

„MARIA AND NICOLAE ZAHACINSCHI” DONATION TO THE PATRIMONY OF THE ETNOGRAPHY DIVISION OF THE DISTRICT MUSEUM IN BOTOȘANI

Steliana Băltuță*

Donația „Maria și Nicolae Zahacinschi” în patrimoniul secției de etnografie a Muzeului Județean Botoșani

– Rezumat –

Colecționarii sunt oameni speciali, care pe lângă profesia lor, găsesc timp și pentru a-și dedica viața alcătuind un patrimoniu de valori, pe care îl dăruiesc mai târziu unor muzee, sau îl fac ei înșiși cunoscut publicului larg, spre apreciere și admirație.

Regretații medicul cardiolog Maria Zahacinschi născută Dragomir la 5 martie 1922 la Caracal, jud. Olt și farmacistul Nicolae Zahacinschi născut la 6 noiembrie 1919 la Mihăileni, jud. Botoșani – au alcătuit o colecție de artă populară, fruct al investigațiilor și investițiilor proprii, pe tot cuprinsul românesc.

Începând să pună bazele colecției de prin anii 1960-1965, cei doi soți împărtășind aceeași pasiune, au reușit ca până în anul 1986, să aibă în propria locuință (apartament de bloc) din București, un număr de peste 8000 de piese cuprinzând ceramică, ouă încondeiate, port popular, țesături de interior de casă tradițională, obiecte din lemn, așa cum ei înșiși afirmă: „În ce ne privește, noi am optat, după ani de zile de experimente, pentru o metodă de depozitare și de expunere care și-a dovedit îndeajuns eficacitatea, mai ales în condițiile adăpostirii întregii colecții în apartamentul care ne servește de locuință”.

Din această „uriașă colecție etnografică particulară” (așa cum a numit-o prof. dr. Nicolae Dunăre), Maria și Nicolae Zahacinschi, au donat numeroase piese Muzeului Țăranului Român din București (unele publicate, în 2000, de etnograf dr. Georgeta Roșu, în Ulcioare de nuntă), Muzeului Etnografic al Brăilei, iar între anii 1983-1986 și în anul 1992, Secției de Etnografie a Muzeului Județean Botoșani, un număr de peste 1146 obiecte. Existența acestei donații în patrimoniul Secției de Etnografie, i se datorează doamnei Maria Bucătaru, director în vremea inventarierii pieselor și aducerii lor la Botoșani. Doamna i-a cunoscut pe cei doi colecționari foarte bine, prin vizite făcute la București în locuința lor care adăpostea colecția,

și prin corespondența purtată cu soții Zahacinschi. Astfel s-a legat prietenia și s-a stabilit încrederea că donația de piese etnografice făcută Botoșaniului va fi pusă în valoare.

Key words: *ethnography, collection, collector, pottery, textured, folk costumes, painted eggs, dishtowels*

Cuvinte-cheie: *etnografie, colecție, colecționar, ceramică, țesături, port popular, ouă încondeiate, ștergare*

Collectors are special people who, beside their profession, find the necessary time to dedicate themselves to gathering a heritage of values, which they later donate to museums or publicise in order to be appreciated and admired.

The late cardiologist Maria Zahacinschi, whose name before marriage was Dragomir, born on the 5th of March 1922 in Caracal, Olt District, and the chemist Nicolae Zahacinschi, born on the 6th of November 1919 in Mihaileni, Botosani District, gathered a collection of popular art, the result of their enquiries and investments all over the Romanian territories.

Starting this collection in 1960-1965 and sharing the same passion, they managed to collect more than 8000 items by 1986, items which they housed in their flat in Bucharest, including ceramics, dyed Easter eggs, popular costumes, traditional indoor weavings, wooden items, about which they stated: „As far as we are concerned, after years of experimenting, our choice to store and exhibit the items has proven efficient enough, especially since we keep the whole collection in the flat which is also our home”.

