heritage

MDPI

Article

The Female Folk Costume of Romanian from the Town of Rupea, Romania: Fashion, Resilience, and Sustainable Management of Cultural Heritage

Daniela Sorea * and Mariana Borcoman

Department of Social and Communication Sciences, Transilvania University of Brașov, 25, Eroilor Bd, 500030 Brașov, Romania; m.borcoman@unitbv.ro
* Correspondence: sorea.daniela@unitbv.ro

Abstract: Clothing is a social product that represents both individual and collective manifestations of identity, functioning as a system of signs. This study examines the relationship between fashion and resilience as factors driving changes in the traditional folk costume of Romanian women from Rupea, Brașov County, from the late 19th century to the present. The research is based on semi-structured interviews with locals and enhanced by photo elicitation and participant observation, where the authors served as community insiders. The study first describes the local folk costume's main distinguishing features, which locals use as indicators of community status. Next, it analyzes the transformations of the folk costume and their sources, including fashion, which facilitated the adoption of external influences based on their association with prestige, and resilient responses to challenges during the period under investigation. The research also demonstrates how Rupea's Romanian residents managed to preserve and capitalize on the folk costume and community traditions after the Communist Party's rise to power in Romania. These transformations in folk costume did not diminish its function as a system of signs. The preservation of its significance and traditions demonstrates cultural resilience in an urban environment and supports the role of local communities in sustainably managing intangible cultural heritage resources.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage; folk costume; resilience; fashion

Academic Editor: Diego Tamburini

Received: 27 November 2024
Revised: 10 February 2025
Accepted: 19 February 2025
Published: 21 February 2025

Citation: Sorea, D.; Borcoman, M. The Female Folk Costume of Romanian from the Town of Rupea, Romania: Fashion, Resilience, and Sustainable Management of Cultural Heritage. *Heritage* **2025**, *8*, 86. https://doi.org/10.3390/heritage8030086

1. Introduction

Clothing is a social product that serves multiple functions; it protects against weather, conceals nudity, and adorns the body. Beyond these practical functions, clothing creates meaning, as Roland Barthes suggests [1]. Like an institution, clothing operates under a system of rules dictating obligations, prohibitions, and permissible behaviors. Society transforms ordinary objects into clothing, demonstrating its creative power over itself [1].

As both a tool for socialization and social control, and a means of overcoming cultural constraints, clothing depicts the wearer's self-representation [2]. Through their clothing, individuals communicate their identity to the world and convey social status, prestige, subcultural membership, emotional state, wealth, age, gender, occupation, affiliations [3], marital status, professional standing, and personal interests [1].

Clothing expresses both individual and collective identity. Its governing rules and primary characteristics offer insights into lifestyle, cultural trends, aesthetic standards, and the values that define a particular era [3]. As Barthes notes, "Dress is essentially part of the axiological order" [1] (p. 7).

Throughout history, clothing has functioned as a means of communication [3]. Pierre Bourdieu observes that clothing contributes to social differentiation, particularly in terms of social class membership [4]. It both establishes and reinforces power relations [5]. Clothing can serve as a political or ideological statement [6], a material representation of tradition and legacy within specific historical and socio-cultural contexts [7], and an expression of local and religious identity [8]. Furthermore, variations in color and design support ethnic identity representations [9].

The folk costume serves as an identity symbol, particularly in multi-ethnic areas and geographical regions marked by tensions arising from the political dimensions of ethnic affiliation. It is considered the sartorial expression of tradition. In traditional cultures and contexts where customs are highly valued, novelty is often met with reluctance. The folk costume is naturally resistant to innovation. In traditional cultures and contexts, it tends to resist innovation. However, as a marker of prestige within communities, folk costumes can be modified by influences that are recognized as prestigious. These changes in traditional clothing represent a narrow domain where fashion can find expression.

Changes in traditional costumes may also stem from resilience strategies, such as the adoption of new fabrics that become available through industrialization, or as a response to the declining practice of manufacturing outfits in individual households. Resilience can also manifest in deliberate efforts to preserve a folk costume despite social and political changes, sometimes emerging as a subtle form of resistance to these changes, even as traditional communities align themselves with broader contemporary societal trends.

Rupea is a small town in Brașov County, Transylvania, in the center of Romania. In Romania, the folk costume is the traditional attire of the rural population. However, in the small town of Rupea, the interest in preserving the folk costume is greater than in the surrounding villages. We aimed to identify the reasons behind this somewhat unique interest in the urban environment, given the contemporary cultural context. This study examines the relationship between fashion and resilience as factors driving changes in the Romanian female folk costume in Rupea, Brașov County. We begin by describing the local folk costume's distinguishing features, which serve as status indicators within the community. We then analyze the observable transformations in folk costume from the late 19th century to the present and their sources, whether stemming from external influences manifested as fashion or representing resilient responses to challenges during this period. We also show how Rupea's Romanian residents successfully preserved and leveraged their folk costume and community traditions following the communist regime's rise to power. This cultural preservation in an urban environment exemplifies cultural resilience and supports the case for engaging local communities in the sustainable management of their cultural heritage resources. In addition, we suggest that local resilient solutions could provide solutions to contemporary problems related to sustainable heritage management.

2. Materials and Methods

In order to achieve these objectives, we analyzed data from semi-structured interviews with Rupea residents. On the one hand, we used the interviews to clarify the components of the folk costume and its function as a status indicator for the community, and, on the other hand, to identify the significance the community associated with wearing it, given the historical context of the last century. Interviews were conducted with locals who are well-known within the community as good connoisseurs of local traditions, namely well-informed informants. For sample composition, we used the homogeneous snowball sampling technique. The dataset includes four interviews from 2010, conducted during previous research [10] and labeled I1–I4, along with eight interviews conducted in 2024, labeled I5–I12. For the recent interviews, we employed photo elicitation techniques using images from both the authors'

personal collections and the interviewees' archives. Photo elicitation, a visual sociology technique, generates research data through images [11] by incorporating photographs during interviews to stimulate discussion and commentary [12,13]. We considered that it would be more efficient to discuss clothing, local specifics, details, and social status-related differences based on images. Correlating the information from the 2010 and 2024 interviews indicated that theoretical saturation had been reached.

One key interviewee demonstrated particular dedication to promoting the folk costume and local traditions, having recently published a monograph about Rupea's inhabitants and two albums documenting the area's traditional clothing [14–16], drawing from his extensive photograph collection (hereafter referred to as V.D.).

In addition, we analyzed as social documents photographs from "Junii Cetății Rupea" (The Lads of Rupea Fortress) association [17], an organization dedicated to promoting local cultural heritage, along with photographs from the authors' personal collections and information from the specialized literature on Rupea's folk costume [18–21].

Additionally, we utilized data from participant observation, with the study's authors serving as community insiders during various Rupea events over the years. This approach is considered the most effective variant of observational research [22]. The findings from this method are denoted by the acronym PO.

During the participant observation, we also determined the first people we interviewed. These were the people with authority regarding the folk costume and its significance. They were consulted when needed, and what they decided was strictly respected and used as an argument in any disputes. Their authority is based on age and the status of informal leaders of the community, a status acquired/inherited from long intra-community relations. These people are the ones who suggested the following interviewees.

Our study presents the results obtained through these methods in a unified manner, aiming for a coherent representation of the folk costume in Rupea within the community. For clarity purposes, we chose to paraphrase the interviews presenting the folk costumes. In order to signal the source of the paraphrases, we used I1–I12 indicators.

We did not notice any marked differences between the folk costume and its representations between 2010 and 2024. Therefore, identifying why the locals were interested in wearing the folk costume was more relevant for approaching the topic of interest compared to the possible results that a longitudinal approach could have generated.

The research was conducted with the approval of the Ethics Committee of the University of Brașov. For the interviews conducted in 2024, we requested and obtained written consent from the participants. In the consent form, the participants were assured of confidentiality and the protection of their personal data. For the interviews conducted in 2010, we only had the implicit consent of the respondents resulting from their participation in the interviews. The Ethics Committee's approval also covers the use of the older data to strengthen the results of the recent research.

3. Some Conceptual Clarifications

3.1. Clothing as a System of Signs

According to Roland Barthes [1], clothing is the result of meaning-making activities, suggesting that every clothing item carries semiotic significance. He draws a parallel between individual clothing choices and clothing as an institution, similar to Saussure's distinction between langue and parole [1]. A garment can signify by its name, manner of wear, authenticity, and brand [23]. In the semiotic interpretation of clothing, a garment becomes the significant object, with one component serving as the support for meaning, while the manner of wearing represents the variant. This immaterial variant operates through binary oppositions, such as open/closed, presence/absence, transparent/opaque, and comfort-

able/uncomfortable [23]. Similar to language [6,24], clothing functions as a communication system based on codes [24] that enables the "decoding" of social groups [4] and contextual situations—whether ceremonial, festive, or everyday [23]. Through this decoding process, one can identify the multiple factors influencing clothing choices, including social, cultural, political, economic, technological, urban, and health-related considerations [25].

3.2. Fashion—Between the Desire to Imitate and the Need for Differentiation

Clothing meanings operate through societal codes that evolve over time [26]. Fashion emerges as one of the primary drivers of change in garment signification. As Simmel observes, fashion operates through two opposing forces: "Thus fashion represents nothing more than one of the many forms of life by the aid of which we seek to combine in uniform spheres of activity the tendency towards social equalization with the desire for individual differentiation and change" [27] (p. 543). These dynamics reflect broader societal patterns in how individuals and groups navigate social adaptation, personal expression, imitation, and independence [27].

Fashion acts both as a unifying force and a differentiator for social classes and their neighboring communities. It is initiated by elites and changes when the masses imitate it, Simmel shows [27]. A clothing item created for differentiation purposes and targeting higher classes is imitated by lower classes [28]. As Barthes also indicates, fashion is driven by the desire of those who do not wish to stand out to emulate those who do. Sometimes fashion interacts with politics, influencing a school or military uniform, while at other times, it is shaped by religious requirements [23].

Fashion is apparently unpredictable over short periods of time. However, it presents an obvious regularity when analyzed from a wider temporal perspective [1]. Even though it has diminished its clarity and innocence as a symbol [23], it remains a dominant organizing principle in society during capitalism [29].

On the other hand, fashion does not exist in societies lacking social classes, indicates Simmel [27]. Unlike developed societies where external borrowings are used by groups to differentiate themselves and showcase exclusivity, traditional cultures function differently. In these societies, novelties introduced by outsiders are not well received, and changes are infrequent [27]. According to Barthes, in traditional societies, clothing remains unchanged and is not influenced by fashion [1].

3.3. Resilience and Cultural Resilience

Resilience, a concept originating in ecology, represents the way an ecosystem adapts to environmental crises and risks [30]. Resilience is the intrinsic feature of a system that manages to preserve its internal structure when transitioning from one state of equilibrium to another [31] under the pressure of internal changes and external shocks [31–33]. It represents the system's anti-fragility [31]. While, for eco-systems, the transition may incur returning to the pre-disturbance state, in the case of resilient human systems, resuming the initial state is impossible because they are characterized by social learning and social memory [30,34]. Human system resilience occurs when going through cycles of adaptive renewal, namely growth, collapse, reorganization, and preservation [35]. It is a complex process characterized by significant contextual features [36] that unfold in a system that needs to be capable of preserving its vitality and stability [31]. For such a system, the continuous generation of community heritage resources is essential [37].

A resilient answer needs to ensure community stability and the development of new structures and norms that allow adaptation to change [36]. Such an answer capitalizes on a community's capacity to adapt while preserving its religious and cultural values [38]. That contributes to the consolidation of the community's endurance to challenges [39,40]

while merging resistance and negotiation as part of its survival [41,42]. Cultural heritage contributes to building more resilient communities [37].

Socio-cultural resilience targets a community's philosophy, psychology, and practices, which need to be responsive to economic, social, and political changes [43]. According to Fleming and Ledogar, cultural resilience is "the capacity of a distinct community or cultural system to absorb disturbance and reorganize while undergoing change so as to retain key elements of structure and identity that preserve its distinctness." [44] (p. 3). It is "the ability to maintain livelihoods that satisfy both material and moral (normative) needs in the face of major stresses and shocks: environmental, political, economic, or otherwise" [45] (p. 3). Cultural resilience is both about absorbing shocks with the help of cultural resources [46,47], such as oral traditions [46,48], collective acknowledgment of responsibility, authenticity, and balance, and establishing a coherent link between the past, present, and future [46]. Cultural resilience capitalizes on long-term relations between the identity of a people and the place where it was shaped, as Rotarangi and Stephenson indicate [49]. In other words, it is related to the concept of "stylistic matrix", coined by the Romanian philosopher Lucian Blaga [50].

Cultural resilience offers an adequate perspective on the mechanisms by which cultural resources are transmitted among generations, as well as on the relations that maintain those mechanisms' functions [37] In this respect, cultural activities lie at the heart of these processes [51].

3.4. Folk Costume as an Intangible Cultural Heritage Resource

Intangible cultural heritage is defined by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, ratified in 2003 at the UNESCO General Conference, as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" [52] (p. 5). Cultural heritage is dynamic, representing human creativity and a source of community cohesion [53], an identity resource [53–55], and an instrument supporting local cultural diversity [56]. The intangible cultural heritage is part of cultural heritage and includes "traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants" [57].

