

MIRCEA

ELADE



From Xalmoxis to
Genghis-Han

H HUMANITAS

FROM ZALMOXIS TO GENGIDS-HAN

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MIRCEA ELIADE

From
ZALMOXIS
at
GENGHIS-HAN

Comparative studies
about the religions and folklore of
Dacia and Eastern Europe

Translation by
MARIA NĂNESCU
and
CEZAR NĂNESCU



HUMANITAS

Cover

IOANA DRAGOMIRESCU MARDARE

Vinieta: Co if de argin t aur it d in tez aurul de la Ag ighiol (de tal iu)

MIRCEA ELIADE

FROM ZALMOXIS TO GENGJS-KHAN

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Preface to the Romanian translation

When I decided to collect in a volume a few studies on the religions and folklore of Dacia and Eastern Europe, I hoped that I would have the time to write at least two other small monographs, one on Carols and winter celebrations, and the other on the Gags and Cathar dances. But these monographs could not be completed in time to be included in *De Zalmoxis a Genghis Khan* (Paris, Payot, 1970), and I have postponed them for a later edition. (Cf. for the time being "Notes on the Horsemen," in *The Gaster Festschrift The Journal of tize Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, vol. 5, 1973, pp. 115-122;

"Observations on European Witchcraft", in *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions: Essays in Comparative Re/igions*, Chicago, University Press, 1967, pp. 78-85, 129-130). But some recent lectures and Seminars, given at the University of Chicago – on death mythologies and funeral rites, on the traces of initiatory scenarios in the ceremonials of youth groups, specific to rural societies in Romania and Eastern Europe, and, especially, about the necessity of integrating European ethnological and folkloric materials into the universal history of religions – convinced me that *From Zalmoxis to Genghis Khan* should be completed with a second volume in which, together with the studies on Carols and Gengis-Khan, all these issues will be analyzed with the attention they deserve. This time the book, although composed like *De Zalmoxis a Gengis-Khan* of small monographs on Romanian ethnographic materials and folkloric traditions, will be addressed primarily to historians of religion and cultural historians.

Indeed, as already noted in volume II of *Histoire des croyances et des idees religieuses* and I will show at length in vol. III, folkloric traditions constitute an inexhaustible mine of historical-

religious information, which has so far been insufficiently exploited or wrongly interpreted. The methodology of this new approach, which aims to

The promotion of folkloric materials to the status of historico-reliable documents is not yet finalized. (It will undoubtedly be one of the main concerns of the younger generation of religious historians.) But even at this early stage of research, the role and importance of popular religious traditions in a truly *universal* history of religions can no longer be ignored. The analysis of 'cosmic Christianity', specific to the rural populations of Eastern Europe, sketched in the present book (chapter VIII) and continued in volume II of the *Histoire des croyances* (chapter XXX), will be completed in volume III. But the value as historical documents of folkloric traditions is also verified in other cultural areas. Hinduism and Islam, as well as the religious history of China, Japan and Central America, discover new dimensions and new values in so far as popular religious traditions are correctly and exhaustively analyzed, and their protohistorical origins and their relationship to the dominant cultural systems and theologies are deciphered.

It is no coincidence that the writing of the studies on Carols and Hymns, on the mythology of death and initiation ceremonies in Romania is proceeding in parallel with the writing of Volume III of *Histoire des croyances et des idées religieuses*. The exegesis of Romanian and South-East European materials facilitates the analysis of popular religious traditions in India, Central Asia, the Far East and Mesoamerica, and is, in turn, validated by the results obtained in these exotic cultural areas.



As for the English, Italian, German, Spanish, Italian, German, Japanese and Spanish translations, we have corrected typos that had crept into the French text, and completed the bibliographical references. For the present translation I have also added a number of more recent publications. I have not tried, however, to record the latest contributions published in the country; on the one hand, because the volume is addressed mainly to non-specialist readers, and on the other hand because the recent folkloristic bibliography is easily accessible to Romanian researchers.

Foreword

In the following pages we intend to present what is essential in the religion of the Geto-Dacians and the most important mythical and logical traditions and folkloric creations of Romanians. This does not necessarily imply, necessarily and in detail, the continuity between the religious universe of the Geto-Dacians and the one that can be deciphered in Romanian folk traditions. If we want to speak of 'continuity', it must be sought at a deeper level than that circumscribed by the history of the Geto-Dacians, the Dacians, the Dao-Romans and their descendants, the Romanians. For the cult of Zalmoxis, for example, as well as the myths, symbols and rituals that form the basis of Romanians' religious folklore, have their roots in a world of spiritual values that predates the great civilizations of the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean. This is not to say, however, that all the religious conceptions of the Geto-Dacians are at least "contemporary" with those that we decipher in the Romanian popular traditions. It could be that a present-day agrarian custom is more archaic than, for example, the cult of Zalmoxis. It is known that certain mythical-ritual scenarios still existing among the peasants of central and south-eastern Europe at the beginning of the 20th century preserved mythological fragments and rituals that had disappeared in ancient Greece before Homer. This work is not a religious history of Dacia. Given the paucity of documents, it is doubtful that such a history could ever be written. However, archaeological research has not yet exhausted its surprises. And despite a considerable effort, Romanian folk traditions are still not sufficiently well known. Until we have a *corpus* comparable to that provided by Oskar Loorits in *Grundzuge der estnischen Volksglauben*, any effort synthesis would be premature.

As yet, we can only advance our knowledge of the religious life

of this region of Europe through independent, though complementary, monographs. We have brought together in this volume a series of studies on

the religious origins of the ethnic name of the Dacians, the cult of Zalmoxis, the *popular* cosmogonic myth (i.e. singwul which is attested in the folkloric traditions of Romanians), the mythical-ritual meanings of the legends about the founding of a state (Moldova) and the construction of a monastery (Arges), certain folk beliefs related to magic and ecstasy, the sorghum and the harvesting of herbs, and finally the mythologies underlying the masterpieces of Romanian epic poetry.

Needless to say that our approach is that of a historian of religions: it is not our task to replace the folklorist, the archaeologist or the specialist in the ancient history of Eastern Europe. We have tried to decrypt in the documents their profound meanings, often camouflaged, degraded or forgotten. And because the significance of a religious belief or behavior is only revealed

In the light of the comparisons, we have not hesitated to place our documents in the perspective of the general history of religions. Indeed, it is only in the universe of values specific to hunters and warriors, and especially

In the light of military initiation rites, the ethnic name of the Dacians reveals its primitive religious significance. Likewise, the cult of Zalmoxis can only be understood after the initiatory meaning of the god's occultation and epiphany is revealed. The Romanian cosmogonic myth reveals its specific features after we decipher not only prehistory

"Balkan and Central Asian 'dualism', but also the hidden meaning of "God's weariness" after creating the Earth, a surprising expression of a *deus otiosus* reinvented by popular Christianity in a desperate effort to dissociate God from the imperfections of the world and the appearance of evil.

We could continue by recalling that, for a historian of religions, the myth of the founding of the principality of Moldavia has its roots in the archaic concept of "ritual hunting"; the legend of the Arges Monastery reveals its symbolism not only when it is linked to the rites of construction, but especially when the primordial meaning of a primitive type of human sacrifice is revealed; the most widespread Romanian ballad, *Miorița*, illustrates, in addition to a barely Christianized mythology of death, the persistence of an archaic theme, specific to hunter and shepherd cultures, in particular the oracular function of the animal; or that, in the cult of the sorghum, the belief in the herb of

Life and Death is prolonged, "folklorized" and degraded.

It would be superfluous to list all the topics discussed in the various chapters of the book. But it is important to emphasize the relevance of such research to the general history of religions. These pages

have been written not so much to make our own contribution to the research of historians, folklorists or Romanianists, but to illustrate the possibilities of a hermeneutics of archaic and popular religious universes, in other words of spiritual creations lacking written expression, and, in general, of valid chronological criteria. I wrote this book while I was studying certain problems relating to "primitivist" religions. And time and again the difficulties I encountered were of the same order. First, the documents presented by the early explorers, missionaries and ethnologists were assembled with the same ideological biases that characterized the earliest collections of folklore documents. Moreover, 'primitive' societies, like 'folk' traditions, were subjects of study that did not belong to the universe of exemplary values embodied in Western culture — that is, in a culture defined by creations recorded in a linear historical time.

Fortunately, recent advances in our knowledge of "primitive" cultures give us hope. These universes of archaic spiritual values will enrich the Western world not only through contributions of vocabulary (*mana, taboo, totem, etc.*) or the history of social structures. Elsewhere I have already discussed the possibilities opened up by confrontation with the creations of archaic civilizations. The historian of religions aspires to broaden this confrontation by researching the popular cultures and *folk-religions* of Europe, Asia and the Americas, in the hope of developing a hermeneutic which will one day enable him to understand the religious values of prehistoric societies in a less imperfect way. This research and these hopes are also part of one of the most vigorous and also the most innovative projects of the second half of the 20th century: the cultural trend uniting the study and knowledge of exotic, archaic and "popular" worlds. There can be nothing more exciting and stimulating for the Western consciousness than the endeavor to understand the creations of both 'prehistoric' and "protohistories" (even "provincial histories" that gravitated in the sea). The creations accumulated and preserved for millennia in exotic, primitive and "folkloric" cultures.

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The texts brought together in this volume were written at

different dates and, with the exception of Chapters II and VIII, appeared in subsequent journals:

Numen (ch. I), *Revue de l' Histoire des Religions* (ch. III), *Revue des Etudes Roumaines* (ch. IV, V), *Acta Historica* (ch. VI). The study

on the cult of the moon in Romania (chapter VII) was translated from the Romanian manuscript by the French Institute in Bucharest and published in *Zalmoxis. Revue des Etudes Religieuses* (vol. I, 1938). The other texts have been read and corrected by our excellent friends, Professor Jean Gouillard (chapters I, III, N, V, VI) and Miss Jacqueline Desjardin (chapters II and VIII). It gives us great pleasure to express our gratitude to them. We are equally indebted to our professional friend Georges Dumzil, who has taken the trouble to correct the spelling and improve the text.

MIRCEA ELIADE

University of Chicago, July 1969.

DACIANS AND WOLVES

Religious meanings of ethnic names

According to Strabo (304: VII, VII, 3, 1 2), the Dacians were first called daoi (ouc; οἰματ Ααουouc; xaÂria9at to 7t<XÂÂ<Xtov). O tradition preserved by Hesychius informs us that daos was the Phrygian name for "wolf".

Fr. Kretschmer had explained this word by the root **dhau* : "a to press, to squeeze, to strangle" t. Among the vocabulary derived from this root, we note the Lydian Kandaules , the name of the Thracian god of war, Kandæon, the Illyrian dhaunos (wolf), the god Daunus, etc.² The town of Daous-dava, in Lower Moesia, between the Danube and Haemus³, literally meant "the village of wolves"⁴-

So the Dacians called themselves long ago "wolves" or "wolf-like", wolf-like.⁵ Also according to Strabo (VII, 3, 12; XI, 5 08 , 5 11, 5 12), the nomadic Scythians east of the Caspian Sea also bore the name Daoi. Latin authors

¹ P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, Gottingen, 1896, pp. 388, 221, 214.

² J. Pokomy , *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, B erne, 1951 and un., 235; G. Kazarow, "Zur Geographie des alten Thrakiens" (*Klio*, XI, N. F. N., 1 929, pp. 84-85), p. 84; cf. also G. Mateescu, in *Ephemeris Dacoromana*, I, p. 208. On Dau nu s, see F. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion*, London, 1938,

pp. 206 ff. On Kanðon, cf. O. Masson, *Kratylos*, II, 1 957, p. 64.

³ Ptolemy, *ID*, 1 O, 6; Kazarow, *Klio*, p. 84.

⁴ For dava "settlement", see W. Tomaschek, *Die a/ten Thrakern* (*Sitzungsberichte Akad. Wien*, 130, 1893), II, p. 70. Tomaschek connected Daci, dai with dava (*ibid.* , I, p. 101). In other words, he understood by the ethnic name of Daci

"inhabitants of the davae-lor". In his last synthesis on the history of Romanians, N. Iorga

accept Tomaschek's explanation; cf. *Histoire des Roumains*, I, i, Bucharest, 1937, p. 149. Ondava see E. Lozovan, "Le "vilage" dans la toponymie et l'histoire

roumaines" (Zeitschrift f romanische Philologie, 1951, pp. 124-144).

^s F. Altheim observes that the name dăci is, like that of luperci, a
 adjectival suffix (op. cit., p. 212). See also E. Lozov ♦ " Du nom ethnique des
 Daces"
 (Revue Internationale d'Onomastique, 13 , 1961, pp. 27-32).

they called them Dahae, and some Greek historians *ddai*.⁶ Their ethnic name most probably derives from the Iranian (saka) dahae, 'wolf'.⁷ But such names were not an exception among Indo-Europeans. South of the Caspian Sea lay Hyrcania, i.e. in eastern Iranian Vehrkana, in western Iranian Varkana, lit. "The nomadic tribes that inhabited it were referred to by Greco-Latin authors as of hyrkanoi, "wolves" .⁸ The Orka (Orkoi) tribe was found in Phrygia.⁹

We may also mention the Lykaonians of Arcadia¹⁰, and Lycaonia or Lucaonia of Asia Minor, and especially Zeus Lykaios Arcadius the Arcadian year¹¹ and Apollo Lycagenetus; the latter nickname has been explained as meaning "of the she-wolf", "the one born of the she-wolf", that is, born of Leto changed into a she-wolf¹². The name of the Samnite tribe of the Lucanians¹³ derives according to Heraclid of Pontus (*Fragm. Hist. Gr.* 218), from Lycos, "wolf". Their neighbors, the Hirpini, took their name from *hirpus*, the Samnite name for "wolf"¹⁴. At the foot of Mount Soracte lived the Soranic hirpipes, the "wolves of Sora" (the Volscian fortress). According to the tradition preserved by Servius, an oracle had exhorted the soranic hirps to live "like wolves", i.e. from prey (*lupos imitarentur, i.e. rapto viverent*¹⁵). Indeed they were exempt from taxes and military service (Plinius, *Hist. Nat.*, VII, 19), for their biannual rite – which consisted in walking barefoot on burning coals – was considered to ensure the fecundity of the land. This shamanic rite, like the way of living "as wolves", reflects rather archaic religious conceptions.

⁶ Cf. Tomaschek, article "Daci", PW, IV, 1945-1 946.

⁷ Cf. H. Jacobsohn, *Arier und Ugrofinnen* (1922), pp. 1 54 ff. ; P.

Kretschmer, "Zum Balkanskythischen" (Giotto, XXIV, 1935, pp. 1-56), p. 17.

⁸ Cf. Kiessling, PW, IX, 454-51 8.

⁹ Cf. R. Eisler, *Man into Wolf*, London, 1951, p. 137.

¹⁰ Cf. Eisler, p. 133.

¹¹ On Zeus Lykaios see A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, I, Cambridge, 1914, pp. 70 et urm.

¹² See bibliography at Eisler, p. 133.

¹³ Lycanian writing on coins from Metapontum, c. 300 BC; cf. Eisler, p. 1 34.

¹⁴ Seivius, *Aen* . XI, 785: *lupi Sabinorum lingua hirpi*" vocan tur. Cf. Strabo, V, 250; on the Hirpini, see also F. Altheim, *Roman Religion*, pp. 66 ff.

¹ s On the Sorani hirp ii, see also F. Altheim, Roman Religion , pp. 262
et urm.

It is unnecessary to mention other examples. 16 Let us note only that tribes with wolf names are attested in regions as far afield as Spain (Loukentioi and Lucenses in Celtiberian Calaecia), Ireland and England. This phenomenon is not limited to Indo-Europeans.

The fact that a people take their ethnic name from the name of an animal always has a religious significance. Specifically, this can only be understood as an expression of an archaic religious conception.

many hypotheses. One may first suppose that the people derive their name from a god or from w₁ mythical ancestor lycomorphs, or who manifested in the form of a wolf. Central Asia tells, in several variants, of the myth of the companionship between a supernatural wolf and a princess, which would have given birth either to a people or to dynasties. We will return to this myth later. But there is no attestation of this among the Dacians.

A second hypothesis is offered to us: the Dacians took their name from

w₁ group of runaways; either immigrants from other regions, or young men in trouble with the law, roaming like wolves or outlaws around villages and living off the spoils. The phenomenon has been widely attested since earliest antiquity and survived into the Middle Ages. It is important to distinguish between : 1) teenagers who during the initiatory ordeal had to hide away from villages and live off the prey ; 2) immigrants looking for new territories to settle in ; 3) *outlaws* or fugitives in search of an asylum. But all these young men acted like wolves, were called wolves, or enjoyed the protection of a wolf-god.

during the trial that Lacedemonian couros lasted a whole year a wolf's life: hidden in the mountains, he lived by prey, taking care not to be seen by anyone. 17 Among many Indo-European peoples,

¹⁶ They are found in fairly large numbers in Eisler, *Man into Wolf*, pp. 1 32-1 40 and Richard v. Kienle, "Tier-Volkemamen bei indogennanischen Stamme" (*Wörter und Sachen* 14, 1932, pp. 25-26), spec. pp. 32-39. About the Argians, who called themselves "wolves", cf. Altheim, op. cit., p. 21 1. See also P. Kretschmer, "Der Name der Lykier und andere kleinasiatischen Volk.emamen" (*Kleinasiatische Forschungen*, I, 1 927, pp. 1 -1 7).

¹⁷ Cf. H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi' et Couretes*, Lile, 1939, pp. 540 ff. on cryptics

and lycanthropy. See also M. Eliade, *Naissances mystiques*, Paris, 1959, p. 229.

emigrants, exiles and fugitives were called "wolves". Already in the hit laws

It was once said of an outcast that "he had become a wolf". ^{1 s}

And in the laws of Eduard the Confessor (c. 100 C.E.), the outlaw had to wear a wolf's head mask (*wolfhede*).¹⁹ The wolf was the symbol of the fugitive, and a large number of gods protected the exiles

and outlaws had wolf attributes or wolf names.²⁰ This was the case, for example, with Zeus Lykoreios and Apollo Lykeios.²¹ Romulus and Remus, sons of the wolf-god Mars and suckled by the she-wolf of Capi tolin, had also been 'fugitives'.²² According to the legend, Romulus founded a place of refuge for exiles and pro-scripts on Capitolinus. Servius (ad *Aen.* 2, 76 1) informs us that this asylum was

^{1s} Ungnad, quoted in R. Eisler, op. cit., p. 144.

¹⁹ "Lupinum enim capul a die utlagationis eius quod ab Anglis wulfeshened nominatur"; quoted from Eisler, p. 145. Cf. *ibid.*, a passage from Heruy de B racton (1 1 85-1267), *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae* (ed. princeps, 1 569), II, 35 :

"a tempore quo utlagatus est, caput gerit lupinum ita ut ab omnibus interfici possit" . In Anglo-Saxon, the witch was called the "wolf-headed tree" : cf.

L. Weiser-Aal, "Zur Geschichte der altgermanischen Todesstrafe und Fried losigkeit" (*Archiv f Religionswiss.* 30, 1933), p. 222.

²⁰ Cf. F. Altheim, *Griechische Gotter im a/ten Rom*, Giessen, 1930, pp. 148 et seq. ; *id.* *Roman Religion*, p. 261, referring to O. Jahn, *Ber. Sächs. Akad.* 1 847, p. 423 et seq. ; O. Gruppe, *Griech. Mythologie*, pp. 918 ff., 1 296 ff.

²¹ F. Altheim, *Roman Religion*, pp. 260 ff.

²² F. Altheim, *ibid.* pp. 261 ff. See also Gerhard Binder, *Die Aus setzung des Konigskindes Kyros und Romulus Meisenheim am Glan*, 1 964. On the myth of the she-wolf with twins and its roots in the archaic beliefs of the shepherd tribes of the Asian steppe, cf. A. A. Alföldi, "Theriomoiophe Weltbetrachtung in den Hochasiatischen Kulturen" (*Archaeologische Anzeiger*, 1931, col. 393--41 8), spec. 393 ff. ; *id.*, *Der fruhromische Reiteradel und seine Ehrenabzeichen* (Baden Baden, 1 952), pp. 88 ff; *id.*, *The Main Aspect of Politica/ Propaganda on the Coinage of the Roman Republic* (in *Essays in Roman Coinage presented to H. Mat tingly*, Oxford, 1 956, pp. 63-95), p. 68. On the Romulus and Remus-type folkloric theme, cf. A. H. Krappe, "Acea Larentia" (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 46/1 942, pp. 490-499); *id.* "Animal Children" (*California Folk/ore Quarterly*, 3/1 944, pp. 45-52). On Romulus and Remus and double kingship, cf. A. B. Cook, *z.eus*, II, pp. 440 and un., m, 2, p. 1 1 34. On the twins Romulus and Remus and their cores pondent in other Indo-European traditions, cf. G. G. Dum◆zil, *La saga de Hadingus*, Paris, 1 953, pp. 1 1 4-1 30, 151-154; *id.*, *Aspects de la fonction guerriere chez les*

/Indo-Européens, Paris, 1956, pp. 20-21, id., L'idiologie tripartite des Indo-Européens, Paris, 1958, pp. 86-88, 106.

was under the protection of the god Lucoris. Lucoris was identified with Lykoreus of Delphi, himself a wolf-god.²³

Finally, a third hypothesis, likely to explain the name Dacians, highlights the ability to ritually transform into a wolf. Such a transformation can be linked either to lycanthropy itself – a very widespread phenomenon, but attested mainly in the Balkan-Carpathian area – or to a ritual imitation of the wolf's behavior and external appearance. The ritual imitation of the wolf particularly characterizes military initiations and, therefore, those *Männerbunde*, secret warrior brotherhoods. We have reason to believe that these rites and beliefs, which are solidly linked to a warrior ideology, made it possible to assimilate fugitives, exiles and outcasts with wolves. In order to survive, these outlaws behaved like gangs of young warriors, in other words, like wolves.

Military initiations: ritual transformation into a beast

Through their studies, Lily Weiser, Otto Hofler, Stig Wikander, Geo Widengren, H. Jeanmaire and Georges Dumezil have made the knowledge of Indo-European military confraternities more sensitive

feathers, especially their religious ideology and initiatory rites. In the Gennan world²⁴ these brotherhoods were still alive at the end of the Volkerwanderung.

The existence of these groups of young warriors in the time of Zarathustra, but as part of the specific vocabulary of these *Männerbunde* is also found in the Vedic texts, there is no doubt that the groups of young warriors already existed in the Indo-Iranian era.²⁵ G. G. Dumezil²⁶ has demonstrated the survival of anu-

²³ Cf. F. Altheim, *Roman Religion*, pp. 260 ff. On the name of the wolf-god, cf. P. Kretschmer, *Der Name der Lykier*, pp. 15 ff.

²⁴ Cf. Otto Hofler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen*, Frankfurt a. M., 1934; Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, ed. a II-I-II (1956-1957), spec. I, 453 ff, 492 ff.

²⁵ Stig Wikander, *Der arische Männerbund*, Lund, 1938; id. *Vayu*, I, Uppsala-

Leipzig, 1941.

²⁶ Cf. mai ales Horace et les Curiaces, Paris, 1942; id. Mythes et dieux des Germains, Paris, 1939. See also Heur et malheur du guerrier, Paris, 1969.

The Indo-Europeans thus seem to have shared a common system of beliefs and rituals specific to young warriors. (We shall see later whether it was an initiation of the whole male youth, or only of one class.)

The essence of military initiation was the ritual transformation of the young warrior into a beast. It was not merely a question of bravery, physical strength or endurance, but of "a magical-religious experience that radically altered the young warrior's way of being. He had to transmute his humanity through an outburst of aggressive and terrifying fury, which was akin to that of the rabid carnage. In old Germanic times, beast-warriors were called *berserkir*, lit. "warriors in bear fur (*serkr*)". They were also known as *filjhedhn ar*, 'men in wolf skins'²⁹. The bronze plaque at Torslunda shows a warrior disguised as a wolf. ³⁰ Two facts should therefore be kept in mind: 1) in order to become a formidable warrior, the behavior of the beast, especially that of the wolf, was magically assimilated; 2) the ritual dressing in wolf's skin was either to share the warrior's way of being or to signify the change into a "wolf".

