complex ethnocultural processes in the history of the southeastern Europe.

Translated by Milana Černelić and Dora Maček

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ONŽO HAZU - Odbor za narodni život i običaje Hrvatske Akademije znanosti i umjetnosti (Committee for Folk Life and Customs of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts).

EZ FFZ SR - Arhiv Etnološkog zavoda Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu - stariji rukopisi (Archives of the Ethnological Institute of the Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb, older manuscripts).

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Sem. r. - EZ FFZ = Seminarski rad - Etnološki zavod Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu (Seminar - Ethnological Institute of the Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb)

Dipl. r. - KH FFP SJP = Diplomski rad - Katedra za hrvatski jezik i književnost Filozofskog fakulteta u Pečuhu Sveučilišta Janus Pannonius (Degree Essay - Seat of Croatian Language and Literature of the Faculty of Philosophy, the Janus Pannonius University)

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## PRIJELAZ PREKO VODE PRIJE ULASKA SVADBENE POVORKE U KUĆU

### Sažetak

U članku se analizira obred *prijelaza preko vode* koji predstavlja jednu od prepreka koju svadbena povorka treba svladati prije nego što uđe u kuću. Ponekad se obavlja ispred obje kuće, češće ili ispred nevjestine ili mladoženjine kuće. Korito, vedro ili posuda s vodom smješteno je ispred kuće i svadbena družina ili netko od svatovskih časnika je dužan ubaciti metalni novčić u vodu da bi omogućio ulazak svatova u kuću. *Prijelaz preko vode* najviše je zastupljen u istočnom panonskom prostoru, prvenstveno u istočnoj Slavoniji i Vojvodini te sporadično u panonskom dijelu Rumunjske i u sjeveroistočnoj Srbiji s pretežito vlaškim stanovništvom.

Analiza elemenata obreda potvrđuje da je riječ o tipološki istovrsnoj pojavi regionalno ograničenoj na istočne dijelove južnoslavenskoga područja. Budući da postoji nekoliko izoliranih podataka o *prijelazu preko vode* i u jugoistočnim dijelovima ovoga područja kao i pojedini zajednički elementi s nekim drugim obredima tipološki različitim (prevrtanje posude s vodom, prskanje svatova) u pojedinim središnjim istočnim i južnim prostorima jugoistočne Europe (neka područja Bosne, istočna Hercegovina, južna Dalmacija, južna Srbija, Bugarska, Makedonija, Albanija, sjeverna Grčka) bilo bi potrebno slijediti trag ovom običaju na širem prostoru jugoistočne Europe. Takav karakterističan raspored specifičnih obrednih postupaka vezanih uz vodu, ukazuje da njihovo izvorište valja tražiti u starosjedilačkom stanovništvu jugoistočne Europe. *Prijelaz preko vode* jedna je od pojava u nizu koje su ukazale na moguća uzajamna prožimanja različitih kultura: doseljenih slavenskih naroda i starosjedilačkog romanskog stanovništva. Kao takav, ovaj običaj nas približava konačnom odgovoru na već ranije postavljena pitanja o etnokulturnim procesima u složenim povijesnim uvjetima na prostoru jugoistočne Europe.