In this study, the term "folk costume" refers to the garment component of the intangible cultural heritage specific to a region, reflecting unity from an ethnographic perspective. The research examines aspects related to "social practices, rituals, and festive events", as well as "traditional craftsmanship", both of which align with the Convention's [52] (p. 5) definition of intangible cultural heritage.

The folk costume is the traditional garment worn by the inhabitants of rural areas. Its narrow definition refers to a traditional garment used for celebrations and ceremonies that can be differentiated from a day-to-day garment by the number and quality of ornaments and jewelry. Everyday garments, on the other hand, feature fewer decorative elements and are not intended for preservation or special occasions. Celebration garments are typically worn by individuals participating in religious and community events. They also serve as the foundation for ceremonial attire, which is used to identify key participants in significant community events.

The name "folk costume" was adopted to differentiate it from the garment worn in urban areas. The development of the textile industry considerably increased the number of garment options for city dwellers, while traditional rural attire remained dependent upon textiles mainly produced in households or small factories. That was also the case for the Romanian dwellers of Rupea until the middle of the 20th century.

A folk costume, especially one for traditional celebrations, is often acknowledged as a national asset. Ethnic affiliation is tightly connected to political orientation, and it is often capitalized on by elites who resort to integrative symbols [58]. National folk costume can play an integrative function as a result of its association with regional culture and ethnic identity. It also reflects the enduring features of a region's dwellers and history, along with its significant political, socio-economic, and cultural relations, including the cultural borrowings associated with them [3].

Globalization, which is associated with concepts like universalism, liberalism, and cultural homogenization, triggers strong and controversial reactions in many countries [59]. Protecting cultural diversity becomes an increasingly significant challenge as the globalization process unfolds. Folk costumes, which vary even among neighboring communities, are valuable expressions of this diversity [60].

The folk costume is an expression of the past that resonates in the present, serving as an integral component of culture as a dynamic process that combines old practices with new ones [61]. It represents both a heritage resource [62,63] and a marker of national identity [63]. Its garments and accessories reflect ancient cultural traditions passed down from one generation to the next [60].

Cultural identity is a synthesis of material and spiritual cultural artifacts, and it meets the basic needs of well-defined national and socio-cultural areas. In contemporary society, the problems related to identity, culture, and ethnicity are deemed central [64]. In an increasingly globalized world under the imperative of transformation, where regional identities are under greater pressure, promoting identity values and local authenticity becomes a necessary endeavor [65,66]. Additionally, the European dimension is culturally tied to the relation between ethnic identity and diversity [64]. In the case of cultural heritage, the inherent tensions ensuing from the confrontation between European unity and national identity can be reconciled [55]. Educating new European generations to embrace common cultural characteristics holds political significance within the EU [67].

But, integration processes do not cancel the diversity nor the cultural complexity of the nations involved. The latter do not lose their salient features because they interpret new cultural elements and make them compatible with their own characteristics. Mutual influence does not lead to cultural standardization [68]. Cosmopolitan nationalism is not self-contradictory; assumed nationality and citizenship do not clash with world citizenship (Stankova). The cultural variety of Europe is a heritage and a gift for future generations, supporting economic and social cohesion [60]. Cultural heritage counters feelings of instability elicited by the swift changes in the contemporary world. Its preservation ensures diversity and cultural pluralism [69].

Returning to the community level, the folk costume as a traditional garment indicates ethnicity, religious affiliation, and the age of the person wearing it—namely age status represented as an individual journey towards seniority [3]. The jewelry adorning the garment is one of the main indicators in this respect.

3.5. Female Folk Costume—The Main Artifact Displaying Status Symbols

Georg Simmel considers beautification a social fact whose main stake depends on the management of its contradictory tendencies: generating joy on the one hand and receiving acknowledgment and respect on the other hand. Adornment, as a way of beautifying, is the symbol of individual power [28]. According to Barthes [1], women have begun wearing their husbands' symbols of power and wealth quite recently in the history of civilization. Ever since then, women's attire has been richer in finery compared to men's. In this respect, women's private property has been acknowledged later than in the case of men and initially consisted of beautifying items [28].

In the case of women, fashion is a tell-tale sign of opposing tendencies—adaptation and imitation on the one hand and differentiation on the other hand. It is also a means for women to become visible in a predominantly masculine culture, as Simmel shows [28].

Regarding the Romanian folk costume, ornaments adorn the pieces of female clothing in particular. The female folk costume serves as the main symbol of status within kinship groups and the broader community. The relatively few changes in folk costume generated by fashion and accepted by the community can be better identified in the female costume, reflecting women's appetite for fashion, as discussed by Simmel [28]. Therefore, our research focuses on the female folk costume from Rupea.

As Barthes points out, clothing functions as a system of signs. Traditional attire signals the wearers' ethnic identity, history, and defining political and cultural relationships. Changes in traditional clothing are rare, and the influence of fashion is almost nonexistent. That makes the attitudes toward changes in Romanian folk costume, highlighted by our research, all the more significant. On the one hand, these attitudes reflect old cultural borrowings influenced by ethnic proximities and political status inequalities in Transylvania. These borrowings were shaped by fashion and by its equalizing power resulting from elite imitation, as emphasized by Simmel and Barthes. However, in the case of traditional clothing, where innovations are difficult to impose, fashion is a challenge that can be managed at the community level. On the other hand, there is the valorization of the folk costume as national attire and, later, as a resilient means of navigating communism. These valorizations were accompanied by resistance to any changes or fashion, which were seen as threats to preserving ethnic identity.

In relation to that, we highlight a number of features that are related to the history of the area, since we deem that the changes in the garment are driven by social and historical factors.

3.6. Romanians in Transylvania

Romanians' representations of their place and role in the history of Transylvania are different from the Saxons' and Magyars' descriptions. As Katherine Verdery underlines, it is impossible to gain an objective perspective in relation to Transylvania's history [70].

Since the Middle Ages, when the intra-Carpathian territories came under the authority of the Hungarian royal court, common Romanian people were politically and economically subordinated to the Hungarian nobility and to the Saxons and Szekelys who had benefitted from royal privileges for centuries. Romanians' access to the high nobiliary dignities of Transylvania or of the Kingdom of Hungary [71] and Romanians' priests' access to privileges were conditioned by their conversion to Catholicism. The Romanian Church United with Rome was established in Transylvania the early 18th century and was perceived differently in the various areas of the province and disturbed the community life of Romanian villages, dividing them and generating resistance movements [72].

Close to the end of the 19th century, the wider European phenomenon of migration to America, resulting from labor opportunities arising from the USA's economic development, reached Transylvania as well. For the Romanians living in Transylvania, that was an opportunity to overcome poverty [73]. Most of the Romanian migrants came from territories that, until WWI, had been under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, namely Transylvania, Banat, and Bucovina [74].

Most of them traveled to America two or three times, and they declared themselves happy with the "one thousand and the journey", namely with the fact that, at the end of their journey, they could pay for it and also save one thousand dollars [75]. Some took their families across the ocean and settled in America. Nonetheless, most Romanians returned home, built houses, and bought plots of land.

Only after WWI, when Transylvania united with the Romanian Kingdom, could Romanians be on an equal footing with the Saxons, economically speaking. The previous ethnic privileges were removed by the Romanian state under a program that provided for equal rights for all nationalities. Against the backdrop of the installation of the Romanian administration and the prolonged manifestations of satisfaction by the Romanians, the interwar period was experienced by the Saxons, who were deprived of their privileges, as one of maximum inter-ethnic tensions [70]. During communism, inter-ethnic relations were no longer strained, given the general dissatisfaction with nationalization, cooperativization of agriculture, and the overthrow of the value system [70]. Relief in inter-ethnic relations came only after centuries, during which the Saxons and Magyars enjoyed privileges at the expense of the Romanians. For the Romanians in Transylvania, these privileged nations, with whom they coexisted throughout history, were seen both as adversaries and as sources of inspiration [70].

At first, the communist regime that came to power in Romania after WWII discouraged traditional culture. Its manifestation was considered dangerous since it disseminated religious content, brought community members together, and, for well-established periods of time, empowered young people, such as those in caroling groups, to take decision-making roles within the community. For a regime that was programmatically atheist and lacking genuine support among the people, such features raised justified concern.

However, things changed when the communist regime consolidated its power in Romania and when the country leader, Nicolae Ceaușescu, discovered the ideological and propaganda advantages of associating nationalism with communism. From an anti-national (internationalist) movement, communism in Romania became ultranationalist [76], despite the ideological mismatch between nationalism and Marxism–Leninism [77]. Thus, traditional cultural practices, void of their religious and community significance and removed from the calendar of rituals, were repurposed in folklore performances designed to promote national pride and portray the country's leader as a national hero. In this context, preserving the authenticity of folk costumes—and even discussing authenticity—became really challenging.

3.7. Some Historical Landmarks About the Town of Rupea

Rupea is a small town in Transylvania, Romania. It is situated in the southeastern part of the province and in the center of the country (Figure 1). From an ethnographic perspective, Rupea is at the center of a subzone that is called by the same name and which is part of the Târnave region. Between the Eastern Carpathians and the Rupea zone, there is an area predominantly inhabited by ethnic Magyars (the Harghita–Covasna region). To the west of the Rupea area lies the Hârtibaciu Plateau (ethnographically known as the Hârtibaciu Valley region), while the southeast borders the Bârsa Land. Numerous Saxon villages have developed along the Hârtibaciu Valley and Bârsa Land. The southwestern part of the Rupea area borders Făgăraș Land (ethnographically known as the Olt Land). The latter is an area with Romanian villages and its history is tied to the ethnic composition of Transylvania [78,79]. The Târnave Plateau (ethnographically comprising the other subzones of the Târnave region) lies in the northwest and north of Rupea and is predominantly inhabited by Romanians.

Rupea is a confluence area, characterized by the historical coexistence of Romanians along with the Saxons and Magyars. An increasing number of Roma population contributes to the ethnic mix.

Archeological discoveries show that the Rupea area has been inhabited since the Paleolithic period [80]. Evidence of human settlement spans multiple prehistoric periods:

the Neolithic period [81–83], the Eneolithic period [81,84–89], the Bronze Age [81], and the Iron Age [90].

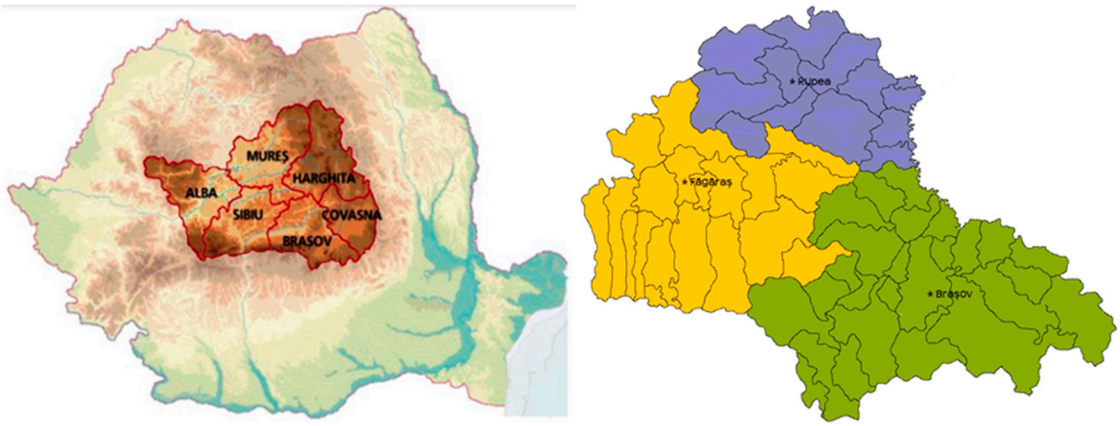

Figure 1. Brașov County and its position in the Center Region of Romania, along with the town of Rupea, situated in the north of Brașov. The territorial administrative units in the Rupea area are highlighted in blue. The stars in the figure indicate the positioning of the towns that are the centers of the three areas of Brașov County. Source: https://addjb.ro/ (accessed on 20 June 2024), author's adaptation.

In the 13th century, the Hungarian monarchy brought German colonists from Luxembourg, the Moselle Valley, and the territories east of the Rhine to Transylvania for political, economic, and strategic reasons. They would be known by the name of "Saxons" even though only a few of them came from Saxony. Upon their arrival in Transylvania, the Saxons were granted the right to settle and self-organize from an economic and religious perspective.

Once the Saxons managed to self-organize and consolidate their settlements, their power and influence increased. Rupea (Reps) was one of the first seven Saxon administrative seats in Transylvania (Siebenbürgen) and a significant center in the administrative history of the Saxons throughout the entire medieval period [91].

The Saxons fortified the fortress of refuge for the locals, which already existed on the basalt cliff above the settlement when they arrived, and added two more buildings with living areas that could be used in case of need. They drained the marshy area that would later become the central district of the settlement, located at the base of the fortress, building their dwellings on both sides of a broad street. The Romanians lived on the hill, at the periphery of this area. In the 15th century, the settlement acquired the status of a fair, and the Saxons built a Gothic hall-type church, which was surrounded by fortified walls.

