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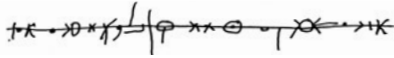
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# The Mother of Us All. A Few Considerations on the Female Archetype and the Body during Pilgrimages



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## ABSTRACT

More than 20 years after the fall of the communist regime, we are witnessing the unprecedented development of religious pilgrimage in Romania, a country where, according to the latest census, 84% of the population self-identifies as Orthodox Christian. Apart from the pilgrimages to well-known destinations (Jerusalem, Rome etc.) organized by the Romanian Patriarchy's Pilgrimage Bureau, a separate category is represented by the improvised, hybrid pilgrimages (both religious and touristic) organized by individuals using hired minibuses. The pilgrimage represents the ideal occasion to study the body and female corporality within the performance of a religious ritual, as well as the persistence of certain archetypes regarding the female archetype. Among the history of religion, anthropology and ethnography, we have tried to capture those experiences, to transcribe them as accurately as possible so as to reach one of the most delicate aspects linked with the "living religion": the female body during rituals.

## KEYWORDS

pilgrimage, ritual, body, Orthodox Church, archetypes, saints

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## Preliminaries

Between October 2009 and October 2013 I studied the Orthodox pilgrimage practice which took place as a queue; four years and twenty-two individual or group pilgrimages, in the search to understand one of the most visible, yet controversial aspects of the contemporary religious act in Romania.

Since the very first hours spent on field in Iași (during Saint Parascheva's celebration), I noticed the majority of female participants in this pilgrimage, their special way of dressing or the symbolic gestures they performed when approaching Saint Parascheva's coffin. But what took me most by surprise was the extraordinary female solidarity taking form in the hardest moments of queuing, as well as the almost

total identification with the image of the Saint, perceived as a mother, sister, mediator and advisor. I intuitively felt that, as a man, a certain essential "something" of the female practice and spirituality would always remain inaccessible to me.

Later on, I tried to approach this state of facts by studying the female archetype in the history of religion and by considering the body and the female corporality within the specific context of a pilgrimage. Having myself become a pilgrim, I used my body as an instrument and means of understanding the experience of queuing. Only the women around me somehow did it *differently*. Thus, the main challenge proved to be the **transcription** of these experiences and the visible differences.

How to explain one of the most subtle aspects of the religious experience which has always been a challenge for classical



anthropology – the exact interpretation of certain experiences and rituals strictly dedicated to the opposite sex?

All great religious systems in the world have the tendency to separate the roles of men and women in religious rituals. Some characteristics of gender differences are common to all cultures, while others are temporal and geographically located (Davidson 2002, 195). Specific anthropological studies dedicated to female religiosity are increasingly numerous, but the intense promotion of the “equality” myth and the similarity between men and women have also had unexpected consequences, meaning that, quite often, the fact that women’s religious experiences and practices are different, has been left unnoticed (Bowie 2000, 91). Through the emergence of feminist approaches and theories, women’s “religious life” is chartered into an older religious tradition, ignored so far, despite numerous phenomena and religious manifestations, mainly feminine, conceived and analyzed, from an androcentric perspective, as a context, as well as documentary sources. A possible methodological solution would be to find some specific data on the female religious history, as well as on other marginalized groups.

The advantages of “feminist approaches of the feminine” would, thus, be the occurrence of new approaches and method challenges, allowing the understanding of certain contradictions in religious practices, contradictions which have been incomprehensible until now (Hawthorne 2005, 3024).



### Between Ethnography and the History of Religions

I will reference mainly the pilgrimage in Iași during the celebration of Saint Parascheva, although the elements linked with the

female archetype are to be found as well in Curtea de Argeș (Saint Filofteia) or at Nicula Monastery (the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary).

In his study dedicated to the psychological aspects of the female archetype, Jung creates an outstanding analysis of its attributes (solicitude, understanding, magical authority, wisdom, spiritual exaltation, spontaneity) that can also be of interest in the case of some aspects of pilgrimages. Thus, I was able to notice that Saint Parascheva is perceived by pilgrims as a “swift helper”, being addressed with formulas such as “the mother of us all”, “Mother, your child has come to see you!” and other similar ones. In the previously mentioned study, Jung draws attention to the existence of major differences between men and women regarding the perception of the **meaning** of the female archetype’s, linked mainly to the image of the mother. For women there is an unconditional type of communication, linked directly to their own gender, whilst for men it’s about a foreign contact, acquired, with a rich vision, but completely outside their conscience. The result is, according to Jung’s conception, “a symbolic identification with the image of the Mother for men and a direct one of women, of which men will never be capable” (Jung 1968, 106).