What interests our research is the fact that the transformation into a wolf was achieved by the ritual dressing of a skin, an operation preceded or followed by a radical change of behavior. As long as the warrior was clothed in the animal's skin, he was no longer human, he was the butcher himself: he was not only a warrior

ⁿ H. Jeanmaire, *Couroi et Couretes*, pp. 540 ff.

²⁸ M. Eliade, *Naissances mystiques*, p. 181.

²⁹ On *berserkir* and *uljhedhnar*, cf. *Handwörterbuch d. deutschen Aberglaubens*, V, 1845 ff.; O. Hofler, op. cit., pp. 170 ff.; Lily Weiser, *Alt germanische Junglingsweihe u. Männerbünde*, Band 1 1927, p. 44; G. G. Dumézil, *Mythes et dieux des Germains*, pp. 81 ff.; J. de Vries, op. cit., I, pp. 454 ff.; A. Margaret Arendt, "The Heroic Pattern: Old Germanic Helmets, Beowulf, and Grettis Saga", in Edgar C. Polom (Editor), *From Old Norse Literature and Mythology: A Symposium*, Austin, Texas, 1969, pp. 130-199.

³⁰ J. de Vries, op. cit. I, p. XI. Cf. and O. Hofler, op. cit., pp. 56 ff.; Karl Hauch, "Herrschaftszeichen eines Wodanistischen Königtums" (*Jahrbuch für Frankische Landesforschung*, 1954, pp. 9-66), pp. 47 ff.

fierce and invincible, ruled by the furor heroicus, but no longer had human anything; in short, he no longer felt bound by human laws and customs.

not only claimed the right to plunder and terrorize communities during ritual gatherings, but were even capable of behaving like butchers, devouring, for example, human cams. Beliefs in ritual or ecstatic lycanthropy are attested both among members of North American and African secret societies³¹, as well as among the Greeks³², Greeks³³, Iranians and Indians³⁴. The African 'leopard' societies are the best example.³⁵ But it is not such sporadic cases of lycanthropy that can account for the diffusion and persistence of beliefs in wolf-people. On the contrary, the existence of confraternities of young warriors or magicians, dressed or not in wolf skins, but behaving like carnivores, explains the spread of beliefs in lycanthropy.

The Iranian texts³⁶ speak in several places of "two-legged wolves", that is to say of members of some Männerbünde. In Denkart³¹ it is even stated that "two-legged wolves are more harmful than four-legged wolves"³⁸. Other texts designate them by the term keresa, "thieves, haimanale", who roam about at night.³⁹

³¹ Cf. Mircea Eliade, op. cit., pp. 140 ff.

³² Cf. the references in Mircea Eliade, op. cit., pp. 174 ff.

³³ A. B. Cook, *ibid.*, I, pp. 81 ff.; J. Przyluski, 'Les confréries des loups garous dans les sociétés indo-européennes' (Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, 121/1940, pp. 128-145); Eisler, op. cit., pp. 141 ff.

³⁴ Cf. E. Arbman, Rudra, Uppsala, 1922, pp. 266 ff.; G. Widengren, Hochgottglaube im alten Iran, Uppsala-Leipzig, 1938, pp. 334 ff.

³⁵ Cf. R. Eisler, op. cit., pp. 148 ff., 160 ff.; see also Birger Lindskog, African Leopard Man, Uppsala 1954.

³⁶ Studied by Stig Wikander, Der arische Männerbund, pp. 64 ff. and G. Widengren, Hochgottglaube, pp. 328 ff., 344.

³⁷ Widengren, op. cit., p. 328.

³⁸ Ayas, a typical epithet of the Marutis, means "undomesticated", "wild" (Wikander, op. cit., p. 43, referring to Geldner, Vedische Studien, I, pp. 227 ff. See also G. Widengren, Der Feudalismus im alten Iran, Cologne, 1969, pp. 15 et seq.

³⁹ Widengren, op. cit., p. 330.

It is much insisted that they feed on corpses,⁴⁰ but, Brl to exclude the possibility of true cannibal feasts,⁴¹ it seems rather to be a cliché *utilizat* used polemically by the followers of Zarathustra against the members of these unbridled Manns who, on the occasion of their ceremonies, terrorized the villages,⁴² and whose way of life was so different from that of the peasants and shepherds Iranians. However, there is also talk of their ecstatic orgies, the intoxicating drink that helped them turn into beasts. Among the ancestors of the Ahemenids was a saka hau mavarka family. Bartholomae and Wikander⁴³ interpret this name: "those who turn into wolves (varka) in the ecstasy of soma (hauma)". However, it is known that until the 19th century, youth gatherings included a banquet of stolen or forcibly obtained food, especially alcoholic beverages.

Maciuca and the flag

The specific emblems of these Iranian Mănnerb un de (mairiy a) were the "bloody mace" and the drafsa (drafsa).⁴⁴ As Wikander⁴⁵ writes, the bloody mace was used in the specific ritual of these Iranian Mănnerb un de for the ceremonial slaughter of the ox. The mace became the symbol of the Iranian "beast-warriors".⁴⁶ It is the archaic warrior's weapon par excellence. How

⁴⁰ Widengren, *ibid.* pp. 33 1 ff.

⁴¹ Cf. the African examples cited by Widengren, *ibid.* , p. 332. For India, cf. Arbman, Rudra, pp. 266 ff and Mircea Eliade, *Le Yoga. /mmortalite et Li berte*, Paris, 1954, pp. 294 ff., 401-402.

⁴² On the terrorization of the villages, cf. Widengren, *op . cit.*, pp. 334 ff.; M. Eliade,

Naissances mystiques, pp. 178 ff

⁴³ Cf. Wikander, *op . cit.* p. 64; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Hommage a George Dwnizil*, Brussels, 1960, pp. 97-8. Cf. and Przyluski, *Les confreries des loups-garous dans les societes indo-europ eennes*.

⁴⁴ Cf. Wikander, *op . cit.* , pp. 60 et seq. *id.*, Vayu, pp. 139 et seq. , 1 57 et seq. ; G. Widengren, "Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte" (*Numen* 1/1 954, pp. 16-3; 2/1955, pp. 47-1 34), I, p. 66.

4S Der arische Miinnerbiind, p. 99.

46 Wikander, ibid. ♦ p. 60; id. , Vayu , p. 168 and unn.

As was the case with instruments belonging to a very accomplished antiquity, the *macheque* retained its value as a cultic instrument when its military use gave way to other, more modern, weapons. On top of that, the mace has remained an excellent weapon of the peasants and farmers⁴⁷ - Thus, it remained the weapon of the Romanian peasants throughout the Middle Ages and until modern times and is still a specific weapon in the "youth games" (*geldings*) in which the memory of the initiatory confraternities still survives.

Note another analogy between the Iranians and the Dacians. According to tradition handed down by *S hah-n ame h*, a Persian standard bore the emblem

Wlui wolf.⁴⁸ mural painting from Turkestan depicts a banner representing a wolf or wolf-headed dragon. ⁴⁹ In the Parthian era, in northwest Iran and Armenia, the elite corps of the

anatei — constituted in *Männerb un de* — were called "dragons" and had dragon-shaped banners. Warriors liked to wear a helmet with a dragon's figure.⁵⁰ It is known that the Dacian standard depicted a wolf with a dragon's body.⁵¹ The penetration of the *draco* standard into the Roman armies of the Lower Empire was most probably due to a Dacian or Parthian influence.⁵²

⁴⁷ Cf. Widengren, 'Harlekintracht und Monchskutte, Clownhut und Der wischmUtze' (*Orientalia Suecana*, II, 1953, pp. 40-111), pp. 93 ff. See also Maria Mariottini Spagnoli, 'The Symbolic Meaning of the Club in the Iconography of the Kuşiiiana Kings' (*East and West*, 11, 1967, pp. 248-268).

⁴⁸ Cf. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube*, p. 343.

⁴⁹ Cf. F. Altheim, *Attila und die Hunen*, Baden-Baden, 1951, p. 37.

⁵⁰ Cf. Widengren, *Numen*, I, p. 67. See also G. Widengren, 'Some remarks on Riding Costume and Articles of Dress Among Iranian Peoples in Antiquity' (*Arctica, Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia*, XI, Uppsala, 1956, pp. 228-276).

⁵¹ Cf. Vasile Pârvan, *Getica, o protoistorie a Daciei*, Bucharest, 1926, 519 et seq.

⁵² Fieliger in P.-W. art. *draco* (p. 521) considers the Parthians and the Dacians;

A. J. Reinach, s. v. *signum*, in *Daremberg-Saglio*, p. 1321, thinks it was the Sarmatians who introduced that *draco* into the Roman army. Pârvan (*op. cit.*, p.

522) refers to the "Iranized Dacians". Pârvan finds "the typological origins of the dragon-emblema" in Mesopotamia (e.g. on a stele of Nebukadnezar I, 11 20, "the dragon with the head of an ox and the body of a serpent").

The dragon was also depicted on German banners.⁵³ The wolf is also depicted on the scepter discovered in the The "shipburial" of Sutton Hoo: he most probably symbolized the mythical ancestor of the royal family.⁵⁴ Let us add that the monomastic Wulf-Wolf theme is extremely widespread among the Germans.⁵⁵ Taking into account all the other contexts in which the wolf plays an important role in German mythology and rituals (berserkir, Mǫnner und, werewolves, etc.), it can be concluded that, while the essence of this religious complex is Indo-European, a more marked solidarity is revealed between Iranians, Thracians and Germans. It is not the place here to dwell on this question at length⁵⁶, but it should be mentioned so as not to give the impression that we are limiting the symmetries to the Thraco-Frigian and Iranian groups. Let us add that wolf-headed banners are also attested among the Tu-kiu,⁵⁷ a branch of the Hiong-nu tribes. They claimed to have been born from a mythical wolf⁵⁸. Every year, the inn of the Tu-kiu tribe offered a sacrifice to the She-Wolf in the very cave where she was believed to have given birth. Members of the royal guard were called 'wolves' and, during battle, wore ^{w1} a banner with a golden wolf. ⁵⁹ As

^{s3} Cf. Karl Hauck, *Herrschaftszeichen eines Wodanisitischen Konigtums*, p. 33. Odin-Wodan himself was represented as an eagle, or as a dragon (cf. Hauck, p. 38, n. 15 3) or as a sea monster. These three types of animals reproduced on the signum symbolize the three cosmic regions — air, earth, water — and, in essence, constitute the symbol par excellence of the Cosmocrator (cf. Hauck, pp. 34 ff.).

^{s4} Cf. Hauck, op. cit., p. 50.

^{ss} Cf. bibliography in Hauck, p. 50, n. 223. The custom of calling chiefs by the name of an animal is attested among all Altaic peoples. Cf. Haussing (in F. Altheim and Haussing, *Die Hunen in Ost Europa*, 1958), pp. 25 ff.

^{s6} Cf. J. Wiesner, *Fahren und Reiten in Alteuropa u. im a/ten Orient* (Der alte Orient, 38, 1939), pp. 80 ff.; H. GUntert, *Der arische Weltkonig und Heiland*, Halle, 1923, pp. 130 ff.; Wikander, *Vayu*, 93 et seq. and M. Eliade, *Le 'dieu lieu' et le symbolisme des noeuds* (= *Images et Symboles*, 1952, pp. 135 ff.).

^{s7} See Freda Kretschmar, *Hundesstammvater und Kerberos*, I, Stuttgart, 1938, p. 5, fig. 1-3.

^{sa} F. Kretschmar, op. cit., I, p. 6; W. Radloff, *Aus Sibirien*, Leipzig, 1893, I, p. 131.

^{S9} F. Kretschmar, op. cit., I, p. 6; W. Radloff, op. cit., I, p. 129; J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Leiden, 1892 ff., N, p. 270.

As we have said, the myth of descent from a she-wolf or a wolf is widespread among the Turkic-Tartars. This fact is not unimportant for understanding the common background of the various religious conceptions discussed in this chapter.

"The Dacians – a warlike confrerie

Returning to the Dacians, it seems quite probable that their ethnic name derives ultimately from the ritual epithet of a warlike confraternity. The stages of the process by which the ritual appellation of a group became the name of an entire people escape us. (Nor are we better informed about other European populations with the name wolf.) But we can represent things in two ways: 1) either that the heroism and ferocity of the warrior youth of a tribe led to their ritual epithet – "wolves" – becoming the name of the whole tribe; 2) or that the ritual epithet of a group of victorious young immigrants was accepted by defeated and subdued Aborigines. In the latter case, we can believe that these conquerors became the military aristocracy and the ruling class. In its current state of our research it is difficult to opt for one of these two possibilities. What is certain is that a long time had to pass before the ritual epithet of a group became the name of a people. If we consider the first hypothesis, the nickname of a small tribe spread to neighboring tribes as broader political organizations crystallized. In the second case, we have to take into account the symbiosis between the victorious immigrants and the subdued Aborigines, a process that was more or less long, but ended fatally in the assimilation of the former.

Whatever the origin of their eponym – a ritual epithet of the warrior youth or a nickname for a group of victorious immigrants – the Dacians were certainly aware of the relationship between the wolf and war: witness the symbolism of their standard. Originally the name Dacians referred to one of the

Thracian tribes of northwest Dacia

(Strabo, 304 : VII, VII, 3, 1 2) .

spread towards the Euxin Bridge, from the Balkans to the Nistru (where the Tyrgyz were situated), while the name Dacians was more common in the north.

west, west and south. (*Dakidava in north-west Dacia, the Daurs in Dalmatia, the Daoii and Dioii in Roclope, etc.⁶⁰) The name Dacians, used by Latin authors, is especially appropriate in the time of Burebista and Decebal, when the unity and political organization of the countries were at their height and when, according to Strabo (305 : VII, 3, 13), the anata could mobilize 200 OO men. The ritual warrior epithet was triumphant at the moment of the kingdom's maximum political and military expansion. It was the triumph of the young wolves. Julius Caesar had well understood the danger posed by this new military power and was preparing to attack the wolves on the Danube when he was assassinated.

Pârvan⁶¹ believed that the name of the Dacians (like that of the Goths) was Scythian; in other words, it would have passed from the Iranian conquerors to the Thracian populations of the Carpathians. Although it is plausible, the Scythian origin of the name of the Dacians does not seem to us to have been proven. As we have already said, the root **dhau-**, "to strangle", is found in the Phrygian name of the wolf, **daos**.⁶² The toponymy of Dacia has preserved a strong Thracian character, even in the regions occupied by the Scythians.⁶³ Moreover, the persistence of the Traco-Frigian (Cimmerian) onomastics in the north of the Black Sea, where the Scythians settled in large numbers from the 8th century onwards, brilliantly demonstrates the survival of the aboriginal element under the domination of the Wlei Iranian military minorities.⁶⁴ Today, the rather modest proportions of the Scythian contribution to the culture of Si culture are being reduced,

⁶⁰ Cf. V. Pârvan, *Getica*, p. 284.

⁶¹ Cf. *Getica*, p. 286.

⁶² Cf. above, note 5, F. Altheim's remark on the formation of the name *dacus*. This reinforces, it seems to us, the hypothesis that it was the vomit of a ritual transformation into a wolf, implying mystical solidarity with a war deity likely to manifest lycomorphically (like Mars, for example).

⁶³ Cf. Pârvan, *op. cit.*, pp. 285 ff., 753; id, *Dacia* (9th ed., Bucharest, 1967), pp. 59 ff. (pp. 163-1 70, recent bibliography by Radu Vulpe).

⁶⁴ E. Benveniste has observed that the information transmitted by Herodotus IV, 5-1 0, on the Scythians declared to be of Greek origin reveals a Thraco-Phrygian

onomastic; cf. Traditions indo-iraniennes sur les classes sociales" (*Journal Asiatique*, 230/1 938, pp. 527-550). Thracian names persist even in the Scythian kingdom of the Cimmerian Bosphorus until the Greco-Roman era. (Cf. M Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, Oxford, 1922, p. 39.)

The Scythians failed to transform the indigenous civilization.⁶⁵ Since the Dacians remembered that their older name was *ddoi*, it is not excluded that this name is of Cimmerian origin. Indeed the Cimmerians

inhabited part of Dacia, especially the Carpathian region. The Cimmerians were a Thraco-Frigian people with certain Iranian elements. If we prefer to explain the Dacian name by Iranian, we must rather think of the archaic Iranian elements attested in the Cimmerians than of the fairly recent contribution of the Scythians. ⁶⁶

Mythical-ritual scenarios of the Wolf

In any case, the archaism of the religious complex of the wolf is unquestionable. The wolf is already present in the Neolithic civilization of Vinca: both statues of wolf-dogs and rather rudimentary figurines interpreted as representing dancers with .⁶⁷ wolf mask as regards the last objects - admitting that their interpretation would be correct — it is impossible to decide whether they indicate warlike initiation rites (Iranian or Germanic) or seasonal ceremonies during which young men put on wolf masks. Such ceremonies are still popular in the Balkans, in Romania, especially during the 12 days of Christmas Eve

⁶⁵ D. Berciu, "A propos de la genese de la civilization Latene chez les G⁶to Daces" (Dacia, N. S., 1/ 1957, pp. 133-142), pp. 1 37 ff. : "The role of the Scythian factor appears less important than that of other external factors" (ibid. , p. 13 8). Cf. and Radu Vulpe, "La civilisation dace et ses problemes a la lumiere des demieres fouilles de Poiana en Basse Moldavie" (Dacia, N. S. 1/1957, pp. 1 43-1 64), spec. pp. 157-1 61 .

⁶⁶ Cf. Franz Hancar, "Hallstadt- Kaukasu s. Ein Beitrag zur Klärung des Kimmerierproblem" (Mitt. d. Oesterr. Gesell. /. Anthropologie, Ethnologie u. Pri:ihistorie, 73-74/1 947, pp. 1 52 ff.); J. Harmatta, "Le probleme cim m⁶rien" (Archaeologiai Ertesito, 1948, pp. 49 ff.) ; R. Pittioni, Die urgeschichtlichen Grundlagen der europäischen Kultur, Vienna, 1949, pp. 255 ff. ; R. Heine-Geldem, "Das Tocharerproblem und die pontische Wan derung" (Saeculum, 2/195 1, pp. 225-255), spec. 245 ff. See also K. Jettmar, in K. J. Narr et alii, Abriss der Vorgeschichte, MUnchen, 1957 , pp. 156 et seq.

67 Pia Laviosa Zambotti, *I Balcani e l'Italia nell'età Preistoria*, Como, 1954, figs. 13-14, 16, and pp. 184 ff.

until Epiphany. 68 Originally these were ceremonies connected with the periodic return of the dead and involved all kinds of animal masks: horse, goat, wolf, bear⁶⁹ etc.. This ritual scenario does not belong to the religious horizon we are studying. We will not discuss it here, just as we will not consider aspects of wolf mythology and ritual in the ancient Near East. It is out of the question to examine in these few pages the remarkable dossier compiled by F. Kretschmar. Our research is necessarily limited to the facts likely to explain the transformation of the WIUi initiatory warrior epithet into an ethnic eponym.

It is important, therefore, to distinguish not only between the different religious complexes crystallized around a mythical Wolf, but also between the different expressions of the same complex. In short, the primary source of all these creations is to be found in the religious universe of the primitive hunter: a universe dominated by the mystical solidarity between hunter and hunted.⁷⁰ This solidarity is often revealed or directed by a Lord-God (or Mother) of the Animals. Such a religious conception makes intelligible the myths of the descent of a nomadic people from a carnivore (wolf, lion, leopard, etc.). The carnivore is the exemplary hunter. Another important aspect is the initiatory ritual and the myth that justifies it: a primordial beast killed people in order to resurrect them as initiates, i.e. transformed into carnivores; the beast was finally slain, and this event is the ritual performed during initiation ceremonies; but by putting on the skin of the beast, the initiate is resurrected not as a human **being** but as the primordial beast, the supposed founder of the mystery. In other words, the mythical Animal resurrects together with the initiate. Such a mythical complex

68 F. Kretschmar, op. cit. Dumézil, *Le probleme des Centaures*, Paris, 1929, passim; Waldemar Liungmann, *Traditionswanderungen*, Euphrat Rhein, Helsinki, 1937-1938, pp. 73, 8, 834, 1076 etc.

69 Documentation can be found in the works of Dumézil and Liungman. Cf. and Eva Gasparini, *I riti popolari slavi*, Venice, 1952, pp. 26 ff.

70 Karl Meuli, "Griechische Opferbräuche" (*Phyllobolia* für Peter von der Mühl), Basel, 1946, pp. 185-288), spec. 223 ff.; A. Friedrich, "Die Forschung über das frühzeitliche Jägertum" (*Paideuma*, II, 1-2/1941); H. Findeisen, *Das Tier als Gott, Dämon und Ahne*, Stuttgart, 1956. Cf. below chapter IV.

The co-ritual is clearly attested in African hunter-gatherer cultures⁷¹, but is also found elsewhere⁷²-

A similar conception emerges in the initiation rites of the Kwakiutl people. The initiation of boys is a repetition of a mythical event: the first master of the ritual was the Wolf; his brother, the Vizon, one day found the Wolf's cubs in the forest, killed them and, becoming the master of the rite, took the name of "Wolf".

The door of the initiation hut was once shaped like a wolf's mouth. In

In this initiatory hut, the young hamatsa – members of the Cannibal society – completed their transformation into wolves: devouring corpses, they were possessed by a kind of furious madness, during which they bit their neighbors and swallowed pieces of raw cam. ⁷³ As Dumezil has remarked, the behavior of the young hamatsa recalls that of the young Germanic berserkr possessed by Wut (rage), by furor heroicus.¹⁴

To this phase of the magical-religious complex of the wolf belong also the reinterpretations and revalorizations of the Miinnerb un de and military initiations, as well as beliefs in lycanthropy and werewolves. ⁷⁵

The warrior is the hunter par excellence; like the hunter, he has his model in the behavior of a butcher. He is a warrior by birth, the descendant of a wolf ancestor (as is the case with certain tribes or certain chief families in Central Asia) – or he becomes a warrior by initiation, by ritual transformation into a carnivore (Indo-Iranian Marya, Berserkir, etc.). Among the Koryak tribes and certain North American tribes (Kwakiutl, etc.), wolf dances are performed before going to war.⁷⁶ They prepare themselves for battle by magically transforming themselves into wolves, in this case a collective operation

⁷¹ Cf. H. Straube, *Die Tierverkleidungen der afrikanischen Naturvolker*, Wiesbaden, 1955, pp. 1 98 ff.

⁷² Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Naissances mystiques*, pp. 58 ff.

⁷³ Cf. the essentials of the dossier and bibliography in Werner MÜler, *Weltbild und Kult der Kwakiutl-Indianer*, Wiesbaden, 1955, spec. 65 ff. and M. Eliade, *op . cit.* , pp. 139 et seq .

⁷⁴ Georges Duménil, *Horace et les Curiaces*, Paris, 1942, pp. 42 ff.

7s The role of the wolf in North Asian shamanism is an ancient phenomenon. **in**
In general, shamanism predates the various forms of warrior magic.

76 Cf. F. Kretschmar, *op. cit.*, II, p. 257; cf. fig. p. 121, representing the wolf dance
of the Kwak.iutl.

- while that Germanic *berserkr* gets the individual transmutation into the beast.

In short, the way of being of a carnivore is shared: 1) by the simple fact of being descended from a mythical animal; 2) by the ritual clothing of a beast skin (repetition of a primordial event, resulting in the assimilation of the essence of the soul); 3) by the experience of shamanic or military initiation. Lycanthropy and the various beliefs in werewolves are similar phenomena, but independent of this magico-religious complex. According to Herodotus (N, 1 05) , the necromancers were transformed into wolves every year.⁷⁷ This periodicity indicates possible annual ceremonies, during which wolf skins were dressed and wolf masks were worn — either on the occasion of the initiation of the young or to figure the return of the dead. (Incidentally, these two ceremonies are generally celebrated together.⁷⁸) But most folkloric beliefs about wolverines are related to the individual transformation into a carnæ. A few cases can be explained by the survival of "spontaneous initiations"; this is a delayed phenomenon, a kind of spontaneous rediscovery of ritual scripts that have been lost or completely transformed. The symmetry between berserkir initiations and the transformation into werewolves has been noted on several occasions.⁷⁹ It can be concluded that a large number of legends and popular beliefs concerning werewolves⁸⁰ can be explained by a process of folklorization, i.e. by the projection into the imaginary world of concrete rituals, whether shamanic or of warrior initiation.