In 1921, the "St.O.Iosif" high school, named after a national poet born in the area, was established. In 1951, Rupea acquired the status of a town. To this day, it is the only town in the northern area of Brașov County and is the economic, cultural, and legal center for the people in the neighboring villages. It is a small town and the number of its inhabitants has never been much higher than 6000.

After WWII, following the communist takeover in Romania and the nationalization of businesses and land, the Saxons in Rupea began to repatriate to Germany. The repatriation process for the Saxons was slow during the communist regime because of its political and diplomatic connotations. Its pace increased after 1989. Currently, the percentage of the Saxon population in the Rupea area is 1.2% [92] and 1.1% in the town [93].

The Szekelys' origin is disputed to this day. They had the reputation of warriors and accompanied the Hungarians in Pannonia. In the 12th century, they were dispatched to protect the inter-Carpathian border of the kingdom and consolidate its power in the region.

As a reward, they were granted privileges and administrative rights for the territories near the border. After long and complicated relations with the royal and imperial authorities, the Szekelys began to acknowledge themselves as Magyars starting in 1900.

The Szekely craftsmen gradually settled in the areas administered by the Saxons in search of better markets for their products. Before the 18th century, there were very few Magyars in Rupea. Afterward, a large number of Szekelys from neighboring areas settled in Rupea and initially lived along with Romanians on the outskirts of the fair. Currently, Magyars represent 23.1% of the population in the Rupea area [92] and 14.4% of the town's population [93].

Concerning the Roma population, which nowadays is present in a significant number in the area—34.0% in the Rupea area [92] and 9.9% in town [93]—there is little information. In the 1800s, some Saxon and Romanian families had Roma servants or helpers for various household chores [91]. The number of Roma people increased in the town around the 20th century.

In the 1960s, after the completion of the collectivization process in agriculture, the population of Rupea town grew, following the broader trend of rural residents moving to urbanized areas in search of employment [91]. The establishment of the Binders and Asbestos Cement Plant near Hoghiz, with its workers housed in apartment blocks built on land previously owned by the Saxons, also contributed to the population increase.

In the background of the housing dynamics lies the constant presence of the Romanians in the area. Their current number amounts to 41.7% in the area [92] and 63.9% in the town of Rupea [93].

For several centuries, the Romanians would be divided by their faiths: Orthodox and Greek Catholic. In 1750, the Greek Catholics were in the majority, but the number of Orthodox kept increasing. Initially, that was due to the financial and cultural support provided by the Orthodox priest [94] and, then, as a result of the union of Transylvania with Romania, whose population was mainly Orthodox. The Romanian Church United with Rome was forbidden in 1948 and was legally reinstated in 1989 after the fall of communism. In Rupea, the attempts to reactivate the Greek Catholic parish failed since the Romanians in the town chose to keep their faith after four decades, when Orthodoxy had been their only religious option.

4. Results

4.1. Female Folk Costume from Rupea Significant Differences

Until the middle of the last century, the traditional folk costume was the standard festive attire, worn on Sundays and during other celebrations in the Romanian villages in the Rupea area and within the Romanian community in the town (I1, I2, I5). The folk costume was also worn at weddings, either by the regular guests or with additional accessories, thereby becoming the ceremonial costume of the main participants. Today, the folk costume is still worn by young people—girls and boys—during winter holidays, when the groups of lads go caroling and organize the traditional Christmas dance/ball, as well as on Pentecost when young people gather to dance (PO). Nowadays, adults wear the folk costume at the Married Couple's Ball before Lent and, occasionally, at various cultural events. Traditional weddings, with the bride, groom, godparents, and close relatives dressed in ceremonial attire, have not been organized for the past fifty years, except as part of traditional festivals (I1, I2, I4) or documentary film productions (I5, I10). However, for the Married Couple's Ball, when the opportunity arises (such as right after marriage, when celebrating a year of marriage, the birth of a child, or becoming godparents within a year after getting married), women complete their costumes with the appropriate ceremonial accessories (I3, I5, PO).

The differences in garments are more visible in the case of the female folk costume and are symbols of marital status [10,95]. These differences in attire convey a lot of information about the person wearing it to community members.

In Rupea, on the first Christmas day, the girls to be visited by the caroling lads are dressed as in Figure 2. They wear black boots, a wide skirt made of black fabric (called a rocher in the Romanian language), a black silk apron on top of the skirt, a short white woolen coat (clicin) over the traditional blouse (ie), and over the black embroidered vest (laibăr), and a light-colored headscarf (cream, beige, or even pale green) made of thick silk and adorned with fringes (cârpa de muslin) (I3, I5).

Figure 2. The girls from Rupea at Crăciun in the churchyard in 1993 (**left**) and in 2017 (**right**). Source: authors' collection.

Starting from the second day of Christmas, the girls dress differently for the dance. Initially, that would be held outdoors and, later, in the community's event hall, built during the interwar period and called the "Plowmen's Hall". The youngest—aged 14–16—wear black skirts and aprons, a black woolen coat instead of a white one, and a brown or yellow headscarf, while those who are about to be married "tie their headscarves" (cârpele) (I2, I3). This phrase refers to the attire depicted in Figure 3 (left). It consists of boots; a blouse with pleated edges over which two overlapping aprons are tied in the front and are held at the waist by a beaded belt; an embellished white vest made of sheepskin, worn over the blouse; and long ribbons (țopchi) hanging from the back of the neck down to the edge of the skirt. On their heads, they wear two overlapping headscarves with floral prints or embroidery, one red and one black. The red headscarf (called cârpa de călărași, meaning horseman's headscarf, as it is worn by the bridegroom's horsemen at the wedding) is worn with only one corner visible, over the girl's left ear, and a narrow strip across her forehead. The black headscarf is tied above with a corner over the girl's right ear and another corner at the back, with the decorative elements clearly visible (I2, I3, I5). The black cloth aprons are adorned along the edges with golden thread and sequins and have rosettes made of red and green silk (ruji) at the bottom.

The apron beneath is tied so that the decorative part is visible below the edge of the outer apron. Around their necks, the girls wear red or burgundy glass beads (called cioplite), either simple or, in the case of the costume with aprons, interspersed with silver coins and forming a necklace. The quality of the jewelry is an indicator of the wearer's economic status (I4).

This garment, which can include or not a vest depending on the season, is worn by the girls to be married, on the occasion of important religious holidays, and at the weddings of those akin (I5). Nowadays, on the occasion of the Christmas dance, which was transformed into a ball for young people and is organized on the third day of Christmas in

the Plowmen's Hall, girls rarely wear the headscarves and the aprons with silk rosettes. The rare exceptions are dancing events organized on the occasion of Pentecost in a clearing in the proximity of the town, community events, or cultural events requiring a performance element (I5, I10, I11).

Figure 3. (from **left** to **right**) Girls wearing headscarves and aprons (1970s), crătințe (2015), and fote (2004). Source: V.D. collections and the collection of The Lads of Rupea Fortress Association.

During the Christmas ball, girls wear light folk costumes, which are more appropriate for indoor events. They would wear these costumes on the occasion of the St. John's ball organized at the end of winter holidays (January 7th), a ball no longer held nowadays, and during other celebrations throughout the year (I1, I2, I5). These costumes, still most commonly worn today, are also differentiated according to the ages of the girls. The youngest girls wear a white cloth skirt covered by two rectangular pieces of red handwoven wool (called crătințe)—one at the front and one at the back—secured with a beaded belt, as well as a white blouse with lace along the length of the sleeve (Figure 3, central). The girls to be married also wear a white cloth skirt. However, the rectangular pieces over the latter are of black wool (they are called fote). The sleeve of the white blouse is adorned with black ornaments along its length, and they also wear a black woolen vest (Figure 3, right) (I3, PO).

In the case of married women, the differences in clothing primarily mark events within the woman's extended family (kinship) and less the annual cycle of community holidays. This is due to the fact that, in the context of community perpetuation, holidays are opportunities for young people to start relationships, and the girls must demonstrate that they and their families are ready for this and that they belong to the group (I3, I5). The attire of married women is meant to enhance the prestige of the extended family into which the woman has entered by marriage and, secondarily, the prestige of the extended family from which she comes.

Married women also tie their headscarves during important community events. Some women from Rupea wear their headscarves and aprons with rosettes at the Married Couple's Ball. Unlike the girls, women do not display the corner of the red headscarf under the black headscarf; only the narrow band across the forehead remains visible (Figure 4, left). However, unlike girls, women wear the red woolen rectangular piece (crătința) at the back over the pleated edges of the blouse (Figure 4, right) (I2). The aprons with rosettes are also worn together with other head adornments. In fact, they represent the basis of ceremonial wedding attire (I3, PO).

Figure 4. Married women wearing aprons with rosettes and crătința at the back. Source: authors' collection and collection of The Lads of Rupea Fortress Association.

A bride wears a wide woven belt with stripes over these aprons, and on each side, two horsemen's headscarves are left to hang along the entire length of their diagonals. On her head, the bride wears two overlapping rows of ornamental metal prisms placed transversely above her forehead (borte), a string of coins at the bottom of these and across her forehead, and red floral ornaments (vrâste) on the sides. At the back of her neck, the bride wears a high ornament made of peacock feathers (peunii) (Figure 5) (I1, I2, I3).

Figure 5. Bride and groom (from **left** to **right**) in 1910, during the inter-war period, and in 2015. Source: V.D. collections and collection of The Lads of Rupea Fortress Association.

The newly married woman wears the head adornment displayed in Figure 6 (I1, I5) for one year after the wedding when attending other weddings. The newlywed's godmother wears the same adornment at traditional weddings (I5). Nowadays, the newly wedded women wear this adornment at the Married Couple's Ball (PO). The adornment (called conci) contains the same type of metal prisms, as well as a long strip of thin cloth passing under the chin (called fachel) (Figure 7), but it is no longer accompanied by the peacock feathers.

Figure 6. Newly wedded woman adorned with the head decoration for the Married Couple's Ball (**left**) and women wearing various folk costumes at the ball (**right**). Source: authors' collection.

Figure 7. Newly wedded young women during their first year after the wedding (the inter-war period) and godmothers, in 1974 and 2011. Source: V.D. collections and collection of The Lads of Rupea Fortress Association.

Another garment piece meant to adorn the head is the headdress made of thick white fabric (called *vălitoare*) rolled on a rigid base, with a decorated end left to hang at the back. At the front, silver pins adorned with precious or semi-precious stones are inserted. The number of these ornaments decreases as the woman bears children (I3, I5). The headdress can be worn in various ways and is an indicator of the woman's degree of kinship with the bride and groom or, on other occasions, her age (I1, I3). Thus, close relatives of the bride and groom, aunts or goddaughters of the family, and women who were godmothers in the past year wore the headdress covered with a horseman's headscarf and, over it, the strip of white fabric characteristic of a young bride and her godmother. Younger, more distant relatives could wear the headdress only with the red headscarf tied over it at the top of the head or tied at the back beneath the headdress (Figure 8). Older women wear the headdress without any additional adornments (I3).

If they are not related to the bride and groom, or, as it is the case nowadays, women who view themselves as too old to wear the aprons embellished with rosettes (I5), they put on a black vest, a black skirt and a simple apron of black silk. In such cases, women can tie their colored headscarves, or they can wear simple headscarves made of silk tied under the chin (Figure 9). This outfit is lighter and more comfortable and is mainly worn by women at the pre-Lenten ball.

Figure 8. Women wearing the headdress in various ways. Source: V.D. collection.

For a community member, all of these differences in clothing are significant and convey information about the girls and women wearing the folk costume, their extended family, and the calendar of religious holidays and community events.

Locals are interested in preserving and wearing traditional clothing precisely because they have knowledge of its significance. That strengthens their sense of community belonging.

Figure 9. Women with colored headscarves or simple headscarves. Source: V.D. collection.

4.2. Discernible Transformations in the Traditional Female Folk Costume from Rupea

4.2.1. Influences of Coexisting Ethnic Groups on the Romanian Folk Costume

As already highlighted, the Saxons used to be privileged dwellers of the Rupea area and of the center of Rupea town. They were wealthier than the Romanians living on the outskirts and had a strong tradition in manufacturing supported by the guilds and tight relations with the important cities in Transylvania and across the empire. All of the above granted prestige. As a result, the Romanian women in Rupea intently borrowed elements from Saxon women's outfits.

It is the case of the two flowery headscarves tied in the lateral of the bride's belt and hanging over the apron. This type of headscarf comes in various colors but, in the same style of wearing, can be found as components of the garment worn by the girls to be married, the brides, and the newlywed Saxon women in the area [18,19]. Concerning the Romanian women in Rupea, the headscarves can only be found in bridal garment. That is a clue that Romanian women borrowed this particular element, signaling prestige from the Saxons. In Homorod, a village neighboring Rupea where an important community of

Saxons used to live, the Romanian girls wear flowery headscarves tied laterally at their belts at Christmas when they go caroling (I5).