Whilst waiting in line I was truly surprised by the way women, regardless of age, were identifying themselves with the life, the suffering and the sacrifice of Pious Parascheva, in a direct manner, without intermediaries, as if everything would have been part of a **whole** we could perceive, but never understand from “within”.

For Erich Neumann, a Jungian psychologist, the female archetype represents a true “human culture therapy” because this is not just *dynamics*, but a real directing force influencing whole parts of the human psyche, like religion, for instance (Neumann 1991, 15).

There are two aspects of the female archetype as a symbol and as a deity: the



female as a source and undried life spring, and the female as an agent of evolution and perpetual transformation, as shown in the famous definition formula: *Terrible Mother, Great Mother, Good Mother*. The study “*Démone et Chretienne: Sainte Vendredi*” by Marianne Mesnil and Assia Popova shows precisely these two facets of the female archetype, perceptible as well in the image of Saint Parascheva – Saint Friday, having as a starting point hagiographic and mythological aspects from both sides of the Danube: the good and generous “mother” versus the evil and avenging “mother”. South of the river, there are a couple of small sanctuaries, caves or springs honoring Saint Parascheva, “scantily furnished, visited mainly by women, especially to pray and address the Saint directly, without any male intermediaries (priests)” (Mesnil; Popova 1993, 743). Pictures of such miraculous springs from Serbia or Bulgaria are to be found, for instance, in a richly illustrated album edited by Petru Sidoreac (*Saint Parascheva. A Pilgrim’s Guide*), retracing the difficult route of Saint Parascheva’s relics before being brought to Iași by Vasile Lupu (Sidoreac 2000). Any quick internet search containing the key words “Saint Parascheva + Balkans” yields various touristic sites offering excursions on Tempi River Valley in Greece where there is a famous monastery dedicated to Saint Parascheva (*Aghia Paraskevi*) and a miraculous spring. Another study which references the double dimension of the female embodied by Saint Parascheva belongs to researcher Claudine Fabre-Vassas, who conducts an ethnological field-research of what is left of the memory of “Saint Friday” among contemporary pilgrims and of the way they perceive this legendary double dimension of the Saint as a “fierce virgin or an aggressive old woman” (Fabre-Vassas 1995, 74).

Mircea Eliade ascertains the existence in Eastern Europe, long before Christianity, of “a sincere and popular devoutness towards the woman and mother, exactly towards

the principle of fruitfulness and kindness embodied by the Mother” (Eliade 2011, 192).

An entire study belonging to B.P. Hașdeu talks about Thracian deities *Kupala* and *Omoroka* (the latter having left significant traces in Slavic languages under the form of words about darkness, death, fog) as being also “the goddess mother of all things, the embodiment mixed without discerning of the feminine and masculine faces of nature, world and darkness, of *sky* and *earth* (in italics in original).” He also declares that in Slavic legends, both have survived the pagan era, for instance, through “Baba Iaga, the ugly, bad and revengeful one” or other words linked to death, cold, darkness, underground, earth (Hașdeu 2003, 121).

Other Romanian ethnographers and folklorists, whom we will not list here, have glimpsed into Saint Parascheva – Saint Friday’s recollections of features and links of the cult of older deities such as Minerva, Juno and Venus. Concerning the North Danube region, ethnologist Bogdan Neagota puts forward the idea that the entire Christianity around the area had been established following the specific functioning mechanism of oral cultures “through non-traumatic and a little acculturated agglutination, in the symbiosis and syncretism (*apud* Eliade 1988, 232) of different symbolic-religious levels which, in time, overlapped, merging at last into archetypal convergent and cognitive points” (Neagota 2003, 7).

George Coșbuc, the erudite poet, trying to conceive a mythological approach of our popular literature under the influence of the “sămănătorist” circle, brings into discussion the double nature of the female in the study “The saint Cronos in our Mythology”. “In our mythology, the saints represent **clear notions** (my underlining) and distinct impersonations. Saint Friday represents the principle of the good, the gentle and the eager to help, while the other three, Thursday, Tuesday and Saturday, are mischievous, and solar heroes avoid them



because they embody the concept of evil” (Coşbuc 1986, 148).

