

**The Digitization of the Cultural Food Heritage.
The Region of Bacău – eCULTFOOD. Towards the processing
methodology of collected audiovisual data¹**

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Abstract

This paper presents the processing methodology of the collected information within the project *The Digitization of the Cultural Food Heritage. The Region of Bacău – eCULTFOOD* (PN-III-P2-2.1-BG-2016-0390). The project aims to create an online platform as an ethno-linguistic and audiovisual Atlas reflecting the cultural heritage of Bacău County. This platform is based on the representative corpus of audio-visual documents related to the traditional cultural food heritage, consisting of surveys involving especially the older generation from the rural county of Bacău, Romania. However, as the processing of information is a preliminary step in the project, the most important methodological aspects related to the editing of the documents resulting from the investigations are required to be presented to the interested public.

Keywords: *corpus, cultural food heritage, processing methodology*

I. Introduction

The project *The Digitization of the Cultural Food Heritage. The Region of Bacău – eCULTFOOD* (PN-III-P2-2.1-BG-2016-0390) is coordinated by a research group from “Vasile Alecsandri” University

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of Bacău in partnership with another research group from “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași and the Cultural Association “Art-Traditions-Patrimony without Borders” from Bacău. It develops between 1.10.2016-30.10.2018 and is funded by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) through the National Research, Development and Innovation Plan for the period between 2015 and 2020 (National RDI Plan III), Direction P2 - Increasing the competitiveness of the Romanian economy through RDI, line 1 - Transfer of knowledge to the economic agent.

This project highlights the idea that in the area of cultural food heritage, each community can be distinguished by its knowledge gained over time. This knowledge results from the interaction with the environment and living conditions, many of them with a proven scientific basis (Bergflødt et al. 2012). It is transmitted from generation to generation and represents the result of a historical process referring to the use of resources. In this way, the rediscovery of those resources includes the idea of progress (Cannarella and Piccioni 2011, Handayani and Prawito 2009).

What this e-CULTFOOD project wants is to bring to the forefront the legacy of culinary knowledge and to contribute to preserving it. Thus, it is intended to create a representative corpus of audiovisual documents in a cartographic and computerized form which is made up of field surveys carried out with people of different generations in Bacău County. The final result is the development of an ethno-linguistic and audiovisual atlas of Bacău County's cultural heritage with a complex database that includes the processed field data of the culinary practices and traditions across the region.

Once transposed into electronic format, this cultural food heritage of Bacău County may become a resource for a broad spectrum of activities impacting sectors such as education, economy and tourism. At the end of the project, the atlas will become the property of the Cultural Association “Art-Traditions-Heritage without Borders” in Bacău as a significant resource for the development of intercultural education programmes. In this way, the specificity of the financing line, which aims at transferring the research results to the economic agents, is respected. Thus, the project provides an answer to the need of generating a change in the concept of cultural research as a socio-economic development factor.

II. Methodology² of eCULTFOOD project

The project is divided into three phases, corresponding to the three years of implementation. During the first phase, we have to design the heritage resource of food, the next phase of the project refers to the creation of that heritage resource, and the final phase is represented by the development of the e-CULTFOOD Atlas web platform.

The research methodology proposed by the e-CULTFOOD project is an interdisciplinary one which combines the methods of socio-human sciences with those of information technology. The main method used to highlight the elements of food heritage within the project is the field survey. All the surveys are carried out according to the ethnological experiment, the semi-direct-type thematic interview and the participatory observation (O'Reilly 2005: 84-112). The main advantage of the semi-direct-type thematic interview is that it provides a certain freedom of communication to the interviewee, although the subject is directly controlled by a researcher (Geraud, Leservoisier and Pottier 2001: 42).

For semi-direct interviews, an interview guide is established with fifty theme topics, so that knowledge and practices of traditional food, cooking techniques and traditional recipes can be recorded. The list of topics is chosen following the research of the intangible heritage elements outlined by Narcisa Știucă (2009: 133-140) available in the collective work *Patrimoniul cultural imaterial din România. Repertoriu I/ Immaterial Cultural Heritage in Romania. Repertory I*, to which there were added elements identified as a result of documentation and field survey. In our research, we also consider the ethnographic experiment technique, which is primarily due to the challenge of preparing diverse dishes (Știucă 2007: 56).