The long ribbons hanging at the back up to the lower margins of the skirt when girls and women wear their aprons with rosettes could also be considered a borrowing. The ribbons can also be found in the Magyar and Saxon costumes worn in the area. These ribbons are monochrome in the case of the Romanian women's garment. Their color is burgundy, and their geometric decorations are woven into the fabric (I2, I3, I5). The ones worn by the Magyar and Saxon girls and women have rich floral ornaments [18,19]. The newer versions woven mechanically have replaced the older embroidered versions. The differences in the textiles used for these ribbons relativize the direction of borrowing. The fact that the Romanian folk costume worn in Transylvania contains such ribbons only in areas of ethnic intersection and not in those areas predominantly inhabited by the Romanians suggests that the Romanian girls and women borrowed the ribbons from coexisting ethnic groups, probably from the Saxon girls and women. The latter had been living there for a longer period of time than the Magyars, in proximity to Romanians in Rupea. The name of the ribbons, *țopchi*, also has a Saxon resonance.

The same origin of borrowing is confirmed by the way the ribbons are tied. In the case of the Saxon and Magyar garments worn in the area, the ribbons are directly tied to the head adornment of the girls, brides, and newlywed women [18,19], or, as in the case of the Magyar girls from Rupea, they are braided into plaits and left to hang along the length of the braids (I7). In Romanian costume, the bride and godmother wear the ribbons of the ceremonial costume directly on the head adornment, but for girls wearing the apron with rosettes or the black skirt with a vest, the ribbons are tied around the neck margin of the blouse. The same is true in the village of Bogata, where some ribbons have floral motifs (Figure 10). This technical solution suggests an addition that is not part of the original logic of the outfit and, therefore, a borrowing. But in the ethnographic area of Rupea, for example in the village of Mateiaș (I6, I12), in addition to the rectangular red woolen items, girls wear ribbons with flowery patterns fastened to the blouse margin with a brooch. So do the girls from Dăișoara, another village near Rupea, in the direction of Făgăraș Land. The Romanian villages of Bogata and Mateiaș neighbor several Magyar villages. The Romanian village of Dăișoara is on the edge of the Saxon settlement area. These neighborhoods support the borrowing hypothesis, but the wearing of ribbons on the Romanian costume in so many variants suggests that it may be more than a simple borrowing aimed at enhancing the wearer's prestige.

The white woolen coat worn by the girls from Rupea at church and when they carol at Christmas can also be considered a Saxon borrowing (I5).

All of the old borrowings from the Saxons indicate Romanians' acknowledgment of the former's superior status in Transylvania, a status that was politically supported for a long time. The Saxon influences on the clothing of Romanian women show the tendency to imitate the elites. Sensitivity to fashion as an external influence, which was atypical in traditional communities, is justified and subordinated in this case to the interest of increasing social prestige. Clothing borrowings from the Saxons were integrated into the folk costume as a sign of belonging to the elites.

Figure 10. Ribbons tied to the Magyar, Saxon, and Romanian (from Bofata) folk costumes (from **left** to **right**). Sources: authors' collection and V.D. collection.

4.2.2. Possible Boyar Influences on the Romanian Folk Costume

The Făgăraș Land, which borders the ethnographic region of Rupea, is an ancient medieval Romanian state formation. It is believed to be the place where the founder of Wallachia, the Romanian principality situated in the south of the Carpathians, crossed the mountains. The Făgăraș Land was under the domination of Hungarian royalty for many centuries. It was a territory granted or taken back from the Wallachian voivodes depending on the interests of the King of Hungary in relation to them [96–98]. Throughout this period, the relations between the boyars of Wallachia and Făgăraș Land remained tight. The voivodes and boyars from across the mountains owned lands and castles/manors in Făgăraș Land.

The complex head adornment characteristic of women's folk costume in the Olt Land—namely the ethnographic area situated in the Făgăraș Land, between the Olt River and the Făgăraș Mountains (which are part of the Southern Carpathians)—and in the neighboring area is viewed as having been influenced by the outfit of the boyar women from Wallachia [18]. In this case, Rupea is one of the neighboring areas. The cloth headdress, in its numerous variants, continues the line of evolution of the head coverings worn by wealthy women in Wallachia. That is validated by available paintings from the medieval period [18] (p. 55). Similar to Făgăraș Land, the wealthier women in Rupea were called "borească", an archaic word derived from the word "boiereasă", used to refer to a boyar's wife.

Wearing goat leather boots along with the costume with rosettes on a larger scale is also viewed to be the result of the boyars' influence. In the case of these boots, an identical last was employed for both feet. Their bootleg was filled with various textiles so that the leather remained stretched (I3, I9), and the boot revealed its elegance. Such boots would be worn only along with the aprons, and they would only accompany a costume that was viewed as valuable and the basis for a ceremonial garment (I3, I5).

The costume in black and white with its two black woolen rectangular items of clothing tied to the belt in front and at the back can also be viewed as the indirect result of the boyars' influence. Its widespread presence in Transylvania was due to two factors. Maria Peligrad, a young woman from Săliște, a locality in Mărginimea Sibiului, Transylvania, won the first beauty contest organized by the Romanian Kingdom in 1906. She was wearing a folk costume similar to the one described above, namely the costume worn in Săliște that she had manufactured by herself. She gave the future Queen Mary of Romania a similar costume as a gift. The latter wore the costume to show her appreciation for the

winner and for her area of origin, which, at that time, was under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The example of the future Queen of Romania was followed by the ladies in her entourage, and after Transylvania united with the Kingdom of Romania, the Romanian women from other parts of Transylvania also began wearing the garment. Thus, the costume began to be worn far beyond its area of origin [99].

Another factor contributing to the success of the costume is tightly linked to the first. The Romanian intellectuals belonging to ASTRA, namely the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and Culture, attempted to make the costume a symbol for the entirety of Transylvania during the inter-war period. The ASTRA members, supported by the women's organizations working with this association, promoted the adoption of the white and black garment as representative for all Romanians in Transylvania and encouraged the girls and women from the villages' choirs who participated in the competitions organized by ASTRA to wear it [99]. As a result of such endeavors, the costume was worn in parallel with the local garment characteristic of each area. Thus, it found its place within the complex system of signs characterizing traditional attire, but it did not become relevant from a ceremonial perspective.

The boyar influences, like the Saxon influences highlighted above, are expressions of the need to increase one's own prestige through the imitation of those whose prestige is recognized. The source of the boyars' prestige lies in their economic status and social standing. For the Romanians in Transylvania, who were not among the privileged nations, coming from a country where Romanians were naturally part of the elite was, for a long time, prestigious in itself.

4.2.3. Urban Influences on the Romanian Folk Costume

The fair of Rupea was connected to the other towns and fairs in Transylvania and the Empire through the Saxons. Several urban influences can be identified in the Romanian folk costume that are possibly/probably the result of Saxon influence. It is the case of the black skirt adopted in the girls' and women's outfits for Christmas. It is about women who (no longer) wear aprons with rosettes. The skirt worn along with a simple apron of silk with flowery patterns is an outfit whose ceremonial importance is reduced and, hence, considered less valuable (I3). Therefore, the pressure to preserve it intact is lower than the one related to ceremonial costumes. The colors of the skirt and vest can be other than black, namely blue, brown, etc. The ornaments of the clothing items (embroidery, lace, velvet bands, cords, etc.) are more diverse, even when such a costume worn with a vest is the attire of a bride at a religious wedding ceremony (I5).

The relation between the costume with the black skirt and the vest on the one hand, and the costume with the aprons embellished with rosettes, metal prisms, and peacock feathers, on the other hand, is complex. First, the ceremonial costume had to be worn in a wider ceremonial context, namely as part of the "wedding with horsemen". During such a wedding, young horsemen accompanied the groom and were ritually presented the bride's dowry by her relatives. Thereafter, the dowry was uploaded into a carriage and taken from the bride's house to the groom's household. Such a context required that the two extended families held a certain economic status. Not all of the weddings in a community were like that. After the communists assumed power, despite the will of the Romanian population [95,100], the newly instated authorities discouraged the gathering of young men in order to protect the new regime against possible rebellion. In the absence of horsemen, the bride could not wear the ceremonial costume.

The research conducted on the V.D. collection of photographs validates the information provided in the I5 interview. The bride and the groom would go to the church accompanied by their godparents, with no retinue, and the wedding ceremony involving the horsemen

would start only after the religious event. The bride would wear a veil with a black skirt and vest at the church, while at the event conducted afterward, she would put on the ceremonial costume. The differences between the religious event and the ceremony organized afterward could entail new research focused on the relation between Christianity and the pre-Christian traditions characteristic of the Romanian cultural areas, as well as of the wider Eastern European space.

Concerning the bride's garment, the aforementioned aspects indicate that the costume with a skirt and vest, which is of urban influence, was an alternative to the ceremonial garment. The bride's entire decision to wear the skirt, the vest, and the veil for her wedding could be related to her desire to align with urban attire. In Fântâna, Paloș, and Mateiaș, Romanian villages situated south, north, and east of Rupea in the same ethnographical area, the bride wore the veil tied at the back to the head adornment with peacock feathers (Figure 11) [18], (I6, I8). The adoption of the veil can be viewed as a way to limit/customize the urban influence. On the other hand, at the beginning of the 20th century, the brides from Rupea who attended the religious wedding ceremony and wore peacock feather head adornments would also wear a white cloth strip—used to cover the head of married women—over the metal prisms or over the headdress [19]. The veil of urban influence could be a replacement for the cloth strip. Its absence in the wedding photographs from Rupea might be due to the fact that those photos were taken after the religious wedding ceremony when the white cloth embellished with ornaments on its margins was completely removed.

Figure 11. Brides wearing the veil in association with costume consisting of a black skirt and vest (**left** and **central**), along with the peacock feather head adornments in the village of Fântâna (**right**). Source: V.D. collection.

The boots with heels and laces worn in association with the different alternatives of the folk costume and most often accompanied by black socks are also of urban influence. The pink and blue ribbons that partially replaced traditional red ribbons worn on each side of the neck and tied to the string of beads (PO) can be considered urban-influenced as well.

The town is the place where fashion is born and represents its point of dissemination. The girls and women from the Saxon community in the small town of Rupea dressed—or tried to dress—as similarly as possible to the women from the larger cities of Transylvania and the Empire. The Saxons were skilled merchants, and their trade networks connected them to Vienna. From Vienna, directly or indirectly—through the larger cities—fashion trends in the urban environment of Transylvania emerged. The Romanians on the outskirts

borrowed elements of urban fashion from the Saxons who lived in the central area of Rupea and eventually incorporated them into their folk costumes. The urban influences on the Romanian traditional costume also resulted from the desire to increase prestige. By adopting garments or accessories they saw on Saxon women, Romanian women implicitly aligned themselves with the fashion of the time.

4.2.4. Valorization of Imported Clothing Accessories

Another source of innovation in folk costume is represented by imported clothing accessories. In the case of the folk costume from Rupea, the light-colored silk head scarves with floral patterns in the fabric worn by girls at Christmas and then by more senior women at various festivities or community events are one such example. These scarves are called "Bohemian cloths", and their name indicates their origin. They were brought for sale by itinerant merchants and replaced the older, home-woven headscarves associated with the folk costume.

The headscarves with a floral print on a red or black background, used as head adornment and in the bride's ceremonial costume, were also imported. Data from the interviews (I1, I3) link the inclusion of these headscarves in the folk costume of the Rupea area to the return of men from America. The headscarves used to initially be presents for their wives and daughters. Then, in order to meet the growing demand, headscarves began to be sold at the local fairs.

It is also about prestige and fashion in the case of imported accessories adopted in the folk costume. The headscarves from Bohemia reflected the economic power of the families where they were worn. They were initially fashionable and then became integrated as mandatory pieces into the folk costume. Romanians who traveled to America had an aura of heroes; their journeys held an initiatory dimension in the collective mindset. It was a matter of prestige to belong to the family of one such hero. The floral headscarves were included in the attire as symbols of this prestige and later evolved into fashionable accessories.

4.2.5. The Influence of Romanians on the Roma Garment

Concerning the Roma population, they would make costumes that imitate those of the Romanians. In Rupea, the wealthiest of the former were called "silk Romas", which most likely referred to their initial and profitable occupation as itinerant merchants. The differences between the Romanian women's costumes with rosettes and the Roma women's attire are hard to notice, especially for those who are not locals. The Roma's outfit has more ornaments (brighter colors and wider and shinier decorative strips). As a result of this salient feature, Romanian women try to avoid adding extra ornaments. And such an attitude is not related only to the costume with rosettes, which is the basis for ceremonial garments. For example, in the case of Romanian women, the petticoat under the black fabric skirt cannot have lace at the bottom because the Roma girls and women have already added lace to the lower part of the underskirt (I3).

4.2.6. Textile Substitution on Account of Industrialization

Concerning the imported headscarves that replaced the cloth scarves woven in the household, several more innovative substitutions can be identified in the folk costume from Rupea. However, they are not the result of the prestige associated by the community to the place of origin of the clothing item, as was the case for the headscarves. That is rather due to the alternate constraints/opportunities resulting from the evolution of the textile industry and market.

