

ENDOGAMOUS MARRIAGES IN THE ISOLATED MOUNTAIN OF GRADIȘTEA DE MUNTE, HUNEDOARA COUNTY

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ABSTRACT: *In the traditional Romanian village in the mountain area, isolation naturally leads to endogamous marital behavior. To this is added the concern for the conservation of the land property. In the interval 1824-1995 the demographic data on the nuptiality demonstrate an accentuated endogamous behavior (especially until 1960). There are real family clans present to this day.*

Key words: *mountain isolated; endogamy; family clans;*

“The Grădiștea Muncelului-Cioclovina Natural Park was established in 1979, and since 2000 it has been declared a protected area of national interest. It is located in the Șureanu Mountains, with the subdivisions of the Orastia Mountains and the Sebeș Mountains, being bordered by the depressions of Hațeg and Oră iei. In the mountain villages, the locals are hospitable and the hikers are highly likely to be invited to stay overnight in the host. The Grădiștea Muncelului-Cioclovina Natural Park comprises some of the most important ancient settlements on the territory of Romania: five Dacian fortresses in the UNESCO Patrimony. The “pearl” of the protected area of Hunedoara County is Sarmizegetusa Regia, the capital of the pre-Roman Dacia” [comuna-orastioara desus.ro]. This is the current description of the area that has as its central point the locality of Grădi tea de Munte, which represents the isolated mountain where we collected in 1998-2000 demographic data related to nuptiality, recording all marriages made between 1824-1995.

The places in which the old local residents are mainly located, those on the Anineș Valley, the Rea Valley, Sub Cununi, Groape, Carpeni, Măgureanului Hills, represent old ancient hearths, fireplaces, terraced and arranged. It can be stated that the Gradiștea’s inhabitants continue to live

in exactly the same place in which their Dacian ancestors lived, in an uninterrupted series, even though the Roman occupation led to the destruction of the fortresses in the area.

In the monograph of the locality the problem of the historical evolution of the population is described as follows: The wars with the Romans have led to an even greater concentration of population in this area, however narrow, and this can be deduced from the numerous traces of different workshops, especially to be made. weapons. They are complemented by large cereal deposits and water tanks, with impressive capacities. (Chișu, 2002, p. 29)

The framework in which this community operates is naturally leading to endogamous behavior. Strictly speaking, inbreeding is the custom of selecting conjugal partners from within the same kinship group. In an endogamous society, affinity or alliance relationships are therefore only a consequence of biological kinship: people marry because they are related by common descent. The endogamous matrimonial strategies were directed by the parents and controlled by the family group for the continuity of the family and the division of the heritage.

For the traditional villages in the mountain areas, the endogamous universe means the respective peasant community,

which means that it becomes the criterion of territoriality. If we postulate the criterion of territoriality, then the endogamous marriages are, in our case, those in which both partners are born in Gradiștea de Munte. Semi-endogamous marriages are represented by those marriages in which one partner is from Grădi tea and the other from the neighboring villages, those that are administratively owned by the commune of Oră țiaoara de Sus. Exogamy is represented by all other situations. Following these delimitations, the situation of the 337 marriages in Gradiștea de Munte, between 1824-1995, looks like this in Tabel 1.

1975, the number of exogamous marriages is obviously higher than the number of endogamous marriages.

We can conclude that in the village to which we refer, as in the whole Romanian rural area, the system of endogamous marriages worked, first inside the same locality, then, by widening the sphere of influence, in the neighboring villages, in the land and area to which the village belonged. The most disadvantaged were those with a higher material status or high social status, who in order to avoid the misalignment or rather, to establish useful multilateral alliances at the level of the castes, were

Tabel 1. The typology of marriages according to the territoriality criterion

	Number of marriages	Percent
1 Endogamous	139	41,2
2 Semi-endogamous	106	31,5
3. Exogamous	92	27,3
Total	337	100,0

The large number of endogamous marriages is observed (41.2%). This type of marriages reaches almost two thirds (72.7%), if we sum up the semi-endogamous marriages (fig. 1).

obliged to expand their network of matrimonial relations over an entire area, on a whole land. "(Pop, 1999).

Local endogamy imposed some particularly rigorous rules such as

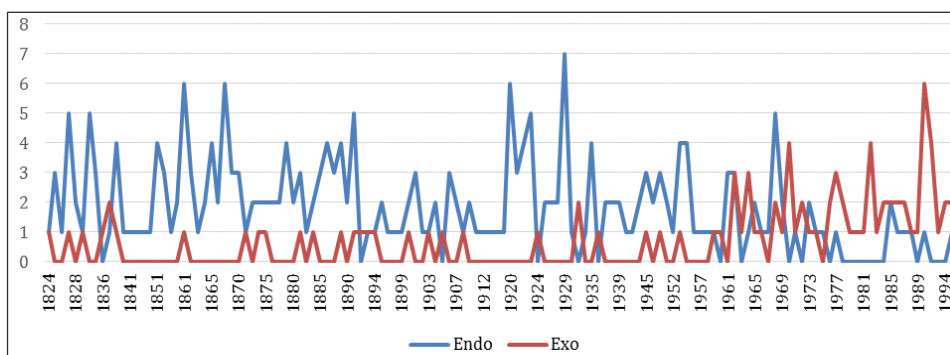


Fig. 1. Endogamous vs Exogamous marriages

For a decade and a half, from 1824 to 1960, marriages in Grădi tea de Munte were almost exclusively endogamous. Between 1960 and 1975 the weights of the two types of marriages are approximately equal. After

contracting marriages beyond the third degree of kinship, discouraging marriages between brothers-in-law (son and daughter of a family with another's son and daughter), to which is added the prohibition of

marriages between descendants related by godfather relationship. These rules had repercussions on the age at marriage (Table 2).

if we extend the interval up to 34 years. This picture denotes the eminently natural role of women in the traditional community social in this mountainous isolate (Table 4, fig. 2).