About the roads they took in order to enrich their collection, Maria and Nicolae Zahacinschi say: „We have thus met hundreds of craftsmen practising all kinds of popular art. We have thus met tens of potters, from well-known names mentioned in art manuals, who were awarded prizes at „Romania’s Praise” Festival and other prestigious prizes, representing famous pottery centres, to those who remained to mould clay alone, in their small pottery ovens, in small villages, unknown to our popular art. We have met craftsmen who make popular knapsacks and bags, unrivalled items in any other parts of the world. We have met mask-artists who make masks used in a form of ancient popular drama integrated in carol singing and in certain rituals whose mythical significance has been lost throughout centuries. We have met countrywomen who, in quiet evenings, still weave in weaving loom inherited from their grandmothers wonderful floral towels with simple decorations which do not lack refinement and high skill; we have met countrywomen who even nowadays, in the age of

industrially-manufactured fabrics, still make those unique popular Romanian blouses, which were once admired by Matisse. And we have given our special attention to the skillful hands of those women who, using secrets handed down from their ancestors, are able to use artistically the fragile egg shell, drawing on its round shape a variety of decorative patterns in well-balanced and accurate compositions, dressed in a harmonious variety of colours, which make each item a unique and authentic work of art”¹.

„And more than once we had the pleasure of being not only their guests for a short hour, but also their friends for more days and nights. With many of them we have built steady relationships based on appreciation and affection. With many of them, about 500, we have kept in touch by mail, writing mainly about their art, their quests, achievements and failures, needs on which their success in the field of ethnographical arts depends. This is the way our collection of contemporary popular Romanian art began to take shape”².

Numerous items of this „huge private ethnographical collection” (as Ph. dr. Nicolae Dunare called it) were donated by Maria and Nicolae Zahacinschi to the Romanian Village Museum in Bucharest, to The Ethnographical Museum in Brăila, and between 1983-1986 and in 1992, they donated more than 1146 items to the Ethnography Division of the District Museum in Botosani. The existence of this donation in the patrimony of the Ethnography Division is due to Mrs. Maria Bucataru, who was museum manager when the items were taken stock of and brought to Botosani. She knew the two collectors very well after visiting their home in Bucharest, which housed the collection and after exchanging letters with the Zahacinschis. Thus they became very close friends and they grew confident that their donation to Botosani would be highly valued.

In 1986 Mrs. Lucica Parvan was appointed manager and the care for this donation continued, being a priority and preoccupation. We should also mention that there was a time when it was believed that the donation had been made for Mihaileni, opinion which was totally wrong. We underline the fact that there still exists the original letter written on the 31st of May 1986, sent to manager Lucica Parvan before the opening of the exhibition in Mihaileni and signed by Maria and Nicolae Zahacinschi, letter in which they settle things: **„The second issue is the judiciary final aspects regarding the transfer of this collection in the patrimony of the District Museum.**

¹ Maria Zahacinschi, Nicolae Zahacinschi, *Elemente de artă decorativă populară românească*, Ed. Litera, București, 1985, pp. 111-112.

² *Ibidem*.

We send in copies of the formal procedures which need to be followed in order to make our donation legal”³.

As far as the exhibition of the donated items is concerned, it was discussed before 1986 that it would be displayed in an old 19th century building on Miorita Street, THE GOILAV HOUSE, in Botosani, building which still stands today. As the house was lived in in 1985, Nicolae Zahacinschi decided, with the consent of the local authorities and the museum board, that the exhibition would be opened with a part of the donation in Mihaileni, his birthplace, as descendent of famous potters, Manole family, his mother's relatives. The exhibition opened on the 5th of July 1986 (in the 19th century Reghinstreich house belonging to a family of potters), in a very festive atmosphere with the participation of officials, of the local community, potters and many other guests.

Speeches were delivered about the donation and the steps taken for the exhibition to be opened by: Gheorghe Jauca – chairman of the Culture Committee, Lucica Parvan – manager of the District Museum, Georgeta Pohontu – primary school teacher in Mihaileni and the main administrative supporter during the two months necessary for the preparation, and Nicolae Zahacinschi, donator of the exhibited ethnographical items.

After 1990 the building which housed only a part of the items of the Zahacinschi donation, placed near the townhall in Mihaileni and which was no longer looked after, began to decay gradually, putting the exhibits at risk of being damaged. The Visitors' Impression Diary, kept as a document throughout years, still contains references to the value of the objects exhibited but also to the decaying building.

This is what dr. Toma Constantin (main veterinary) wrote on the 8th of May 1994: „I am impressed by the valuable pottery collection carefully gathered by the Zahacinschi family. We ask the local council to give its material support to mending and keeping up this museum”; this is what sculptor Aurelian Antal underlined too in 1996, but also the well-known and appreciated actor Daniel Badale, who stated: „I have visited your museum. I liked it very much, but the way the building is taken care of made me very sad. It is a pity that we deny our culture and this museum”.