First, the substitution concerned the aprons with rosettes. The photos in the collections employed by our research that date back to the middle of the 19th century show aprons

decorated with a shining thread and rosettes made of ribbon along the margins. Sometimes, before those photos were taken, the decorative option of rosettes made from industrially woven ribbon must have been an innovative decision replacing the older ornaments made from the colored thread woven directly into the fabric used for aprons. The substitution occurred when ribbons became available on the market.

The thin cloth woven in the household was finished either by intentional polishing with an iron [19] or by waxing in the Saxon workshops in town (I5). Even such techniques used to be innovative at the time when they were first introduced.

The availability of industrially woven cotton cloth made the latter an option for making traditional blouses with black ornaments along the length of their sleeves (I2, I3). Women reduced the amount of cloth manually woven as a result of labor division principles imposed by the Communist Party, and that made it scarce. Hence, the industrially woven cloth became the main option for making traditional clothing (I2, I3). When the economy of communist Romania got worse, even that type of cloth was hard to purchase, and making new blouses became a challenge.

Later, also as a result of cotton scarcity, the new blouses worn by the young girls, along with the rectangular clothing items woven from red wool, would be made from a synthetic fabric similar to a thicker voile (I9, I10). After 1989, the custom of making new blouses from cotton cloth resumed. The white cloth strip worn over the metal prisms and headdresses was also replaced in the second half of the 20th century with a thicker white voile (I3).

Innovative changes occurred even in the case of the ornaments on the blouses. Thus, the handmade lace that merged the two parts of a sleeve lengthwise was replaced with commercially available lace. The latter was first made of cotton, but later, in the case of the blouses made from synthetic material, it was made with embroidery on voile. Also, the rows of ornaments hand-sewn with black thread along the sleeves, on either side of the lace, on blouses worn with black skirts and vests were replaced with narrow black embroidery applied to the white fabric of the sleeve (I2, I3, I9).

The most recent changes signaled by the interviews we conducted date back to the second half of the 20th century, more precisely to the 1970s. It was a period when traditional cultural events were revitalized after the establishment of the communist regime in Romania. In the first decades following the changes in the political regime, such events were discouraged on account of symbolizing the old ways and a Weltanschauung that no longer aligned with the new proletarian and internationalist order.

Later, the communist authorities realized the propaganda advantages of promoting traditional culture and nationalist sentiments. As a result, various traditional customs and practices were revived through festivals and folkloric events. Members of local communities were invited to showcase their traditions as amateur artistic ensembles. Additionally, folk costumes were used as official attire for locals during the visits of the country's leader and his entourage across the country. In Paloș, a village with an impressive identity tradition located in the Rupea area, during one of those visits, an entire wedding with horsemen was staged (I8) (Figure 12).

In the same context, the lads reorganized into groups after almost a quarter of a century of interruption following the political regime change in Romania after World War II. They also resumed organizing youth gatherings for dancing after caroling. After so many years of interruption, preparing appropriate attire for caroling, dancing, and the revival of customs as performances proved to be a challenge for the women in the community. Commercially available fabric and lace became a quick and accessible solution. The attire was not specifically made for the stage. The new garments were used both during performances and at community events. The latter, mainly caroling, the youth ball organized after caroling, and the Married Couple's Ball, suggestively renamed as the Folk

Costume Ball, would be allowed to unfold again (I2, I3, I5). The new clothing supplemented wardrobes that had not been refreshed for nearly a generation due to the lack of sufficient opportunities to wear traditional costumes.

The use of new materials of industrial origin instead of traditional ones was no longer a fashionable option. It was not motivated by a desire to increase the prestige of those wearing the traditional costume. Instead, it was a resilient choice made by the women of Rupea, who used what they had at hand to dress their children or grandchildren for special occasions.

Figure 12. A wedding organized as a performance in the village of Paloș in 1974. Source: authors' collection.

4.2.7. The Challenge to Preserve Local Traditions in the Urban Environment During Communist Times in Romania

The revival of the lads' group caroling in the community at Christmas was a challenge in many ways. The lads were responsible for organizing the ball, where they would participate along with the girls, all dressed in folk costumes. Hence, the garment was just one of the difficulties raised by the period of interdiction. The men in the community, in the absence of a natural direct initiation of each of the lads into their responsibilities when joining the group by a senior lad, had to teach the former what to do. Additionally, the men and the lads from the community sought ways to reconcile the religious practice of caroling with the programmatically atheistic orientation of the political regime in Romania at the time. The solution was a combination of the "say what you need to say and do whatever you want" on behalf of the lads' group and the local authorities' tacit agreement/goodwill. "The lady mayor used to attend the youth ball, because she had to, it was her duty, but she made sure to leave before the ceremonial part, at midnight, when the leader of the young men had to recite his poem and make wishes for the community... that was a religious part which was not to the taste of communists" (I5). "In fact, they liked it too because they were honored by the young men, for that was the custom in the past that the mayor had to be among the first to be caroled" (I9), the respondents say. The lads prepared an official repertoire of patriotic songs, which they submitted for approval along with the request to authorize the group's activities during the winter holidays. Once the official repertoire was endorsed, it was only partially sung during the caroling, and the lads would also sing religious carols. Some of those patriotic songs that used to be included in the officially approved repertoire are sung even nowadays by the lads' group from Rupea: "They sang many soldiers' songs, the old songs about World War I, when the Romanian army liberated Transylvania... And there were also the military songs, because most of the young men had served in the army" (I12).

Traditionally, the lads' group was at the core of community life during the winter holidays. The community would organize its schedule based on the schedule of the group [101]. However, when caroling resumed in the 1970s, things changed.

The number of caroling lads during communist times was larger compared to the time period following the war. The reason was that after the collectivization of agriculture, many people in the neighboring villages of Rupea moved to town in search of jobs. At Christmas, people would not be granted free days. Hence, the lads' group had to schedule its activities in accordance with the working people's availability to welcome them and to participate in their activities. "It was difficult, because in the morning the carolers had to go to work... poor things, they did their job, finished caroling all over the town, but they could hardly go through the next day... Some would arrange for a day off, depending on where they worked, but not everyone could have a day off, because it wasn't allowed!" (I4). "People would wait for them, because it was a great joy... but the next day everyone would go about their chores... there wasn't really time to sleep during Christmas" (I5). As a result, the traditional dance that used to be organized on the second and third day of Christmas, which during the communist regime were workdays, was replaced by the youth's ball organized on the first Saturday after Christmas in the Plowmen's Hall. This ball also replaced the dance (and the ball) that used to be organized on the occasion of St. John the Baptist's Day, a day that, according to the Orthodox calendar, marks the end of winter holidays. St. John the Baptist's Day is always celebrated on January 7th, according to the Byzantine rite. Consequently, during communism, it could not be celebrated as its religious importance would have required (I5, I11). Winter vacations were over before St. John the Baptist's Day, and many of the young people for whom the ball was organized would have already gone back to school. It is worth mentioning that keeping children in school for a longer period (that is, high school, post-secondary school, and college) ensured a better future for them, given the programmatic disavowal of wealth-based hierarchies under the new regime. "There was this rule once that the leader of the young men should not be away at school, but should be home for all the holidays... students didn't have much chance to be chosen" (I5), one of the respondents says. "That's how we chose, from those who had finished their military service and lived in Rupea... because there was a lot to do, the one who was selected had to have authority, be able to control the young men... and know everyone because we would visit them all", recalls one of the former carolers (I11).

The way the group of young men was supported by the locals and found (again) its place within the ceremonies conducted during the winter holidays in communist Romania shows the resilience of the community from Rupea. They leveraged the ideological relaxation in the 1970s to revive the custom of the caroling group of young men and restore its importance. The community found its own way of connecting to its cultural heritage resources.

5. Discussion

5.1. Borrowings Integrated into Folk Costumes

The folk costume of Romanian women from Rupea is known in the Romanian language as "catrință" [102]. Its name is coined by the woven rectangular clothing items tied to the belt and covering the lower part of the body. There are several sub-types of this costume. In Rupea, as already detailed before, there are two sub-types. One of them has two rectangular pieces, one in front and the other at the back of the skirt, whereas the other consists of an apron in front and a so-called "catrință" (in Rupea named *crătință*) at the back of the skirt.

Our research highlights two types of changes in the folk costume. Some of the changes are the result of borrowings from sources acknowledged as prestigious by the community.

The Saxons, town inhabitants, boyars from Wallachia, Western Europeans, and Americans used to be such sources. The prominent role of the Saxons as the primary source of inter-ethnic borrowings ensues from the main interactions of Romanians, as dwellers in the fair of Rupea, with them for several centuries. The relations with the Magyar craftsmen who settled on the outskirts of the Saxon fair at a later date were politically and historically influenced. The borrowings between Magyars and Romanians at the level of cultural heritage across Transylvania is a rich subject worth conducting in-depth research. As our research unveils, in the town of Rupea and its surrounding area, the ratio of borrowings from the Magyars is smaller when compared to the number of borrowings from the Saxons.

Clothing borrowing from a recognized dominant culture is not a rare phenomenon. [3]. They are driven by the desire to imitate elites, which is a defining feature of fashion [1,28]. The borrowings mentioned in this study, as the result of the influence of prestigious sources, express the sensibility of the local community from Rupea to fashion. But, traditional communities are, by their very definition, reluctant to change [27] and outside the influence of fashion [1]. Some of their members have better knowledge of the dress code of the community [24], and they manage the community's attitude to change in this respect.

In Rupea, Transylvania, the need for prestige among Romanians overcame their reluctance to change and drove community acceptance of external influences initially expressed as fashion. The community integrated these influences into folk costumes, making them part of its tradition. The traditional folk costume captured in old photographs is the one that integrated external influences. Once the community included the influences from prestigious sources, the shape of the folk costume was fixed. Reluctance to change and insensitivity to fashion have become operational again in keeping it unchanged over generations, in which the Romanian community in Rupea behaved as a traditional one. Our research results focus on the period when this community transformed from a traditional one to an urban with traditionalist concerns one.

5.2. The Perpetuity of Popular Costume as a System of Signs

The community-accepted changes did not influence the traditional structure of signs characteristic of the folk costume. The latter preserved its community-related functionality, signaling the status of its wearer. The same observation is valid in relation to the changes in the folk costume as a result of employing new materials. The substitution of the homemade woven fabric with industrially made fabric or with synthetic fibers at a later date did not change the design of the garment nor the category to which the woman wearing belonged. Purchased lace replaced hand-crocheted lace at the sleeves. Black ornamental rows were attached next to the lace and replaced the strings of ornaments sewn directly onto the blouse fabric, stitch by stitch on traditional blouses. The function of the folk costume's design to signify the wearer's status within the community is very close to that played by uniforms. The latter also signals the wearers' membership to a group [29] and defines them as its members [3]. Within the system of signs characteristic of the folk costume, the place where the lace is inserted is more important than its source of production: homemade or industrially produced. The design of the costume signals membership. In Rupea, the differences among the same type of costume ensuing from its personalization within the formal limits delineated by the community are rather small and might be the result of the the rigor that characterizes the neighboring Saxons' culture. Folk costumes do resemble uniforms in this area compared to other localities within the ethnographic area.

We have highlighted on other occasions [10,95] the results of a semiological analysis of the traditional clothing of Romanians from Rupea. We highlighted the binary opposition that gives the folk costume its functionality as a symbol. Regarding female clothing, we signaled the opposition as discreet/flamboyant, closed/open (or modest/provocative),

and standardized/differentiating. The headscarves of very young girls and older women are discreet. Floral headscarves worn by girls who are ready to get married and by young women, as well as the metal pieces adorned with (semi)precious stones, are flamboyant. A silk headscarf tied under the chin at church is a closed, modest adornment. Floral headscarves with their corners turned up and worn at dances and other festivities constitute an open, provocative adornment. The clothing of girls is dependent on their age group, and the usual clothing of married women is standardized. The ceremonial costumes of brides, godmothers, and young wives are differentiating. In community weddings, as a particularization of the standardized/differentiating pair, we also noted the binary opposition between relatives/simple invitees. Relatives signaled their degree of kinship with the bride and groom through clothing, while simple invitees wore clothing specific to their age and marital status. All of these binary oppositions are supported by and leverage the primary opposition: married/unmarried. The differences in girls' clothing indicate the age of their wearer—very young or ready to be married—and the event in the community calendar they attend. The differences in women's clothing indicate the important stages and moments of their family life and kinship. Clothing communicates information about nubility and fertility. These are relevant pieces of information regarding the power and prestige of the girl's/woman's lineage. The emphasis placed on these through clothing signals the importance given to marriage and children by the traditional community.

The use of new textile materials did not compromise the functionality of traditional costumes as a system of signs, nor did it affect the relevance of the opposing pairs. The structure of meanings in clothing has been preserved precisely because it was/is still significant at the community level.

5.3. Resilience in Preserving Tradition

We consider that the replacement of traditional materials with the materials made available by the very limited offer of communist Romanian commerce is an expression of the resilience of the local community in Rupea. These changes are completely different from the borrowings made from prestigious sources. They prove the capacity of the women from the community to face challenges and find solutions. While the acknowledged borrowings echo the desire to "join the elite", the substitution of traditional materials is a means to survive and resist.