Personal note: not one single female subject that I interviewed on field or outside used the name of “Saint Friday” when referring to Saint Parascheva. Is it a sign of profound secularization of the rural area, a loss of its memory? Linguist Ivan Eseev writes that “the patron of Fridays in the popular calendar is Saint Friday, whose persona represents a blend of features of an old nature deity, elements of the Mother of God and Saint Parascheva’s cult, Moldova’s patron, revered by the Eastern Slavs under the name of Praskovia-Piatnitza, and the Southern Slavs as Saint Petka and Paraskeve for the Greeks which became the name for Friday; the cult of the Saint whose relics are found in Iaşi comprises agrarian elements and rituals linked to water consecration, proving its true *Alma Mater* characteristics.” The cult of Friday is related to the “cultural and religious unity of the old Indo-European lineage which had a female deity of nature, love and fertility, whose prototype is Venus” and the fear of the “linked Fridays” noticed by M. Mesnil and A. Popova, “a form of respect towards the ancient pagan deity Friday whose features we discover in the Saint Friday of Romanian fairy tales and legends” (Evseev 2007, 640).



### **The Female Archetype and Rituals. A case of Sacred Mutilation**

Once more I ask: why is a saint like Saint Parascheva so fascinating and so captivating? What could be the explanation of the success and attachment shown by Romanian female pilgrims? Eric Neumann is suggesting a functional equation of the female archetype: the woman **is** the body, corporality represents a vessel and the recipient in itself is the receptacle of the female *corporality*.

**The body of saints** could be one of the interpreting keys. It is Saint Parascheva’s femininity that has “distinguished” her in the symbolic competition from the other saints for which we organize pilgrimages; underneath her clothing one can read the shape of a human body placed in an oblong coffin, as a nave, sacred concentrated in a feminine shape.

As Joachim Wach noticed, the gesture of incorporating the object of devotion in a perceivable environment for the human senses represents “the union between the intellectual and the emotional life of man” (Wach 1958, 100). Or Saint Parascheva **is** a perceivable body and presents to the external world a bright image, solar, full of warmth, accentuated by the manner she is seated in the coffin on an imposing canopy, her clothing, her gold, gemmed crown on her head. From an archetypal point of view, the “bright bodies” are symbols of knowledge, of the spiritual aspects of man (Neumann 1991, 57).

As an empirical observation, *the devotional culture* of the pilgrim body in front of Saint Parascheva’s coffin (praying positions, the direct touch or the touch of various clothing items, icons etc.) seemed more intense in Iaşi than in Suceava or Bucharest, sites where there are coffins of male saints, sites known to be harsher and more fastidious concerning the pilgrims’ requests.

In *Bucarest* (his well-known travel diary in interbellum Romania), writer and diplomat Paul Morand senses the fascination exerted by Saint Parascheva, assigning her archetypal roots (precisely by her icon at Sf. Vineri Church in Bucharest, demolished in June 1987), stating that “a silver Virgin with charcoal face receives, among sweet-smelling fumigations, *wishes addressed to Venus and Ceres* (my italics)” (Morand 2000, 181).

The motif of the female archetype is relaunching the interrogations about the



massive presence of the Rroma at the pilgrimage in Iași, but at other Marian pilgrimages in Romania as well (Costești, Curtea de Argeș, Nicula). Researcher Delia Grigore launches the idea that the Rroma can see a link between the figure of the Virgin Mary, other female saints and “the mother-goddess revered by the pre-Aryans from India. Actually, in the same spirit of worshipping the sacred mother, the Rroma have a special veneration for female saints, a lot bigger than for male saints, which is proven by other two great pilgrimages: the Rroma one in West Europe at St. Sara (Camargue, May 24-25) and the Orthodox Rroma one from Romania at St. Parascheva’s relics (Iași, October 14) (Grigore 2001, 134).

When asked the question “why is Saint Parascheva’s coffin covered with a transparent plexi-glass board?”, the pilgrims came up with a similar explanation, with only small variations: in time people have tried to obtain a shred from the relics on display using their teeth (or *splinters* as some were saying – interesting formula showing the founding ambiguity of relics, placed between alive and mineral). The church had to react and protect the relic by covering it completely.