⁷⁷ On the periodic transformation into wolf in Arcadia, cf. A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, I, pp. 71 ff. See also M. Schuster, "Der Werwolf und die Hexen. Zwei Schauennärrchen bei Petronius" (Wiener Studien, 1930, XLVI, pp. 149-178) ; W. Kroll, 'Etwas vom Werwolf' (ibid. , 1937 , LV, pp. 168-172).

⁷⁸ Cf. e.g. Otto Hofler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen*, pp. 45 ff. and passim; see also Alexander Slawik, "Kultische Geheimbünde der Japaner und Germanen" (Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte u. Linguistik, Wiener Beiträge, Vienna, 1936, pp. 675-764), pp. 738 ff.

⁷⁹ O. Hofler, op. cit., pp. 27 ff. ; G. Dumézil, *Mythes et dieux des Germains*, Paris, 1939, pp. 83 ff.

⁸⁰ The bibliography of werewolves is immense; the essentials will be found in W. Hertz, *Der Werwolf*, Stuttgart, 1862 ; W. Fischer, *Dämonische Wesen , Vampir u. Werwolf in Geschichte u. Sage*, Stuttgart, 1906 ; Montague Summers, *The Werewolf*, London, 1933 ; F. Kretschmar, op. cit. II, pp. 184 ff. ; R. Eisler, *Man into Wolf*, pp. 146-

Hunters, huntsmen, warriors

The uniting element of all these beliefs is the magico-religious experience of mystical solidarity with the wolf, whatever the means used to achieve it: anthropophagy, *fluor heroicus*, initiation by dressing in skins, ceremonial drunkenness, robbery, etc. The discovery of such solidarity with the exemplary beast is always a personal experience; only such an experience brings about a total change of behavior, the **trans-formation** of a human **being** into a carnivore. But the experience was made possible by the myth of origin, in other words by the reactualization of a primordial event that took place at the beginning of Time. indeed, the mythical Ancestor lycomorph, like the mythical Founder of of the mystery of initiation, or the First Shaman or the First Warrior performed certain decisive actions in *illo tempore*. These actions later became paradigmatic models to imitate. The wolf is transformed into a wolf when he steps out of himself and out of the present time, becoming the contemporary of the mythical event.

The ritual retrieval of the Original Time is an archaic religious behavior sufficiently elucidated by recent research to dispense with further insistence. Considered in this perspective, the different religious revalorizations of the mystical solidarity between the wolf and the warrior can also be explained as varied expressions of the same fundamental experience. The great hunt, like the initiation or war, or the invasion and occupation of a territory are activities following mythical patterns: in *illo tempore*, a supernatural carnage-maker performed them for the first time. renowned hunter, a formidable warrior, a conqueror to the extent that you reactualize the myth, that is, to the extent that you share the behavior of the carnivore and repeat the primordial event. Thus, although they belong to different historical moments and represent independent cultural expressions, a structural analogy emerges between the collective pursuit of the hunted, war⁸¹, the invasion of a territory by a group of immigrants and the behavior of the hunter, the war, the invasion of a territory by a group of immigrants and

the behavior of the hunted.

¹¹ Cf. Karl Meulitz "Ein altpersischer Kriegsbrauch" (in *Westöstliche Abhandlungen* . Festschrift Rudolf Tschudi, Wiesbaden, 1954, pp. 63--86), on the common structure of hunting and war telmicons in Iranians and Turco-Mongolian

fugitives and *outlaws*. All those who carry out one of these operations behave like wolves, because from a certain point of view and for different reasons they are about to "establish a world". In other words, imitating the mythical model, they hope to begin a paradigmatic existence, to free themselves from the weakness, helplessness or misfortune of the human condition.

In South-Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean region, such archaic religious ideologies were modified and eventually suppressed by Eastern and Aegean cultural influences. In the historical era

in Greece, Italy and the Balkan Peninsula, only mythological fragments and some traces of initiatory rites. The original name of the Dacians must be placed among these mutilated relics, along with more illustrious fragments such as the legend of Romulus and Remus. Of course, some of this legacy has survived in the form of folk customs and folkloric creations in these quintessentially conservative regions of the Balkans and the Carpathians. We are thinking here not only of the belief *in* werewolves, but also of certain customs and, in particular, folklore about wolves. s rmtul

Sava and St. Sava and St. Theodore in Yugoslavia, St. Peter in Romania are considered as patrons of wolves.⁸² An entire study of all these archaic customs and beliefs is needed surviving in the Balkan-Carpathian area.

in concluding these remarks, a word about what might be called the mythical dimension of Dacian history. It is significant that the only people who succeeded in definitively invading the Dacians, occupying and colonizing their land and imposing their language on them was the Roman people; a people whose genealogical myth was built around Romulus and Remus, children of the Wolf-God Mars, suckled and raised by the wolf from Capitolius. The result of this conquests and this assimilation was the birth of the Romanian people.

In the mythological perspective of history, it could be said that this people was born *under the sign of the Wolf*, that is, predestined to wars, invasions, and emigrations. The wolf appeared for the third time on the mythical horizon of the history of the

¹² Cf. Pia Laviosa Zambotti, *op . cit.* , p. 1 86 on Balkan traditions. See also Octavian Buhociu, *Le Folklore roumain de printemps* (typed thesis, Universite de Paris, 1 957), pp. 1 27 ff. etc.

their descendants. Indeed, the Romanian principalities were leveled following the great invasions of Genghis-Han and his successors. Now, the genealogical myth of the Genghis-Hans proclaims that their ancestor was a gray wolf who descended from heaven and was wiped with a deer...

1959

ZALMOXIS

Herodotus, IV, 94-96

In a famous passage, Herodotus tells us what he learned from the Greeks of Hellespont and the Black Sea about the religious beliefs of the Getites, and especially about their god Zalmoxis. The Getae, says Herodotus, "are the bravest of the Thracians and the most righteous" (IV, 93). "They consider themselves immortal", and here is how: "their belief is that they do not die, but that he who perishes goes to Zalmoxis — their deity (daimon) — whom some believe to be the same as Gebeleizis" (IV, 94; trans. rom. Adelina Piatkovski and Felicia Vanț-Ștet). Herodotus then describes two rites dedicated to Zalmoxis: the blood sacrifice of a messenger, performed every four years, and archery during storms. We will deal with these rituals later. For now, let's read what Herodotus learned from his informants.

"According to what we have learned from the Hellenes who live in Hellespont and Pontus, this Zalmoxis, a **faithful** man (like all men), would have lived in bondage at Samos as a slave of Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchos. Then, gaining his freedom, he would have acquired much wealth and, acquiring wealth, returned rich among his own kind. As the Thracians led a life of abject poverty and lacked learning, this Zalmoxis, who knew the Ionian way of life and better morals than those of Thrace, as one who had lived among the Hellenes and especially with the wisest man of Ellada, next to Pythagoras, had a reception hall built for him, where he lodged and entertained the leading citizens; during the feasts he taught them that neither he, nor his guests, nor their descendants would ever die, but would only move into a

And all the time that he was entertaining his guests, and speaking to them thus, he had a dwelling made for him underground. When

his dwelling was ready, it was made
unseen in the midst of the Thracians, descending into the
depths of the rooms

and hid himself there for three years. The Thracians mourned for him and mourned him as dead. But in the fourth year he appeared again before the Thracians, and so Zalmoxes called him.

to believe all that he said. As for me, I neither doubt nor fully believe all that is said about him and his dwelling under the earth; besides, I reckon that this Zalmoxis lived long before Pythagoras. Whether Zalmoxis was only a man, or whether he was really some god from the parts of Getia, I leave him well" (IV, 95-96, transl. Adelina Piatkovski and Felicia Vanț-Ștef.)

As was only natural, this text made a great impression on the ancient world, from Herodotus' contemporaries to the last Neo-Pythian Goricians and Neo-Platonists. It has been extensively commented on and interpreted by scholars and continues to be so today. Certain interpretations will hold our attention further on. ¹ For now let us

¹ The bibliography up to 1936 was recorded by G. Kazarow, "Thrakische Religion", in Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, VI A I, zweite Reihe, XI Halbband Stuttgart, 1936, spec. col. 548 ff. See also Carl Clemen, "Zalmoxis" (Zalmoxis, Revue des Etudes religieuses, II, București, 1939, pp. 53-54); Jean Coman, "Zalmoxis. Un grand problème gete" (ibid., pp. 79-110); I. I. Russu, "Religia Geto-dacilor. Zei, credințe, practici religioase" (Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice, V, Cluj, 1947, pp. 61-137), spec. pp. 84-102 (pp. 66-74, bibliography, especially useful for works published in Romanian); id. "Zalmoxis", Real-Encyclopaedie, zweite Reihe, XVII (1967), col. 2302-2305; Friedrich Pfister, "Zalmoxis" (Studies presented to D.

M. Robinson, Edited by George Mylonas and Doris Raymond, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, vol. II, 1953, pp. 111-123) It would be useless to summarize here the rich bibliography on the protohistory and history of Dacia. Let us mention only a few indispensable works: Vasile Pârvan, Getica, București, 1926; id. Dacia. An Outline of the Early Civilization of the Carpatho-Danubian countries (Cambridge, 1928; see also the Romanian translation by Radu Vulpe, ed. IV-a, București, 1967, with important additions and critical bibliographies by the translator, pp. 159-216); Istoria României, vol. I (Bucharest, 1961): D. Berciu and D. M. Pippicli, Din istoria Dobrogei I: Geti și Greci la Dunărea-de-jos din cele mai vechi timpuri până la cucerirea romană, Bucharest, 1965; Hadrian Daicoviciu, Dacii, Bucharest, 1965; R. Vulpe, Așezări getice în Muntenia, Bucharest, 1966;

C. Poghirc, Thraco-dacica, Bucharest, 1976; M. Eliade, Histoire des Croyances et des Idées religieuses, II, Paris, p. 447 (critical bibliography). It should also be remembered that Herodotus only informs us about the Getites and neighboring

tribes (the Teryds and Crobyds) in the Pontic area. It was only later, during the Roman Empire, that authors began to take an interest in the Dacians living in the Carpathian arc.

We distinguish the main elements: a) Herodotus' informants insist first of all on the fact that Zalmoxis was Pythagoras' slave and that he became free and then strove to introduce Greek civilization and his master's teachings among the Greeks; b) the essence of Zalmoxis' "Pythagorean" doctrine was the idea of immortality, or more precisely of a happy post-existence; c) Zalmoxis explained this doctrine at banquets which he offered to the elite citizens, in *an andreon* built for the purpose ; d) during this time he built an underground dwelling in which he hid for three years ; considering him dead, the Getae mourned him, but he reappeared in the fourth year, thus convincingly demonstrating the truth of his teaching. Herodotus concludes his history without pronouncing on the reality of the subterranean dwelling, and without deciding whether Zalmoxis was a man² or a divine **creature**, but opining that, according to him, the personage had lived long before Pythagoras.

Except for one detail that seems incomprehensible, namely the lamentation of the Greeks after the disappearance of Zalmoxis (for one wonders how they came to the conclusion of Zalmoxis' *death* if they did not find his body?), the story is coherent; the Greeks of Hellespont, or Herodotus himself, integrated what they had learned about Zalmoxis, about his doctrine and cult, into a spiritual horizon of Pythagorean structure. Whether the Greeks of Hellespont or Herodotus himself did so for reasons of patriotism (how could such a doctrine discovered by barbarians be conceived?) is irrelevant. What is important is that the Greeks were struck by the similarity between Pythagoras and Zalmoxis. But this is enough to inform us about the kind of religious doctrine and practice specific to the cult of Zalmoxis. Indeed, the *interpretatio graeca* allowed a fairly large number of homologations with Greek gods or heroes. The fact that

Pythagoras was designated as the source of the religious teachings of Zalmoxis demonstrates that this cult of the god get presupposed a belief in the immortality of the soul and certain initiatory rites.

² The historical reality of a personage posing as Zalmoxis, who was a disciple of

Pythagoras, and who endeavored to introduce "Pythagorean politics" into Dacia, is supported by Edwin L. Minar, Jr. , Early Pythagorean Politics in Practice and Theory, Baltimore, 1942, pp. 6 ff. The hypothesis does not hold.

Beyond the rationalism and hegemonism of Herodotus or his informants, one glimpses the mystical character of the cult. This is perhaps why Herodotus hesitates to give details (if - which is not certain — informers had given them to him) : his discretion about the Mysteries is well known. But Herodotus admits that he does not believe in the story of Zalmoxis slave of Pythagoras, and that on the contrary he is convinced of the anteriority of the *dai monului* get — and this detail is important.

"The underground dwelling

The Andreon which Zalmoxis built for himself and in which he received important citizens to discuss immortality is also reminiscent of the hall in which Pythagoras preached at Crotona³ and of the chambers in which the ritual banquets of the secret religious associations of the rejoyous secret associations took place. Such scenes of ritual banquets are abundantly attested by later monuments in Thrace and the Danubian area.⁴ As for the subterranean dwelling, if it is not an interpolation of Herodotus, who recalled a legend in connection with Pythagoras⁵ which we will discuss shortly, it is clear that his function has not been understood. indeed, in a satirical story

³ Pierre Boyance, *Le culte des Muses chez les philosophes grecs*, Paris, 1937, p. 134, sees in the meals taken in common by Zalmoxis and his guests the earliest evidence of the Pythagoreans' cultic meal.

⁴ Documentation will be found in the article by G. Kazarow, *Real-Encyclopaedia*, VI, A, 548 et seq. ; see also M. P. Nilson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, I (2nd ed., München, 1955) pp. 172 ff. ; S. Eitrem, in *Real-Encyclopaedia*, VIII, 114 ff. ; Gh. Pintea, *Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice*, Cluj, II, 1935, p. 229, n. I, lists the monuments found in Dobrogea; see also R. Vulpe, *Histoire ancienne de la Dobroudja*, Bucharest, 1938, p. 220 and fig. 61.

⁵ Walter Burkert (*Weisheit und Wissenschaft. Studien zu Pythagoras, Philolaos und Platon*, Nürnberg, 1962, pp. 139 et suiv.) wonders whether the "dwelling under the earth" is not due to an influence of the Pythagorean tradition. For, as we shall see, Strabo (VI, 297 ff.) does not speak of an underground dwelling, but of a cave of Mount Kogălniț. Be that as it may, symbolically and ritually the subterranean

hiding-place is equivalent to the cave, and one and the other signify "the other world." See also V. Aly, *Volksmirchen, Sage und Nove/le bei Herodotus und seinen 'kitgenossen*, Gottingen, 1921, pp. 129 ff.

of Hermip, which has been handed down to us in an imperfect form⁶, Pythagoras retreats for seven years (the seven years is given by Tertullian) to an underground hiding place. According to his sfa tures, his mother writes a letter which he memorizes before sealing it. C"md reappears, like a dead man who returns from Hades, Pythagoras goes to the assembly of the people and declares himself able to read the text without breaking the seal. following this miracle, the Crotonites are convinced of his descent into Hell

and believe everything he tells about the fate of their relatives and cousins. But the survival of the soul is for Pythagoras only the consequence of the doctrine of metempsychosis, and this doctrine he endeavors to impose.

Beginning with Rohde, scholars have recognized the source of this parody in Herodotus' story of the hiding place of Zalmoxis.⁷ But Hermippus may have used other sources as well.⁸ It is also known that Iamblicus in his *Life of Pythagoras* repeats the same story but adds details not found in Herodotus.⁹ Be that as it may, Herodotus' rationalist account, like the parodies transmitted by Hennip and his sources, willfully ignores or distorts the religious significance of the facts he communicates. The retreat into an ascent or descent into a subterranean chamber is ritually and symbolically equivalent to a *katabasis*, a *descensus ad inferos* undertaken in the sight of the gods.

6 Briefly in Diogenes Laertios, **VI** 41, and in Tertullian, *De anima*, 28, and in the *Electra's Scultus*, v. 62 — texts reproduced in Isidore Uvy, *Recherches sur les sources de la Ugende de Pythagore*, Paris, 1926, pp. 37-38. See the discussion of this theme in I. Uvy, *La Mgende de Pythagore en Grece et en Palestine*, Paris, 1927, pp. 129 et seq.

7 Erwin Rohde, "Die Quellen des Iamblichus in seiner Biographie des Pythagoras" (*Rheinisches Museum*, 26, 1871, pp. 554-576), p. 557; Armand Delatte, *La vie de Pythagore de Diogene Laerce*, Brussels, 1922, p. 245; I. Uvy, *La Ugende de Pythagore*, p. 133.

8 indeed, at least three elements are not attested in Herodotus: the theme of the letter, detailing the fact that Pythagoras reappears under a skeletal aspect, but especially the presence of the mother. It may be that this latter motif represents a rationalization of the Chthonian Great Mother; cf. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, p. 139. At Metapontum, the city where Pythagoras was believed to have died, his house was transformed into a sanctuary of Demeter; cf. Boyance, *Le*

culte des Muses, p. 234. 9 J. S. Morisson, "Pythagoras of Samos" (Classical Quarterly, 50, 1956, pp.

135-156), pp. 14-141 .

an initiation. Such descents are attested in more or less legendary biographies of Pythagoras. ¹⁰ According to Porphyrios (*Vita Pyth.* 16-17), Pythagoras was initiated in Crete into the Mysteries of Zeus in the following way: he was purified by the initiates of Dactylus Morgetus with the help of a meteorite stone, spent the night wrapped in a black sheep's fur and descended into the cave of Idei where he remained for 27 days. Diogenes Laertios (VIII, 3) adds that he descended into the cave in the company of Epimenides, the purifier par excellence.

supernatural executioners. ¹²

These legends, though late, help us to grasp the original meaning of Zalmoxis' underground dwelling. *It was an initiatory ritual.* This does not necessarily imply that Zalmoxis was a chthonian deity (see further on p. 50). To descend into the Underworld is to know the 'initiatory death', the experience of the above-

¹⁰ The sources on the descents of Pythagoras have been grouped and discussed by Paul Corssen, "Zum Abaris des Heraklides Ponticus" (Rheinisches Museum, 67, 1912, pp. 20-47), pp. 42 ff.; cf. A. Dieterich, *Nekyia* (2nd ed., Leipzig, Berlin), pp. 130 et seq.; M. P. Nilsson, *op. cit.* I, pp. 664. See now Burkert, *op. cit.*, pp. 136 ff.

¹¹ On this model, Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*, VI, 19, elaborates the descent of Apollonius from Tyana to the cave of Trophonius, where he is said to have remained for seven days. When he asks what is the most perfect philosophy, the oracle presents him with a doctrine similar to that preached by Pythagoras.

¹² Cf. I. Levy, *IA Ugende of Pythagoras*, pp. 79 ff.; cf. also 46 ff., 84 ff. It is important to add that recent researches on Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism are likely to clarify, though indirectly, our subject. On the one hand, we now have better editions of texts and rigorous textual analysis; cf., for example, Maria Timpanaro Cardini, *Pythagoreans: Testimonianze e Frammenti*, 3 vols, Firenze, 1958-1964; Holger Thesleff, *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* (Acta Academiae Aboensis, Humaniora XXN, 3, Abo 1961). On the other hand, scholars are more and more willing to capitalize on certain hitherto neglected or underestimated testimonies of Late Antiquity. One of the consequences of this new interest

The character of Pythagoras is also directly affected: one no longer separates the "scientific" Pythagoras from the "mystical" Pythagoras. In addition to Morisson's article and Burkert's book, already cited, see also C. J. de Vogel, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, Assen, 1966 and W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. I, Cambridge

bridge, 1962, pp. 146-181.

ceptible to establish a new mode of existence. The "disappearance" (occultation) and "reappearance" (epiphany) of a divine or semi-divine being (messianic king, prophet, magus, lawgiver) is a mythical-ritual scenario that is quite common in the Mediterranean and Asian world. Minos, the son of Zeus, the exemplary model of the ancient lawgiver, retired every nine years to the mountains in the cave of Zeus and returned from there bringing tablets of laws (Strabo, X, 4, 8; XVI, 2, 38). Dionysus in particular is characterized by his periodic epiphanies and disappearitions, by his "death" and "rebirth", in which we can still decipher the relationship with the rhythm of vegetation and, in general, with the eternal cycle, life, death and rebirth. But in the historical epoch, this solidarity between cosmic rhythms and the presence, preceded and followed by the absence of supernatural Beings, was no longer evident.

Rituals : occultism and ep ifanii

A mythical-ritual scenario can be deciphered in numerous traditions relating to the periodic epiphany of a god or the enthronement of a cosmocratic messianic king, or, finally, the appearing of a prophet. This scenario survived quite late in Iranian and Asian circles. According to one legend, Mani announces that he will ascend to Heaven where he will stay for a year, and as a result, he retreats into a cave. ¹³ Bîhâfarid, who lived in the 8th century, builds himself a temple and, convincing his wife that he is dying, allows himself to be locked inside. He emerges a year later declaring that he had been in Heaven where God showed him Heaven and Hell and made him the bearer of a revelation. ¹⁴ G. Widengren has studied this motif in due course, recalling among other things the tradition handed down by Al-Bîrfini : on the eve of his enthronement, the Parthian king retires into a cave and his subjects approach and worship him as a newborn child, in other words, as a

¹³ Mirxond, Histoire des Sassanides, Paris, 1843 , p. 1 89 ; see the commentary by G. Widengren, Muhammad, the Apostie of God, and his Ascension, Upp sala, 1955 ,

pp. 83 ff. ; id. /ranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer 'kit, Cologne and Oplanden, 1960, p. 64.

¹⁴ Cf. the texts quoted in Widengren, Muhammad the Apostie of God, p. 82; Iranisch-Semitische Kulturbegegnung, pp. 63-64.

1 S Armenian traditions speak of a cave in which Meher (i.e. Mihr, Mithra) used to lock himself up and from which he emerged once a year. Indeed, the new king is Mithra, reincarnated, born again.
16

This Iranian theme is echoed in the Christian legends of being born in the grotto of Bethlehem full of light. According to the anonymous author of *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, the Magi climbed the Mount of Victories every year, where there was a grotto with springs and trees, awaiting the appearance of the Star. She finally appears to them in the form of a little child who tells them to go to Judea. The *Chronicle of ʿqnîn* whose prototype — like *Opus imperfectum* — must predate the sixth century develops this legend: The twelve "Wise-Kings" ascend the Mountain every month and enter the Cave of Treasures. One day they see an ineffable column of light above which a Star shines brighter than the radiance of many suns. The Star enters the Cave of Treasures and a voice invites the kings to enter. Entering the cave, the kings are blinded by the light and kneel. But the light focuses and after a short time it appears to them in the form of a humble little man who tells them that he has been sent by the Heavenly Father. He instructs them to go to Galilee. 11

We recognize here the great syncretistic, strongly Iranized, syncretistic myth of the Cosmocrat-Saviour. As I have shown elsewhere, these elements are archaic and precede the cult of Mithra and Iranian-Semitic syncretism. The importance of the theme of supernatural light should not lead us to neglect the fundamental symbolism of the scenario. Here, as in the examples cited above,

¹⁵ Al-BîrCini, India (trans. Sachau), II, p. 10; G. Widengren, Iranisch -semi tische Kulturbegegnung, p. 62.

¹⁶ Cf. Geo Widengren, Iranisch -semitische, p. 65; id. Les religions de l' Iran (French translation, Paris, Payot, 1968), p. 269. See further examples in Sv en S. Hartman, Gayomart, Study on Syncretism in Ancient Iran, Uppsala, 1953, p. 60, n. 2, p. 180 and n. 6. See also Ilya Gerschewitch in Mithraic Studies, Manchester, 1971, I, pp. 85 ff. ; II, pp. 356 ff. ; Mircea Eliade, Histoire des Croyances, II, pp. 485 ff.

¹¹ See the sources and bibliography in Mircea Eliade, Meph istophiMs et

l'Androgyne, Paris, 1962, pp. 61-63.

¹¹ Cf. Mephistophiles and the Androgyne, pp. 63-64.

The cave at the top of the mountain signifies the place par excellence of divine epiphany, the place where, after a period of occultation, a savior god, a prophet or a cosmocrat appear.