And other notes go on the same way: on the 30th of September 1997 – „I have been impressed by this museum... Now, that I have visited it, I would be very happy if this building were rehabilitated”, signed by teacher G. Horga; on the 16th of October 1997: „I have visited your museum and, except for the fact that its servicing is not what it should be, the exhibits are

³ Nicolae Zahacinschi, *Scrisoare adresată Directorului Muzeului Botoșani, Lucica Pârvan*, datată 31.05.1986.

of a real artistic value” – illegibly signed. As the building was decaying fast and there was no hope for it to be rehabilitated, on the 24th of February 1999 we decided to take the items back to Botosani and display them in temporary exhibitions, which we did.

Beside the valuable collection appreciated by ethnologists, journalists in magazines, radio and television programmes, the two collectors also published two books: *Mihaileni in Times Gone By*, Bucharest, 1982, by Nicolae Zahacinschi and *Aspects of Decorative Popular Romanian Art*, Bucharest, 1985, by Maria and Nicolae Zahacinschi.

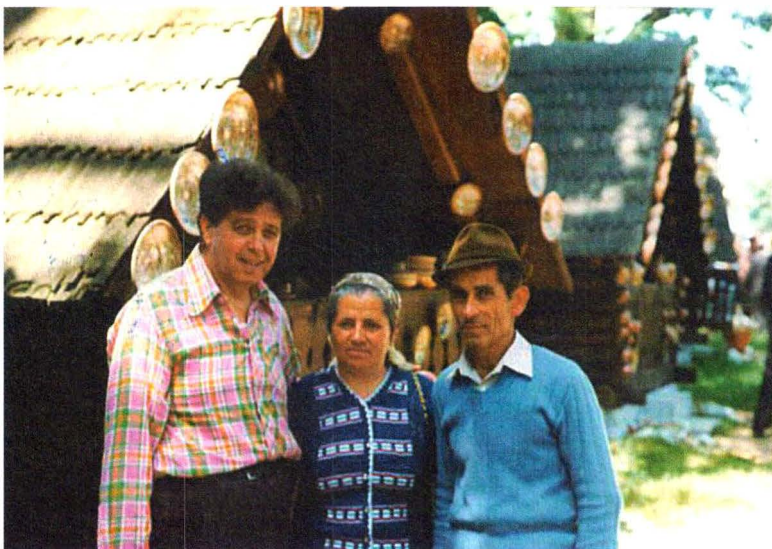
Referring to their collection, Maria and Nicolae Zahacinschi said: „All these items have been gathered from all over the country, directly from those who made them. Bringing together such a large variety of items in one collection emphasizes, at the same time, the way in which regional artistic versions mix up in the unity of the whole, the way in which our popular art, with its richness and diversity, becomes a reflection of the unity of thoughts and feelings, specific to our people, civilization and culture”⁴.

Maria and Nicolae Zahacinschi donation is and will long be a valuable treasure of the patrimony of the Ethnographical Division of the District Museum in Botosani, it is and will long be an undeniable part of the heritage of popular Romanian culture.

⁴ Maria Zahacinschi, Nicolae Zahacinschi, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113.



Maria și Nicolae Zahacinschi
în mijlocul colecției din casa lor
București, 1983



Nicolae Zahacinschi cu Eufrosina și Victor Vicșoreanu
la Târgul olarilor „Cocoșu de Horezu”, 1983
Horezu, jud. Vâlcea