These surveys certainly capture the dynamic nature of traditional regional food and can make us think about the dependence degree of the ethnographic discourse on some different factors such as historical, socio-cultural, theoretical and ideological contexts.

² General data of the project methodology has already been presented in the paper *Digitalizarea patrimoniului cultural alimentar al județului Bacău. Aspecte metodologice*, by Petronela Savin, Valentin Nedeff, Cosmina Timoce-Mocanu, Luminița Drugă, issue XIII of *Caietele ASER*, 2017.

II.1 Collecting data

During one year (starting in November 2016 and ending in October 2017), the surveys related to the traditional menus, codes and cultural behaviour of the residents of Bacău regarding the culinary art were carried out. During the first nine months of the project, all thirty-two places planned to be surveyed according to their representativeness for the geocultural diversity of the region were investigated. The objective is to reinvestigate – in the last three months of investigation – the most interesting localities known for providing authentic and varied data.

Audiovisual documents have already been archived: that data represents real communication situations with eighty-two informants from thirty-two localities of Bacău county, which are presented in the alphabetical order: Apa Asău (Asău), Balcani (Balcani), Bălăneasa (Livezi), Berești (Sascut), Berzunți (Berzunți), Blidari (Căiuți), Buda (Blăgești), Cașin (Cașin), Chetriș (Tamași), Dumbrava (Gura Văii), Faraoani (Faraoani), Frumușelu (Glăvănești), Galbeni (Nicolae Bălcescu), Gioseni (Gioseni), Glăvănești (Glăvănești), Ludași (Balcani), Mănăstirea Cașin (Cașin), Mălosu (Lipova), Muncelu (Glăvănești), Oituz (Oituz), Pâncești (Pâncești), Pârjol (Pârjol), Prăjești (Prăjești), Pustiana (Pîrjol), Răchitiș (Ghimeș-Făget), Răstoaca (Răcăciuni), Rățeni (Balcani), Scurta (Orbeni), Somușca (Cleja), Țârdanii Mici (Blăgești), Valea Mică (Roșiori), and Vâlcele (Târgu-Ocna).

Data of food heritage are collected using video and photo techniques. The two types of videos obtained from the investigations refer to an evocative discourse on traditional dishes, recipes, culinary habits, food codes that the informants recall, but also, to a procedural discourse on the on-the-spot preparation of a dish considered to be representative for their local food culture. As far as the photo material is concerned, it exposes panoramic frames and images with representations of dishes in the final form, the informant or group of informants in different communication situations, as well as pictures with the informant's household, food preparation and storage rooms, food utensils and installations, the investigated locality, etc.

This database provides an obtained material as a discourse about food heritage elements which is a novelty in the field. The realization of this patrimonial atlas will respond to a methodological desideratum available in the current theoretical research: the survey

is no longer a sampling of material, but a form of communication more suitable for an exact reproduction of the cultural specificity of an ethnographic area (Dumistrăcel et al. 1997).

II.2. Editing methodology of data

The editing is the next stage after the documents with heritage information are gathered. The editing process of the audiovisual material is necessary to accurately provide documents that contain both videos and photos with dishes made from the beginning to the end of the preparation, as well as evoked video recipes without preparation during the survey. In addition, the undertaken investigations also illustrate various video sequences regarding wedding traditions, holiday habits, evocations of recipes as they were prepared in the past, the kitchen, the house and the gardener of the informant etc., all with an impact on the past and present culinary art.

For a better archiving and storage in the database, the audiovisual files resulting from the surveys require a number of edits such as subtitles, sound editing, cuts, creation of slideshows, text and sound insertions that will be presented below. All the edits made do not lead to any modification of the discourse, as the reason is to facilitate its understanding. It was meant to keep the authenticity of both videos and photos without too many changes in aspect and sound.

II.2.1. Wondershare Filmora Video Editor

The choice of the video editor has been done in a random manner as there is a variety of tools that can be used for editing video and photo documents. After having a look at its features and functions, Wondershare Filmora Video Editor³ has been selected for the editing process of the collected documents.