Table 2 – Average age at marriage

	Average age of the husband at marriage	Average age of the wife at marriage	Average age difference between spouses
Endogamous	29,28	23,41	5,61
Semi-endogamous	28,42	22,57	5,85
Exogamous	28,38	24,44	3,98

If the average difference between spouses is in the case of exogamy of less than 4 years, in the endogamy it is close to 6 years. This denotes the increased difficulty of finding the right partner in one's own generational field for endogamous marriages.

For men, the age at marriage is determined by the evidence of a maturity that results in a material stability and the confidence given by the previous generations that they are able to manage the properties received. Thus, of the 323 men, whose age we know in marriages, between 1829 and 1995, about 40% are between 25 and 29 years old (Table 3):

The process of taking over, maintaining and transmitting a family heritage is fundamental and becomes the main social factor in perpetuating endogamous marriages. It is thus shown that the property originally designated the domain of the people first and foremost. The small family and the extended family (the kinship) were connected organically with the property, especially with the land.

The symmetrical exchange between two families, often considered as a matrimonial rule in certain mountain areas, is generally accounted for by the desire to increase the wealth and not the one - closer to reality - of keeping it unfragmented, without the risk of

Table 3 – Husband's age at marriage

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulate Percent
<20 years	5	1,5	1,5
20-24 years	94	29,1	30,7
25-29 years	127	39,3	70,0
30-34 years	43	13,3	83,3
35-39 years	27	8,4	91,6
40-44 years	4	1,2	92,9
45-49 years	8	2,5	95,4
50-54 years	5	1,5	96,9
55-60 years	6	1,9	98,8
>60 years	4	1,2	100,0
Total	323	100,0	

At girls it is observed that up to 24 years of age a percentage of over 70% are already married, the proportion reaching up to 90%

a misalignment. In fact, after the analyzes in the isolated mountain of Grădi tea de Munte and the surrounding villages, one can

observe the practice, until 60-70 years ago, of marriage by restricted exchange (Lévi-Strauss, 1968, p. 548) between some kin, on economic criteria, but respecting the mentioned restrictions.

the users of the national spies can be highlighted (Table 5).

It is observed that out of the 337 marriages recorded in Grădiștea de Munte between 1824-1995, in more than 250 cases

Table 4 – Wife's age at marriage

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulate Percent
<20 years	101	31,7	31,7
20-24 years	128	40,1	71,8
25-29 years	38	11,9	83,7
30-34 years	21	6,6	90,3
35-39 years	10	3,1	93,4
40-44 years	12	3,8	97,2
45-49 years	5	1,6	98,7
50-54 years	2	,6	99,4
55-60 years	1	,3	99,7
>60 years	1	,3	100,0
Total	319	100,0	

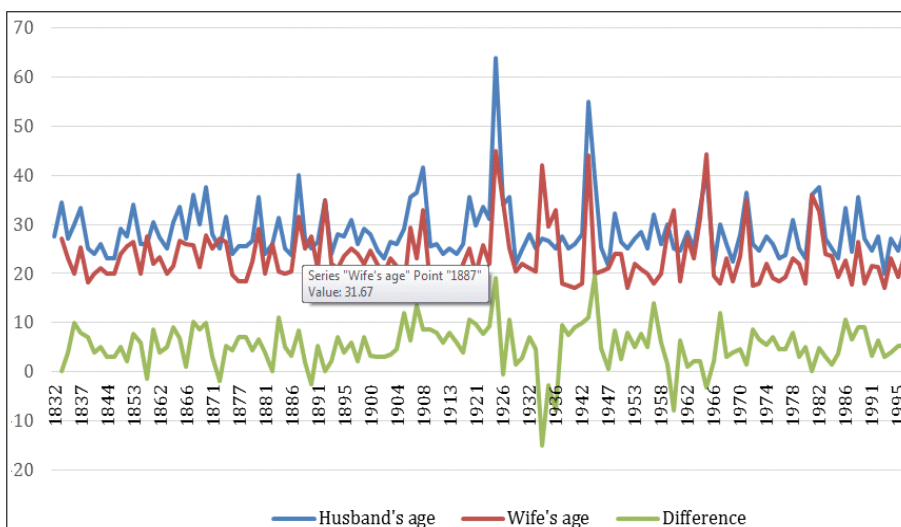


Fig. 2. Average ages at marriage

For the researcher, it is noticeable that, without being close as a relative, the spouses had easily detectable common descendants.

Thus, from the nineteenth century, for which there are records, but certainly the roots are somewhere in the past centuries,

one of the partners bears the surname Alionescu, Crișan, Ciucurescu, Lăscoi.

We can conclude that both the territoriality and the structure of the property have outlined in this mountain true family clans based on the endogamy behavior.

Table 5 – Names of clans

Clans	Wife's family name	Husband's family name
ALIONESCU	34	31
CRIȘAN	22	12
CIUCURESCU	20	16
LĂSCOI	19	10

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