

HISTORIOGRAPHIC OUTLINING ON THE *SONG OF THE DAWN**

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Abstract: The ritual manifestations that accompany the funeral, carried out within the traditional community, have been referred to, in the specialised literature, as *passing rites*. The rites, the gestures, the customs, along with the funerary ritual texts, strictly transmitted from one generation to another, prove their own signification, as much as they are related to a transcendent reality. In this context, they play their polyvalent roles, on one side, by assuring the separation of the soul by the world of the living, and its aggregation into that of the ancestors, and, on the other side, through the fact that they reinstall the temporary equilibrium state that has been lost through death.

In the present study there have been pointed out the most significant contributions of the theme, based on ethnographic and anthropologic researches, which have been carried out since the second half of the 19th century.

Keywords: historiography, funerary ceremony, Song of the Dawn, Oltenia, post-existence.

Within the Romanian space, the funerary ceremonies contain a ritual sequentiality that implies the rigorous performing of the three essential categories of rites: of separation, of passing and of aggregation¹. The conservative character of the funerary rites can be explained through the obligation to perform certain practices, manifestations and ritual gestures, by the family and the people who attend the funeral, which are thought to help the soul of the deceased to cross the difficult road, and to integrate into the community of the ancestors. In case the

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¹ According to Arnold van Gennep, *Rituri de trecere*, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 1996, the rites of passing have a pre-liminary, a liminal and a post-liminal phase, p. 22.

funerary ritual is not fulfilled by those who have this inalienable responsibility, the soul of the deceased has its statute affected, along with the destiny of the kin².

The phenomenon of solidarity of those who attend, with the grieving family, can sometimes manifest itself through folkloric ritual texts, seconded by the symbolic gestures and mimic. The funerary creations, with a value of verbal rite, belong to the ritual-ceremonial context and fulfil a pure ritual function, although, in the past, they used to have a magical function. It must not be forgotten the fact that, the sophisticated mythology of the death, the fear and the fascination referring to the land of the Other Side World results from the need to find explanations and arguments for the post-existential representations. The entire social life is carried on under the mark of “the eternal return” of the mythical time, along with the repetition of the same complex gestures and verbal structures, from the ritual background with a mythical substantiation. The myth models the entire human behaviour, prevents the moments of crisis, ensures the cohesion of the social group.

Within the Romanian ethnic and cultural space, the ritual funerary song displays three manifestations – *The Song of the Dawn*, *The Song of the Fir-Tree* and *The Wake Song* –, which, along with the *Versified Laments* are included, through the messages transmitted to the other-side-world traveller, into the Romanian Book of Dead. Mihai Pop considered that, in the past, the ritual-ceremonial songs used to be performed on the entire Romanian space, because, in the texts of the laments, there are images that appear in the ritual songs too³. Due to the fact that, in the last period of time, the burial funeral has been simplified, some of the themes and motives moving towards the *Song of the Dawn*, which confers it a composite structure. Among the traditional themes and motives illustrated within the lyric funeral creations, as an example, we are mentioning: *the deceiving death, the ruthless death, the death and the cuckoo, the abandoned house, the bed of the dead, the mourning cart, the messenger-deceased, the leading of the souls on the right way towards the Virgin Mary, the meeting with the other dead, the irreversibility of the route of death* etc.

The Song of the Fir-Tree, performed by women in group, at specific ceremonial moments, has an obvious archaic character, on addressing both the content, and the form. This ritual-ceremonial song, with a mythological, pre-Christian, base, has a much more limited area than the custom, being spread in the north-western Oltenia, between Jiu and the Carpathians (the western part of Tg. Jiu district, Baia de Arama district and the north side of Turnu Severin district), a narrow strip of the western Banat (especially Bistra Valley), then Țara Hațegului (including the Transylvanian basin of river Jiu), the Land of Pădureni and the Valley of Mureș,

² Referring to the beliefs of the man, on addressing the Other-Side World, see Loredana-Maria Ilin-Grozoiu, *Concepte, credințe și tradiții privind nemurirea sufletului și cultul morților*, Craiova, Universitaria Publishing House, Bucharest, Pro Universitaria Publishing House, 2014.

³ Mihai Pop, *Mitul Marii Treceți*, in vol. “Romanian folklore”, Bucharest, Grai și Suflet-Cultura Națională Publishing House, 1998, p. 79.

between Deva and Aiud (to the edge of Apuseni Mountains)⁴. It ought to be mentioned the fact that, within this spreading area, even if there are small differences in terms of content, the merging of the sequences, of functionality, of the musical texts, the subject of this ritual funerary song is the same.