ȘTERGARE



TÂRNĂVIȚA - ARAD



COȘTEȘTI - ARGEȘ



CRISTIOR - BIHOR



VORNICENI - BOTOȘANI



SĂGEATA - BUZĂU



BEDECIU - CLUJ



OSTROV - CONSTANȚA



VIȘINA - DĂMBOVIȚA



VALEA STANCIULUI
DOLJ



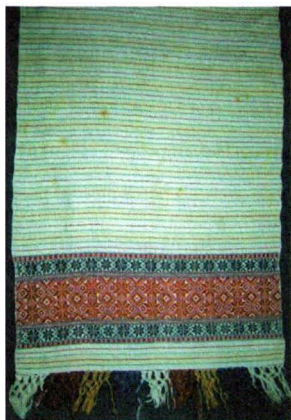
FLOREȘTI, STOENEȘTI
GIURGIU



DELENI - ARGEȘ



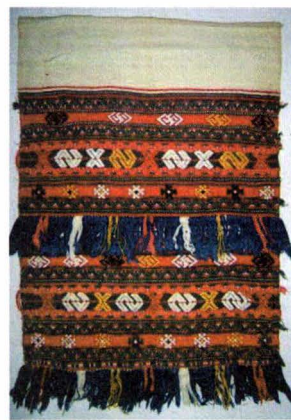
RONA DE JOS - MARAMUREȘ



CRĂCĂOANI - NEAMȚ



SCĂRIȘOARA - OLT



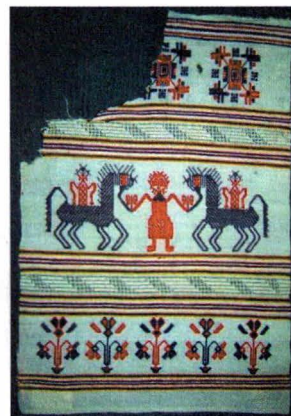
GURA RÂULUI - SIBIU



COSTIȘA, FRĂTĂUȚI
SUCEAVA



MERENI - TELEORMAN



IZVOARELE - TULCEA

PORT POPULAR



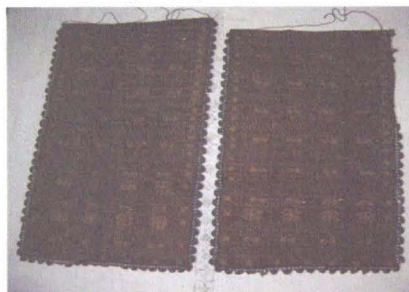
**FOTĂ
LEREȘTI - ARGES**



**FOTĂ DE MIREASĂ
SIRNEA - BRAȘOV**



**VÂLNIC
BĂLENI, SÂRBI - DÂMBOVIȚA**



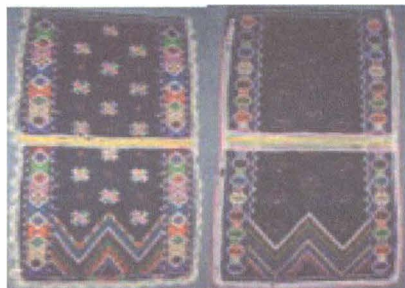
**ZĂVELCI (FAȚĂ-SPATE)
BIBEȘTI - GORJ**



**IE
MUNTENIA**



**IE
LĂDEȘTI - VÂLCEA**



**PESTELCI
IZVOARELE - TULCEA**



**MARAMĂ
OBOGA - OLT**

TRAISTE, DESAGI



COOPERATIVA BRAȘOV



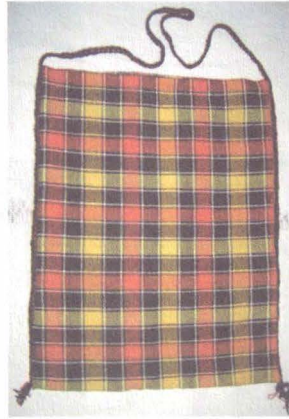
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BISTRIȚA - NĂSĂUD