Wondershare Filmora Video Editor is a popular video editing software for Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android users. Users who have less or no significant experience in editing videos can make

³ Filmora Editor is available at:

https://filmora.wondershare.com/?utm_expId=101542311-181.h9m-KdqyQQ6r0XT7CzrVIw.0&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Ffilmora.wondershare.com%2Fwhats-new-in-filmora-video-editor.html.

professional-looking videos using this video editor. With almost all the video editing tools, Filmora allows us to modify the videos as we like. Features such as trim, crop, split, combine, rotate, aspect ratio, hue, speed, brightness, contrast, saturation, as well as amazing effects: filters, motion graphics, overlays, titles, transitions, PIP, face-off, etc. are perfect to make interesting and impactful videos. And for more flexibility, Filmora offers its users the possibility to export the resulted video to any video format they like, to share on YouTube, Facebook, Vimeo or burn to DVDs.

With a clear and pleasing user interface for basic editing and advanced editing (Figure 1), Filmora provides two options to edit video in Easy Mode and Full Feature Mode. The editing interface in Easy Mode is intuitive as it allows users to import video, select theme and music, preview and export the video, while in Full Feature Mode, there are advanced editing tools.

Filmora is a free trial software application, but this free version of Wondershare Filmora adds a watermark to videos; this can be removed if the user chooses to pay for its version (the paid version comes with more features). The used version of Wondershare Filmora Video editor for editing the heritage documents of the eCULTFOOD project is Version 8.3.0.

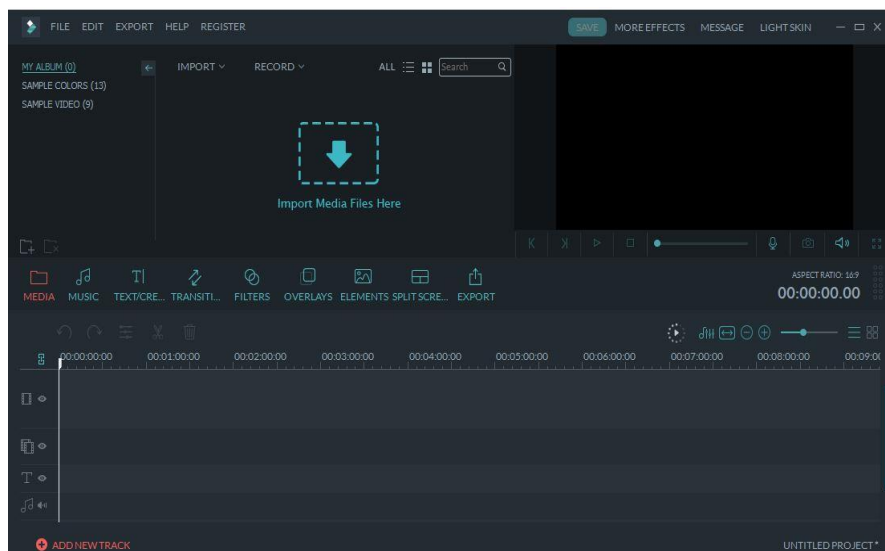


Figure 1. The interface of Wondershare Filmora Video Editor

II.2.2. Video editing

Editing the videos recorded during the investigations takes into account two types of recipes: in the first phase, the recipes prepared during the survey are processed, and then, the recipes that are evoked by the informants on their own initiative or as a result of the researchers' questions.