The area of spreading for the *Wake Song* encompasses the southern and eastern Transylvania, northern and southern Moldova. Most of the times, this song is performed within the same areas as the laments and the *Song of the Dawn*.

The Song of the Dawn is spread in the north-western Oltenia, Banat (especially the hilly and mountainside areas), a part of Țara Hațegului and here and there in the west of Pădureni Land⁵. This ritual implies that, when a person dies, a group of women, who are not close relatives of the deceased, perform the *Song of the Dawn*, in different moments of the funerary ceremony, once or three times, as long as the deceased is in the house. If the lament is a spontaneous and subjective manifestation of suffering, the ritual song has to follow precisely a certain text. This funerary ritual song was published at the end of the 19th century, when the study of the folk universe was orienting towards the field of the folk songs, by Ion Becineagă⁶, B. P. Hașdeu⁷, Simion Manguica⁸, Aurel Iana⁹, Viorica Magdu¹⁰ and Enea Hodoș¹¹, and in the first period of the next one, by G. Coșbuc¹², O. Densușianu¹³, Ion G. Popescu¹⁴ etc.

In the Romanian ethnic-cultural space, the rites addressing the death and the *Dawn* funerary songs have drawn the attention of the researchers and folklorists, who have always considered the ternary structure of the funerary ceremony. Within the collective mentality, the separation from this world is perceived not as a barrier that cannot be passed, but as “an instance that establishes other temporal relations, which extends the perceiving of time. By becoming aware of the death, the time of living is completed, almost concretely, by a time extension”¹⁵. For Nicolae Panea, This-Side

⁴ Ovidiu Bârlea, *Folclorul și unele probleme ale dezvoltării poporului roman*, in “R.E.F.”, year IV (1959), no. 1-2, pp. 196.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 197.

⁶ Ion Becineagă, *Diorile – datini populare*, in “Familia”, year XI, 1875, pp. 268-269, 568.

⁷ B. P. Hașdeu, *Cuvinte din bătrâni*, volume I, Bucharest, 1878.

⁸ Simion Manguica, *Căldariul iulian-gregorian și poporalu român pe anul 1883*, Biserica Albă, 1882, pp. 129-131.

⁹ Aurel Iana, *Jalea românului*, in “Familia”, year XXVI, 1890, p. 546.

¹⁰ Viorica Magdu, *Diorile*, in “Gazeta Transilvaniei”, LIV (1891), no. 22.

¹¹ Enea Hodoș, *Cuvinte din bătrâni*, Caransebeș, 1898.

¹² G. Coșbuc, *Bocetul*, in “Familia”, XXXVII, 1901, pp. 277-279. The author observes, for the first time, the sorrowful lyricism of the funerary song, related to the elements of nature: “The dawns are coming/ And you are still sleeping/ Wake up my dear brother,/ The sun is shining up in the sky/ Look out of the window/ Listen to the cuckoo singing”; Idem, *The song of the Dawn*, in “Universul literar”, XXI, 1903, no. 2, p. 2.

¹³ O. Densușianu, *Flori alese din cântecele populare*, Bucharest, 1920.

¹⁴ Ion G. Popescu, *Obiceiuri, credințe și superstiții în Clopotiva*, in Ion Conea (coordinator) *Clopotiva: a village from Hațeg*, II, 1940, p. 433 and next.

¹⁵ Nicolae Panea, *Folclor literar românesc: pâinea, vinul și sarea, ospitalitatea și moartea*, Craiova, Scrisul Românesc, 2005, p. 32.

World is “a world of exchanges, of gifts, of equivalent, a world of acceptance and reciprocity. It is a world of giving. The quintessence is given, according to our opinion, by the following lyrics: *It is not of giving, But of enduring...*”¹⁶.

Starting with the second half of the 19th century, the ethnographer S. Fl. Marian oriented “the investigation of the folk culture firstly towards the concrete aspects of the peasant’s life”¹⁷, continuing, in this manner, the directions of the European ethno-psychological directions. His activity of gathering data on the Romanian funerary beliefs, rites and rituals, was manifested through the publishing of the work *The funeral at Romanians. Ethnographic study*, in 1892¹⁸. Researcher of the popular culture, he draws attention to the fact that “When writing the present work, I have considered only the customs and beliefs of the Romanians from all the provinces, where they live. Yet, if, during my research, I found customs and beliefs, partly Roman, partly of other origin, but which were similar to those of the Romanians, I could not refrain myself from reproducing them too”.