BĂLENI
DÂMBOVÎȚA



GORJ



PETRICANI
NEAMȚ



SĂPÂNȚA - MARAMUREȘ



GURA RĂULUI - SIBIU



VAIDEENI - VÂLCEA

MĂȘTI



MEȘTER GHEORGHE ȚUGUI
CHISCOVATA, VORONA - BOTOȘANI



MĂȘTI DIN MARAMUREȘ

CERAMICĂ



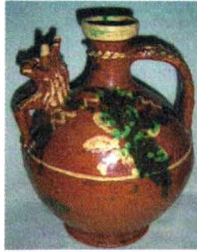
FARFURIOARĂ
HĂLMĂGEL - ARAD



ULCIOR MIC
TÂRNĂVIȚA - ARAD



ULCIORAȘ
VÂRSĂNEȘTI
MUȘĂTEȘTI - ARGEȘ



ULCIOR CU CERB
VÂRSĂNEȘTI
MUȘĂTEȘTI - ARGEȘ



TORTAR
VÂRSĂNEȘTI
MUȘĂTEȘTI - ARGEȘ



SCRUMIERĂ
PETREȘTI
COȘEȘTI - ARGEȘ



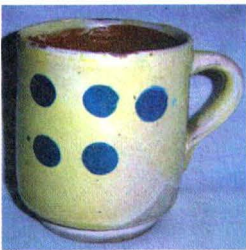
OALĂ
PETREȘTI
COȘEȘTI - ARGEȘ



ȚEPĂ DE ACOPERIȘ
PETREȘTI
COȘEȘTI - ARGEȘ



TIGĂIȚĂ
PETREȘTI
COȘEȘTI - ARGEȘ



CĂNIȚĂ PENTRU APĂ
MIHĂILENI
BOTOȘANI



VAZĂ DE FLORI
MIHĂILENI
BOTOȘANI



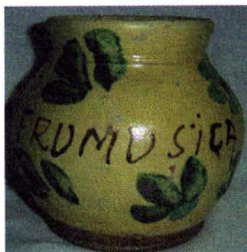
COȘ DE PĂINE
MIHĂILENI
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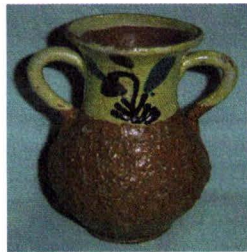
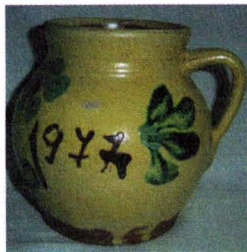
OALĂ
MIHĂILENI
BOTOȘANI



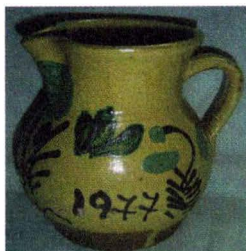
**VAS DE FLORI
(AN 1947)
MIHĂILENI
BOTOȘANI**



**ULCICĂ DE VIN
FRUMUȘICA - BOTOȘANI**



**CANĂ PENTRU FLORI
(AN 1980)
FRUMUȘICA - BOTOȘANI**

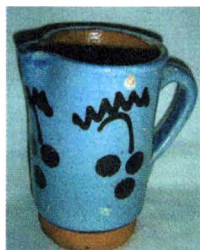


**CANĂ DE VIN
FRUMUȘICA - BOTOȘANI**

**CANĂ
FRUMUȘICA - BOTOȘANI**

**CASTRON
HUDEȘTI - BOTOȘANI**

**CASTRON DE CIORBĂ
HUDEȘTI - BOTOȘANI**



**CANĂ DE APĂ
HUDEȘTI - BOTOȘANI**



**TORTAR
HUDEȘTI - BOTOȘANI**



**CASTRONEL
COOPERATIVA
„ARTIZANATUL”
BOTOȘANI**



**CĂNIȚĂ
COOPERATIVA
„ARTIZANATUL”
BOTOȘANI**



**VAS PENTRU ZAHĂR
COOPERATIVA
„ARTIZANATUL”
BOTOȘANI**



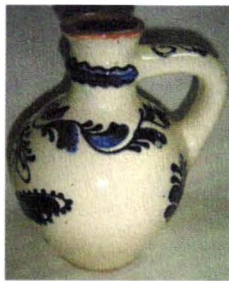
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**FARFURIE
UCECOM, ARTA
APLICATĂ BUCUREȘTI**



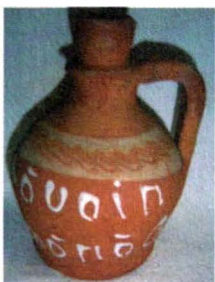
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ARTA APLICATĂ
BUCUREȘTI**



**ULCIOR
UCECOM, ARTA APLICATĂ BUCUREȘTI**



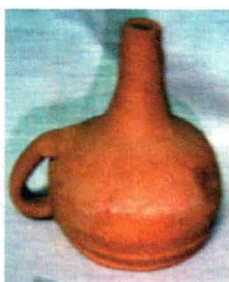
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ARTA APLICATĂ
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**ULCIORUȘ
VALEA COTOAREI, MÂNZĂLEȘTI - BUZĂU**