Now, the cave represents the other world and also the whole Universe. It is not the immediate, 'natural' valorization of the cave as a dark and therefore subterranean place that allows us to grasp its symbolism and its religious function, but the experience of entering a sacred and ultimately 'total' space, that is to say, a *world-in-itself*. The ritual grotto sometimes imitates

night sky.¹⁹ In other words, it is an *imago mundi*, a miniature universe. ²⁰ Dwelling in a cave does not necessarily imply a descent into the shadows, as to live in another world, more vast, more complex because it incorporates multiple modes of existence (gods, demons, souls of the dead, etc.), and is therefore full of richness and countless virtualities (cf. the desacralized myths of treasure caves, etc.). It is only due to the "naturist" interpretations of 19th century scholars, who reduced religious symbolism to its concrete, physical expression, that the cosmic significance of caves and underground cult dwellings was limited to a single will

loare, namely as the abode of the dead and source of earthly fertility.²¹

Zalmoxis and -immortalization"

If we try to understand the tradition transmitted by Herodotus by itself without wondering about its origin or authenticity, the character Zalmoxis can be described as follows: a) he is a *Daimon* or theos who "reveals" an eschatological doctrine and "founds" an initiatory cult of which

¹⁹ See A. B. Cook, 'kus, II, 2, Cambridge, 1 925, p. 11 50; **il**, 2 (1 940), p. 1 1 87.

²⁰ Cf. F. K. Domer and Th. Goell, Arsameia am Nymphaios, Berlin, 1 963, pp. 1 29-145.

²¹ F. B. B. J. Kuiper, insisting on its "infernal" aspect, saw well the cosmic structure of the Indo-Iranian underworld; cf. "Remarks on "The Avestan Hymn to Mithra"" (Indo-Iranian Journal, V, 1 961, pp. 3 6-), pp. 58-59.

depends on the ontological regime of post-mortem existence; b) in other words, Zalmoxis is not a supernatural **being of** a cosmic or institutional type, considered *to have been* there from the beginning of tradition, like other Thracian gods mentioned by Herodotus, "Ares", "Dionysos", "Artemis" or "Hera"; Zalmoxis makes his appearance in a religious history that precedes him, he inaugurates a new eschatological epoch ; c) the "revelation" he brings to the Getae is communicated through a well-known mythical-ritual scenario of "death" (occultation) and "return to earth" (epiphany), a scenario used by various characters to establish a new era or the establishment of an eschatological cult; d) the central idea of the message of Zalmoxis concerns the survival or immortality of the soul ; e) but because the return of Zalmoxis in flesh and blood does not constitute "proof" of the "immortality" of the soul, this episode seems to reflect a ritual that is unknown to us.

The belief in the immortality of the soul never ceased to intrigue the Greeks of the 5th century. Herodotus could not have found a more felicitous introductory formula than to present the Greeks as those "who believe in their immortality" (*getas tous athanatizontas* ; IV, 93) , "for their belief is that they do not die and that he who perishes goes to Zal moxis" (IV, 94) . In *Charmides*, a dialog probably written some thirty years after Herodotus, Socrates speaks of a Thracian physician he had met, "one of those doctors of the Thracian king Zalmoxis who is said to have mastered the skill of making you immu

Indeed, the verb *athanatizein* (cf. Herodotus V, 4) does not mean "to think oneself immortal" but "to make oneself immortal".²²

The meaning of this "immortalization" is indicated in the story transmitted by Herodotus: when Zalmoxis entertained his guests (-leading citizens"), "he taught them that neither he, nor his guests, nor their descendants will die in the age to come, but will move only to a place where they will live forever and enjoy all good things" (IV, 95). In other words, this blissful postexistence was by no means generic, but was obtained by means of an initiation, which brings the cult established by Zalmoxis closer to the Greek and Hellenistic Mysteries. Hellanikos, who was older than Herodotus, but who follows

22 Cf. I. M. Linforth, 'Oĩ athanatizontes, Herodotus IV, 93-96' (*Classical Philology*, **XI**, 1918, pp. 23-33).

his narrative, describing the rite of Zalmoxis, rightly calls it "*teletai*", emphasizing its initiatory character.²³

Hellanikos refers among other things to the Teryzi and Crobyzi, two Thracian tribes neighboring the Getae in the Pontic area: they too believed that they would not die and that the dead go to Zachnoxis. However, the stay with the god is not definitive because "it is believed that the dead will return". That's why they rejoice at the thought

that the deceased will come back"²⁴- Indeed, they bring offerings and wake up so that "the dead will return"²⁵.

Information about the return of the dead is found only in Photios, Suidas and Pomponius Mela (II, 2, 18). According to the latter, there were among the Thracians three beliefs concerning the post-existence of the soul, the first of which he speaks of is the return of the dead themselves: *alii* (among the Thracians) *redituras putant animas obeuntium*. According to another belief, souls will never return, yet they do not die out but begin a happy existence (*etsi non redeant, non extingui tamen, sed ad beatiora transire*). Finally, a third belief is more akin to a pessimistic philosophy than to a popular eschatology: souls die, but it is preferable to die than to live (*emori quidem, sed id melius esse quam vivere*).

As can be seen, the numerous pieces of information we have, apart from Herodotus, complicate the problem even further. Let us first try to understand what it might mean

"return of the dead" spoken of by Photios, Suidas and Pomponius Mela. In no way does this statement imply metempsychosis, as has sometimes been claimed²⁶, although an allusion by Euripides makes belief in reincarnation among the Thracians probable²⁷. It

²³ F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923 and unnn.), frg. 73. Emperor Julian repeats the same tradition: the Gauls are convinced that they will not die and that they will go to Zalmoxis (De Caes. , 327, D).

²⁴ Cf. J. Coman, "Zalmoxis", p. 108.

²⁵ Suidas, s. v. Zalmoxis.

²⁶ E. Rieu, *Psyche*, 4th ed., Tübingen, 1907, II, p. 31.

²⁷ Rieu, *ibid.* Herbert S. Long, *A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece from Pythagoras to Plato*, Princeton, 1948, p. 8, rightly rejects Rieu's interpretation: Zalmoxis could not preach metempsychosis because it did not appear in any other form. A similar view is held by J. A. Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, University of Toronto Press, 1966, p. 153. See also A. Cameron, *The Pythagorean Background of the Theory of Recollection*, Menasha,

The information on the "return of the dead", which is also rather late, may be the result of a confused interpretation of Herodotus' text: the Getae believed in the "immortality of the soul", convinced by Zalmoxis, who appeared again after four years; they therefore go to Zalmoxis for a while and then return to earth. Another possible interpretation would be a funerary ritual aiming at the periodic return of the dead. Similar rituals are attested both in the Mediterranean, Greek and Balkan areas and elsewhere (among the Germans, Finno-Ugrians, etc.) The indication that the Teryds and Crobys make sacrifices and entertain themselves "so that the dead may return" recalls a large number of similar customs, the most spectacular of which is attested in the Ceremusians.²⁸ It could also be a more recent innovation as a result of Iranian and Germanic influences, which were quite strong in Decebal's time. ²⁹

But whatever the interpretation, the theme of the "archers of the dead" has nothing to do with what Herodotus communicates about the teaching of Zalmoxis and what the Greeks had learned about the beliefs of the Getae since the 5th century. What interested the Greeks was that Zalmoxis conferred 'immortality' and that after death his followers went to meet him 'in a place where they enjoyed all good things'. Herodotus does not say that the "soul" separated from the body would go to meet Zalmoxis after death. If he had not added further information about the cult of Zalmoxis, we could have interpreted Herodotus' text in the perspective of Homeric doctrine: immortality is inaccessible to humans; the few non-divine beings who escaped death (Achilles, Menelaos, etc.) were miraculously transported to remote and fabulous regions (the Islands of the Blessed, etc.) where they continue to *live*, that is, enjoy an incarnate existence. The same could have been said of the initiates of Zalmoxis in teletai : they did not die, they did not know the separation of the soul from the body, but met Zalmoxis in a paradisiacal iac realm.

²⁸ Cf. Uno Holmberg, *Die Religion der Tcheremissen* (FFC, No. 61, Porvoo, 1926), pp. 27 ff.

²⁹ See some bibliographical references in Joseph Wiesner, *Die Thraker*, Stuttgart, 1936, p. 225, n. 53.

But Herodotus also relates (IV, 94) Zalmoxis' own ritual; the sending every four years of a messenger. The one whom fate appoints is thrown into the air and, falling, is pierced by the points of spears. It is obvious, then, that the soul of the messenger is on its way to Zalmoxis. Let us leave aside for the moment the coexistence of such a bloody human sacrifice with the religious initiation which confers "immortality". What seems certain is that for the Getae, as for the initiates of the Eleusinian Mysteries or for the "Orphs", the pre-happy post-existence begins after *death*: only the "soul", the spiritual principle, meets Zalmoxis.

But it was precisely this autonomy of the soul and also some paranormal phenomena (ecstasy, cataleptic trance, etc.) invoked as proof of transmigration, i.e. of the "immortality" of the soul, which astonished and fascinated the Greeks. And because Zalmoxis was directly involved, it will be useful to examine more closely a certain mythology, heavily historicized, in relation to ecstasy, death, and the wanderings of the soul.

Ecstatics and thaumaturgists

Strabo (VII, 67) cites Zalmoxis together with Amphiaraos, Trophonius, Orpheus and Musaios, that is to say, with personages renowned for their prestige, their mantia and thaumaturgy, and their ecstatic experiences.³⁰ Amphiaraos was a Theban hero whom the earth swallowed up: Zeus made him immortal. ³¹ Trophonius was known especially through his oracle in Lebadeia, of which Pausanias (IX, 39) has left us a famous description.³² Orpheus' "shamanic" ecstatic experiences are well known: he

³⁰ See also Rohde, *Psyche*, I, p. 121, n. 1.

³¹ Cf. Euripides, *The Prayers*, 925 ff; Sophocles, *Electra*, 833; Pausanias (IX, 8, 3). See also Angelo Brelich, *The Greek Heroes*, Rome, 1958, s. v. ; Jack Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks*, London, 1965, pp. 154 ff.

³² The myths of Trophonius are varied and apparently contradictory. A. Brelich has made a brilliant attempt to find an intelligible structure for them (op. cit., pp. 46 ff.). See also Marcel Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque*, Paris, 1967, pp. 45 ff.

he descends into Hell to bring back the soul of Eurydice; he is a sorcerer and a musician, he charms and masters animals; his head, cut off by the Bacchantes and thrown into Hebros, floats singing to Lesbos. He then serves as an oracle like the head of Mimir, like the skulls of the yukaghiri shamans. 33 As for the mythical singer Musaios, Plato recalls the story that he and his son were led by the gods to Hades: there they see the virtuous crowned and banished to their beds, entertaining themselves and drinking wine — an image of vulgar bliss which Plato comments ironically: "Which supposes that, according to them, there is no finer reward of virtue than eternal drunkenness!" (*Republic*, II, 363 c-d).

On the other hand, since antiquity, Pythagoras - the "mcxlelul" of Zal

moxis — was put in connection with such figures as Aristeas, Abaris, Epi menides, Phormion, Empedocles.³⁴ We shall measure the interest of such a classification later. For the time being, let us recall that Rohde brought the cult of Zalmoxis close to that of Dionysus, underlining the Thracian character of enthusiasm and belief in immortality.³⁵ Half a century after the publication of *Psyche*, Karl Meuli interpreted in a famous study the legends of Aristeas and Abaris as reflecting shamanistic experiences specific to the Scythians of the northern Black Sea.³⁶ The eminent Swiss scholar regarded Zalmoxis as akin to Abaris, i.e. a shaman or the mythical image of a shaman.³⁷ W. K. C. Guthrie and E. R. Dodds took up and elaborated on Rohde and Meuli's research. Guthrie identifies in Zalmoxis the representative of the true Thracian religion, the god being indeed a "brothergod" of Dionysus.³⁸ For his part, Dodds regards Orpheus as a "Thracian figure of the same type as Zalmoxis — a mythical shaman or the prototype of the shaman.

33 Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase*, Paris, 1951; 2nd ed. 1968, pp. 307-308. Cf. and E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951, p. 147.

34 See the references grouped by Walter Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, p. 123, No 161.

35 Rohde, *Psyche*, II, pp. 27 ff.

³⁶ Karl Meuli, "Scythica" (Hermes, 70, 1953, pp. 121-167), spec. pp. 153--164.

³⁷ Meuli, op. cit. , p. 163.

³⁸ W. K. C. Guthrie, The Greeks and Their Gods, London, 1950, p. 176.

39. Finally, very recently, Walter Burkert systematized, on the one hand, the data of Greek shamanism and, on the other hand, brilliantly analyzed the traditions concerning Pythagoras, highlighting several shamanic features.

As can be seen, the ancient authors as well as certain modern scholars have associated Zalmoxis on the one hand with Dionysus and Orpheus, and on the other hand with mythical or highly mythologized characters, whose characteristic feature was either a shamanistic ecstatic technique, mantic or mantic, or the descents into Hell, the "catábasis". Let us examine more closely the very rich and complex morphology of these sacred specialists.

Abaris, a native of the land of the Hyperboreans and priest of Apollo, was endowed with oracular and magical powers (e.g. bilocation). Herodotus (N, 3 6) tells that he "would have gone around the world with the arrow he had, without eating anything", but even as early as Heraclid (fr. 51 c), Abaris was said to have flown on an arrow.⁴¹ Now the arrow, which plays a certain role in Scythian mythology and religion⁴², is present in Siberian shamanistic ceremonies⁴³—

Herodotus (IV, 14) also reports the gist of the legend of Aristeas of Proconnesos (a fortress on an island in the Marmara Sea). After recalling that Aristeas tells in an epic poem that "ruled by Phoebus" went to the Issedonians, where he inquired about their neighbors, the Arrhynassians ("men who would have had but one eye") and the Hyperboreans (IV, 15), Herodotus relates what he heard about him

39 E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the irrational*, p. 147.

40 Walter Burkert, "Goes. Zum griechischen "Schamanismus"", *Rheinisches Muzeum für Philologie*, n. s. voi. 1 05, 1 962, pp. 55; id *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*,

pp. 98 et seq. Cf. J. A. Philip, *Pythagoras and early Pythagoreanism*, pp. 1 59-162, for a critical discussion of Pythagorean "shamanism". See also M. Detienne, *IA notion de daimon dans le pythagorisme ancien*, Paris, 1963, pp. 60 ff.

41 The sources were recently analyzed by Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, pp. 1 26-1 27. Cf. and the bibliographical references cited by J. Wiesner, *Die Thraker*, p. 21 8, n. 64.

⁴² Cf. Meuli, "Scythica", pp. 1 61 ff. ; Dodds, op. cit. pp. 1 40 ff.

⁴³ Cf. for example Mircea Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, p. 180; see also M. Eliade, "Notes on the symbolism of the arrow" (in : *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough*, edited by Jacob Neusner, Leiden, 1 968, pp. 463-475), pp. 463-465 .

Entering the shop of a piper at Proconnesos, Aristéas died, and the piper, closing his shop, set out on the road to bring the news to his parents. The news of his death had spread throughout the town, when a man from Cyzicos declared that he had met Aristéas entering Cyzicos and that he had "been talking with him". Indeed when the door of the workshop was opened "they found Aristéas neither alive nor dead". After seven years he would reappear at Proconnesos and disappear for the second time. Herodotus adds what happened to the Metapontians, in Italy, "two hundred and forty years after the second disappearance of Aristéas". The Metapontians affirm that Aristéas appeared to them in person, commanding them to erect an altar to Apollo, and 'beside it to erect a statue to bear the name of Aristéas of Proconnesos; he told them that they were the synagogue of the Italiotes to whom Apollo had come before; and that he who was Aristéas had accompanied him; but when he accompanied the god, he was a raven. Having said this, he disappeared" (IV, 14-15).⁴⁴

Let us note a few distinctly shamanic features: ecstasy likely to be mistaken for death, bilocation, appearance in the form of a raven.

Hermotimus of Clazomene, who was regarded by some authors as an earlier incarnation of Pythagoras, had the power to and leave the body for many years. in this long ecstasy, he traveled far away and on the way back predicted the future. But one day while

⁴⁴ On Aristéas, cf. Meuli, op. cit., pp. 153 ff. ; Guthrie, op. cit. pp. 1 93 ff. ; Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, pp. 1 24 ff. See also Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, p. 306, n. 4. in his book *Aristéas of Proconnesus*, Oxford, 1 962, J. D. P. Bolton presents a "historical" interpretation of the legend: a faithful worshipper of Apollo, "with the fealty usually felt by the initiates of Dionysus for their god", Aristéas decides to go to the land of the Hyperboreans and takes part in an expedition to the north of the Black Sea. He was so obsessed by this project that he had psychosomatic disorders. These crises were interpreted by his fellow countrymen as "death and resurrection", and by Aristéas as proof that he was ruled by Apollo. The journey that was real took him to the land of the Scythians and the Issedonians, where he learns a wealth of legends about these peoples and their neighbors. On his

return to Proconnesos, more than six years later, Aristeas recounted his experiences in a poem which the Greeks later called Arimaspea (Bolton, pp. 179 ff.). The hypothesis is not in any case it is irrelevant because in the history of Greek culture Aristeas exists only as a fabulous character.

He lay disembodied, his enemies had burned his body, and his soul never returned.⁴⁵ Epimenides of Crete had long slept in the cave of Zeus on Mount Ida; he had fasted and had learned prolonged ecstasies. When he left the cave, master of an "enthusiastic wisdom", that is to say of a certain ecstatic technique, he traveled everywhere foretelling the future, explaining the hidden meaning of the past and purifying cities of the miasmas caused by crimes.⁴⁶ Burkert also mentions the legends of Phormion and Leonymos. Phormion was cured of a wound following an ecstatic journey to a strange region, and was the victim of a

"mythical geographies". The oracle of Delphi also advises Leonymos to go to the "White Island", where Achilles and Ajax are. Leonymos reaches the "White Island" — later located in the Black Sea, but originally identical to the "White Cliffs" in the other world — and returns healed. In both cases it is an ecstatic journey of the shamanic type, later explained by some authors (Tertullian, Hermias) as a dream journey.⁴⁷

Philosophers-shamans

To this list of fabulous personages, in whose *deeds the* memory of shamanic prestige was recognized, some scholars have added the names of Parmenides, Empedocles and Pythagoras. Already H. Diels had already compared the mystical journey described by Parmenides in his poem with the ecstatic journeys of the Siberian shamans.⁴⁸ Meuli takes up the subject and brings Parmenides' vision closer to the poetry

⁴⁵ Rohde, op. cit. , II, 94 ff. with the sources (spec. Plinius, Naturalis Historia, VII, 1 74). Cf. Dodds, op. cit. , p. 141 and n. 39, with other examples of disappearances and appearances, e.g. Sophocles (Electra, 62 ff.), who under the influence of his friend Herodotus rationalizes a mythical tradition.

⁴⁶ See sources cited by Rohde, II, pp. 96 ff. ; Guthrie, p. 197, n. 1; Burkert, op. cit. , p. 1 28. Cf. and Marcel Detienne, Les maîtres de vérité, pp. 1 29 et seq.

⁴⁷ Sources and bibliography in Burkert, p. 129.

48 H. Diels, *Parmenides' Lehrgedicht*, Berlin, 1877, pp. 14 ff.

shamanic.⁴⁹ More recently still, and with particular arguments, Morisson, Burkert and Guthrie have compared Parmenides to a shaman.⁵⁰

As for Empedocles, Dodds writes that his fragments represent "the only first-hand source from which we can still form some notion of what a Greek shaman really was; he was the last specimen of a species which, at his death, was dying out in the Greek world while still flourishing elsewhere" (*op. cit.*, p. 145). This interpretation was rejected by Charles H. Khan: "Empedocles' soul does not leave the body like that of Hermotimus and Epimenides. He did not ride on an arrow like Abaris, he did not appear in the form of a raven like Aristaeus. You never see him in two places at *the* same time, and he does not descend into Hell like Orpheus and Pythagoras."⁵¹

Dodds considers Pythagoras *a greater Greek shaman*, who no doubt drew theoretical conclusions from his ecstatic experiences and consequently believed in metempsychosis (*op. cit.*, pp. 143 ff.). But it is Burkert, in particular, who has subjected all the sources concerning the legend of Pythagoras to a rigorous analysis, showing that the main traditions can be categorized under the same mythical-ritual scenario characteristic of the fabulous characters we have reviewed above.⁵² Indeed, the legends of Pythagoras allude to his relations with gods and spirits⁵³, his mastery over animals (Burkert, *op. cit.*, pp. 118 ff.), his presence in several places at the same time (*ibid.*, p. 133). Burkert explains Pythagoras' famous "golden shoulder" as a shamanic initiation (*ibid.*, p. 134). It is well known that

⁴⁹ Meuli, "Scythica", pp. 171 ff.

⁵⁰ J. S. Morisson, "Parmenides and Er" (Journal of Hellenic Studies, 15, 1955, pp. 59-68), spec. p. 59; Burkert, *op. cit.* pp. 256 ff.; W. K. Guthrie, A History of Greek Philosophy, vol. II, Cambridge, 1965, pp. 11 ff. See also Marcel Detienne, Les maîtres de vérité, pp. 139 ff. and the bibliography given in note 14.

⁵¹ Charles H. Khan, "Religion and Natural Philosophy in Empedocles Doctrine of the Soul" (Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, 42, 1960, pp. 3-35), especially pp. 30 ff. ("Empedocles among the Shamans").

⁵² Cf. Weisheit und Wissenschaft, pp. 118 ff., the list of miraculous legends concerning Pythagoras, with sources and recent bibliography.

⁵³ Cf. the documentation in Burkert, *op. cit.*, pp. 118 ff.; see also pp. 163 ff.

cousin that during their initiation Siberian shamans are considered to have their organs renewed and their bones sometimes bound with iron. 54 Pythagoras's Pythagoras's Peregrinations bring him closer to Epimenides and Empedocles who

themselves are for Burkert a kind of "shamans" (p. 135).

Finally, the catabasis of Pythagoras (see above, p. 33) constitutes another shamanistic element (Burkert, pp. 136 ff.). Hieronimus of Rhodes tells that Pythagoras descended into Hades and there saw the souls of Homer and Hesiod atoning for all that they had spoken evil of the gods.⁵⁵

Greek shamanism

We have discussed the question of Greek shamanism elsewhere.⁵⁶ For our discussion it suffices to recall that some authors (first and foremost Dodds) explain the diffusion of shamanic techniques and mythologies by the contact of the Greek colonies of the Hellespont and the Black Sea with Iranian (i.e. Scythian) populations. But Karl Meuli, who first shed light on the shamanic structure of ancient Scythian customs and showed their reflection in Greek traditions, also identified shamanic elements in epic poetry

Greek.⁵⁷ Burkert considers the *goesul* to be the authentic Greek shaman because he is related to the cult of the dead.⁵⁸ Finally, very recently, E. H. S. Butterworth tries to find the shamanism in archaic Greece: he assumes that at least three of the most important clan cultures of mainland Greece in the sec. XIV-XIII B.C. originated in "shamanism".⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Cf. Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, p. 46.

⁵⁵ Fr. 42 (ed Wehrli); cf. Burkert, p. 82, n. 32 and p. 136.

⁵⁶ See Mircea Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, pp. 305 ff. ; cf. Marcel Detienne, *La notion de daimon*, pp. 81 ff.; Alois Closs, "Der Schamanismus bei den Indo-europäern" (*Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft und Kulturkunde, Gedenkschrift für Wilhelm Brandenstein*, Innsbruck, 1968, pp. 289-302), spec. 296-297.

⁵⁷ Meuli, "Scythica", pp. 164 ff. ; contra, Dodds, *op. cit.* , 164, n. 47.

⁵⁸ Burkert, "Gols. Zum Griechischen "Schamanismus"" , pp. 43 ff.

⁵⁹ E. A. S. Butterworth, *Some trace of the pre-Olympian World in Greek Literature and Myth*, Berlin, 1966, pp. 135-173; Jack Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks*,

pp. 247 ff. We have examined the most recent literature on shamanism in an article in the forthcoming *History of Religion*.

One of the difficulties is the many different meanings we are willing to give to the terms "shaman" and "shaman". "shamanism". *Stricto sensu*, shamanism is par excellence a Siberian and Central Asian religious phenomenon, but it is also found elsewhere (North and South America, Indonesia, Oceania, etc.). It is not our purpose here to repeat the analysis and material of our book *Le chamanisme*. Suffice it to recall that initiation involves the breaking of the body, the renewal of organs and viscera, and ritual death followed by resurrection, experienced by the future shaman as a descent into Hell (sometimes accompanied by an ascent into heaven). The shaman is an ecstatic par excellence. Now, in archaic and traditional religions, ecstasy signifies the soul's ascent to heaven or wandering on earth, or, finally, the descent into the netherworld, among the dead.