The author considered the *Dawn Songs* a specific type of laments, due to the fact that, along the paper, these songs are not analysed within the section dedicated to the laments, but separately. In his acceptance, “their name comes partly from the Dawn fairies, which are invoked to wake the deceased, partly from the moment when they are sung. And their singing or lamenting is expressed through the verb *to cry*, rarely, or to sing. Therefore, in certain regions, these laments are also called *the cry*, or *the cry of the dawn*, and, in others, the *song of the dawn*”¹⁹. The ethnographer describes a ritual from Banat, for the sending away of the ghost, performed on the second, the third and the fourth day at dawn break, by seven or eight women, next to the grave, calling for the dawns of the dead.

Further on, we are going to focus our attention on the important bibliographic sources that contain the *Song of the Dawn*, from Oltenia. Some of the aspects considered by the authors were: the knowing of the ritual-ceremonial context in which these ceremonial songs are performed; the gathering of new pieces from the funerary repertoire, interesting both as authenticity and artistic performance; the knowing of their frequency, their documentary and stylistic value; the identification, within the ritual texts of the *Songs of the Dawn*, the traditional themes and motifs, the specific poetic images.

According to Teodor Gâlcescu, the women who perform the Song of the Dawn are called the *Dawn Women*: “The women who lament do not have a special name, sometimes, they are called “the lamenters”. The term of *laments* and *lamenters* are recognised by the entire region. There can be two, or three groups of women who know the songs. The lamenting for the dead is usually done in the

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ Silvia Ciubotaru, *B. P. Haşdeu și cultura populară*, in “Anuar de lingvistică și istorie literară”, Iași, volume XXVI, 1977-1978, p. 208.

¹⁸ S. Fl. Marian, *Înmormântarea la români. Studiu etnografic*, 1892.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 226.

morning, before the sunrise, in the three consecutive days that the deceased spends in the house. For this reason, the lamenters are known as the *Down Women*²⁰.

It ought to be underlined that, the ethno-musicologist Constantin Brăiloiu was the first to draw the attention on the differences that exist between the ritual-ceremonial songs specific for the funeral, and the laments. Thus, the author considers that, unlike the laments, defined as “a melodic outburst of the grief”, the ceremonial songs are “ritual songs, better said ceremonial, sung by “chosen” women, who can be close relatives of the deceased, at specific times of the day, and according to some unwritten laws”²¹. The author was noticing the archaic character of this funeral song, which is not just a lament. Different from the lament, which is the individual expression of grief, the funerary ritual song is a scenario of a well-established ritual that includes institutionalisation, specialised performers, which confers a special social character, within the rural community. Constantin Brăiloiu published a series of variants of the *Song of the Dawn*, in which there were noticed interferences between rite, myth, religion and the ritual text. These funerary ritual texts, totally different from those of the laments, “depict a major pentatonic, with a final half cadence that shows the influence of Banat”²².

O. Buhociu in the work called *Folclorul de iarnă, Zorile și poezia pastorală* (*The winter folklore, the Dawn and the pastoral poetry*), elaborated in 1979²³, publishes the text of a variant of the song of the Dawn, recited or sung next to the window after sunset, by three older women, who hold each other around the waist and swing on the right and on the left, according to the tune. In this ritual funerary text, the role of guide towards the sacred land is fulfilled by a wolf, a fox, or an otter. As referring to the interpretation of *Song of the Dawn* at a funeral, the author concludes that: “We again deal with a mythical archaic and pre-Christian source, regarding the interpretation of death and soul, by the people living within the Carpathian regions”²⁴.

The popular Romanian creation, analysed within the European context, was the basis of the scientific preoccupations and activities, carried out by I. C. Chițimia. The compared study of the ritual-ceremonial funerary songs “proves the different way of perceiving and singing the disappearance of the human being”²⁵. The author analyses the activity of G. Coșbuc, referring to the gathering and interpretation of the *Song of the Dawn*, who “due to his poetic sense, established a

²⁰ Teodor Gâlcescu, *Folclor din Gorj*, extras from “Grai și suflet”, VII, 1937, pp. 3-4.

²¹ Constantin Brăiloiu, “*Ale mortului*” din *Gorj*, in “Opere”, vol. V, introductory study, translated and supervised by Emilia Comișel, Bucharest, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, 1981, p. 109.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 110.