**SFEȘNIC
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MÂNZĂLEȘTI
BUZĂU**



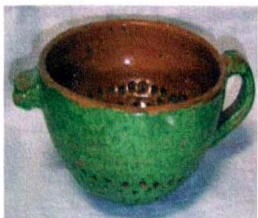
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BUZĂU**



**PĂLNIE
GHEBOAIA, FINTA - DÂMBOVIȚA**



**STRECURĂTOARE
GHEBOAIA, FINTA - DÂMBOVIȚA**



**PLOSCĂ
GHEBOAIA - DÂMBOVIȚA**



**ULCIOR
GHEBOAIA, FINTA - DÂMBOVIȚA**





**STRACHINĂ
GHEBOAIA,
FINTA - DÂMBOVIȚA**



**FARFURIE
CORUND - HARGHITA**



**FARFURIE MICĂ
CORUND - HARGHITA**



**FARFURIE MICĂ
CORUND - HARGHITA**



**STRACHINĂ
CORUND - HARGHITA**



**STRACHINĂ
TANSA - IAȘI**



**TÂLGERAȘ
TANSA - IAȘI**



**FARFURIOARĂ
TANSA - IAȘI**



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**FARFURIOARĂ
TANSA - IAȘI**



**VAS DE TĂMÂIAT
SISEȘTI - MEHEDINȚI**



**FARFURIE
OBOGA - OLT**



**FARFURIE
OBOGA - OLT**



**FARFURIE
OBOGA - OLT**



**STRACHINĂ
OBOGA - OLT**



**APLICĂ DE FLORI
OBOGA - OLT**



**PORUMBEL PE ULCIOR
ROMÂNA OBOGA - OLT**



**ULCIOR MIC
ZALĂU - SĂLAJ**



**CĂNIȚĂ
RĂDĂUȚI - SUCEAVA**



**SFEȘNIC MIC
RĂDĂUȚI - SUCEAVA**



**FARFURIOARĂ
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**ULCIOR
VÂLCEA**



**ULCIOR
HOREZU - VÂLCEA**



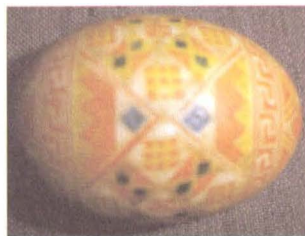
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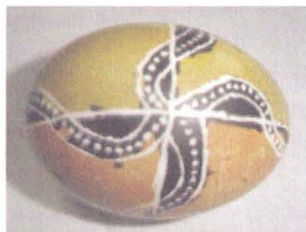
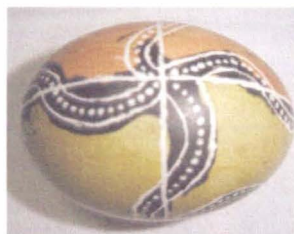


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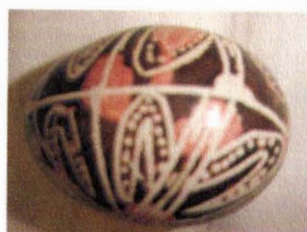
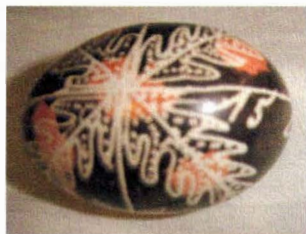
OUĂ

Botoșani - ROGOJEȘTI, MIHĂILENI





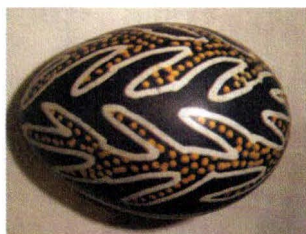
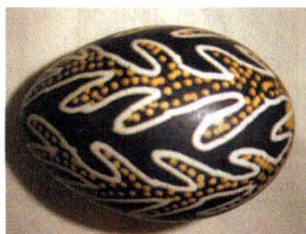
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Harghita - LUNCA DE JOS - ouă golite

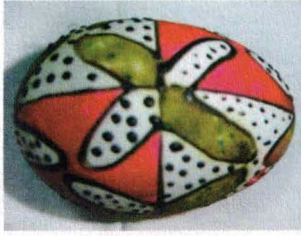


Argeş - ALBEȘȚII DE MUSCEL - ouă pline



Dâmbovița - VIȘINA - ouă golite





Suceava - BRODINA - ouă golite



Suceava - PUTNA - ouă golite