First, once all the videos have been cut and ordered on recipes or stages of recipes, videos with recipes or with dishes made during the survey are edited using Wondershare Filmora Video Editor. Each ready-made video recipe has an opener (a start-up image) that shows a picture of the preparation in the final state, usually on the table. This opener contains the name of the dish, as well as the name of the village and the county (*Bacău*) where it was cooked. The font used for the name of the dish is *Roboto-Bold* (size between 50 and 80, depending on the length of the name), while for the name of locality *Roboto-Thin Bold* (size 32) and the chosen animation for the writing is *Linear Wipe* type. The transitions that link the food preparation stages are *Morph* type, and finally, an end credit is selected and exposes details of the eCULTFOOD project (PN-III-P2-2.1-BG-2016-0390 *The Digitization of the Cultural Food Heritage. The Region of Bacău – eCULTFOOD*) with *Roboto-Medium Italic* font, size 20 and a *Zoom In* animation type. For example, for the recipe of forcemeat rolls in cabbage leaves (*sarmale*), the stages refer to leaf preparation, preparation of ground corn, vegetable fry, preparation of meat, preparation of filling, adding of tomato sauce and eggs in filling, preparation of pot, rolling the filling in cabbage leaves and boiling the forcemeat rolls in cabbage leaves. All of these product preparation steps are linked together using the mentioned transitions and are anchored with a beginning (an opener) and an end (end credit) as shown in the picture below.

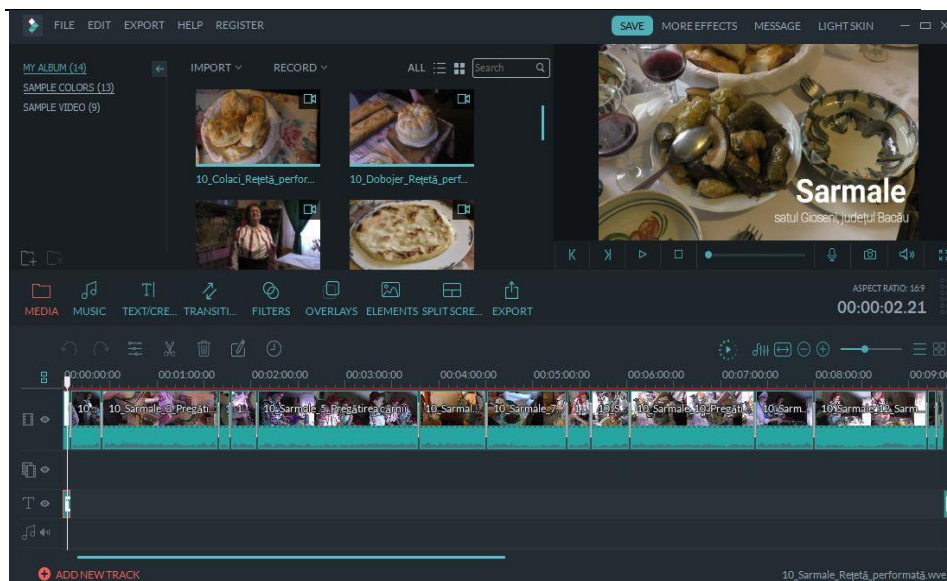


Figure 2. Editing the video of a prepared dish

The evoked recipes do not involve more than two work steps and their editing does not require as much effort and time as for those recipes prepared on the spot. There are many similarities between the video edits of prepared dishes and the videos of recipes exposed from memories.

For the beginning, the same type of opener is chosen, but the selected image is that of the informant presenting the recipe from his or her memories. The font used for the name of the preparation and location details remains the same (*Roboto-Bold* font, size between 50 and 80 and *Roboto-Thin Bold* font, size 32), as well as the animation of writing (*Linear Wipe* type). In order not to create the impression of interrupted discourses, the transitions used between the opener and the recipe, respectively between the recipe and the end credit represent *Evaporated 2* type proposed by Filmora Editor. Also, the video closes with a credit end containing ongoing project information marked with *Roboto Medium Italic* font size 20 and *Zoom In* animation type.

II.2.3 Photo editing

Editing photos is a first step in making a collage of images that highlight all the steps of recipe preparation (a ready-made recipe where the video was previously edited as outlined above). So, for prepared dishes, there is a series of photos that show all the stages of preparation.

For each picture showing a stage of preparation, a short text describing the preparation procedures is added using *Roboto-Bold* font, size 32 and *Linear Wipe* animation for writing. The transitions between these stages are the same as those of the evoked recipes, namely *Evaporate 2*. The photo collage of the preparation opens with an opener showing the picture of a dish to which the related text (the name of the preparation, the locality and the county) is added using *Roboto-Bold* font, size between 50 and 80 and *Roboto-Thin Bold* font, size 32, *Linear Wipe* animation type and closes with an end credit with information about the eCULTFOOD project and the sound track inserted with *Roboto-Medium* font, size 20, respectively 18 and *Linear Wipe* animation.