The shaman undertakes such ecstatic journeys: 1) to meet face to face with the celestial god and present him with offerings on behalf of the community; 2) to search for the soul of a person supposedly lost far from his body or abducted by demons; 3) to lead a dead soul to its new home; 4) in the srrrşit, in order to enrich his knowledge by trading with higher Beings.

To prepare for his ecstatic journeys, the shaman must dress in his ritual costume, drum (or play a specific instrument.) During ecstasy he is

able to transform himself into a wild animal and fight other shamans under this embellishment. Thanks to his ability to travel to supernatural worlds and to see superhuman beings (gods, demons, spirits of the dead, etc.), the shaman made a decisive contribution to *our knowledge of death*. It is probable that a large number of features of "funerary geography", as well as a number of themes in the mythology of death, are the result of the shaman's ecstatic experiences. It is equally probable that a large number of the "themes" and epic motifs are, in the last analysis, of origin

ecstatic, in the sense that they are borrowed from the stories of the shamans, narrating their journeys and adventures in superhuman worlds.

in the light of these few clarifications, it is obvious that certain

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more or less fabulous sonnets that we have reviewed — Orpheus, Abaris , Aristeas, Aristeas, Hermotimus, even Pythagoras and

Panenides — shows distinctly shamanistic features. But what Herodotus relates about Zalmoxis does not fit at all into the system of shamanistic or shamanizing mythologies, beliefs and techniques. On the contrary, as we have seen above, the most characteristic elements of his cult (*andreon* and banquets, concealment "in the underground dwelling" and epiphany after four years, "immortalization" of the soul and the teaching of a happy existence in another world), bring Zalmoxis closer to the Mysteries.

Zalmoxis, ecstasy and immortality

However, this does not necessarily imply the absence of shamanic ideas, thenic or behavior in the Getao-Dacians. Like all Thracians, the Getae also knew ecstasy. Strabo (VII, 33) reports, according to Poseidonius, that the Mysians, in virtue of their religions, abstain from all *cam-* food, contenting themselves with honey, milk, and cheese, and for this reason they are called at the same time "those who fear *the* God" (*theosebeis*) and "those who walk in smoke" (*kapnobatai*)⁶⁰- This information is probably also valid for the Getae. As for *the* terms *theosebeis* and *kapno batai* they actually designate certain religious persons and not the whole people. It is probable that the expression "smoke walkers"

refers to an ecstasy provoked by the smoke of the scepter, a means known to the Scythians⁶¹ and to the Thracians (if we interpret a passage from Pomponius Mela in this sense)⁶²- in this case *the kapnobats* would be dancers and Mysian and Gethian sorcerers (shamans), who used hemp smoke to induce ecstatic trances.

We will come back later on these specialists of the sacred attested in Dacia. But *the kapnobatai* are not mentioned in connection with Zalmoxis, and nothing authorizes us to suppose that a

⁶⁰ Vasile Pârvan, *Getica*. A Protohistory of Dacia, Bucharest, 1926, p. 162, translates *kapnobatai* as "those who walk through the clouds", but the meaning is "walkers through the smoke", cf. also Coman, *op. cit.*, p. 10 06.

⁶¹ Herodotus, IV, 73; Meuli, *op. cit.* , pp. 1 22 ff. ; Eliade, *Le Chamanisme*, pp. 3 10 and unnn.

⁶² Pomponius Mela, II, 21; cf. Rohde, *Psyche*, II, p. 1 7 and note 1.

such a 'shamanizing' practice was part of the cult of Zal moxis. According to Rohde and Meuli, there has been much commentary on a report by Polyaeus (*Stratagemata*, VII, 22) concerning Kosingas, king of the Thracian tribes Kebrenoi and Sykaiboai, who was also high priest of Hera: when his subjects became recalcitrant, Kosingas threatened to ascend to heaven on a wooden ladder to complain about their behavior.⁶³ The ritual ascent to heaven with the aid of a ladder is typically shamanic, but the symbolism of the ladder is also attested in other religions of the Ancient Near East and the Medite ranea.⁶⁴ Yet Polyaeus' information is valuable for other reasons as well. As we shall see, according to Strabo, Zalmoxis – presented as a kind of high priest – persuaded the king to take him as an associate in government, founding an institution that was maintained in Dacia. (As for the high priest Comosicus, he became king himself on the death of the sovereign, combining the two functions.) But, according to Suidas, Hera would **be the** Greek version of Zal moxis⁶⁵, and in Late Antiquity the goddess Hera was interpreted as the personification of the atmosphere⁶⁶- Coman sees in this fact an argument in favor of the celestial conception of Zalmoxis.⁶⁷ What is certain is that in the episode highly rationalized by Polyaeus, an ancient Thracian rite of ecstatic ("shamanic?") ascent to Heaven is deciphered.

In conclusion, the examples we have briefly analyzed do not authorize us to place Zalmoxis among the shamans. But our request was not in vain. For a great number of ancient authors constantly compare Zalmoxis with historical or fabulous characters, characterized by certain facts or special qualities: the descent into hell, initiation, ecstasy, shamanic trance, eschatological doctrines in connection with "immortality" or metempsychosis. Zalmoxis indeed belongs to this religious and cultural, peculiar especially to the Thracians and related Balkan and Carpatho-Danian populations. There is some truth in the clichés so popular in Greece after Herodotus, which placed Zalmoxis alongside

⁶³ See further examples in A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II, pp. 1 29 ff.

⁶⁴ Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, pp. 378 and un.

⁶⁵ Suidas, s. v. 'Zalmoxis. Diodorus (I, 94) states that Zalmoxis attributed to himself the power of communicating with Hestia.

⁶⁶ Salustius and Firmicus Matemicus quoted by Coman, op. cit. , p. 95 , n. 2.

⁶⁷ Coman, *ibid.* , p. 95.

by Pythagoras, Orpheus, Musaios and later by Zoroaster, by "Egyptian sages" or Druids. All of these figures were known to have ecstatic experiences and capable of revealing mysteries concerning the human soul and its survival. Even the information of Mnases of Patara, a pupil of Heracosthenes, that the Getae worshipped Kronos and called him Zalmoxis, can be interpreted in the same sense. For Kronos was lord in the Isles of the Blissful, Wlwhere only pious men are admitted.⁶⁸ In other words, it is always a question of a blissful post-existence in another world which does not belong to profane geography, but which is not even the Hell of the Infernes into which the shadows of the uninitiated go. Even with this fragmentary and partly contradictory information, one can see how the cult of Zalmoxis was centered on an experience that we could call "eschatological", because it was likely to ensure a happy post-existence for the initiate in a paradisiacal world beyond.

The very fact that Zalmoxis was put in relation to Kronos or with certain specialists of ecstasy (ecstasy being regarded as a provisional death, as the soul is supposed to leave the body) paved the way for the modern interpretation of Zalmoxis as god of the dead.

Etymologies and history of religions

If Zalmoxis has been interpreted as a chthonic-funerary god, it is mainly because of the "subterranean dwelling" to which he had retreated and because, also according to Herodotus, the Getae were to meet him after the Moor. But even the etymology of his name seems to confirm

this chthonic funerary function. Indeed, antiquity knew, alongside the form **Zalmoxis** (Herodotus, Plato, Diodorus, Apuleius, Iordanes, Porphirios, etc.), the variant **Zamolxis** (Lucian, Diogenes Laertios, etc.).⁶⁹ It is obvious that Wla from forms derived

⁶⁸ Cf. Pfister, "Zalmoxis", p. 11-16. Already Pindar, Olympiad, II, 68 ff. Cf. Diogenes Laertios, VII, I, 2

69 G. I. Kazarow, "Zalmoxis" (*Klio*, XI, 1912, pp. 35-40), pp. 363--64 Russu, op. cit., p. 68.

by metastasis from the other. Porphirios (*Vita Pyth .*, 14) had tried to explain the variant *Zalmoxis* by the Thracian word *zalmos*, "skin, fur", which is in accord with an anecdote that, at his birth, a bear's fur was thrown over Zalmoxis.⁷⁰ Some authors (Rohde, Deubner, Kazarow, etc.) have deduced from this etymology that Zalmoxis was originally a '*Berrengott*'.⁷¹ Recent hypothesis reprised by Rhys Carpenter who places the god get among other *sleeping bears*⁷².

The other etymology interprets the name from the theme *zamol*, for which M. Praetorius (1688) had already proposed the meaning of *earth*. In 1852, Cless compared Zalmoxis to the Lithuanian god of the earth, Zameluks (Ziameluks).⁷³

But only P. Kretschmer in 1935 elaborated the linguistic demonstration, discussing in parallels '*Zemelo* (from the Graeco-Frigian funerary inscriptions from Asia Minor), the Thracian *zemelen* (earth) and Semele ("Earth goddess", mother of Dionysos), terms deriving from the radical i.-e. *g ' *hemel-*, "earth, soil, belonging to the earth" (cf. also Avestic *zam*, earth, Lithuanian *zeme*, Latvian *zeme*, Old Pru sacul *same*, *semme*, Old Slavic *zemlja*, earth, land)⁷⁴- Kretschmer interprets the final part of the name (*Zamol*)-*xis* (which he also finds in the names of the kings Lipoxaïs, Arpoxaïs and Colaxaïs ;

⁷⁰ After recalling that at Cyzicos, near Hellespont, it is said that the doice of the child God had been transformed into bear cubs, as it happened and in Crete (Zeus, I, p. 112, n. 3 and 5), A. B. Cook concludes that Zalmoxis was the Thracian appellation of the new-born Zeus (ibid., II, I, p. 230).

⁷¹ Cf. the references in C. Clemen, "Zalmoxis", pp. 65 and unn. ; Russu, p. 88.

⁷² Rhys Carpenter, Folk-tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1946, pp. 113 ff. Cf. and E. Roux, Le probleme des Argo nautes, Paris, 1949, p. 255.

⁷³ Cf. Russu, p. 88, mentions the opinions of Cless, Rhousopolous, Bessel and Tomaschek. For Zameluks, Zeminink.e, Zemyna and other names of Lithuanian deities, cf. H. Usener, Gotternamen , Leipzig, 1920, pp. 104 ff.

⁷⁴ P. Kretschmer, "Zum Balkanskythischen" (Glotta, XXIV, 1935, pp. 1-56), pp. 45 et unn. ; cf. Russu, op . cit., pp. 88 et seq. ; id. Limba tracodacilor, 2nd ed. , Bucharest, 1967, p. 128 ; cf. also Alfond Nehring, "Studien zur inclogermanischen Kultur und Umeimat" "Die Indo-gennanen und Genanenfrage", in Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik, IV, Salzburg-Leipzig, 1936, pp. 7-229), pp. 214 ff. ; F. R. Schroeder, "S infjotli" (Homage a Georges Dumezil, Bruxelles, 1960, pp. 192-200), pp. 195 and unn. (Zalmoxis would be the Thracian name of the god who

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arrived in Greece as Dionysos.)

Herodotus, IV, 5-6) through the *-xais*, "lord, prince, king". The signification of *Zalmoxis* would therefore be "King, Lord of men".

But the juxtaposition of a Scythic theme and a Thracian vocabulary is hardly admissible. Moreover, it has been rightly noted that *Zal moxis* cannot have a radical element *x(-a)is* in the final part, but a simple suffix derivativ *z-(x)* "whose value or nuance cannot be specified"⁷⁵. Rejecting Kretschmer's interpretation

- "King, lord of men" — Russu also refutes Rohde's hypothesis, adopted by Clemen⁷⁶ among others, that Zalmoxis was originally a lord of the dead. For the Thracian scholar, the semantic value of the *zamol-* theme is "earth" and "earth power" and Zalmoxis cannot be anything other than "God of the earth", a personification of the source of life and the maternal womb to which men return.¹¹

But whatever we may think of this etymology, we may wonder to what extent it helps us to grasp the structure of the god. No ancient source alludes to chthonic ceremonies in honor of Zalmoxis.⁷⁸ The documents at our disposal highlight the role of Zalmoxis in obtaining the "immortalization" of the soul. True, it is believed that the initiators were to meet Zalmoxis after death, but this does not mean that the god is sovereign over the dead. The disappearance of Zalmoxis, his "death", is equivalent to a *descensus ad inferos* in view of an initiation (cf. above, p. 43). Following the divine model "one dies"

¹⁵ Russu, "The Religion of the Geto-Dacians", p. 92, cf. also D. Detschew, *Die Thralcischen Sprachresre*, Vienna, 1957, s. v. Zalmoxis. On the Thracian language, see in addition to the already cited paths of Decev and Russu, D. Decev, *Charakteristik der thralcischen Sprache* (Sophia, 1952 : German text, pp. 63-119), V. Pisani, "Libri recenti sulla lingua dei Traci" (Paideia, XVI, 1961, pp. 238-258; cf. also the reply of I. I. Russu, *Limba traco-dacilor*, 2nd ed., pp. 223-230) and the critical analyses of E. Lozovan, "Onomastique roumaine et balkanique" (*Revue Internationale d'Onomastique*, XVI, 1965, pp. 225-236) spec. pp. 230 ff.

⁷⁶ Clemen, "Zalmoxis", p. 58.

⁷⁷ Russu, "Religia", p. 93.

⁷⁸ Clemen (p. 60) compared the sacrifice of the messenger with sacrifices for the sake of the harvest. It will be seen below why the approximation is not required. Already Tomaschek had interpreted the appearance and disappearance of Zalmoxis in an "agricultural" sense; cf. *Die alten Thraker*, II, (Sitzungsbericht Akad. Wien, 1930, 1893, II, pp. 1-70), pp. 63-67.

ritual precisely to obtain non-death, the "immortality" on which the sources insist.

This is also true, moreover, for other Greek-Oriental Mysteries; their possible chthonic-agrære or rare fune "origins" do not explain the structure of the initiations themselves. We must carefully distinguish the deities of the Mysteries from those of the dead. The gods and goddesses of the dead reign over a multitude of the dead, whereas the deities of the Mysteries admit only initiates. Moreover, we are dealing with two different eschatological geographies; the glittering realms that await initiates into the Mysteries are not to be confused with the subterranean Underworlds where the dead gather.

Zalmoxis and Freyr

From Jacob Grim to Neckel and Jan de Vries, some Germanicists have approached the occult theme of Zalmoxis to the death of Freyr, god of fertility.

Sweden; he died of an illness and was laid on a hill. But Freyr's death was kept secret. The hill was dug three openings through which gold, silver and iron were poured for three years. Saxo (*Gesta Danorum* V, 142) recounts a similar episode in connection with the Danish king Frotho: on his death he was embalmed, imprisoned in a cart and driven for three years up and down the country, so that the people would not hear the news. Frotho is known to be just another name for Freyr.^{so}

Neckel saw in this legend an influence of the Thracian myth of Zalmoxis, through the Goths, on the North Germans. Jan de Vries believes that it is rather a matter of ideas shared by Thracians and Germans, with the latter having their ultimate source in agricultural mythology and mysticism.⁸¹

79 Cf. Jacob Grimm, *Ueber Iordanes und die Geten*, Berlin, 1846; G. Neckel, *Die Ue'berlieferungen vom Gotte Baider*, Dortmund, 1920, p. 119; F. R. Schroeder, *Germanentum und Hellenismus*, Heidelberg, 192A, p. 64; Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, 2nd ed. Berlin, 1956-1957, II, pp. 182 ff.

^{so} Jan de Vries, op. cit., II, pp. 185 ff.

st Jan de Vries, II, p. 1 83 .

The comparison is not necessary: it could only be made because Zalmoxis was considered the god of the earth and of agriculture, and therefore analogous to Freyr. But the Norse documents present a mythical king, whose corpse is hidden and whose death is kept secret for three years for political and economic reasons, and do not speak of his "return" to earth ; whereas the occultation of Zalmoxis aims at establishing a mystery and, as we have seen, fits into a completely different mythical-ritual scenario. Neither the hypotheses favored by certain etymologies, nor the comparisons with Freyr-type divinities, are able to impose chthonic-funerary or agrarian values. Whatever its prehistory, Zalmoxis as worshipped by the Geto-Dacians was neither a god of the earth, nor of agricultural fertility, nor a god of the dead.

Sacrifices of the messenger

The human sacrifice of which Herodotus speaks (IV, 94) has also been interpreted in a chthonic-funerary sense – and only he, by the way. The text is, however, quite clear: "Every four years they cast lots, and always the one of them on whom the lot falls they send with a solemn offering to Zalmoxis, entrusting to him each time all their needs. The sending of the soil is done in this way: some of them, sitting in a row, hold up three spears with their points, and others, grasping the one sent to Zalmoxis by the hands and feet, swing him several times, and then, winding him, throw him up over the points of the spears. If the man is pierced in the fall, they remain confident that the god is benevolent to them; if he does not die then they blame him on the ground, blaspheming him as an evil man; after they have blamed him, they send another. Whatever they have to ask, they say to the soil while he is still alive" (Trans. Adelina Piatkovski and Felicia-Vanț-Ștef.)

Human sacrifice is attested in the history of religions, both among paleo-cultivators and certain peoples with a more complex civilization (e.g. Mesopotamians, Indo-Europeans, Aztecs, etc.).

Such sacrifices are offered for a variety of reasons: to ensure the fertility of the land (cf.

in India); to strengthen the life of the gods (as with the Aztecs); to re-establish contact with mythical ancestors or recently deceased relatives; or to repeat the primordial sacrifice of which the myths speak and, from there, to ensure the continuity of life and society (cf. the example of the Hainuwele tribe).

in another chapter of this book we will have the opportunity to study

sacrifices made to "animate" a construction (or in general an "operl"): in this case, the sacrifice realizes the transfer into another "body" of life and of the virtues of the righteous virtues of the vic time (see chapter V).

It is obvious that the sacrifice of which Herodotus speaks does not fall into any of these types. The essential element is the sending of a messenger appointed by lot and charged with communicating to Zalmoxis "what they desire in every circumstance".

rare". U l t i m a t e l y , sacrifice makes communication possible a mes aj , in other words, *it reactualizes the direct links between the Getae and their god.*

Now, this type of human sacrifice is known especially in South-East Asia and the circumpacific regions, where slaves are sacrificed in order to transmit to the Ancestor the wishes of his descendants. In the form it takes in South-East Asia and the circumpacific, the slave-messenger sacrifice is not a phase among the oldest. behind this mythical-ritual scenario is decipherzl an older and much more widespread idea in the world, plus the hope of being able to reactualize the primordial situation (i.e. mythical), when people could communicate directly and *concretely* with their gods. According to two myths, this situation would have come to an end as a result of a certain event, which forced the gods to retreat into the heavens and cut off direct communication with the Earth and with humans. (The cosmic mountain was flattened, the tree or the vine that linked the Earth to Heaven was cut, etc.)⁸²

⁸² On this mythical motif see M. Eliade, "La nostalgie du Paradis dans les traditions primitives" (Mythes, rlves et mysteres, Paris, 1957, pp. 80-98); id. "

Australian Religion: An Introduction. Part. II" (*History of Religion*, 6, 1967, pp. 208-235), pp. 210 ff. ; id. *The Quest*, Chicago, University Press, 1969, pp. 82 ff.

In this category of rituals we must place the sacrifice of the get messenger. It is not a slave or a warrior as in Asia and Oceania, but a free man, and, if the no astral interpretation is correct, an "initiate" into the Mysteries founded by Zalmoxis. There are in classical antiquity other examples illustrating the custom of sending messengers or letters to the gods. 83 An even more striking parallel is the ecstatic journey of the Altaic shaman to the seventh or ninth heaven, to convey to B ai- Ulgan the tribe's petitions and to receive the god's blessing and assurance that he would watch over the welfare of his faithful. 84 The journey to heaven is made in "ecstasy", i.e. in spirit: only the shaman's soul undertakes the celestial journey. But according to certain mythological traditions, *in the beginning, in illo tempore*, the encounter with the god was made in flesh and blood.

Every four years, the Getae would send Zalmoxis the "soul" of a messenger to re-establish contact with him and convey their wishes. This ritual renewal of a once **concrete** relationship between Zalmoxis and his worshippers is tantamount to the symbolic or sacramental **presence** of certain divinities at the banquets. in one case as in another, "the situation The "original time" – the time when the cult was founded – is recovered. Believers can again communicate with their god as a group. The fact that a messenger is sent every four years is a clear indication that the sacrifice is related to Zalmoxis' years of occultation in his 'underground dwelling'. The reappearance of the god in the myth corresponds in the ritual to the reestablishment of concrete communications (personal "wishes") between Zalmoxis and his believers. The sacrifice and the sending of a messenger constitute in a certain way the symbolic (because ritual) repetition of the founding of the cult; in other words, it reactualizes the epiphany of Zalmoxis after the three years of occultation with all that it implies, especially the assurance of immortality and the beatitude of the soul. (Although, as I have already noted,

⁸³ Pfister, "Zalmoxis", pp. 11–14 ff.

⁸⁴ M. Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, 2nd ed. 1968, pp. 160 ff.

the ritual scenario that Herodotus has given us is certainly incomplete⁸⁵ ; cf. page 38.)

Gebeleizis

After first citing the name of Zalmoxis, Herodotus adds: "some of them (i.e. the Getae) call the same divine being (*daimon*) Gebeleizis" (IV, 94) . This is the first and last time the name of this god appears in literature. No author spoke of Gebeleizis after Herodotus. Dej a Tomaschek⁸⁶ had recognized in this name a parallel with the southern Thracian god Zbelsurdos, Zbeltiurdos⁸⁷, and it is possible that the original form of the Getaean may have been *Zebeleizis⁸⁸. Also Tomaschek had identified in Zbelsurdos the theme *z(i)bel and the radical i.-e.* g' heib, "light, lightning".⁸⁹ The second part of the name, *-surdos*, would derive from the root **suer*, "to roar, to roar" . Therefore, Zbelsurdos like *Zebeleizis (Gebeleizis) would be storm gods, comparable to Donar, Taranis , Perkfulas, Perunu and Parjaniya.⁹⁰

8♦ Pârvan saw in the fact that the messenger was sacrificed in mid-air a supli mental proof of the celestial structure of Zalmoxis (cf. Getica, pp. 151 ff.). The argument has some merit. **in the** Arctic and central Asian regions, where the There are also sacrifices to celestial and chthonic divinities, the former are performed on high places and the offerings are placed in trees; cf. Mircea Eliade, *Traitl d'histoire des religions* (new edition, 1968), p. 63. Similarly, in ancient Greece, in the cult of the Olympians, the animal was sacrificed with its neck raised on a high altar.

86 W. Tomaschek, *Die a/ten Thralcer*, II, p. 62.

87 On Zbeltiurdos, cf. G. Seure, "Les images thraces de Zeu s Keraunos; Zbelsurdos, Gebeleizis, Zalmoxis" (*Revue des Etudes grecques*, XXVI, 1913, pp. 225-261); A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II, 1, pp. 81 7-824; G. I. Kazarow, *Real-Ency clopaedie*, IV, A (1936), pp. 51 6-5 17; cf. also Russu, op. cit., p. 1 07 , n. 1.

aa Cf. Russu, op. cit. , p. 106.

89 Tomaschek, op. cit. , p. 61; cf. Deev, *Charakteristik der thrakischen Sprache*, pp. 73--81 .

90 Russu, p. 1 09; cf. Eliade, *Traite d'histoire des religions*, pp. 79 ff., 107-1 11 (bibliography). See the recent bibliography in Eliade, *Histoire des Cro yances*, II, pp. 447 ff. ; C. Poghirc has given a new interpretation to the theonym Gebeleizis ; cf. " Consid♦rations philologiques el linguistiques sur G♦b♦l♦izis" (*Academia Litterarum Bulgarica, Thracia II, Serdica*, 1974, pp. 357-360) – The author proposes the form *Nebeizis ; the first part of the name is close to the Greek term *nephele* (Lat. *nebula*, Old Anglo-Saxon *nifon*), meaning: cloud, storm

sky, and the second part means "god" (cf. p. 359).