The pressure to supplement wardrobes with new items must have been very high if the solutions for substitution were adopted. After 1989, there were attempts to replace the wool used to weave the red rectangular clothing items worn by young girls with acrylic fibers. It was readily available in shops and easy to weave, whereas wool was harder to procure (I2). The attempt failed because the community rejected it. The same rejection was encountered when trying to replace the hand-sewn ornaments on the cuffs of men's shirts with decorations made with a sewing machine. The community accepted substitutions on a need-based case and rejected the ones substantiated by comfort-anchored reasons, even if women's economic roles and labor division within the family changed during communism. By tradition, it was a woman's attribute to make the outfit for the entire family, including for their husbands, children, and themselves. During the long winter nights or after working in the field, women would weave or spin, and they would teach their daughters and granddaughters to do the same (I3, I5). As a result of communist drivers for women to take a job, women ended up having a salary and a fixed schedule but very little time to make folk costumes for their families. However, as already highlighted, the changes in the folk costumes that were not need-based were considered unnecessary and inappropriate. Consequently, they were not considered resilient options, and the pressure to adopt them was not high enough.

On the other hand, the repertoire of patriotic songs, canceling the ball organized on the day of St. John the Baptist, and merging the dance meetings of the youth in a ball organized on the first Saturday after Christmas are important parts of the resilient response of the community, especially of the men who made those decisions, to the challenges incurred by the need to support the traditional custom of the caroling lads' group despite a programmatically atheist political regime. The solutions identified to reconcile the ritual demands of caroling with the ideological constraints and with the schedule of the working people demonstrate the same resilience. Cultural heritage is recognized as a significant resource of cultural resilience [37]. According to Flint (2013), "a sustainable community is one that moves beyond subsistence, to the capability for making choices that promote resilience and long-term benefits" [103] (p. 58). Such a community is characterized by "cultural vitality", namely by the capacity to acknowledge and preserve its values over the long term.

Along with all the resilient decisions related to caroling, the resilient options to replace hard-to-acquire traditional materials with readily available ones demonstrate that the local intangible cultural heritage is viable. The locals' involvement is a necessary condition in order to keep heritage alive and to enrich it [104]. This condition has been met in Rupea. Traditions are preserved and capitalized with the support of the local people. These are the main connoisseurs and disseminators of cultural heritage [105]. The decisions about the changes in the folk outfit are taken by the community and are evidence of its functioning as a manager of cultural heritage.

When the people from Rupea first participated in a contest of local traditions and customs in the 1970s, the artistic group from Rupea, whose members were wearing the homemade ceremonial garment, was sanctioned because the women's white cloth strip (*fachel*) used as a head adornment was made of voile and not of home-woven fabric (I3). According to the ethnographers who were preoccupied with the preservation of traditional garments, the decision was justified. However, it also signaled the difficulties of culturally acknowledging that, in order to survive, the folk costume needs to be alive and fit its wearers.

5.4. The Town as a Keeper of Pre-Urban Traditions

The urban social environment has sustained the resilient approaches of the community in Rupea. We consider that several factors have contributed to that. The change in the authorities' approach to traditional culture overlapped with the economic boom witnessed by Rupea as a new town whose development was supported by county authorities. The increasing economic development transformed Rupea into a vibrant cultural hub.

The economic power of the local community empowered, for example, the lads' group. Such groups were re-established in all the villages in the area. However, the number of lads decreased gradually as they moved to the town, which had more to offer in terms of job opportunities compared to collectivized villages. On the other hand, the Romanian population in Rupea increased as a result of the same phenomenon. The number of lads in the group also increased. Worth noting, the lads would pay the instrument players who accompanied them when caroling, as well as those playing at the Christmas dance/ball, from the money gathered during the caroling (I4, I5). Paying for instrument players could be expensive in small and poor communities. However, in the case of Rupea, the costs were not so high in this respect. Thus, the town of Rupea was an adequate environment for preserving and developing an interest in this intangible cultural heritage.

It was not just about economic power. The town also could host performances and support artistic groups. The intellectuals of the town and, last but not least, the teachers from "Șt. O. Iosif" high school were important members of those groups. To this day, the

cultural association of The Lads of Rupea Fortress continues the tradition of those groups and relies on the intellectuals (I5, I12). There was a long-standing tradition in Transylvania, consolidated by the activities of ASTRA, to involve Romanian intellectuals in promoting Romanian cultural values. Already used to being in front of the public, as well as with the complicated management of propaganda requirements included in their job descriptions, the intellectuals in town were quick, even quicker than the dwellers of the neighboring villages, to grasp the opportunity generated by the change in the political outlook on national/traditional culture. All those factors contributed to making the urban area a hub for the preservation and development of interest in cultural heritage.

Somewhat paradoxically, traditions and folklore better resisted in the town area rather than in the neighboring Romanian villages. The situation is similar in the case of the Romanian community from the Șchei neighborhood in Brașov, where the Youngsters of Braşov conduct their activities. The opinions on the historical and ethnographic origins of this group of men are different [106–108]. The Youngsters were considered successors of the lads' group from the former Romanian settlement that was separate from the city of Brașov, successors of a group of healers playing an initiating role (called *călușari* in the Romanian language), or descendants of a paramilitary group meant to protect the settlement. The Youngsters go caroling at Easter with the blessing of the priest from the main Orthodox church of the community, organize dance meetings on the terraces of the mountain gorge situated at the end of the neighborhood, and descend in a ritual manner on horseback into the historic center of Brașov on the Sunday of Thomas. The dwellers of Șchei adjust their schedule to that of the Youngsters'. In this case, also, the economic and symbolic power of the urban community, traditionalist by its cultural orientation, enhances the intangible cultural heritage.

In summary, the Romanians from Rupea adopted external influences from what they viewed as prestigious sources into their folk costume and integrated these elements into their traditional system of clothing symbols. They proved resilient in reactivating and preserving traditions in adverse historical contexts by employing the opportunities provided by the urban social space.

5.5. Folk Costume, Cultural Dualism and Efficient Cultural Management

Cultural heritage underpins well-being and sustainable development [109], ensuring the cohesion of the different dimensions of the latter. The folk costume represents a cultural resource with significant revitalization potential [63]. It serves as an effective tool for sustaining traditional art. The folk costume supports the preservation of crafts within their natural cultural environment [60]. In the meantime, by enhancing national identities, folk costumes also influence contemporary fashion [110]. They can be a source of inspiration for fashion designers [111]. Produced predominantly from locally sourced, hand-crafted natural materials, traditional costumes can also inspire sustainable and economically efficient clothing production methods for local communities [112]. The leverage of traditional crafts can, thus, support community development [111]. Fashion design can be a means of rediscovering cultural capital and, thus, building and strengthening cultural identity [113]. Reinterpreting traditional cultures helps preserve their relevance. In Rupea, the interest in preserving the folk costume could turn the town into a handicraft center, making the creation of the garments a source of income. In any case, each member of the Romanian community receives their own folk costume when they join the group of lads or the group of girls attending the ball. Families' domestic efforts in this respect could be combined into a sustainable activity, even in the form of social entrepreneurship. With regard to the use of traditional clothing in fashion, the most well-known Romanian item is the traditional

blouse (*ia*, the Romanian blouse). But, the inspirational potential of the whole costume is considerable.

Urszula Swadźba [114] considers that cultural dualism is the most desirable scenario when discussing the impact of globalization on local cultures. Cultural dualism protects communities' cultural identity and allows for the preservation of traditional values (work, family, and religion) while at the same time having participative assimilation of world culture. Community members, the educated ones in particular, participate in national and ethnic cultural events while also being well-anchored into global culture. They, thus, evolve on two distinct cultural levels. The wide access to online information [115] of contemporaries facilitates this evolution.

Locals have the best knowledge about cultural heritage, and they are its promoters [105]. Cultural heritage is kept alive and keeps evolving only with the help of locals [104]. Therefore, the decisions on managing heritage resources should be participative [55]. In Rupea there are two cultural associations oriented towards the preservation of the local cultural heritage [116]: the "Junii Cetății Rupea" and the "Ramidava" (name of a large ancient settlement of unknown location, but traditionally associated with Rupea). The activities carried out by the associations, local performances and festivals, the organization of pre-Lenten balls, and tours in the country and abroad, are easily placed under the concept of cultural duality. The members of the associations, not least their leaders, dress up in folk costumes at each event. These associations are potential partners of local authorities in heritage management. They represent resources that cannot be ignored in equitable management.

Expertise in cultural preservation and cultural management are interconnected when aiming for an efficient approach to cultural heritage [53]. It has acquired a strategic socio-cultural role against the backdrop of the current European interest in the sustainable dimension of culture. Cultural management functions as a support for sustainable regional development [117].

6. Conclusions

From the mid-19th century until today, the Romanian folk costume from Rupea has restricted its use from universal clothing, simpler for work and more elaborate during holidays, to a festive costume. The type of celebrations has also changed: the religious celebrations and the weddings organized within the community requiring ceremonial outfits have been replaced by performances, celebrations of national holidays, and festive occasions. The only opportunities to actively wear the folk costumes in a traditional manner are the winter holidays, Pentecost, and the Married Couple's Ball. The substitutions of some textiles and ornaments have been need-based. Such restraints and replacements have not significantly impacted the design of the folk costume and, implicitly, its significance for the community. The structural characteristics of the folk costume that work as signs are instead related to the changes resulting from borrowings. Most of the latter are very old; they go back in time to the Middle Ages. They are borrowings from prestigious sources; they met from the beginning the community's need to enhance its prestige.

Therefore, the Romanian female folk costume from Rupea was not, in its history, totally insensitive to fashion. But, the influence of fashion has been limitedly linked to a few sources considered at the community level of prestige and subordinated to the functionality of the costume as a status insignia. The community's ability to symbolically and, to a certain extent, capitalize on external influences has, to a large extent, ensured the perpetuation and viability of its folk costume.

The functional preservation of the clothing system of signs to this day is also the result of locals using their own folk costumes, both on the occasion of new events and during

traditional celebrations and events. That was possible as a result of the community's elderly women's involvement in teaching their daughters, daughters in law, and granddaughters how to dress "adequately" for every occasion. The women who were knowledgeable in this area carefully monitored the details so that everyone would put on what they were allowed and entitled to, just like in their youth. Given the aforementioned context, nationalistic communism facilitated the preservation of the folk costume. Moreover, it opened access to aspects characteristic of community mentality, as they were reflected in traditional garments.

The town is in the background of the preservation of folk costumes as a component of local cultural heritage in the Rupea area. The urban social space facilitated borrowings in the clothing area, as well as resilient solutions. The same area sustained the valuable use of the folk costume in association with the powerful group of caroling lads during their performances and ceremonies. We consider that, in the case of the town of Rupea, similar to the Șchei neighborhood in Brașov mentioned earlier, a special relationship between the urban social space and the intangible cultural heritage is forged. The town favors the survival of some heritage resources, traditionally belonging to the rural area, within its borders. That could become the focus of future distinct research.

The small town of Rupea and the town of Brașov share the same Saxon heritage. As a result, the marginalized and long politically disadvantaged Romanian locals felt the need to consolidate their own identity and enhance their prestige. The dominant Saxon dimension of the urban space and, in a broader perspective, the status of a dominated ethnicity in a multiethnic town might explain the interest of the dominated ethnic group in preserving their traditional, pre-urban culture within the town. This conclusion of our research could serve as a hypothesis for future studies.

Our research highlights the cultural resilience of the Romanian community from Rupea in relation to their intangible cultural heritage. The folk costume became a consolidated system of signs by including borrowings from prestigious sources and by also changing in an adequate manner only when needed. The lads' group was re-established during the 1970s upon the initiative of the young men after more than two decades of interruption and with the elderly men monitoring the precise conduct of the rituals associated with caroling. The resources of the urban space are used/diverted for the benefit of the community's traditions. The way local communities resiliently use the town for their own cultural interests—and at least partially in opposition to the trends of urban culture—could also represent a theme of interest for future research. The fact that the need to "keep up with the trends" within the community forces the identification of resilient solutions represents a conclusion of our research that can serve as a hypothesis for future research.

The evidence of resilience highlighted throughout our research suggests that local communities should be given more credit for their capacity to manage their cultural heritage. For a sustainable approach to cultural heritage, community ownership is at least as important as professional conservation approaches. In traditionalist communities, the use of heritage resources ensures the preservation of those resources. Living cultural heritage finds its own ways of perpetuation. That could even incur the use of urban assets in order to sustain certain traditions that are older than the history of towns and originate in rural communities. Efficient heritage management should support heritage throughout this evolution. The pressure of globalization further increases the importance of communities in managing heritage resources. The emphasis on authenticity demands cultural dualism as a sustainable managerial approach.

New management methods could mean crediting traditional or native practices. Local communities survive by their power to adapt to challenges of different kinds. Contemporary challenges are only the latest in a long line of others that communities have overcome.