The episode of the “theft of the relics” is mentioned as an oral story legitimated by the authority of the ministrant priests from the Iași Metropolitan Cathedral, “a story from around 1900 when the face of Saint Parascheva was uncovered to be cherished by the faithful and a woman ripped off, with her mouth, while crossing herself, the Saint’s nose. After that, it was decided that Saint Parascheva’s face, as well as the other parts of the Saint’s relics, should be covered with a piece of clothing.” The plexi-glass board mentioned earlier was placed in 1992 (Adumitroaie; Vicovan 2011, 263).

This episode told by pilgrims during the interviews is placing the sacred mutilation gesture around 1960s or 1990s and its author was described as a “simple woman,

from the countryside” or “a witch”. In E. Neumann’s vision, the female archetypal body is crossed by a straight line which connects the Sky – (the Paradise) – the Moon – (the Logos) – the Breath – (the Mouth) – the Heart – the Abdominal Belt – the Navel – the Underground World – the Night – the Fear – the Darkness. If we are to agree that the gesture really happened (at a closer look one can notice that the nasal protuberance is not visible), the hypothesis that the act can be interpreted as a desperate, last attempt to connect with the circuit of the divine breath of the female archetype, seemed truly appealing to me.

Other post-Jung interpretations perceive the female archetype as a vessel, chalice or receptacle, thus surpassing the common image of the womb, and dealing, in fact, with “an all-encompassing, protective quality, an embrace, nourishment that allows something else to grow. The female archetype nourishes the human *Self*” (Sease; Schimdt 2011, 61). The suggestion of a vessel or a chalice at the Iași ensemble is also accentuated by the coffin which displays the relics, as one of the most dazzling and imposing saints’ coffins in Romania. The actual coffin dates from 1891, but was fully restored in Greece in 2009. The coffin itself is perceived as a “conductor” of the relics’ sacredness, hence “the multitude of names being found written on it during restoration, thankful notes, akathists for the departed, cotton balls and parts of the objects pilgrims and members of the clergy left at the time of contact” (Adumitroaie; Vicovan 2011, 264).

Another interesting ritual about Saint Parascheva which can be linked to the persistence of the female archetype is the changing of her clothes five times a year. The clothes “differ from a liturgical period to another, according to the celebrations on the Church’s calendar, from light or dark colors” (Adumitroaie; Vicovan 2011, 240). After being renewed during a somewhat



secret ceremony where only women are allowed, “the old clothes are offered as comfort to Christians from different regions of the country and to some churches abroad in order to keep the Orthodox faith alive and for God-loving people *to feel near* (my italics) Moldova’s Patron Saint.” Usually, Saint Parascheva’s clothing fulfills a protective role against the wear and the daily pressure from the pilgrims’ incessant succession in front of her coffin; in the interpretation key suggested by E. Neumann, the clothes bare a cohabitation function, consecrating and dispersing the feminine concept of that “primordial figure bearer of the benefactress *manna*, well-hidden in the human subconscious. The wisdom of feminine representations is not abstract or disinterested, but it is wisdom that demands communion through love as a Whole” (Neumann 1991, 330). The travels of the Saint’s attire, the gift and counter-gift game, complements and universalizes its cult.



### **The Social Function of the Female Archetype and Female Body**

The analysis of the social function of the pilgrimage, in connection to the illness, the suffering, the therapeutics of physical and spiritual sicknesses, cannot be properly understood if one ignores the intimate dynamics of society, of the manner in which some historic eras have left their mark on the body and the illness per se. As a working hypothesis, I can see a link between the social function of the female archetype and the “gender crisis” of a part of the female population that I met during the pilgrimages. More precisely, after 1990, the majority of communist institutions supporting the family, maternity, the hygiene and health of children collapsed. Even if they were faulty in content and function, they played an essential role,

especially in the rural area, which finds itself nowadays completely lacking any social and medical support. Maybe it’s not by accident that the “collections of miracles” that have lately flourished are full of recovery stories of children from modest social backgrounds.

I believe the direct and extremely honest manner, without intermediaries, the intense emotional scenes that take place during pilgrimages centered on female holiness can be better understood by taking into account the abovementioned. And for the psychology of depth, the entire Orthodoxy possesses a true “matriarchal” dimension, a loving mother, an accomplice and an understanding for all people going through a profound crisis (Kristeva 1987, 16).