Starting from Herodotus' statement, Kretschmer⁹¹ endeavors to link Zalmoxis etymologically to Gebeleizis on the basis of the equivalence of the themes **zemele/gebele**, which implies equivalence of **zamol-** and **gebele** bases. finally, K. retschmer sees in Gebeleizis the name Thracian and in Zalmoxis the hybrid name scito Thracian of the same god.⁹² K. retschmer's etymology was rejected by Russu⁹³ and other scholars, but it had the merit of explaining Herodotus' testimony that the Getae believed in a single god called by some Zalmoxis, by others Gebeleizis. The eminent archaeologist Vasile Pârvan did not doubt the veracity of the testimony

of Herodotus and Jean Coman even spoke of a daco-get monotheism.⁹⁴ Indeed, after having recounted the sacrifice of a messenger

of Zalmoxis, Herodotus adds: "When it thunders and flashes, the Thracians of whom it is spoken shoot their arrows upward into the sky and threaten their god, for they recognize no other god but their own." This passage, which is unfortunately inaccurate, has provoked long discussion. C. Daicoviciu understands it in this sense: "the Thracians themselves, when thunder and lightning flash, shoot their bows in the sky, threatening the god, for they believe that (the thunder and lightning) is no other god than theirs", i.e. Gebeleizis.⁹⁵

In spite of Herodotus' testimony (expressed, it is true, with astonishing grammatical and stylistic carelessness), it is hard to look at them

Zalmoxis and Gebeleizis as one and the same god.⁹⁶ Their structures are different, their cult is not at all similar. Gebeleizis is a storm god, or rather an ancient sky god (if

⁹¹ P. Kretschmer, "Zum Balkanskythischen", pp. 47 ff.

⁹² Kretschmer, op. cit. , p. 48.

⁹³ Cf. Rus su , op. cit. , pp. 1 08 et seq.

⁹⁴ P"arvan, Getica, pp. 151 ff. ; cf. J. Coman, "Zalmoxis", p. 85 ("pre monotheism"); id., "Zalmoxis et Orph♦e" (Serta Kazaroviana, I, Sofia, 1950), p. 183; cf. R. Pettazzoni, "Il " monoteismo" dei Geti" (Studia in honorem Acad. D. Decev, Sofia, pp. 649--655). The problem of "Geto-Dacian monotheism" belongs to the history of ideas in modern Romania and not to the history of religions (see p. 85 below). However, it should not be forgotten that Mars was popular among the Geti (cf. Vergilius, Aeneid, **il**, 35; Ovid, Tristia, V, 3, 22, etc.).

⁹⁵ C. Daicoviciu, "Herodotus and the alleged monotheism of the Getites" (Apulum, Alba Iulia, 1944--45, pp. 90-93).

⁹⁶ As, for example, Seure, "Les images thraces", p. 255 and Kazarow, "Zalmoxis", p. 356. For Kazarow, Zalmoxis was a god of Hell (ibid., p. 357).

would be if we follow Walde-Pokomy and Decev , who derive his name from the radical i.-e. **guer*, "to shine")⁹⁷- The only rite that we know of, archery during storms, is also found among primitive populations such as the Semang of Malacca or the Yurakare of Bolivia, as well as among those of Asia. But the meaning of such rituals is not the same everywhere. At the most archaic level where it is attested — Yurakare, Semang, Sakai — archery is aimed

the god of the storm and threaten him.⁹⁸ in Asia they are no longer threatened

gods of the sky or of the atmosphere but demons who are considered guilty of causing storms. Also in ancient China, on the occasion of eclipses, arrows were fired at the Celestial Wolf in order to reconstitute ritual space and restore order to a world compromised by darkness.⁹⁹ On monuments, Mithras is depicted shooting arrows at the clouds¹⁰⁰ , as was Indra¹⁰¹ , and similar rites are attested among the Caunans (Herodotus, I, 172) and survive in modern Bulgaria¹⁰² .

In the light of these parallels, the question arises whether Herodotus got the meaning of the ritual right. In all likelihood, not the god

(Gebeleizis) was threatened, but the demonic powers manifested in the clouds. In other words, it is a positive cultic act: the god of lightning is imitated and indirectly helped by shooting arrows against the demons of darkness.

Be that as it may, we have to resign ourselves to the fact that we cannot reconstruct the structure, function and "history" of Gebeleizis with the help of an ethiology and on the basis of a single document. The fact that Gebeleizis is no longer mentioned after Herodotus does not necessarily imply that the cult has disappeared. It would be futile to deplore the paucity of documents, but it should not be lost sight of the fact that information on the ideas and practices of the

V1 A Walde — J. Pokomy, *Vergleichendes Worterbuch der indo-germanischen Sprachen*, Berlin, 1-ii, 1927-1932, p. 643; Decev, *Characteristik*, pp. 73, 81.

⁹⁸ C f. M. Eliade, "Notes on the symbolism of the arw", pp. 465-466.

⁹⁹ Marcel Granet, *Dances et legendes de la Chine ancienne*, Paris, 1926, I,

p. 233, ni. ; cf. 390, note II, pp. 538 ff.

¹⁰⁰ F. Saxl, *Mithras*, Berlin, 1931, p. 76; G. Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans*, pp. 44 ff (trans. fr. *Les religions de l' Iran*, pp. 62 ff).

¹⁰¹ H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (3. Auflage, Berlin, 1923), pp. 491 --494.

¹⁰² Kazarow, "Zalmoxis", pp. 356 ff.

The religious practices of the Geto-Dacians are fragmentary and approximate. The few valid documents handed down by ancient authors refer only to certain aspects of the religion, ignoring the rest – and we are forced to imagine what this mysterious leftover might constitute. To return to Gebeleizis, and bearing in mind the destiny of the celestial and storm gods, several hypotheses may be considered to explain the silence of the sources. First of all, Gebeleizis may have undergone the process well known in the history of religions: from being a celestial god of the Dyaus type, he became a god of the storm and, consequently, also of fertility like Zeus or Ba'al.

indeed, with rare exceptions, a celestial god becomes *deus otiosus* and eventually disappears from the cult, unless he is "reactualized" into a storm god, which seems to have happened with Gebeleizis. And because storm gods play a significant role in Indo-European as well as in Asian and Ranaean religions, it is not necessary to assume the disappearance of Gebeleizis. One can imagine either his aliliation to another deity or his survival under another name. The fact that the folk mythology of the prophet Elijah contains a large number of elements of a storm god at least proves that Gebeleizis was still active at the time of the Christianization of Dacia, whatever his name may have been at that time.

It can also be admitted that, at least beginning with a certain epoch, a religious syncretism, encouraged by the high priest and the sacer dotal class, eventually ended by confusing Zalmoxis with Gebeleizis. Be that as it may, it is important to remember that the Dacian sanctuaries at Sanizegetusa and Costești had no roof and that the large round sanctuary at S armizegetusa was dominated by celestial symbolism; moreover, the admirable "stone sun" of the sacred enclosure at Sanizegetusa confirms the uranosolar character of the Geto-Dacian religion in the Roman era. 103 We do not know which god or gods were worshipped in these sanctuaries, but because classical authors do not

¹⁰³ C. Daicoviciu, "Le probleme de l'etat et de la culture des Daces ♦ la lumiere des nouvelles recherches" (in: Nouvelles Etudes d'Histoire prsentes au xe Congres des sciences historiques, Bucharest, 1955 , pp. 121-1 37), pp. 126 ff. ;

Hardian Daicoviciu, "II Tempio-Calendario dacico di Sanizegetusa" (Dacia, N. Sr. IV, Bucureşti, 1960, pp. 23 1 – 254) ; id. Dacii, Bucharest, 1968, pp. 194 et seq. ; 210 et seq.

talking only about Zalmoxis one can conclude that in Roman times there was a Zalmoxis-Gebeleizis syncretism. If, as we think, Gebeleizis represents the ancient celestial god of the geto-dacians, patron of the aristocratic and military class, the "tarabostes" (whose name contains the element *-bostes*, from the radical i. -e.

* *bhO-s* "shining, bright")¹⁰⁴, and Zalmoxis "god of Mysteries", the master of initiation, the giver of immortality - the syncretism between these two gods was the work of the priestly class.

Zalmoxis and the priest-therapists

We have but a few documents about the Geto-Dacian priests and magician-therapists, but Plato tells us about them and his testimony is important. After recounting his meeting with one of the physicians of "the Thracian king Zalmoxis, who is said to have mastered the craft of making you immortal", Socrates continues: this Thracian doctor told him what he had learned "from our king who is also a god"; Zalmoxis, he says, teaches us that "just as we should not try to heal the eyes without healing the head, or the head without taking the body into account, so neither can the body be healed without the soul". For this reason, adds the Thracian therapist, "the cure for many diseases is unknown to Greek physicians, because they neglect the whole" (*Charmides*, 156 d, translated by Simina Noica). Under the literary cliché of the "barbarian wisdom" superior to Greek science, a doctrine analogous to Hippocratic integralism is revealed.¹⁰⁵ We must not forget that the reputation of the Geto-Dacian physicians was real and that it was maintained for centuries.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Walde-Pokomy, II, p. 122; I. L. Russu, *The Thraco-Dacian Language*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁵ Nothing can be deduced from possible connections between Hippocrates and Thracian traditions. Although the ancient biographers agree about Hippocrates' stay in northern Thrace and some modern authors observe that Books I and II of the *Epidemics* seem to be written in "Thracian Greek", no allusion to Thracian traditions is found in the Hippocratic Corpus; cf. G. Brătescu, *Hippocratism over*

~~the Centuries, Bucharest, 1968, pp. 55 ff.~~

¹⁰⁶ There is indeed a certain tradition about Zalmoxis iatros (cf. Tomaschek, "Die alten Thraker" , II, I, pp. 64 ff.), and, as Pârvan remarks

But Plato communicates some details of great value: the importance given to the "soul" by Zalmoxis who is at the same time king, king and therapist; the functional relationship between health preserved by a "total method" in which the soul plays the role decisively, and achieving immortality. to the extent that these details

reflect, even beyond a certain fabulism, real information about the "wisdom of the Getae", they confirm and complete Herodotus' testimony: in short, Zalmoxis is the god-therapist who is concerned above all with the human soul and its destiny. Plato introduces this new element: Zalmoxis is both god and king. The tradition is attested elsewhere among the Thracians: Rhesus, king and priest, was worshipped as a god by the initiates in his ministries.¹⁰⁷ Three main expressions of a religious system can be discerned here, whose roots probably extend back to Indo-European prehistory: 1) the identification, homologation or confusion between god, king and high priest; 2) the tendency to "deify" kings; 3) the importance of the high priest, whose authority, in principle inferior to that of the king, sometimes proves to be greater. We have a classic example of the first category in Strabo's historical-religious presentation of the Dacians. As for the "divinization" of kings, the phenomenon is too complex to be dealt with here.¹⁰⁸ Suffice it to mention a few Celtic parables. According to Tacitus (*Hist.*, V, c. 61), Mariccus, king of the Boii, was called *deus*, as was Conchobar, king of Ulster, who bore the title *dia talmái de*. There are also known

(*Getica*, p. 145), it is not by chance that Dioscurides, a Greek physician of the sec. I p. C.E., has endeavored to collect and record a large number of Daco-Gegetic names of medicinal plants (cf. Tomaschek, op. cit. pp. 22 ff. ; the most recent studies on Dioscurides are discussed by Russu. *Thraco-Dacian language*, pp. 43-47). On the medical knowledge and techniques of the Geto-Dacians, see also I. H. Crișan, "O trusă medicală descoperită la Grădi ștea Muncelului" (in : *Istoria Medicinei. Studii și cercetări*, București. 1957, pp. 45-56).

¹⁰¹ Muse's famous verses on the fate of her son in his drama Euripides, Rhesus (970-973), have been interpreted by some authors as referring to Zalmoxis; cf. A. A. D. Nock, 'The End of the Rhesus' (*The Classical Review*, XL 1 926, pp. 1 84-1 86) ; see also Ivan M. Linforth, *The Ans of Orpheus*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1 94 1 , pp. 60 ff. ; Jack Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks*, p. 375.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. the study of the problems in *La Regalia Sacra* (8th Congress International History of Religions, Leiden, 1 95 9).

other examples of Celtic kings named after gods.¹⁰⁹ Finally, the importance of the high priest and his political and social role on the king's side seem to characterize the Traco-Frygian¹¹⁰ and the Celts (where the druid was sometimes considered superior to the king¹¹¹), but the institution was also attested in archaic Greece¹¹² and it certainly existed in proto-Indo-European history¹¹³.

Zalmoxis and Deceneu

These relationships between god, king and high priest are fully emphasized by Strabo, who, as we know, follows Poseidonius. According to the author of *the Geography* (VII, 3, 5), Zalmoxis was the slave of Pythagoras, from whom he had learned "some knowledge of the heavens". Zalmoxis traveled to Egypt and also learned "many things" from the Egyptians. On his return to his homeland, Zalmoxis was sought after by the nobles and the people because he "unveiled in heaven". He finally persuaded the king to take him as his advisor to the government because he could even transmit the will of the gods. Although at first he was declared only a "priest of their most revered god", Zalmoxis later came to be considered a god himself. "Having withdrawn into a kind of cave inaccessible to others, he spent a long time there, seldom meeting with outsiders except the king and his servants. The king, when he saw that the people were more submissive to him than before, as to one who gives them commandments after

¹⁰⁹ Jan de Vries, *IA Religions des Celtes* (trans. L. Jospin, Paris, 1963), pp. 245 ff. On the 'king' get Zalmodegikos, who, in the 11th century B.C., had relations with the Greek colony of Histria, cf. D. M. Pippidi, *Contribuții la istoria veche a României*, (Bucharest, 1967), pp. 172 ff. (pp. 554-555 the summary in French).

¹¹⁰ Cf. R. Hennig, *Symbolae ad Asiae Minoris reges-sacerdotes* (1893); Charles Picard, *Ephese et Claros*, Paris, 1922, pp. 274 ff. On Vologaisus, high priest and king of the Bæasars, see Dio Cassius, LIV, 34, 5.

¹¹¹ Jan de Vries, *La Religion des Celtes*, pp. 217, 24.

¹¹² Cf. Ingrid Löffler, *Die Melampodie. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion des Inhalts* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, Heft 7, Meisenheim am Glan, 1963).

¹¹³ See the works of Dumézil, primarily *Mitra-Varuna*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1948, and *Ideologie tripartite des Indo-Européens*, Brussels, 1958.

at the urging of the gods, he gave him his full support. This custom has endured down to our own times; according to custom, there was always such a man to help the king's counselor, and among the Geti this man was even called a god. F'me and the mountain (i.e. "cave") was known as the sense, and so they call it. His name is Kogainon , like that of the river that flows by it."

Strabo adds that "when Burebista came to reign over the Goths, this honor was held by Deceneus. And the Pythagorean practice of abstaining from meat remained with them as a commandment given by Zalmoxis".

in another passage (VII, 3, 11) Strabo returns to the history of the Getae of his time, presenting especially the career of Burebista. "Burebista, a man of get," he writes, "taking in hand the reins of his nation, raised up a people overwhelmed by the needs of the wars, and so much did he direct them to certain habits that in a few years he established a great kingdom and brought under the rule of the Getae most of their neighbors. And even to the Romans he was to be feared, for he boldly crossed the Isthmus and plundered Thrace as far as Macedonia and Illyria. [... ..] To convince his people, he worked with Deceneus, a sorcerer who wandered through Egypt and taught the ancients.

many omens that he could divine the divine will. For a short time Decenius himself was considered to be filled with the divine breath, just as I said when I spoke of Zalmoxis." (Translation by Felicia Vanț-Ștef.)

As evidence of the Getae's complete obedience, Strabo relates that they were persuaded to pull up their vineyards and live without wine. Yet some rose up against Burebista, and he was overthrown before the Romans could send an expedition against him. 114

114 On Burebista see Em. Condurachi, "Burebista și orașele pontice" (Studii și Cercetări de istorie Veche, IV, 1953, pp. 515-523); M. Macrea, "Burebista și celții de la Dunărea de mijloc" (Studii și cercetări, VII, 1956, pp. 119-136); Radu Vulpe, "Les Getes de la rive gauche de Bas-Danube et les Romains" (Dacia, NS, IV, 1960, pp. 309-332), spec. pp. 310-315; H. Daicoviciu, Dacii, pp. 85-111. More recent works include: R. Vulpe, Așezări dacice în Muntenia,

Bucureşti, 1 96 ; H. Daicoviciu, Dacii de la Burebista a la cucerirea romană, Bucureşti, 1 966 ; I. H. Crişan, Burebista şi epoca sa (1 975). On the expansion of the Thracians and the Geto-Dacians, and their relations with the Scythians, see M. Dusek, "Die Thraker im Karpaten Gecken", in : Slovenska Archaeologia" 22, 1 974, pp. 36 1-428.

As can be seen, Strabo takes up certain details of the tradition transmitted by Herodotus, but modifies them and adds other information. Zalmoxis is prerendered as a slave of Pythagoras, yet it is not the doctrine of the immortality of the soul that he is said to have learned from his master but "some science of heaven", that is, the science of predicting events by the signs of the heavens. Strabo adds the journey in

Egypt, land of magic par excellence. Thanks to his astronomical knowledge and his magical and prophetic skills, Zalmoxis came to be associated with the king in the government. A high priest and prophet "of the most revered god in their land", Zalmoxis retired to a cave at the top of Mount Kogainon, where he received only the king and his own servants, who later addressed him as a god. According to Strabo, the same scenario is repeated with Deceneus, which explains for the author of *Geography* the persistence of the "Pythagorean doctrine", vegetarianism among the Getae.

It is obvious that Strabo (or more precisely Poseidonios) had other information besides that transmitted by Herodotus. There is evidence that some of these sources refer mainly to the Dacians of the Carpathian Mountains, who were quite well known in the Roman world after the surprising victory of Burebista, while Herodotus' information concerned mainly the Getae of the Pontic-Danubian region. But it is just as likely that the cult of Zalmoxis itself had undergone some transformation over the last four centuries. What seems to impress Strabo is the exceptional prestige of the high priest, at once prophet and associate of the king, living in inaccessible solitude on the summit of the sacred mountain, and deified. Another detail seems equally important to Strabo: that Zalmoxis – like, more recently, Deceneus – had achieved such a prodigious career thanks above all to his astronomical and mantic knowledge. The insistence on knowledge of the heavenly bodies may reflect accurate information. Indeed, the temples of Sanizege tusa and Costești, whose urano-solar symbolism is evident, seem to have a calendar function.¹¹⁵

We shall further analyze Iordanes' information on the astronomical knowledge of the Dacian priests (see p. 77). As for "sacred mountain" Kogainon, its name, attested only by Strabo,

^{us} Cf. the references cited in footnote 103, spec. H. Daicoviciu : "11 Tempio-Calendario dacico".

1 16 But we have no plausible reason to doubt the authenticity of the information about the high priest's residence. In the vast Carpathian-Danubian and Balkan area, and elsewhere (Asia Minor, Iran, India), from the remotest antiquity until the beginning of our century, the peaks and caves of the mountains have been the favorite retreats of ascetics, monks and contemplatives of all kinds.

in the new stage of Dacian religion presented by Strabo (or Poseidonios), the character of Zalrnoxis turns out to be sensibly altered. There is first the identification between *the god* Zalmoxis and *his high priest*, who is eventually deified under the same name. This aspect of the cult of Zalrnoxis was not known to Herodotus. This is not necessarily to say that it is a recent innovation; for, as we have seen, it is a characteristic feature of the Thraco-Frygian. We may, however, be dealing either with a Celtic influence, or with a process which took place in the last two or three centuries, when the high priest of Zalmoxis had gained enough authority to be regarded as the representative of the god and, finally, the god himself.

But furthermore, we do not find in Strabo-Poseidonius any allusion to the cult of mysterious structure as presented by Herodotus. Zal moxis no longer appears as the "slave" of Pythagoras who reveals to the Geto-Dacians the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, but as the slave of Pythagoras who learns the art of reading the future in the march of the stars and, returned to his own country, becomes the right hand of the king, high priest, and, still alive, is finally deified. For Strabo, the best proof of the continuity between Zalmoxis, a slave of Pythagoras, and Deceneus is the vegetarianism of the Dacian gods, a detail ignored by Herodotus. For Strabo, after all, the cult of Zalmoxis is dominated by a high priest who lives solitarily on the mountain tops, being at the same time the king's associate and first counselor; this cult is also "Pythagorean" because it excludes the consumption of meat.

Of course, Strabo did not set out to repeat the famous history of Zalmoxis that every scholar of his time knew from Herodotus; he set out to present what other, more recent, sources had brought

116 Cf. I. I. Russu, "The Religion of the Geto-Dacians", p. 94, notes. Cf, *ibid* pp. 93 and

urm. on some recent hypotheses on the localization of Mount Kogainon.

as novelty. Most probably, the new data mainly concerned the role and fame of the high priest and the "Pythagorean" asceticism of the Dacians. We do not know to what extent the initiatory and eschatological structure of the "mystery" of Zalmoxis, as we can decipher it in Herodotus, still survived in Strabo's time. But there can be no doubt that it is around the "specialists in the sacred" and the high priest that we must look for information likely to shed light on the esoteric aspects of this cult.

Loners and scholars

I have already mentioned (above, p. 48) what Strabo had to say about *the theosebeis* and *kapnobatai* of the Mysenians who lived on the right bank of the Danube. These ascetics and contemplatives were vegetarians and fed on honey, milk and cheese. Strabo adds that among the Thracians, too, there were pious solitaries who lived dep art of women and were known as *ktistai*. They are honored because they consecrate themselves to the gods and "live free from all fear" (VII, 3, 3). Among the Dacians, according to a report by Flavius Josephus (*Antiquites Judai-ques XVIII*, 2), these ascetics and contemplatives were called pleistoi, a word which Scaliger proposed to be read *polistai*.

These names have given rise to controversy. Pârvan saw in *ktistai* the Greek term ktistes, "founder" and, adopting Scaliger's reading, translated *polistai*, "founder of a city".¹¹⁷ The eminent archaeologist suggests that the first term, ktistai, was used by the Getians on the right bank of the Danube, while the inhabitants of the left bank and the Dacians used the tennen polistai.¹¹⁸ This may be true, but, as E. Lozovan notes, Strabo refers expressly to the Thracians and Flavius Josephus speaks of the Dacians.¹¹⁹ Be that as it may, it is certain that these ter meni did not mean "founder" or "founder of a city". Jean Gage

¹¹⁷ Pâivan, *Getica*, p. 160, followed by Coman, "Zalmoxis", p. 90, contra Russu, "The Religion of the Geto-Dacians", p. 124.

¹¹¹ Pâivan, *Getica*, pp. 160, 739; id., *Dacia*, p. 80.

¹¹⁹ Eugène Lozovan, "Les Pleistoi: des Carpathes à Qumran" (*Acta Philologica et Theologica*, II, Rome, 1964, pp. 183-189), p. 185, note; id. "Dacia Sacra" (*History of Religions*, VI, 1968, pp. 209-243), p. 221, note 51.

and Lozovan have shown that Scaliger's reading, *polistai*, is unlikely.¹²⁰ Gage attempted a bold interpretation of the word *pleistoi*. Following Tomaschek and Kazarow, he related *pleistoi* to the Thracian god *Pleistoros* (Herodotus, IX, 119), but he added to the record a dedication from Hadrian's reign to Diana Plestrensis and some South Danubian toponymy (among others, *Pliska* in southern Dobrogea), to reconstitute a **pleisk* root (cf. Rom. *plisc*). The reconstruction has been criticized by F. Altheim and Lozovan. The latter suggests a radical

i. -e. **pleus*, with its Thracian form **pleisc* from which the Romanian *plisc* is derived as well as **pleiskoi*, *pleistoi* and *pileati* (those who wore "pilos" on their heads)¹²¹ - "*The Pleistoi* now appear to us clearly, definitively rid of the suspicion of being nothing more than a fanciful reading. Celibate and vegetarian, with heads covered with *pilos* like the Dacian nobles, the approach to the Essenes as far as they are concerned is not forced." ¹²² As for *ktistai*, D. Decew derives it from the Indo-European **sqei-* d, "to separate," whence the Tractian **skistai*, "separated, isolated, single" .¹²³

¹²⁰ J. Gagé, 'Du culte thrace de Pleistonius à la secte dace des "Pleistoi". A propos d'une dédicace épigraphique à Diana Plestrensis'. (Nouvel Album Macedo-Romain, Freiburg i. Br., 1959, pp. 15-26), p. 16; E. Lozovan, "Les Pleistoi", p. 184; id. *Dacia Sacra*, p. 221.