The study on folk costumes and the preservation of traditions in the Romanian community of Rupea signals the community's capacity to find sustainable solutions. As we suggested, the results of the research carried out at the local level could be used as working hypotheses in wider research on the importance of consulting local communities in developing solutions to contemporary challenges. Extrapolating from this, traditional wisdom and community resilience may offer sustainable solutions, solutions not only to heritage problems but even to community development or ecological ones. Efficient and innovative management should explore this direction.

Limits and Relevance of Our Research

Our methodological approach is qualitative. As with all research of this kind, it is difficult to extrapolate results and generalize conclusions. We do not claim that the situation in Rupea is identical to that in other communities. Local geographical, historical, and ethnic features interact contextually in highly diverse ways. However, we believe that this does not render our research irrelevant. It provides hypotheses for future studies in terms of the relationships between urban spaces, traditions, fashion, and resilience. Additionally, our research offers material for future comparative approaches to the topic.

We limited the number of interviews conducted when theoretical saturation was reached. However, it is possible that our direct observations regarding the current standardization of clothing within marital or age categories have influenced our expectations regarding older folk costumes. This might have led us to overlook some differences. It is possible that the semiological distinctions are more varied and subtle than those we identified during the interviews, even when using the technique of photo elicitation. We also believe that conducting a more in-depth semiological analysis, including in a comparative context, represents a promising direction for future research with potential didactic applicability.

Also, regarding the sample, as we have previously shown, it was constituted around and with the help of informal community leaders regarding knowledge about folk costumes and traditions. We did not take into account the possibility of subjective interpretations that these leaders may have imposed, even with good intentions, on what they presented as cultural heritage resources. If so, and these interpretations were also assumed by the community, this would be a good opportunity to research the dynamics of traditional culture. The possibility requires a closer look but does not invalidate our conclusions about the role of the town in heritage conservation.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, D.S. and M.B.; methodology, D.S. and M.B.; investigation, D.S. and M.B.; writing—original draft preparation, D.S. and M.B.; writing—review and editing, D.S. and M.B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding. The APC was funded by Transilvania University of Brașov, Romania.

Data Availability Statement: The original contributions presented in this study are included in the article. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding authors.

Acknowledgments: The authors thank the engineer Vasile Danciu and the engineer Sorin Nistor, the owner and, respectively, the administrator of the two photo collections from which many of the illustrations of this study come. Without their benevolent help, the study could not have been written.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Barthes, R. *The Language of Fashion*; Bloomsbury Publishing Plc: London, UK, 2013.
2. Crane, D.; Bovone, L. Approaches to material culture: The sociology of fashion and clothing. *Poetics* **2006**, *34*, 319–333. [CrossRef]

3. Todorović, T.; Toporišič, T.; Pavko-Čuden, A. Clothes and Costumes as Form of Nonverbal Communication. *Tekstilec* **2014**, *57*, 321–333. [CrossRef]
4. Bourdieu, P. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*; Harvard University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1984.
5. Owyong, Y.S.M. Clothing semiotics and the social construction of power relations. *Soc. Semiot.* **2009**, *19*, 191–211. [CrossRef]
6. Danesi, M. Clothes. In *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, 2nd ed.; Brown, K., Ed.; Elsevier Science: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2006; pp. 495–501.
7. Bouvier, G. The Role of Clothing in Materializing Ideologies: A Social Semiotic Study of Women's Abaya. Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312038976_The_role_of_clothing_in_materializing_ideologies_a_social_semiotic_study_of_women's_Abaya (accessed on 19 November 2022).
8. Bouvier, G. Clothing and meaning making: A multimodal approach to women's abayas. *Vis. Commun.* **2018**, *17*, 187–207. [CrossRef]
9. Eicher, J.B. (Ed.) Dress as expression of ethnic identity. In *Dress and Ethnicity*; Berg: Oxford, UK, 1995; pp. 1–5.
10. Sorea, D. Head Adornment as Sign of Marital Status. A Semiological Study. *Bull. Transilv. Univ. Braşov Ser. VII* **2018**, *11*, 103–112.
11. Williams, R.R.; Whitehouse, K. Photo Elicitation and the Visual Sociology of Religion. *Rev. Relig. Res.* **2015**, *57*, 303–318. [CrossRef]
12. Harper, D. Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Vis. Stud.* **2002**, *17*, 13–26. [CrossRef]
13. Banks, M. *Using Visual Data in Qualitative Research*; SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2007.
14. Danciu, V. *Memoria Caselor Orașului Rupea*; Petru Maior: Reghin, Romania, 2023.
15. Danciu, V. (Ed.) *Album foto. Portul popular din Rupea între anii 1900–2023*; Petru Maior: Reghin, Romania, 2024.
16. Danciu, V. (Ed.) *Album foto. Portul popular din zona Rupea*; Petru Maior: Reghin, Romania, 2024.
17. Junii Cetății Rupea. Available online: https://www.juniicetatiirupea.ro/ (accessed on 2 September 2023).
18. Dunăre, N.; Catrina, C. *Portul Popular Românesc de Pe Tîrnave*; Casa Creației Populare a Județului Brașov: Brașov, Romania, 1968.
19. Fulga, L.; Chiru, G. *Discursul ritual și costumul tradițional din sud-estul Transilvaniei*; Muzeul de Etnografie Braşov: Brașov, Romania, 2018.
20. Baba, M.; Nistor, E. *Obiceiuri de nuntă din Transilvania*; Altip: Alba Iulia, Romania, 2011.
21. Radu, G.; Nistor, E.; Nistor, S. *Nunta tradițională din Rupea*; Capolavoro: Brașov, Romania, 2011.
22. Onuț, G. *Cercetarea sociologică*; Tritonic: Bucharest, Romania, 2014; Volume 2.1.
23. Barthes, R. *Système de la Mode*; Éditions du Seuil: Paris, France, 1967.
24. McCracken, D.G.; Roth, J. Does Clothing Have a Code? Empirical Findings and Theoretical Implications in the Study of Clothing as a Means of Communication. *Int. J. Res. Mark.* **1989**, *6*, 13–33. [CrossRef]
25. Coates, J.F. The future of clothing. *Technol. Forecast. Soc. Chang.* **2016**, *113*, 121–125. [CrossRef]
26. Berger, A.A. Semiotics and Society. *Society* **2014**, *51*, 22–26. [CrossRef]
27. Simmel, G. Fashion. *Am. J. Sociol.* **1957**, *62*, 541–558. [CrossRef]
28. Simmel, G. *Philosophie de la Mode*; Allia: Paris, France, 2013.
29. Carter, M. *Fashion Classics from Carlyle to Barthes*; Berg: Oxford, UK, 2003.
30. Wilson, G.A. Community resilience, globalization, and transitional pathways of decision-making. *Geoforum* **2012**, *43*, 1218–1231. [CrossRef]
31. Lombardini, G. Cultural Identity and Anthropized Environment: The Multidimensional Definition and Measure of the Resilience. *Procedia Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2016**, *223*, 634–639. [CrossRef]
32. Pike, A.; Dawley, S.; Tomaney, J. Resilience, adaptation and adaptability. *Camb. J. Reg. Econ. Soc.* **2010**, *3*, 59–70. [CrossRef]
33. Kirchhoff, T.; Brand, F.S.; Hoheisel, D. From cultural landscapes to resilient social–ecological systems: Transformation of a classical paradigm or a novel approach? In *Resilience and the Cultural Landscape: Understanding and Managing Change in Human-Shaped Environments*; Plieninger, T., Bieling, C., Eds.; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 2012; pp. 49–64.
34. Wilson, G.A.; Hu, Z.; Rahman, S. Community resilience in rural China: The case of Hu Village, Sichuan Province. *J. Rural Stud.* **2018**, *60*, 130–140. [CrossRef]
35. Wilson, G.A. Community resilience: Path dependency, lock-in effects and transitional ruptures. *J. Environ. Plan. Manag.* **2013**, *57*, 1–26. [CrossRef]
36. Wu, X.; Yuan, Z. Understanding the socio-cultural resilience of rural areas through the intergenerational relationship in transitional China: Case studies from Guangdong. *J. Rural Stud.* **2023**, *97*, 303–313. [CrossRef]
37. Beel, D.E.; Wallace, C.D.; Webster, G.; Nguyen, H.; Tait, E.; Macleod, M.; Mellish, C. Cultural resilience: The production of rural community heritage, digital archives and the role of volunteers. *J. Rural Stud.* **2017**, *54*, 459–468. [CrossRef]
38. Southwick, S.M.; Bonanno, G.A.; Masten, A.S.; Panter-Brick, C.; Yehuda, R. Resilience definitions, theory, and challenges: Interdisciplinary perspectives. *Eur. J. Psychotraumatol.* **2014**, *5*, 25338. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
39. Ross, H.; Cuthill, M.; Maclean, K.; Jansen, D.; Witt, B. *Understanding, Enhancing and Managing for Social Resilience at the Regional Scale: Opportunities in North Queensland*; Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Ltd.: Cairns, Australia, 2010. Available online: https://rrrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/497-UQ-Ross-H-et-al-2010-Social-Resilience-at-the-Regional-Scale.pdf (accessed on 19 November 2024).
40. Sausner, E. *Community and Cultural Resilience in Bluefields, Nicaragua: An Ethnographic Study of Creole People. A Dissertation in Educational Theory and Policy and Comparative and International Education*; ProQuest LLC: Ann Arbor, MI, USA, 2019.

41. Bui, H.T.; Jones, T.E.; Weaver, D.B.; Le, A. The adaptive resilience of living cultural heritage in a tourism destination. *J. Sustain. Tour.* **2020**, *28*, 1717503. [CrossRef]
42. Tahara, T.; Al Isra, A.B.; Tiro, S. Cultural Resilience and Syncretism: The Towani Tolotang Community's Journey in Indonesia's Religious Landscape. *J. Ethn. Cult. Stud.* **2023**, *10*, 233–246. [CrossRef]
43. Magis, K. Community resilience: An indicator of social sustainability. *Soc. Nat. Resour. Int. J.* **2010**, *23*, 401–416. [CrossRef]
44. Fleming, J.; Ledogar, R.J. Resilience, an Evolving Concept: A Review of Literature Relevant to Aboriginal Research. *Pimatisiwin* **2008**, *6*, 7–23. [PubMed]
45. Crane, T.A. Of models and meanings: Cultural resilience in social–ecological systems. *Ecol. Soc.* **2010**, *15*, 19. Available online: http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol15/iss4/art19/ (accessed on 21 October 2024). [CrossRef]
46. Belgrave, F.Z.; Chase-Vaughn, G.; Gray, F.; Addison, J.D.; Cherry, V.R. The Efectiveness of a Culture and Gender-Specifc Intervention for Increasing Resiliency among African American Preadolescent Females. *J. Black Psychol.* **2000**, *26*, 133–147. [CrossRef]
47. Kirmayer, L.J.; Dandeneau, S.; Marshall, E.; Phillips, M.K.; Williamson, K.J. Rethinking Resilience from Indigenous Perspectives. *Can. J. Psychiatry* **2011**, *56*, 84–91. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
48. Mehta, J.M.; Chamberlain, E.L. Cultural-ecosystem resilience is vital yet under-considered in coastal restoration. *Humanit. Soc. Sci. Commun.* **2023**, *10*, 265. [CrossRef]
49. Rotarangi, S.J.; Stephenson, J. Resilience pivots: Stability and identity in a social-ecologicalcultural system. *Ecol. Soc.* **2014**, *19*, 28. [CrossRef]
50. Blaga, L. *Trilogia culturii*; Humanitas: Bucharest, Romania, 2018.
51. Callaghan, E.G.; Colton, J. Building sustainable & resilient communities: A balancing of community capital. *Environ. Dev. Sustain.* **2008**, *10*, 931–942. [CrossRef]
52. UNESCO. *Basic Texts of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*; UNESCO: Paris, France, 2018.
53. Baltà Portolés, J. Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Cities. Key Themes and Examples in European Cities. UCLG Committee on Culture Reports. 2018, 7. Available online: https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/report_7_-_cultural_heritage_sustainable_development_-_eng.pdf (accessed on 14 July 2022).
54. Piñeiro-Naval, V.; Serra, P. How Do Destinations Frame Cultural Heritage? Content Analysis of Portugal's Municipal Websites. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 947. [CrossRef]
55. Mäkinen, K. Cultural heritage: Connecting people? *Monit. Glob. Intell. Racism* **2020**, *6*, 1–4.
56. Calligaro, O. From "European cultural heritage" to "cultural diversity"? *Polit. Eur.* **2014**, *3*, 60–85. [CrossRef]
57. UNESCO. What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage? Available online: https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-isintangible-heritage-00003 (accessed on 30 July 2019).
58. Săcălean, L.; Gîfu, D. Psychosocial Influences in Multiethnic Communities. *Procedia Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2015**, *180*, 127–135. [CrossRef]
59. Stankova, M.V. Globalization, Nationalism and Cultural Translation in Bulgarian Folk Singing (Order No. 10980796). 2019. Available online: https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/globalization-nationalism-cultural-translation/docview/2201117111/se-2 (accessed on 20 January 2025).
60. Portelli, L.; Arvanitidou, Z.; McSweeney, K.; Räisänen, R. Tradition in action–Traditional costume innovations. *Heritage* **2024**, *7*, 5307. [CrossRef]
61. Harrison, R. (Ed.) What is heritage. In *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*; Manchester University Press: Manchester, UK; Open University: Milton Keynes, UK, 2010; pp. 5–42.
62. Fan, K.K.; Zhou, Y. The influence of traditional cultural resources (TCRs) on the communication of clothing brands. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 2379. [CrossRef]
63. Delgado, M.J.; Albuquerque, M.H. The contribution of regional costume in fashion. *Procedia Manuf.* **2015**, *3*, 6380–6387. [CrossRef]
64. Valcic, M.; Herceg, J. Processes of Globalisation–Negation of Identity. Economic and Social Development: Book of Proceedings. 2023. Available online: https://www.proquest.com/conference-papers-proceedings/processes-globalisation-negation-identity/docview/2901530333/se-2 (accessed on 20 January 2025).
65. Volkov, Y.Y.; Guskov, I.; Gurba, V.N. Regional Identity in the Space of Social and Managerial Activity. *Humanit. South Russ.* **2022**, *11*, 40–54. [CrossRef]
66. Camacho Posada, M.F. Constructing Collective Identities within European and Latin American Integration Frameworks. *Acad. Appl. Res. Mil. Public Manag. Sci.* **2023**, *22*, 39–53. [CrossRef]
67. Lähdesmäki, T.; Mäkinen, K. The 'European Significance' of Heritage. Politics of Scale in EU Heritage Policy Discourse. In *Politics of Scale: A New Approach to Heritage Studies*; Lähdesmäki, T., Zhu, Y., Thomas, S., Eds.; Berghahn: Oxford, UK, 2019; pp. 36–49. [CrossRef]
68. Hassi, A.; Storti, G. Globalization and Culture. The Three H Scenarios. In *Globalization–Approaches to Diversity*; Cuadra-Montiel, H., Ed.; InTechOpen: Rijeka, Croatia, 2012; pp. 3–21. [CrossRef]
69. Mason, R.; Torre, M. Valores e conservação do património nas sociedades em processo de globalização. In *Informe Mundial Sobre a Cultura*; UNESCO/Editora Moderna: Sao Paolo, SP, Brazil, 2000; pp. 170–186.