A particular case is represented by the pilgrimage at the Prislop Monastery in Hunedoara, centered around the charismatic figure of Father Arsenie Boca, who had focused during his lifetime on married life and the suffering of women – an aspect that deserves special development and which partially explains the present success of the popular cult that addresses him. Prislop became a true sanctuary for women who had aborted babies during the communist period; as if a process that would repair the “rupture in equilibrium” between a world of extra-human entities, but still linked to the mothers’ bodies, and the current bodily health could still occur via the use of various rituals.

Do women believe otherwise? Or is there a feminine specificity in the creation of the religious fact perceived under the pilgrimage form? The persistent dichotomy existent in the sociology of religions between *ritual* and *faith* or between *practice* and *representation* is to be found as well in the consecrated studies on the account between gender and religion; at present, there is a series of analysis centered on social and cultural issues. In the specialized literature dedicated to pilgrimages, the difference contained in the experiences and the





manner of female religious manifestation is well represented. Thus, Alice-Mary Talbot notices the fact that in Byzantium, religious cults had a particular role in women's destinies because "for feminine secularism, taking part in liturgy and processions, visiting saint shrines etc., was the only possibility approved by society to get out of the house. All these opportunities were, in fact, a way of satisfying some psychological and spiritual needs" (Talbot 2000, 154). Her observation seems to me quite pertinent and perfectly valid as a motivation even nowadays.

Talking with women from the rural area, I have understood that moving from their residence to the pilgrimage site, the actual time spent in ritual or the journey in itself by train or bus, represented for them a breakthrough, a change in their daily routine, probably the only one in an entire year. The pilgrimage offered the possibility to get out of the sometimes suffocating family ambiance, of the daily routine and the careful "surveillance" of their husbands in a world that isn't familiar with the notion of "tourism" (in the contemporary meaning of term).

The female participation rate at pilgrimages is verified by a quantitative research conducted by the Faculty of Sociology (Iași University) and dedicated to the religious implications and motivations in the Iași pilgrimage; 51,9% of the subjects were female (Netedu 2008, 173). Given the Orthodox conditions of the pilgrimage, women's particular behavior, the number of female participants was higher than that of the men, which is similar to pilgrimages in Greece; these statistics can be placed in a direct relationship with the role and the secondary position women hold in society (Gothoni 2010, 73). The Catholic sources that have been consulted – for instance, the synthesis of French historian Edmond-René Labande, a tertiary Franciscan, dedicated to "the problems, behavior and mentalities of the Christian pilgrim" since the Middle

Ages – accept the fact that "women are always more faithful than men because they convey life, being linked to traditions as well as superstitions and being simultaneously denied access to the ritual" (Labande 2004, 110). The author stresses "the misogyny" expressed towards pilgrim-women for centuries, perceived as a "weak gender", incapable of withstanding the supposed dangers and temptations of long distance pilgrimages. The preferred solution for high-rank women in the Middle Ages was to travel as a family or accompanied only by women, followed by armed guards.



### **The Body of the Pilgrim and the Construction of the Religious Identity**

During the trip, the pilgrim's body suffers because of the deprivations and because of the weather conditions; accounts focused on this aspect are abundant in all pilgrimage stories from the Middle Age onwards. "The pilgrim travels in order to suffer and to be healed through suffering. The pain and its progressive teachings merge into some sort of 'dialectics'" (Fabre; Julia 2000, 137), giving birth to the pilgrim's final identity. The role of pain in the spiritual "treatment" of the female body is stressed in the famous study of Marian pilgrimage on the Greek island of Tinos; the study, conducted by American Jill Dubisch, states that the full assumption of physical pain (as it is for the Nicula Monastery where one crawls on knees and elbows, on rocks) is a means of constructing one's identity. Pain becomes "a female-privileged language taking part in daily life, as well as in religious practice" (Dubisch 1995, 34). Women's suffering, visible to anyone, also represents the suffering provoked by their lesser social status; thus, the pilgrimage becomes a healing path, in addition to a means of revalidation of one's identity (Derks 2009, 130).







Women do not reproduce the religious act in a passive way; they “reformulate” it through their acts, probably because they are charged with supplementary “guilts”, including giving life – see the six-week purification prayers for women if they give birth to a girl or three weeks if it is a boy, the interdiction of entering the church while on their period (Manolache 1994, 46). Through the devotion shown to the Virgin Mary, one can identify with the image of the “suffering mother” who sacrifices herself for the whole family. In this very context, we have to bring into discussion Mihaela Miroiu’s position on the manifestation of “somatophobia” from Western Christianity, “that can no longer find its place in the East, because this type of Christianity bears a cosmic meaning. Through Christ, the sacred penetrates into the embodied existence as a spirit, soul and body, as it does in the entire nature as well, that person giving an account of both worlds. Evil has nothing more to do with physiology, the matter itself being transfigured through the holy grace” (Miroiu 2002, 14).