¹²¹ On linen hats — pilos — among the Dacians, Goths and Iranians see F. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, I, Berlin, 1959, pp. 325-329; cf. also G. Dumézil, *Mythe et Épopée*, I, Paris, 1968, pp. 444 ff. on the "cap-bearers" among the Scythians. The symbolism and mythology of these caps have been brilliantly evoked by Leonardo Olschki, *The Myth of Felt*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949.

¹²² E. Lozovan, "The Pleistoi daces – abstinent monks?" (*Orpheus*, XI, 1964, pp. 141-147), p. 146.

¹²³ D. Deeve, "Charakteristik der thrakischen Sprache" (*Linguistique Balkanique*, Sofia, II, 1960, pp. 148-212), p. 169; cf. Lozovan "Les Pleistoi", p. 185 n. 6; id. "Dacia Sacra", p. 221, n. 51. Recently A. Dupont-Sommer has proposed to read into the text of Josephus instead of *Dakoi* ("Dacians"), a corruption of *saddoukaion*, or rather of *saddou-kaion* ("saddou-kaion"); cf. "On a passage of Josephus relating to the Essenes" (*Journal of Semitic Studies*, I, 1956, pp. 361-366) and *Les écrits essentiels découverts près de la mer Morte*, Paris, 1959, p. 47. In the meantime, Like other authors, Dupont-Sommer wonders what the Dacians are doing in Flavius Josephus' text. But Lozovan rightly recalls that Josephus had written *Antiquités Judaiques* between 93-94, shortly after Domitian's Dacian campaign, when the Dacians were the order of the day; cf. Lozovan, "Les Pleistoi", pp. 187 ff. ;

"Dacia Sacra", pp. 223 ff.

What is to be retained from all this is the existence of one or more classes of "sacred specialists," characterized by a somewhat monastic life, because they were celibate, vegetarian, and lived in solitude. Hippolytus communicates a legend that Zalmoxis had propagated a Pythagorean doctrine among the Celts.¹²⁴ This proves once again the importance given, even in late antiquity, to the tradition that defined the religion of Zalmoxis by a belief in the immortality of the soul. Certain modern authors have brought Druidism closer to the Thracian and Geto-Dacian faiths.¹²⁵ In particular, the importance of the high priest, the belief in immortality and the sacred, initiatory science of the Druids evoke parallels with the Dacians. Certain Celtic influences must also be taken into account, since the Celts lived for some time in the western regions of Dacia.¹²⁶ It is therefore probable that in Strabo's time the "mysterious" tradition of the cult of Zalmoxis survived among the hermits and the believers of the Geto-Dacian, whatever their names may have been. And it is equally likely that these solitary ascetics were in some way dependent on the high priest.

The importance of the high priest is strongly emphasized by Iordanes, who, although writing in the 5th century, uses older sources, primarily Cassiodorus, who in his turn was based on Dion Chrysostom, quoted by Iordanes (*Getica*, V, 40) and other authors. Iordanes thought he was writing the history of his ancestors, the Goths, and we will come back to this confusion between the names "get" and "got". Iordanes states that the Dacians had a king, Zalmoxis,

"of great erudition in philosophy, and before him another scholar, Zeuta, to whom Decineus (*Getica*, V, 40) joins him. According to Iordanes (XI, 67-68), Decineus became the collaborator of King Boruista when Sylla reigned over the Romans, i.e. around 80 B.C., and this indication seems correct. As Iordanes presents it, Decineus' activity is both cultural and religious.

¹²⁴ Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, II, 25.

¹²⁵ H. Hubert, *Les Celtes depuis l'époque de la Tène et la Civilisation Celtique*, Paris, 1932, p. 283; Jean Coman, "Décineus (Zalmoxis, m, 1943, pp. 103-160), pp. 148 et seq.

126 Cf. Păivan, *Getica*, pp. 461 and unn. ; id. *Dacia . Civilizațiile antice din țările carpato-danubiene*, 6th ed. ;
H. Daicoviciu, *Dacii*, pp. 61 ff.

On the one hand, he is a civilizing hero (as imagined in Late Antiquity); on the other hand, he behaves as a reformer (apparently a creator) of religious institutions.

Iordanes describes Deceneus' civilizing work in extravagant terms : nd he saw that the Goths (=getites) "obeyed him in all things and were endowed with a natural intelligence, he taught them almost all philosophy, for he was a renowned master in this subject. Thus, teaching them morals, he overcame their barbarous habits; instructing them in physics, he directed them to live according to nature, under the rule of their own laws, (laws) which they possess in written form to this day, and which they call *belagines*. He teaches them logic and succeeds in making them skillful in thought and superior to other peoples. Showing them theoretical knowledge, he teaches them to observe the twelve signs (of the zodiac) and the course of the planets that pass through them, and all astronomy. He explains how the face of the moon waxes and wanes, and shows them how much the sun's hot globe is larger than our terrestrial planet. He explains the names of 346 stars and also the signs of their moons in the sky from sunrise to sunset. Just think, please, what a pleasure it was for these brave men to be instructed in philosophical doctrines when, for a short time, they were not engaged in war! You could see them, one scrutinizing the positions of the heavens, another examining the nature of grasses and shrubs; this one watching the waxing and waning of the moon, while another watched the work of the sun, and observed how these heavenly bodies rushing eastward are turned and brought back by the rotation of the heavens. After they (the Getae) had learned the reason (of all these things), they rested. Teaching them by his knowledge these and other things, Dicineus gained a marvelous reputation among them, so that he reigned not only over the common people, but also over their kings. " (XI, 69-71).

This fabulous picture is, of course, more than an exercise in rhetoric. In clumsily compiling the sources, Iordanes was mainly glorifying his "ancestors", the Gaetians. Dio, one of Iordanes' sources, claimed that the Gauls were almost as civilized and "scholars" like the Greeks. Of course this belief was validated by a venerable tradition: Zalmoxis, the disciple of Pythagoras. But

Strabo had already insisted on the high priest's astronomical knowledge, and Iordanes takes up and amplifies this information, confirmed by

otherwise, as we have seen, of the Dacian temples and their solar symbolism and as lendaristic. It is true that Iordanes presents Deceneus as a civilizer of the whole nation ; with all the cliché of the "civi lizing hero" which dominates this romantic biography, it is nevertheless possible that the sources compiled by Iordanes may have mentioned surprising advances made in Dacia from Burebista and Deceneus to the time of Decebal. We can decipher in the encyclopedic teaching of Decenius, described in enthusiastic terms by Iordanes, the cultural flowering of the Dacians following the political unification achieved by Burebista and its culmination during the reign of Decebal. 127

Dicineus is also responsible, according to Iordanes, for the religious organization. He chooses some of the noblest and wisest "and teaches them theology, commanding them to worship certain divinities and divine places. To the priests he consecrated he gave the name of *pileati* ('the capped ones'), I think because during the sacrifices they offered they wore a tiara on their heads, which we call *pilleos*. But he orders the rest of the people to be called *capillati* ("the hairless ones"), a name which the Goths (= the Goths) accepted and cherished as their highest honor, keeping it to this day in their songs" (XI, 72).

We have no reason to believe that the classroom organization of priests was the work of Decenius, or that the names *pilleati* and *capil lati* were invented by him. In all probability the high priest was only the reformer of an institution which already existed, but which had to be organized and strengthened when the Dacian state had attained the power and prestige we know under Burebista.

In any case, the last compiler who wrote about the Dacian religion insists almost exclusively on the work of Deceneus, the great priest and civilizing hero, and places Zalmoxis among his successors. Here we have the secularized and highly "historicized" version

of a *deus otiosus*. as god Zalmoxis had disappeared. According to

¹²¹ Cf. Daicoviciu, *Dacii*, p. 209, and the references cited above in notes 106 and 114. The sources of Iordanes have been analyzed by Momsen, *Mon. Germ. Hist. auct. ant.*, 5, 1, pp. XXXI ff. See also F. Altheim, "Waldeute und Feldleute" (*Paideuma*, V, pp. 424--30). On Iordanes, see Norbert Wagner's monograph,

Getica. Untersuchungen zum Lebens des Jordanes und zur friihen Geschichte den Goten (Clueblen und Forschungen zur Sprach u. Kulturgeschichte des Germanischen Vol.ker, N. F. 22, Berlin, 1967).

Iordanes' opinion, the rare sources that still cite Zalmoxis always present him alongside Deceneus, among the philosophers who civilized the Goths in the fabulous land of their ancestors, Dacia.

Dacia capta

But the transformation of Zalmoxis into a civilizing hero and philosopher is only the work of foreign authors: we have no evidence that the same process took place among the Geta-Dacians. In short, from Herodotus to Iordanes, all that we know about Zalmoxis and the religion of the Dacians we know from the information and commentaries of foreign writers. In trying to decipher, beyond the interpretations of these authors, what the religion of Zalmoxis was and in what sense it developed, we arrive at this result: the mysterious character of Zalmoxis and his famous doctrine of immortality, which had so much impressed the Greeks¹²⁸, were complemented by the growing interest in mediæology, astromomy, mysticism and "magic". A similar process can also be deciphered in other Mystery religions in the age of Greco-Oriental syncretism.

We don't know what happened to Zalmoxis and his cult after the transformation of Dacia into a Roman province (106 *BC*). What is certain

In the cities, name-changing was widely practised and syncretistic clans thrived.

tones have survived, more or less transformed, not only the process of Romanization, but also that of Christianization. We have plenty of evidence of the survival of "pagan" inheritances, i.e. Geta-Dacian and Dacian and Dacian-Roman, in the Romanians and we will have the opportunity to point them out in other chapters of this book. But their number is certainly greater: one need only think of the cult of the dead and funerary mythology, agrarian rites, seasonal customs, beliefs

¹²¹ Doubtless, owing chiefly to the doctrine of immortality and to the episode which made him "the slave of Pythagoras," the ancient authors continued to speak of Zalmoxis.

¹²⁹ We shall return to the syncretistic Cultures of Dacia in a special paper.

The bibliography is considerable

magic, etc., which, it is known, persist, barely changed, from a religion for millennia.

An example of continuity, evident even in vocabulary, is that of the goddess Diana. Pârvan¹³⁰ assumes that the Dacian Diana (*Diana sancta, potentissima*) was the same deity as Artemis Bendis of the Thracians (Hercxlot, N, 33). This equivalence, however probable it may be, has not yet been proved¹³¹, but there is no doubt that under Diana's Roman name, syncretized or not, an aboriginal goddess may be hidden. However, the cult of this goddess survived after the Romanization of Dacia and the name Diana is found in the Romanian vocabulary of the *fairy*. *Diana Sancta* of Sarmizegetusa¹³² became *Sânziana* (<*San(cta) Diana*), a central figure in Romanian folklore¹³³. Religious and linguistic continuity was ensured mainly due to the fact that the transformation process took place in a popular, i.e. rural (rural and sylvan), environment.

We cannot expect a similar process for him Zalmoxis, for from the beginning his cult was widespread among cultivated people and in proto-urban environments. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that the chief god of the Geto-Dacians, the god who interested the Greeks and later the elite of the Hellenistic and Roman world, and whom writers did not cease to mention until the end of antiquity, was the only one to have disappeared completely and been forgotten forever after Dacia became a Roman province. Is it to be sought in one of the syncretist and Romanized divinities? ¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Cf. Getica, p. 163.

^{B¹} See E. Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra", p. 230 and bibliography cited, *ibid.*, footnote 105.

¹³² Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra", p. 230 and note 109, citing H. Daicoviciu, "Diana of Sanizegetusa, Ulpia Traiana" (Homage to C. Daicoviciu, Bucharest, 1960, pp. 131 -139).

¹³³ Dianatici, "ruled by Diana", gave in Romanian *zănateci*, "crazy, lost". Pârvan, *Contribuții epigrafice la istoria creștinismului în daco-roman*, București, 1911, p. 120; E. Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra", p. 231.

¹³⁴ A. Bodor, "Der Liber-und Libera-Kult. Ein Beitrag zur Fortdauer der Bodenstindigen Bevölkerung im Römerzeitlichen Dazien" (Dacia, N. S. VI, 1963, pp. 211 -239), assumes that the cult of the Liber-Libera couple is of Se origin; he refers to Suidas' article mentioning a goddess Zalmoxis; cf. *supra* note 65. See also N.

Gostar, "Culte autochtone în Dacia romana" (Anuarul Institutului de Istorie antică), II, 1965 , pp. 237-254.

Let us not forget that the characteristic features of the cult of Zalmoxis were of a mysterious and eschatological type: according to Herodotus, Zalmoxis revealed the possibility of obtaining immortality by means of an initiation involving a *descensus ad inferos* and an epiphany, an

"ritual 'death' coupled with a 'rebirth'. We can therefore imagine that beliefs about Zalmoxis and his cult were absorbed and radically transformed by Christianity. It is hard to believe that a religious complex centered on the hope of attaining immortality, modeled on – and mediated by – a god of mysterious structure, could have been ignored by Christian missionaries. All aspects of Zalmoxis' religion – eschatology, initiation, Pythagoreanism, asceticism, asceticism, mystery scholarship (astrology, therapeutics, theurgy, etc.) – encouraged a rapprochement with Christianity. The best and simplest explanation for the disappearance of Zalmoxis and his cult is to be found in the early Christianization of Dacia (before 270

p. Chr.). 135 Unfortunately, we know very little about the more of Christianity in Dacia¹³⁶; we do not know, therefore, whether aspects of the religion of Zalmoxis survived in a new form during the early Christian centuries. But it would be futile to look for possible traces of Zalmoxis in Romanian folklore, because this cult was not of a specifically rural structure, and especially because it lent itself, more than any other pagan deity, to almost total Christianization.

Metamorphose de lui Zalmoxis

The fate of Zalmoxis is of course paradoxical. Disappeared with the Dacian-Romans, he survived far from his homeland, in the traditions of the Goths and, therefore, in the historiographical erudition, very mytholo-

¹³⁵ This is not to say, as some Romanian authors think, that Zalmoxis had passed or prepared Christianity.

¹³⁶ See E. Lozovan, "Aux origines du christianisme daco-scythique" (in:

~~Altheim-Steinl, Geschichte der Hunnen, IV, Berlin, 1962, pp. 146-165); D. M.~~

Pippidi, "around the literary sources of Christianity

mului daco-roman" (in : Contribuții la istorie veche a României, pp. 481-

96) ; id., "Niceta of Remesiana and the origins of daco-roman Christianity"

(ibid., pp. 497-516; cf. p. 516, n. 72, bibliography).

of the West. It has survived precisely because in a certain way it symbolized the genius of the Geto-Dacians. And it is only by reconstituting the mythological history of the Geto-Dacians in the consciousness of the Western world, from the invasion of the barbarians to the ~~end~~ of the Middle Ages, that we understand why Alfonso el Sabio, in his *Cron ica Gene ral*, spoke so fervently of *Zamolxen*, *Boruista* and his adviser *Dicineo*.

We must first consider the image of the Geto-Dacians, as it had been specified and strengthened since Herodotus, especially in the last centuries of antiquity. These barbarians were glorified for their moral qualities and heroism, for the nobility and simplicity of their lives. But, on the other hand, mainly because of the confusion with the Scythians, the Geto-Dacians were portrayed as true savages, bearded (*hirsute*), unburned (*intonsi*), dressed in fur (*pelliti*), etc. The tradition of heroism of the Geto-Dacians — "the bravest of the Thracians", as Herodotus called them — continued long after the demise of the Dacian state. Ovid evoked the "wild Gaecians who did not fear the power of Rome" (*Ex Ponto*, I, II, 81 – 82) and described them as "true images of Mars" (*Tristia*, V, VII, 17).

For Vergilius, the realm of the Getae was the "martial land of Rhesus" (*Georg.* IV, 462); indeed, Mars (Pater Gradivus) ruled over their cities (*Aeneid*, III, 35). At the beginning of the 11th century B.C., Dion Chrysostom still repeated that the Getae were "the most warlike of all barbarians." And Lucian assured that "as often as I have looked on the land of the Getae, I have seen them at war". in

5th century, Sidonius Apollinaris claimed that the Getae (whom he called "Thracians") were invulnerable. 137 As for Iordanes, he wrote a whole mythology about the exceptional heroism of "his ancestors": the Greeks had defeated the Greeks in the Trojan War, and later had defeated Cyrus the Great and Darius; so that more than 700,000 men, the ancestors of Xerxes, did not dare to attack the Greeks. 138 Isidor of Seville (7th century)

137 Dion Chrysostom, Discourses, XXXVI, 4; Lucian, Icaromenippus, 16; Sidonius, II, Panlgyrique d 'Anthemius, 34-36 — texts quoted from Jane Acomb Leak.e, The Geats of Beowulf, Madison, 1967, pp. 18, 42.

138 Getica, IX, 60; X, 61 —. Iordanes also tells us that the army of Philip of Macedon was scattered by the Gethite priests, and that not even Julius Caesar was able to defeat this marvelously brave people (X-XI, 65-8).

who also identified the Goths with the Goths, wrote in his *Historia Gothorum* that Rome itself, conqueror of all peoples "suffer the yoke of captivity imposed on her" 139.

Naturally, after being identified with the Amazons, the Geans were also assimilated to the Giants. 140 Ovid compares them to the descendants of the Giants, the Lestrygonians and Cyclopes (*Ex Ponto*, IV, X, 21-24). For their part, Christian writers very quickly equated the Geto-Goths with Gog and Magog. 141 Some of this ethnic mythology was dislodged as a result of the confusion between the Getae and the Goths. Julian the Apostate is probably the first to use the term "get" as the equivalent of "got" , which is not to say that he confuses the two peoples, for he speaks of a victory of the Goths over the Goths, and indeed he also refers to the Dacians.¹⁴² In the 4th century, Pru

dentius resumes the equivalence and the formula becomes more and more popular, although the ethnic identity of the Goths was not forgotten.¹⁴³ But it was not until Claudianus (early 5th century) that the tradition of calling the Goths *getae* was established. His contemporary, Orosius, wrote : "but those who are Goths today were formerly Goths" (*modo autem Getae illi qui et nunc Gothi*) and Claudius Rutilius Namatianus, Prosper of Aquitaine and numerous other writers adopted

¶ Quibus tant extitit magnitudo bellorum et tam excel/lens gl/oriosae victoriae virtus, ut Roma ipsa victrix omnium populorum subacta captivitatis iugo Geticis Triumphis adcederet et domina cunctarum, gentium illis ut /amu/a deserviret. (So great was their power in war and so glorious in victories, that Rome herself, the conqueror of all peoples, suffered the yoke of captivity imposed upon her, and thus the Geats became masters of all peoples and they set them as subjects.) (Isidor, *Historia Gothorum*, 61--68 ; text reproduced from Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf*, p. 44.)

¶ Cf. the quotations from Statius (1st cent. p. Chr) and Dio Cassius grouped by Leake, pp. 19-20. According to Dio, quoted by Iordanes (IX, 58-59), a king of the Getae, Telephe, was the son of Hercules and equaled his father in power and stature.

¶ See the passages from St. Jerome, St. Ambrose and Isidore quoted by Leake, pp. 25, 35-37; cf. *ibid.* , pp. 38 ff, the references to Jewish sources and the theme of Gog and Magog in Alexander's novel. Isidor regarded the Gothic Geto-Goths as the offspring of Gog and Magog (cf. Leake, pp. 38, 158, n. 39).

¹² Panyrique in honor of Constantine, 9 D; De Caesaribus, 31 IC, 3200, 3270; cf. Leake, p. 25. At about the same time Ausonius uses the same formula; cf. Leake, *ibid.*

¹³ **on** three occasions when, in his commentary on Vergilius, he glosses the term
getae, Servius explains it correctly twice, but in connection with a passage in Georg.
(VI, 462) states that the Goths were Goths; cf. Leake, *ibid.*

144 Cassiodorus (487-583), the main source of Iordanes, merely follows an already established tradition. Iordanes, for his part, uses the term *getae* when speaking of ancient history and, with a few exceptions (LX, 308 , 315, 316), uses the term *gothi* when referring to more recent history.

The glorious portrayal of the Goths, as presented by Iordanes and Isidor, and later, in the Middle Ages, in the novels centered around Theodoric, coexists with the other, negative, image derived from the confusion between the Geti (= Goths) and the Scythians. The two representations continue throughout the Middle Ages, as Jane Leake's exhaustive survey proves.¹⁴⁵ The epithet-clique

- "clothed in furs", "hairy", "hairy", etc. — pass from the Getae and Scythians to the Goths (Leake, p. 49). In medieval geography, the Germanic north is presented as *Scythia* by classical authors; in the con sect, the Getae and their neighbors were projected northwards (*ibid.* , pp.

54-55). in his *Cosmographia* Aethicus Ister moves northwards

In the early Middle Ages, the terms *Gothia* and *Getia* were applied to Denmark and the peninsula of Jutland, and on medieval maps the Dane mark was called *Dacia* or *Gothia*, for in the Middle Ages *Dacians* was synonymous with *Danes*. Adam of Bremen mixes Goths, Goths, Danes and Dacians and calls them all Hyperboreans.¹⁴⁶

In his Chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy, Guillaume de Jumieges (11th century) traces their fabulous history and speaks of

"Dacia, which today is called Denmark" (*Dacia, quae et Dana marcha*), a country inhabited by Goths who had "many kings abundantly endowed with the knowledge of admirable philosophers, especially Zeuta and Dichineus , and likewise Zalmoxis and many others."¹⁴¹ But as the

¹⁴⁴ References to Leake, pp. 25-26, 155-156.

¹⁴⁵ op. cit., pp. 72 and 1. un., 8 31 un.

¹⁴⁶ See the extensive documentation presented by Jane Leake, op. cit. pp. 72 and un., 79. Sweden, Denmark, Norway are integrated into Scythia, p. 79. Cf. p. 92 identification of Denmark-Dacia in *Ymago mundi*.

¹⁴⁷ ... sistens reges habuit multos mirare philosophiae eruditione philosophiae

vehementer

imabutos, butan scilicet atque Dichineum, necnon Zalmoxen aliosque plures"(Gesta Normannorum Ducum, I, 11-111, ed. Jean Marx, 19 14, quoted by Leake, op. cit., p. 80). It is very likely that the Geatas in Beowulf are Getae, regarded by the Germans as their ethnic ancestors (Leake, pp. 98-1 33). On the Getae-Goth homologation

pointed out Alexandru Busuioceanu 148, especially in Spain this tradition was assimilated and eventually became an integral part of the national culture. Isidor, himself of Gothic origin, had based Iberian historiography on the famous identification between Goths and Getites. Isidor, who does not know Iordanes, in praising Spain, spoke of this country "where the glorious fecundity of the Get people flourished" (*Geticae gentis gloriosa /ecunditas*). And when, in the 13th century, Iordanes began to be read in Spain,

The "Dacians" enter the history and genealogy of the Spanish people through the *His toria Gothica* of Bishop Rodrigo Jimenez de Rada and the *Cronica General* of King Alfonso el Sabio. What Alfonso writes about the distant ancestors of *Dacia* or *Goya*, about *lilmolxen* ,

"of whom historians relate that he was marvelously wise in philosophy" 149, about King *Boruista* and his counselor *Dicineo*, derived directly from Iordanes 150.

But this time it is not a simple compilation. Alexandru Busuioceanu has shown very well the role of this mythology historicized in the *Reconquista* and, in general, in the formation of the Spanish historiographical consciousness. is 1

in the traditions of the Transylvanian Saxons, cf. Karl Kurt Klein, "Die Goten-Geten Daken-Sachengleichung in der Sprachentwicklung der Deutschen Siebenbürgens" (Südost-Forschungen, XI, 1946-1956, pp. 84-154). On the historical relations between the Scandinavians and the Romanians, see E. Lozovan, 'De la Mer Baltique A la Mer Noire' (in: F. Altheim-R. Stiehl, Die Araber in der alten Welt, Berlin, 1956, vol. II, pp. 524-554).

¹⁴⁸ Alexandru Busuioceanu, "Utopia getica" (Destin, Nr. 8-9, Madrid, May 1954, pp. 99-114).

¹⁴⁹ The stories tell that he was very wise to marvel in philosophy (quoted from Busuioceanu, p. 112).