²³ O. Buhociu, *Folclorul de iarnă, Zorile și poezia pastorală*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1979.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

²⁵ I. C. Chițimia, *Folclorul românesc în perspectivă comparată*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1971, p. IX.

series of literary specific characteristics, which proved to be fundamental, some of the laments that he studied showing a unique artistic value”²⁶.

In the folklore collection of Dumitru Șandru we find variants of the ritual text from the *Song of the Dawn*, from the locality of Malaia (Vâlcea County) and from the north of Oltenia (localities of Păunești and Izverna)²⁷. *The Song of the Dawn* version from Malaia is, nonetheless, the Carol of the Dawn, a variant sung at the end of the carolling in Țara Loviștei and the south of Transylvania.

The work of C. Mohanu, called *Fântâna dorului. Poezii populare din Țara Loviștei (The Fountain of longing. Folkloric poems from Țara Loviștei)*, elaborated in 1975, on addressing the folklore from this region²⁸, is founded on the field research carried out by the author in the over thirty localities. The researcher comes to the conclusion that, although in the past, in Loviștea, there was also a ceremonial song (*The Dawn of the Dead*), it was integrated into the lament, because some laments are sung in certain moments (on the way to the cemetery, while burying the deceased, at feasts, early in the morning)²⁹.

As regarding the funerary ceremony from Mehedinți County, Pavel Ciobanu was one of the people who approached the subject³⁰. It reminds of a variant of the ritual *Song of the Dawn*, from Seliștea, Mehedinți County.

In 1988, Mariana Kahane and Lucilia Georgescu-Stănculeanu, researchers at the Department of Musicology, from the Institute of Ethnologic and Dialectological Researches of Bucharest, were publishing the work *Cântecul Zorilor și Bradului (The Song of the Dawn and of the Fir-Tree)*, for which the two specialists invested a lot of effort³¹. The ceremonial texts of the *Song of the Dawn*, which are founded on field investigations, are not only numerous, but also very close to the authentic forms.

The study realised by Mihai Fifor on the funerary ceremony, is based on the field investigations from the north of Gorj County, in the localities of Brediceni and Cernădia. These researches “position us in front of an extremely interesting phenomenon and, unfortunately, a more and more frequent one, such is “the spoiling” of one of the most conservative traditional manifestations, that of the funerary ritual. It has become more and more visible, a probable irreversible process of desacralisation, of passing from the sacred to the profane, a process

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 191.

²⁷ Dumitru Șandru, *Folclor românesc*, edition supervised by Tudora Șandru Olteanu, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1987, pp. 458-460.

²⁸ C. Mohanu, *Fântâna dorului. Poezii populare din Țara Loviștei*, Bucharest, Minerva Publishing House, 1975, p. 631.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 631.

³⁰ Pavel Ciobanu, *Plaiul Cloșani*, vol. I, Published by Centrul Județean de Îndrumare a Creației Populare Mehedinți, Drobeta Turnu-Severin, 1976; vol. III, 1981; vol. IV, 1996.

³¹ Mariana Kahane, Lucilia Georgescu-Stănculeanu, *Cântecul zorilor și bradului*, Bucharest, Editura Muzicală Publishing House, 1988.

generated mainly by a void of signification, felt within the dogma, the faith, and, more and more increasingly, within the rituals”³². The researcher considers a recovery of the sacred through an analysis of the symbols that are included in the *Song of the Dawn*.

Another study, elaborated by Mihai Fifor, referring to the richness of ritual-magical acts and practices, related to the great passing, are founded on the direct field researches from the locality of Salcia. The author considered the ancient sequences and elements, along with the ones that confer individuality to the funerary ceremony³³.

Nicolae Panea and Mihai Fifor talk about the group of old women, who become true solar priestesses, with the role of predestining the faith of the dead: “The communication during the day, starts with the invoking of the dawn, by the group of older women. The Dawn Women are not depicted now only as solar priestesses, but also as intermediaries, between the community and the occult deity, parallel to a Christian God, because these women are seen as Fairies, Faith Fairies, without any connection to the temporal dimension”³⁴. These ritual funerary songs become “the keepers of secrets, and even if it would seem too much to imagine the esoteric aura, they have something from the mystery of the sacerdocy”³⁵.

Within the *Song of the Dawn*, the fundamental myth that we find, is that of the great road, or the great passing. The travelling of the road, for passing from one world into another, implies the going through several stages, well-established by Mihai Pop: “The first stage is, as in some fairy-tales, the choosing of the road (...). The second stage, as well as in the tales, is the meeting with the helpers (...). The third stage presents the first contact with the world of the dead, the meeting with the frontier of this world and the customs that must be paid, in order to accede to it”³⁶.