The music chosen for the background is not a random one: *Doina ciobănească* by *Vrânceanu Vasile* (born in 1950), in the locality of Berzunți, county of Bacău (recorded on 26.06.17). The song was received during the investigations, and small changes made to the song while editing picture collages refer to the volume and intensity.

The image below shows the image collage of kolach (*colaci*), where an opener is added with the name of the preparation and the location of its recording, photos with the preparation steps and the inserted text for each stage, an end credit with the details of the project and the selected music for background.

Besides the pictures of dishes and stages of their preparation along with surveys, there are also images of different ingredients used or not used in recordings, pictures of pre-cooked dishes, pictures of the kitchen and various utensils and cookware, images of the host's house, pictures of researchers, informants, collaborators who took part in the survey, pictures of the locality, etc. To all these images, the name of the dish and the locality of the recipe are added.

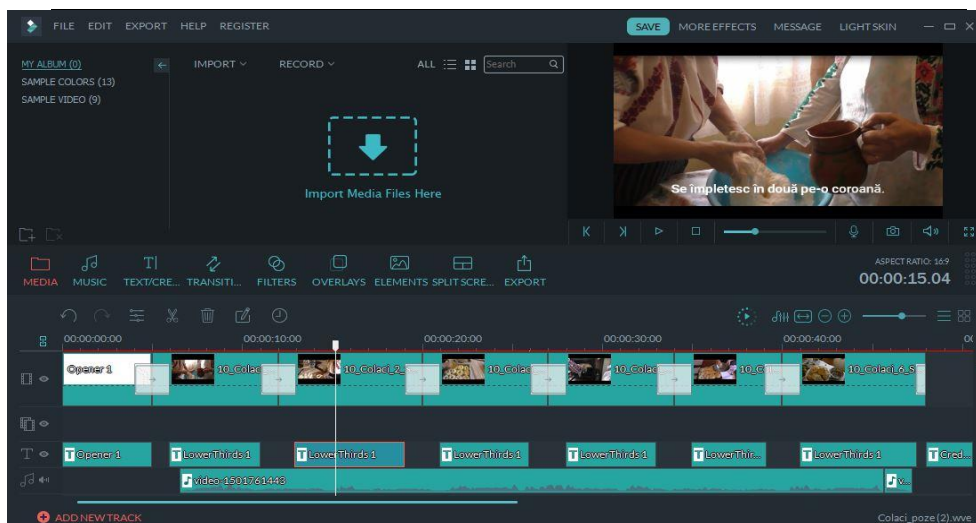


Figure 3. Editing a collage of pictures for the preparation of kolach

Conclusion

The aim of the project is to safeguard (to collect, research, and valorize) and to disseminate (using new models developed in the online environment) the cultural heritage of Bacău County that can serve the cultural education and sustainable development of the communities in the region. The computerization of food heritage responds to the desires of European policies, as the digitization of cultural resources is considered a key-factor that contributes to improving the accessibility and flow of information in economy.

The editing process is an important step within the eCULTFOOD project as it contributes to the organization and coding of all audiovisual material. Using the right tool to edit and annotate documents is the key to success and, as it was shown, Wondershare Filmora Video Editor is very useful with adding text, music or animations, inserting transitions, openers and end credits, and modifying the intensity of a sound.

Finally, the project *The Digitization of the Cultural Food Heritage. The Region of Bacău – eCULTFOOD* (PN-III-P2-2.1-BG-2016-0390) will provide a resource (edited and annotated audiovisual documents of cultural heritage of Bacău County) and establish a community of users with common professional interests and learning experiences, and a community of researchers and practitioners with experience in

the implementation of research tools with socio-economic utility. The editing process will be continued for all the documents gathered in surveys as the material of this cultural food heritage will be transformed into a patrimonial resource with a well-established database designed to connect the experienced generations with the young ones through tools that focus on creative and experiential learning.

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