Women insist on physical pain, they talk publicly about it, trying to invent techniques and procedures to cope with it in the best possible way. K. Seraidari states that, by doing this, women build themselves **a common base of identification and experience**, prolonging in time and space the symbolic sacrifice made by honoring the pilgrimages dedicated to “female figures” (Seraidari 2005, 150). The French researcher suggests it would be wrong to associate women to suffering, bereavement and pain too easily.

Although the theme is a recurrent one in gender and anthropology studies, I would like to mention a research study regarding “female sanctity” sociology in the Christian West: the woman and her religious practice are placed in a dramatic context stating that “women are best at experimenting the condition of ‘brides of Christ’ through suffering” (Albert 1997, 163).

Regarding Eastern Christianity, “the suspicion towards the body, especially the female body, a recurrent theme of the Eastern monasticism in the 4<sup>th</sup> century” is noticeable (Delumeau 1986, 110). However, it was not only the anthropology of religions that sensed this essential aspect of the female practice.

Slavist Georges Nivat, a fine *connaisseur* within Orthodoxy, mentions in a travel diary through contemporary Russia the fact that, within this confession, the body plays an essential role in understanding the faith. “The female *body* is the one that understands, prostrates, embraces the icons, lights candles, makes lists of names of the departed and the living family members to be read by the priest (‘akathists’ and ‘diptychs’)” (Nivat 2004, 281).

Another observation linked to female corporality on pilgrimages: the peculiar attire, following specific and strict dress codes, is a lot more visible for women than for men. American anthropologist of Tunisian origin A. Hammoudi, who studies the great pilgrimage at Mecca, emphasizes the universal importance of clothing from the moment of entry into the space dedicated to the pilgrimage. A part of his statements are valid also outside Islam.

Thus, under specific pilgrimage conditions (stress, jams, various deprivations), differences are accentuated between men’s and women’s dress, the clothes themselves ritualizing, in turn, gender transgressions. The whole body image should not be ostentatious, hence the need for specific clothing. Any excess is immediately denounced by the pilgrims themselves (Hammoudi 2005, 46).

This statement has been verified in the field of pilgrimages in Romania; I have seen many situations in which female pilgrims tried to hastily improvise some sort of *tenue* to cover their head or their legs either by their own means (scarf, head kerchief, sweater) or by those put at their disposal by the religious

authority (at Prislop Monastery).

In a documentary made by Trinitas Television of the Romanian Patriarchy entitled "Israel, land of Salvation", many frames show what I would call the *model-pilgrim in Jerusalem*: a woman between 55 and 65 years old. The body position while praying is a correct and decent one, which has been previously practiced. She is making the sign of cross with wide didactic gestures, with an emphasis on the three symbolically closed fingers. She is wearing a small backpack for practical reasons. Finally, she wears sober-colored clothes, with a compulsory long skirt hiding the ankle and on her head she is wearing a gauzy veil which she doesn't wear all the time, only when imposed by the proximity of a sacred site (Truşcă 2009).

Abidance by the dress codes and interdictions contributes to the sacral construction of the pilgrimage site. Starting from Victor Turner's statement that "the sacredness grows gradually while the pilgrim progresses on the path", Jill Dubisch

shows that in Orthodox pilgrimages in Greece dress codes are a mixture of official church directives and the pilgrims' self-imposed attitude (Dubisch 1995, 127). Regarding queues, I have noticed the pilgrims' *tenuë* becoming stricter and stricter as they approached the coffin in order to touch the relics which is the final purpose of the journey. A head cover pulled out at the last minute from the luggage or the pocket completes one's pious image.

The sacred space built (as well) through dress codes appears to be even more obvious for pilgrimages taking place inside a Monastery (as for instance Suceava or Prislop) and less for those where the queue is in an aggregation relationship with the road and the public city space (Iaşi, Bucharest) or impregnated by a long commercial and touristic tradition (Curtea de Argeş). The contact with the sacred is the pilgrim's main goal. Looking for it is what defines the pilgrim's behavior, often without external obvious constraints, but through self-imposition.

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