The Song of the Dawn was researched by Ion Ghinoiu in the work *Lumea de aici, lumea de dincolo. Ipostaze românești ale nemuririi (This-side World, the Other-side World). Romanian hypostases of immortality*, published in 1999. The author speaks about three sisters who face the sunrise, holding a candle and a stalk of basil, and invoking the Dawn, in different moments of the funerary ceremony, to not rise soon (the variants from Gorj), or they asked why the Sun has hurried to appear, on the day the deceased is departing (the variants from Mehedinți and, partially, from Banat). The Dawns are goddesses of destiny for the departed towards the Other-side World. In the Romanian collective imaginary, the *Dawns* are three sister fairies who decide, through their occurrence before the sunrise, the

³² Mihai Fifor, *Cântecul ritual funerar-contribuții la analiza simbolurilor*, in “Arhivele Olteniei”, new series, no. 10/1995, p. 173.

³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 95-111.

³⁴ Nicolae Panea, Mihai Fifor, *Cartea românească a morții*, Drobeta, Published by Centrul Creației Populare a județului Mehedinți, 1998, p. 89.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ Mihai Pop, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

exiting of the soul from existence, and its entering into post-existence. These goddesses become correspondent of the Faith Fairies, goddesses of the soul arrived in This-side World. A precious piece of information aims the archaic character of the sonority and the evoking power of the ritual funerary text, nonetheless, which “is of a hardly imagined greatness, for the one who has ever had the opportunity to hear and see the custom being performed”³⁷.

Vasile Şişu was publishing, in 2001, the work *Odiseea sufletului-epos funerar românesc (The Soul Odyssey – Romanian funerary epos)*³⁸, where the ritual funeral song from Mehedinţi County held a special position. The ethnologist depicts the ritual sequencing of the funerary ceremony, which has the role to mark its significant moments: *the Signs of Death (Premonition); the Participation, the Forgiveness, the Coming-out of the Soul, If the dying person cannot die, the washing of the dead, the Round-shaped candle, the Cloth for covering the face, the String used for measuring the dead, the Watching of the dead, the Small cross made of wax, the Things to be put in the coffin, the Bag for the Censing Women, the Coffin, the Leaving from home, On the way, Next to the Grave, the Fir-tree of the Dead, the Cross, the Cemetery, the Returning home from the Cemetery, the Funeral Feast after the burial, the Wheat Porridge, the Mourning Cloth on the House, the Post-funeral Feasts, the Bringing Home of Water, the Ghosts, the Seven-year Feast, the Censing of the Dead, the Hora danced for the Dead, the Funerary Practices and Rites of Fertility, the Death and the Dreams, Other aspects on addressing the Funeral, the Christian Services and Traditions on addressing the Human Soul, the Remembrance Services and the traditional Dogmas after the Funeral, the Masses for the Dead. The Dawn Songs*, invocations of the sun, are called this way only when referring to the first ritual funerary songs, sung in the morning, in front of the house, the others having the name of the ritual object next to which they are sung.

The published variants, from the villages of Mehedinţi County: Rucu, Bahna, Runcşor, Schitul Topolniţei, Dâlbociţa, Negoieşti, Noapteşa, Lumaş (Godeanu), Păuneşti, Bala de Jos, Şişeşti etc., transmit the following message: “After the disappearance of the human body, the soul has to remain alive, in the other world, to not “die the second time” or to remain in the inferno”³⁹.

References to the first sequence of the *Dawns* are made by Nicolae Panea, in the work *Gramatica funerarului (The Grammar of the Funeral)*, elaborated in 2003. He notices that the Dawn Women, necessarily an odd number, identified by the community as experts of the ritual texts “basically double, in a laic manner, the function of the priest, accompanying, along with him, the departing of the dead”⁴⁰.

³⁷ Ion Ghinoiu, *Lumea de aici, lumea de dincolo. Ipostaze româneşti ale nemuririi*, Bucharest, Fundaţia Culturală Publishing House, 1999, p. 101.

³⁸ Vasile Şişu, *Odiseea sufletului – epos funerar românesc*, Centrul Judeţean de Creaţie Populară Mehedinţi Drobeta Turnu-Severin, 2001.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 329.

⁴⁰ Nicolae Panea, *Gramatica funerarului*, Craiova, Scrisul Românesc Publishing House, 2003, p. 72.