70. Verdery, K. *Transylvanian Villagers*; University of California Press: Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA, USA, 1983.
71. Pop, I.A. *Biserică și societate în secolul al XV-Lea. Între acceptare și excludere*; Editura Academiei Române: Bucharest, Romania, 2012.
72. Sorea, D.; Popescu, I.M. Glass Icons in Transylvania (Romania) and the Craft of Painting Them as Cultural Heritage Resources. *Heritage* **2022**, *5*, 4006–4023. [CrossRef]
73. Terteleac, V. Povestea primului val de români ajunşi în America, fugiţi de sărăcie din Ardeal către Tărâmul Făgăduinţei capitaliste. 2022. Available online: https://adevarul.ro/stil-de-viata/cultura/povestea-primului-val-de-romani-ajunsi-in-america-2150628.html (accessed on 20 September 2024).
74. Gârdan, G. Emigrația română în America. Cine a fost de fapt primul român care a ajuns în SUA? Available online: https://historia.ro/sectiune/general/emigratia-romana-in-america-cine-a-fost-de-fapt-570358.html (accessed on 20 September 2024).
75. Gârdan, G. Emigrația română în America. Cine erau cei care plecau? Available online: https://historia.ro/sectiune/general/emigratia-romana-in-america-cine-erau-cei-care-570265.html (accessed on 20 September 2024).
76. Boia, L. *Strania istorie a comunismului românesc (și nefericitele ei consecinţe)*; Humanitas: Bucharest, Romania, 2016.
77. Verdery, K. *Compromis și rezistenţă. Cultura română sub Ceauşescu*; Humanitas: Bucharest, Romania, 1994.
78. Băjenaru, C. *Ţara Făgăraşului în timpul stăpânirii austriece (1691–1867)*; ALTIP: Alba Iulia, Romania, 2013.
79. Sorea, D.; Csesznek, C. The Groups of Caroling Lads from Făgăras, Land (Romania) as Niche Tourism Resource. *Sustainability* **2020**, *12*, 4577. [CrossRef]
80. Doboș, A.; Gridan, S. Recente descoperiri paleolitice în sud-estul Transilvaniei: Microzona Rupea–Homorod–Ungra, judeţul Braşov. *Mater. Și Cercet. Arheol.* **2018**, *XIV*, 5–12.
81. Gridan, S.; Florian, C. Contribuţii la cunoaşterea neoliticului şi eneoliticului din sud-estul Transilvaniei, comuna Homorod (judeţul Braşov). In *ArheoVest III. Interdisciplinaritate în Arheologie Și Istorie*; Forțiu, S., Stavilă, A., Eds.; JATE Press Kiadó: Szeged, Hungary, 2015; pp. 119–133.
82. Lazarovici, G.; Lazarovici, C.M.; Gridan, S. Surse de sare și procesul de neolitizare din S-E Transilvaniei. In *Anuarul Muzeului Etnografic al Transilvaniei*; Argonaut: Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2018; pp. 303–319.
83. Oancă, M.; Lazarovici, G.; Gridan, S. Cercetări în stațiuni Starčevo-Criș din zona Rupea. In *Marea Unire de la Marea Neagră*; Colesniuc, S., Ed.; Celebris: Constanța, Romania, 2018; pp. 21–30.
84. Lazarovici, C.M.; Lazarovici, G.; Gridan, S.; Florian, C.; Aparaschivei, C.; Roman, C. Cercetări privind cultura Petreşti la Rupea. In *Marea Unire de la Marea Neagră*; Colesniuc, S., Ed.; Celebris: Constanța, Romania, 2018; pp. 31–44.
85. Lazarovici, G.; Lazarovici, C.M.; Gridan, S.; Pirău, H.; Apapraschivei, C.; Oancă, M.; Florian, C.; Roman, C. Cercetări arheologice la Rupea. Campania din 2018. *Acta Terrae Fogorasiensis* **2018**, *VII*, 21–37.
86. Gridan, S.; Lazarovici, G.; Lazarovici, C.M.; Aparaschivei, C.; Gridan, O. Contribuții la cunoașterea culturii Petrești din sud-estul Transilvaniei- zona Rupea (jud. Brașov). In *ArheoVest VII1, Interdisciplinaritate în Arheologie și Istorie*; Forțiu, S., Ed.; JATE Press Kiadó: Szeged, Hungary, 2019; pp. 155–174.
87. Mârza, I.; Lazarovici, G.; Gridan, S. Analize mineralogice și determinări petrografice ale unor unelte și aschii descoperite în așezarea de la Rupea 7–Părăul Mălinilor (Comuna Homorod, jud. Brașov). *Acta Terrae Fogorasiensis* **2019**, *8*, 13–21.
88. Gridan, S. An eneolithic innovation from south-eastern Transylvania. The Ariușd-Cucuteni culture sickle blade from Rupea 4- La Movilă settlement (Rupea, Brașov county). *Acta Musei Tutovensis. Istor. Veche Și Arheol.* **2021**, *17*, 23–41.
89. Beldiman, C.; Gridan, S.; Beldiman, D.-M. Un obiect de podoabă preistoric din os descoperit în sud-estul Transilvaniei (com. Homorod, jud. Brașov). In *ArheoVest X1. Interdisciplinaritate în Arheologie Și Istorie*; Forțiu, S., Ed.; Istros: Brăila, Romania, 2022; pp. 243–274.
90. Gridan, S.; Urdea, P.; Hegyi, A. Castrul de la Ungra, jud. Brașov. Cercetări multidisciplinare. In *ArheoVest V2. Interdisciplinaritate în Arheologie Și Istorie*; Forțiu, S., Ed.; JATE Press Kiadó: Szeged, Hungary, 2017; pp. 851–883.
91. Borcoman, M. *Așezări Transilvane: Rupea*; Editura Academiei: Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2010.
92. Asociaţia Transilvană Braşov Nord. Plan de Dezvoltare Locală Zona de Nord a Judeţului BRAŞOV. Available online: http://galatbn.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/PDL-FINAL_varianta-initiala.pdf (accessed on 14 July 2022).
93. Recensământul Populației și Locuințelor. Rezultate Definitive: Caracteristici Etno-Culturale Demografice. Available online: https://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-rpl-2021/rezultate-definitive-caracteristici-etno-culturale-demografice/ (accessed on 3 September 2023).
94. Moga, A. Parohiile Românești Din Rupea (Sec. XVIII-1918). Bachelor's Thesis, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 2020.
95. Sorea, D. Clothing as Marital Status Insignia. A Study on the Traditional Female Clothing of Romanians from Rupea, Transylvania. *Philobiblon. Transylv. J. Multidiscip. Res. Humanit.* **2024**, *29*, 103–126. [CrossRef]
96. Sorea, D.; Csesznek, C.; Rățulea, G.G. The Culture-Centered Development Potential of Communities in Făgăras Land (Romania). *Land* **2022**, *11*, 837. [CrossRef]
97. Sorea, D.; Roșculeț, G.; Rățulea, G.G. The Compossessorates in the Olt Land (Romania) as Sustainable Commons. *Land* **2022**, *11*, 292. [CrossRef]

98. Roșculet, G.; Sorea, D. Commons as Traditional Means of Sustainably Managing Forests and Pastures in Olt Land (Romania). *Sustainability* **2021**, *13*, 8012. [CrossRef]
99. Sorea, D.; Băjenaru, E. The Evolution of the Romanian Traditional Garment in Făgăraș Land in the First Decades after The Great Union of 1918. *Int. Conf. Knowl. Based Organ.* **2019**, *25*, 342–347. [CrossRef]
100. Cioroianu, A. *Pe umerii lui Marx. O introducere în istoria comunismului românesc*; Curtea Veche: Bucharest, Romania, 2005.
101. Herseni, T. *Forme străvechi de cultură poporană românească: Studiu de paleoetnografie a cetelor de feciori din Țara Oltului*; Dacia: Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 1977.
102. Secoșan, E.; Petrescu, P. *Portul Popular de Sărbătoare Din România*; Meridiane: Bucharest, Romania, 1984.
103. Flint, R.F. *Practice of Sustainable Community Development. A Participatory Framework for Change*; Springer: New York, NY, USA, 2013. [CrossRef]
104. Grey, S.; Kuokkanen, R. Indigenous governance of cultural heritage: Searching for alternatives to co-management. *Int. J. Herit. Stud.* **2020**, *26*, 919–941. [CrossRef]
105. Boukas, N.; Chourides, P. Niche tourism in Cyprus: Conceptualising the importance of social entrepreneurship for the sustainable development of islands. *Int. J. Leis. Tour. Mark.* **2016**, *5*, 26–43. [CrossRef]
106. Surdu, A. *Șcheii Brașovului*; Kron-Art: Brașov, Romania, 2010.
107. Olteanu, V. *Junii brașoveni și troițele lor din Șcheii Brașovului*; Semne: Bucharest, Romania, 2001.
108. Olteanu, V. *Istoricul troițelor din Șcheii Brașovului*; Pentru Viață: Brașov, Romania, 2001.
109. Heritage, A.; Tissot, A.; Banerjee, B. Heritage and Wellbeing: What Constitutes a Good Life? International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). 2019. Available online: https://www.iccrom.org/news/heritage-and-wellbeing-what-constitutes-good-life (accessed on 20 January 2025).
110. Moorhouse, D.; Moorhouse, D. Designing a sustainable brand strategy for the fashion industry. *Cloth. Cult.* **2018**, *5*, 7–18. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
111. Brown, S.; Vacca, F. Cultural sustainability in fashion: Reflections on craft and sustainable development models. *Sustain. Sci. Pract. Policy* **2022**, *18*, 590–600. [CrossRef]
112. Fletcher, K. Durability, fashion, sustainability: The processes and practices of use. *Fash. Pract.* **2012**, *4*, 221–238. [CrossRef]
113. Le, T.H.; Dang, P.; Bui, T. Towards Sustainable Products and Services: The Influences of Traditional Costumes in Promoting Sustainable Fashion. *Sustainability* **2024**, *16*, 9800. [CrossRef]
114. Swadźba, U. The Impact of Globalization on the Traditional Value System. In *The Scale of Globalization. Think Globally, Act Locally, Change Individually in the 21st Century*; Mácha, P., Drobík, T., Eds.; University of Ostrava: Ostrava, Czech Republic, 2011; pp. 332–337.
115. Sorea, D.; Repanovici, A. Project-based learning and its contribution to avoid plagiarism of university students. *Investig. Bibl.* **2020**, *34*, 155–178. [CrossRef]
116. Primăria Rupea. Strategia de Dezvoltare Durabilă a Orașului Rupea. Available online: http://www.primariarupea.ro/img/upload/strategie-dezvoltare-durabila-rupea.pdf (accessed on 3 September 2023).
117. Borin, E.; Donato, F. What is the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage? A long way from cultural policies towards innovative cultural management models. *Eur. J. Cult. Manag. Policy* **2020**, *10*, 4–20. [CrossRef]