The name, the behaviour and the clothes are just few elements that make the difference between these women and the other members of the community. Different from the lament, which is a spontaneous and subjective manifestation of the grief, the ritual song has to observe a specific scenario, being transmitted, within the group, by these women, who are permanently accompanied by younger women. In the opinion of Nicolae Panea, “to study the poetic aspect of the ritual, means to accept the idea that it represents the logical and functional consequence of the pragmatic, in other words, that *any poetic complementation of the ritual exists only within its situational context of its actualisation*”⁴¹.

In 2006, Delia Suiogan publishes the work *Simbolica riturilor de trecere (The Symbols of the Passing Rites)*⁴², in which there are approached the passing rites and the calendar customs from the locality of Șovarna, situated in the north-west of Mehedinți County. The value of this work is increased by the information gathered directly from the sources, between 1980 and 1992. The author manages to present the order in which there is sung the *Song of the Dawn*, in well-specified moments of the funerary ritual, along with the ritual moments when they are created, or when the funerary objects are prepared. Thus, on the first evening, while the cloth is being adorned, by the dawn women, when it is made the round-shaped candle and the candle supports, they sing *the Song*. The next morning, before the sunrise, these women, with lit candles in their hands, to which there are attached handkerchiefs that have a coin sewn at a corner, stand on a higher place in the yard, or next to three corners of the house, facing the east, and sing the *Dawn from Outside*. These women also go inside the house, next to the dead person, and sing *the Dawn from Inside the House*. In the evening of the same day, the women sing *the Dawn of the Evening*. After the sunset, there are sung ritual songs, also related to *the Dawn*. On the day before the burial, there are repeated *the Songs of the Dawn*, from the previous day. Moreover, these ritual funerary texts are performed by the group of women, when the procession leaves the yard, and on the way to the cemetery.

The researcher analyses a series of symbols, mythological ideas and ritual actions from the perspective of *the great passing* myth, following the relation that is established between myth and religion: “Our intention was not to evidence the specific of the researched area, most of the symbols that are present in the variants that we have proposed cannot be met in the versions published by C. Brăiloiu, M. Pop, N. Bot, I. Ghinoiu and many others, but, as we have announced since the beginning of the paper, to follow the way in which the initial meaning can be rediscovered, not through the gathering of all the meanings, but through the rediscovery of that internal network, extremely complex, of the significations that are subordinated to a *unique meaning*”⁴³.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 122.

⁴² Delia Suiogan, *Simbolica riturilor de trecere*, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House, 2006.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 214.

Ion Ghinoiu elaborated, in 2013, the work *Mitologie română: dicționar (Romanian Mythology: Dictionary)*, whose documentary basis was represented by “the information recorded in the last two centuries by the restless gatherers of the folkloric traditions, hoarded in archives, museums and private collections, or published in volumes and specialised magazines”⁴⁴. As referring to *the Dawns*, the researcher mentioned that they are three sister fairies that decide, through their emergence before the sunrise, the exiting of the soul from existence and the entering into post-existence. The melody of *the Song of the Dawn* distinguishes itself through the archaism of the sonorities, and its text through its evoking power⁴⁵.

In the Romanian folkloric creations, *the Song of the Dawn* has a specific melody, an ancient one. The ritual in which there are interpreted the variants of the funerary ritual songs is based on a mythical vision that treats death as a voyage, at the end of which there is the *True Life*. The common meaning of the word *Dawn* (*zori* in Romanian) is of daybreak, but, in *the Song of the Dawn (Cântecul Zorilor)*, the word has an older meaning, it is that of the verb *a zori*, which means to wish (something to someone).

In the Romanian ethno-cultural space, the ritual funerary song knows three manifestations – *The Song of the Dawn*, *The Song of the Fir-Tree* and *The Wake Song-*, which, along the *Versified Laments* make, through the messages transmitted to the traveller towards another world, *The Romanian Book of the Dead*. The road between Here and the Other-side World, travelled by the deceased, is depicted in the versions of the funerary ritual song. *The Song of the Dawn* has the role of an eschatological text, of travelling guide towards the sacred land, as it used to represent, for the ancient Egyptians, the texts from *The Book of the Dead*, written on a papyrus and deposited in the tomb. They were offering details on the places of the dead was to reach, after a series of difficulties; there were described the characters that the deceased would call, in case they needed help, or would avoid; there were hymns for the divinity, vows, descriptions of places and beings from the other-side world.

⁴⁴ Ion Ghinoiu, *Mitologie română: dicționar*, Bucharest, Univers Enciclopedic Gold Publishing House, 2013, p. 14.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 318-319.