¹⁵⁰ In describing the civilizing work of Dicineo, Alfonso follows Iordanes closely; cf. for example the passage on philosophical and scientific instruction: "este Dicineo ensenno a /os godos fas cas toda la filosofía et la física, et la theoria, et la practica, et la logica, et /os ordenamientos de /os doce signos, et /os cossos de las planetas, et el crescer et el decrecer, et de la luna et el cosso de/ sol, et la astrologia, et la astronomia, et las ciencias natura/es . . ." (This Dicineo taught all the Goths all the physical philosophy, and theory, and practice, and logic, and the roundness of the twelve signs, and the trajectories of the planets, and the waxing and waning of the moon, and the trajectory of the sun, and astrology,

and astronomy, and the natural sciences.) (text reproduced by Busuioceanu, op. cit. , p. 112-113 .)

m Al. Busuioceanu , op. cit. , p. 112.

Indeed, it is significant that the name of Trajan, the pure Iberian emperor, does not appear at all in the *Chronicle of Gen ral* in the chapter devoted to the history of Dacia, whereas Decebal (Dor paneo) does. For Alfonso, Trajan had his chapter in the history of Rome, where there is also a brief mention of the conquest of Dacia.¹⁵² This is the first mention in a Spanish chronicle of Trajan conquering Dacia.

It could be said that a contrary process took place in the historiographical consciousness of Romanians. Indeed, since the 16th century, the central theme of Romanian historiography has been the main source of national pride: Latin descent. Rome and the idea of latinity were at the forefront of the formation of Romanian culture. It was only in the middle of the last century that the Dacians were "rediscovered" through the courageous study in which Hasdeu asks himself whether this people had really disappeared.¹⁵³ But it was not until around 1920, thanks primarily to Pârvan and his pupils, that the protohistory and ancient history of Dacia began to be studied scientifically. Very quickly, among writers and amateurs, a trend developed which, in its most extravagant expressions, deserved the name of "tracomania". They spoke of the "revolt of the autochthonous background", by which they meant the revolt of the Geto-Tracian element against the Latin forms of thought introduced into the formation of the Romanian people.

The revalorization of the autochthonous background is a rather troubled chapter in the history of modern Romanian culture, but it is beyond the scope of our study. Suffice it to recall that Zalmoxis plays a capital role in this recovery of the most remote past of the Romanian people. Zalmoxis reappears as a prophet in plays; as a religious reformer comparable to Zarathustra, in various essays and monographs; as a celestial god founding "pre-monotheism" get, in certain historical-religious interpretations of theological tendency. But

¹⁵² "A /os de Dacia et de Sicia conquirio por batal/a et echo de Dacia al rey Decibalo etftzo la tie"a provincia de Roma." (The Dacians and Scythians he conquered by battle and drove out of Dacia king Decebalus and made the land a province of Rome.) Busuiocanu, who reproduces this passage (p. 11 3),

recognizes in it an echo of Dio Cassius.

IS3 B. P. Hasdeu, "Perit-au Dacii ?0 (Foița de istorie și literatură, Iași, 1 860, Nr. 2, 3, 4, 5).

Zalmoxis is always and everywhere valorized because it embodies the religious genius of the Daco-Getes, because, ultimately, it represents the spirituality of the "autochthones", of these almost mythical ancestors defeated and assimilated by the Romans.

The "Goths" have survived in the mythologized historiography of the Western civilization thanks to their confusion with the Goths: they had become the mythical ancestors of the Germanic peoples and, later, of the Spanish. About Their "kings and advisers" — Zalmoxis, Dicineus — they were remembered in the West mainly as civilizing heroes of the "Getae". A similar process took place in the Romanian historiographical consciousness. The Geto-Dacians were recovered as ancestors and in several cases as "mythical ancestors" because they were endowed with a lot of para-historical symbols. As for Zalmoxis, he regained in modern Romanian culture the primordial religious prestige that he had lost in the first centuries of our era, when he had been reduced to the role of civilizing hero. But, of course, this rediscovery is also a work of culture and is part of the history of modern Romanian ideas.

1944, 1969 .

SATAN AND B ONE GOD : PREHISTORY OF ~~ROMANIAN~~ FOLK COSMOGONY^A NEȘTI

Cosmogonics

In connection with the Bogomilic influences on Romanian folklore, N. Cartojan recalls a cosmogonic myth, which he summarizes as follows according to a Moldavian variant: "Before the creation of the world, there was a vast cloud of water over which God and Satan walked. When God decided to make the earth, he sent Satan (to the bottom of the sea) to take up the earth's seed in his name and bring it up above the water. Twice Satan plunges into the bottom of the sea, but instead of taking the seed of the earth in the name of God, as he was told, he took it only in his own name. As he rises up until he reaches the surface of the water, all the seed of the earth slipped through his fingers. Only the third time, going down to the bottom of the waters, he took up the seed of the earth in his name and in the name of God. When he came up above the water, a little earth remained under his fingernails, that is, as much as he had taken in the name of the Lord; the rest was washed away by the waters through his fingers. And with the earth that remained under the devil's nails, God made a cake on which he sat down to sleep. Satan, believing that God was asleep, thought to roll him over in the water and drown him, so that he might remain lord of the earth, but as he rolled him over, the earth grew and spread out under God. In this way the earth grew so much that the water had no place to fit ... "1

1 N. Cartojan, *Cărțile populare în literatura românească*, voi. I, Buc., 1929, pp. 37-38. I have already given the gist of the present article in "Preistoria unui motiv folkloric românesc" (*Buletinul Bibliotecii române din Freiburg*, vol. II, 1955-1956, pp. 41-54). Cf. also "Un volum de cercetări literare", (*Vremea*, Bucharest, July 3, 1934) and "Cărțile populare în literatura românească" (*Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, 1939; article also published in French: "Les livres populaires dans la littérature roumaine", *7.almoxis*, II, 1939 [published in 1941], pp. 63-78).

This Romanian cosmogonic myth has been recorded in several variants, the best known of which have been published and studied by Tudor Pamfile, Elena Niculiță Voronca, Florian Marian and I. A. Candrea.² N. Cartoian points out that the Bulgarian scholar Iordan Ivanov, who does not doubt the myth's Bogomilic origin, also published other Slavic folk legends and thus illustrated the spread of this motif as far as eastern and northern Russia.³ But, Cartoian adds, the Bulgarian scholar was not familiar with O. Dăhnhardt's work *Natursagen*. At the time when the books by Jordan Ivanov and Cartoian had appeared, the materials collected by Dăhnhardt in the first volume of his work, and especially his attempt to analyze this cosmogonic myth and to trace its history, were the most important contribution to the solution of the problems.⁴

N. Cartoian summarizes and appropriates the conclusions reached by Dăhnhardt in 1907. As it results from the Romanian version, the myth has two motives: 1) the oceanic motive of the primordial Waters from the bottom of which the "seed of the earth" is brought, and 2) the dualistic motive of the creation of the World through the collaboration of the two antagonistic Beings. The dualism, concludes Dăhnhardt (op. cit., I, pp. 36 et un.), is of Iranian origin. The oceanic motif,

² The Seelfar. Magazine for Literature and Folk Traditions (1892 ff.), II, pp. 99-104; m, 1-2, 25; Tudor Pamfile, Povestea lumii de demult, pp. 14, 17-18, 25-27; Elena Niculiță Voronca, Datinile și credințele poporului român, I, Cernăuți, 1903, pp. 5-7, 22, 143-144; II (1912), pp. 24 ff.; S. A. Marian, Insectele în limba, credințele și obiceiurile Românilor, București, 1903, pp. 122-124; id. /nmormfntarea la Români, Bucharest, 1892, pp. 49-51; I. A. Candrea, Iarba Fiarelor, Studii de /ol/dor, Bucharest, 1928, pp. 59 ff.; N. Cartoian, op. cit., p. 41 (bibliography).

³ Jordan Ivanov, Bogomilski knigi i legendi, Sofi' 1925, summarized by Cartoian, op. cit., p. 38. One will find the discussion of Ivanov's ancient theories in the article by Emile Turdeanu, "Apocryphes bogomiles et apocryphes pseudo-bogomiles" (Rev. Hist. Re/, vol. 13 8, 1950, pp. 22-25, 176-218) See also below, n. 25.

⁴ Oskar Dăhnhardt, Natursagen. Eine Sammlung Naturdeutender sagen, Miirchen, Fa'beln und Legenden, voi. I: Sagen zum A/ten Testament, Leipzig-Berlin, 1907, pp. 1-89. Cartoian let slip J. Feldman's work, Paradies und

~~Siindenfall (MUnster i. W., 191-3), in which the cosmogonic myth is discussed~~
(pp. 337ff., 381ff.) in a different perspective from that of Dahnhardt.

unknown in Iran, is on the contrary fully attested in India. The cosmogonic myth, as it circulated in the Balkans and among other peoples of central and eastern Europe, is thus the product of the fusion of two different themes, the first Indian, the other Iranian. Summarizing Dähnhardt's conclusions, N. Cartojan concludes in these terms: "This oceanic motif from India migrated to Iran, where it intertwined with the dualistic motif. It was then, in this form, borrowed by the heretical sects of Christianity, which were flourishing in Asia Minor in the first centuries of Christianity (Gnostics, Mandaean, Manichaeans). These sects took the Indo-Iranian legend, gave it a Christian form, and passed it on to the Bogomils."

The role of the Bogomils in the dissemination of this cosmogonic myth will be discussed below. For the moment, it is important to present the essentials of the dossier furnished by Dähnhardt. Using and supplementing the material collected by Veselovskij⁶, Dähnhardt published European verses collected from Bulgarians, Transylvanian Gypsies, Russians, Ukrainians, Latvians and in Bukovina. We shall see that the same myth was also recorded in other regions of central and northern Europe. With a few variations – the importance of which will be assessed below – the mythical scenario remains the same.

Verses in South-East Europe

The Bulgarian legend tells that in the beginning there was no Earth, no people, only Water, and there were only God and Satan. One day God addressed Satan and said:

"Let us make earth and men." But where shall we find earth? Satan asked, and God answered, "**There** is earth under the water."

⁵ N. Cartojan, op . cit., p. 39. Cf. Dähnhardt, op . cit., pp 7 et seq. 14 et seq. 34 et seq.

⁶ Alex. Veselovskij, " Razyskanija v oblasti russkago duchovnago sticha XI (Dualisticeskija poverija o mirozdanji)", in Sbornik otdelenija russk, jazyka imp . akademii, 46 (1 890), no. 6, pp. 1-1 1 6. The work of the Ukrainian scholar M. P. Dragomanov, published in Bulgarian in Sofia in 1 892 and 1 894, was recently

translated by Earl W. Count, Notes on the S/avie Religio-Ethical Legends : The Dualistic Cre ation of the World, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1 961 .

Dive in and get me some clay. But before you get your ass down, you have to say: By the power of God and me! and you will go to the bottom and find land." But Satan said:

"By my power and the power of God" and as a result could not reach the bottom of the sea. Only after pronouncing the correct formula, sinking a third time, was he able to reach the bottom and was able to get a bit of mud under his fingernails. With this debris God creates the Earth. And God fell asleep, the Devil pulled him close to the water and tried to drown him. But the earth kept widening so that the Devil could not reach the water.⁷ We shall see that this limitless extension of the Earth sets the stage for another mythological episode, in which God's stature suddenly seems strangely diminished.

The Transylvanian gypsies have this legend: in the beginning there were only Waters. God was thinking of making the World, but he didn't know how to do it or what for. He was irritated because he had neither brother nor friend. Angry, he threw his staff into the waters. He turned into a big tree, and under the tree God saw the devil, who said to him, laughing: "Hello, brother! You have neither brother nor friend. I will be your brother and friend." God rejoiced and said to him, "You will not be my brother but my friend. I need no brother." They traveled nine days on the Waters, and God understood that the Devil did not love him. Once, the Devil said to him, "My brother, it's hard enough on our own, we must make other creatures. I would like to make a great World, but I don't know how, dear brother! I will make the world with this sand." The astonished Devil asked: "Will you make the world of sand? I don't understand!" God explained: "I will pronounce my name over this sand, and it will be like this.

7 A. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, Leipzig, 1898, pp. 6 and unnn. Dähnhardt, op. cit., p. 2; J. Feldman *Paradies und Sündenfall*, p. 364; Dragomanov, op. cit., pp. 1-3. It is only in this Bulgarian version of our myth that God asks the Devil to say: 'in the name of God and me'. In all other versions, God asks him to pronounce only his name. Another simpler version is reported by O. D. Kowatcheff, "Bulgarische Volksglaube aus dem Gebiet der Himmelsk:unde" (*Zeitschrift. Ethnologie*, 63, 1931), p. 340.

Earth. Go get me sand!" The devil sank, but he too wanted to make a World, and because he now had sand, he uttered his own name. But the sand didn't crack and he had to throw it away; he told God that he found nothing. God sent him again. And the devil kept the sand for nine days, saying all his own name, and the sand burned him more and more, until he was blackened, and at last he was forced to throw it away.

When he saw him, God cried out: "Thou art blackened, thou wicked friend go and fetch me sand, but do not utter thy name, or else thou shalt be burned." The devil dived again and this time brought sand. God made the World, and the Devil rejoiced greatly.

"I want to live here under this big tree," he said. And you, dear brother, find another place." God was angry. "You are a very bad friend! I want nothing more to do with you. Go away!" And then a huge bull appeared and took the Devil. And out of the great tree, the cam fell to the ground, and out of the leaves of the tree came forth men. s

A Russian version recounts the Devil's three dives and the creation of the World from the slime under his fingernails. Furious, the Devil wanted to seize the Earth and throw it into the Water. But it was too late. The Devil could no longer grasp the Earth, which was spreading on all sides and becoming endless.⁹

In Bucovina the following legend has been recorded: while not there was only Heaven and the Waters, God was traveling in a boat on the Waters. He met a lump of foam with the Devil in it. — Who are you? asked God. The Devil refused to answer

⁸ H. V. Wlislöcki, *Märchen und Sagen Transsilvanischen Zigeuner*, Berlin, 1892, p. 1; Dähnhardt, pp. 34-35; Feldman, pp. 364 ff. The myth does not seem to be known to the gypsies of the Near East and the West. Dähnhardt presupposes that the various elements of this legend show analogies with Altaic and Iranian traditions, and ascribes to the Gypsy myth an Indo-European origin (op. cit., pp. 35-36).

⁹ Dähnhardt p. 43, after *Etnograf. Sbornik*, VL 1864, section I, p. 122. According to another legend, attested to the Estonians, the Devil had hidden a bit of millet in his mouth. When God commanded the Earth to grow and spread the millet hidden in the Devil's mouth began to thicken and spitting out -1 Devil gave birth to deserts, swamps and rocks; cf. Dähnhardt, p. 54. Cf. a similar legend in Bukovina, further on, n. 11. The other Russian variants are discussed further on,

unless God takes him in the boat. God accepted and received the answer, "I am the Devil. " After they traveled a long time in silence, the Devil said, "It would be good if we had land under our feet." God then commanded him to dive and take sand in his name. The usual details follow: the three dives, the creation of the world from a few grains of sand, God's resting in the night, the Devil's attempt to drown him with the known consequences, the stretching of the Earth. ¹⁰ One of the Latvian legends presented by Dähnhardt is simpler: God sends the Devil to fetch him sand and makes the World with what the Devil had left under his nails. There is no question of taking sand in the name of God, nor of the Devil's efforts to drown God (Dähnhardt, *op . cit.* , p. 44). In other Latvian variants, the Devil keeps a little bit of mud in the mouth ; when the broth begins to swell, the Devil spits it out and gives birth to mountains (*ibid.* , pp. 56-57). Similar legends have been recorded in some regions of Russia, in Malorussia, in Ukraine and in Bukovina. ¹¹

Varian Polish, Baltic, Mordvin tee

Let us add a few new documents to Dähnhardt's file. apart from the ending, the Polish legend bears a striking resemblance to the various anecdotes found in Bukovina: God rides in a boat, he encounters a lump of foam, in which is the Devil, whom he takes into the boat. As the Devil was desirous of a strong place under

¹⁰ The Devil, p. 43, after Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie, p. 178; Felclman, p. 394. According to Dähnhardt, this Bukovina myth is analogous to a Galician version published by Afanasiev.

¹¹ The Malorussian legend features God and the archangel Satanail. The latter hides a bit of sand under his tongue but is forced to spit it out, and from his spittle mountains and rocks are born (Dähnhardt, p. 52; *ibid.*, p. 56, a Ukrainian legend). According to the Bukovina legend, the devil had swallowed a bit of tannin. When God blessed the Earth, this vat began to swell, and the Devil was about to go mad. God took pity on him and commanded him to cast it out. And so he made the mountains; cf. E. N. Yoronca, *Datinile și credințele poporului român* , I, p. 15; I.

A. Canclre • Jarba fiarelor, p. 63. Dăhnhardt places these variants among the legends about the origin of the mountains ; op. cit. pp. 52 ff.

feet, God asked him to dive to the bottom of the sea and bring him sand. With this sand, God made the earth, but the earth was barely enough for them both to lie down at ease. When the devil saw that God was asleep, he began to push him toward the sea. But in vain, for under God, the earth grew. and grew wider and wider. Finally, God woke up and ascended to Heaven. The devil pursued him, but God sent the thunderbolt and plunged him into the abyss. 12

According to Finnish versions, before the creation of the world, God stood on a golden pillar in the middle of the sea. Seeing his image in the water, he cries out: "Arise! "The image was the Devil. God asked him how he could make the World. The other answered, "You must go down three times to the bottom of the sea." God commanded the Devil to dive. The third time he managed to bring up some mud, but he hid some in his mouth, and the mud swelled up and hurt him. And God took the earth out of the devil's mouth and turned it to the north, and the stones and the rocks were born. t 3

The Estonians tell that in the beginning the spirit of God (*jumala vaim*) moved over the waters. He heard a noise and saw bubbles rising to the surface of the water, and a voice called out to him:

¹² I. Piatowska, "Obyczaje ludu zidu ziemi sieradzkiez", Lud, IV, 4, 1 898, pp. 414 -41 5. The same legend in Galicia : after the bringing of the sand and Creation, "Dum nezeu, tired lay down to rest". And the Devil tries to drown him: cf. Br. Gustawicz, "Kilka szczeg6low szczeg6low ludomawczych w powiatu bobreckiego", Lud, VII, 3, 1902, pp. 267-268. (I owe these two references to the kind permission of Fr. Eva Gasparini.) Very probably, God's ascension to Heaven and his pursuit by the Devil, with his being thrown out of the unnã into the abyss, are elements belonging to another myth.

¹³ Translated from the Finnish journal Antero Vipunu, I, 2, p. 25, in Wilhelm Schmidt, Ursprung der Gottesidee, voi. VI (MUnster, i. W., 1 935), p. 568, and Voi. XII (ibid., 1955), p. 49. A similar variant in EI Kaija Kongäs, " The F.arth-Diver" (Ethno history, VI, 1960, pp. 15 1-1 80), p. 161 . The identity between the image of God and the Devil recalls a Bulgarian legend which does not belong to the cosmogonic cycle.

as he walked by himself, God saw his shadow and cried out:

"Get up, my friend!" Satan rose from the shadow of God and asked him to share the universe with him: Earth for him, Heaven for God; the living for God and the dead for

him. (Dähnhardt, op. cit., p. 44; W. S. Schmidt, Ursprung, XII, p. 1 23; cf. also A. Strauss, Die Bulgaren , p. 9.)

"Wait for me! "God waited for him. "Who are you?" he asked. "I am the Other." And God sent him to the bottom of the sea to fetch some oil; and the Other hid a little in his mouth, and when the oil began to swell, God said to him, "Spit it out, Satan! " and so he was called Satan. And where Satan spat, there were swamps and lakes.

14 Although it belongs to the group of Ugrian myths which we will present them later on with the traditions of Central Asia, let us also mention this Mordvin variant: God (Tsam Pas) stood alone on a rock. He was thinking of making the world. "I have neither brother nor companions with whom to take counsel!" he said and spat into the Waters. From his spit a mountain was born. Tsam-Pas struck him with his staff, the mountain broke and the Devil (Saitan) came out. As soon as he appeared, the Devil proposed to God that they should be brothers and make the world together. "We shall not be brothers... answered Tsam-Pas

- but comrades." And he sent him to the bottom of the sea to seek sand. But instead of speaking God's name, Saitan spoke his own, flames rose up from the bottom of the sea and he came up all burned. On the third dive he pronounced God's name and managed to get sand, but kept a little in his mouth. When the sand began to rise and his head became as big as a mountain and he was about to burst, God took pity on him and struck him on the head. And Shaitan spat with such force that the earth shook, and out of the earthquake mountains and hills were formed. 15

We will not present all the European variants; the rest can be found in the works of Dähnhardt, Feldmann and W. Schmidt. We shall have the opportunity to intimate others when we study the spread of this cosmogonic myth in central and northern Asia. Let

14 Oskar Lorits, *Grundzüge des estnischen Volksglauben*, I (Uppsala-Lund, 1949), pp. 455-456. Lorits had already presented and analyzed this myth in his article "Contribution to the material concerning baltic-byzantine cultural relation" (*Folklore*, 45, 1934, pp. 47-73), pp. 48 and unnn. He attributes to it an oriental origin; according to him, it reached Russia through Byzantium, and was spread by the Russians as far as the Baltic countries.

15 A. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, pp. 17-19; Dähnhardt, op. cit., pp. 60-2; Feldmann, pp. 378 and unnn.; W. Schmidt, *Ursprung d. Gottesidee*, XII, pp. 45 ff. Add: Uno Haiva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der Mordwinen*, Helsinki, 1954, pp. 134-135 (The devil

sinks in the form of a goose).

we add that the theme of the antagonism between the two super-natural Beings and of the immersion in the sea is the central element of another legendary cycle, having as its personages the Prophet Elijah and the Devil or the Emperor Diocletian and St. John the Baptist. ¹⁶ But before undertaking the comparative research, let us look a little more closely at the Balkan documents we have presented.

"God's fatigue"

Among Romanians, this myth has a consequence not without importance for our study. God, when he woke up, noticed that the Earth was expanding so much that there was no more room for Water. Not knowing how to remedy this state of affairs, he sent the bee to the hedgehog

- the most learned of animals — to ask his advice. But the aardvark refused to help him on the grounds, he said, that God is all-knowing. But the bee knew that the hedgehog had a habit of talking to himself. Indeed, she soon heard him murmur, "Of course, God doesn't know that he has to make mountains and valleys to make room for the waters." The bee flew to God, and the hedgehog cursed her and cursed her to eat nothing but dirt. But God blesses the bee: the dirt it will eat will become honey. ¹⁷

Among Bulgarians, the myth is even more drastic. The Earth had grown so wide that the Sun could no longer contain it. God made

¹⁶ The devil, who had stolen the sun, was playing ball with Elijah. Elijah threw the ball into the water, and when the Devil scrambled to catch it, Elijah froze the sea, took the Sun and rose to Heaven. The Devil managed to break through the ice, chased the stint and tore off a piece

heel. In Serbian folk songs, the characters are Emperor Diocletian and St. John the Baptist. They play with an apple and a crown. St. John throws the apple into the sea, and when the emperor lunges to catch it, he freezes the sea, steals the crown and heads for heaven. The crown is the Sun, for the saint arrives in paradise wearing "sjajno sunce", "the shining sun". Cf. E. Gasparini, *IA civilul matriarcale degli Slavi* (University Course, 1955-1956, lithographed. Venice' 1956),

pp. 90 et seq. ; id. *Credenze religiose e obblighi nuziali degli antichi Slavi* (University

Course, lithograp., Venice, 1960), pp. 9 and unnumbered. According to Gasparini, these legends represent a /unrarizzazione of the myth of the fishing of the earth ; see *Cre denze religiose*, p. 11.

17 S. A. Marian, *Insects*, p. 122; Dahnhard  pp. 42--43.

the angels and sent the angel of war to Satan to ask him what to do. But the war angel failed to approach the Devil. God then created the bee and sent it to sit on the Devil's shoulder to hear what he said. "Oh, what a fool God is!" muttered the Devil. "He does not know that he must take a staff, make the sign of the cross in the four winds and say: "Earth is enough!"' The Bee hurried to tell God the solution

problem.¹⁸ In another Bulgarian version, God had made

The earth so large that the sky was no longer big enough to contain it. As he was at a loss what to do, but noticing that the devil was talking to the hedgehog, he sent the bee to listen. "God does not know," said the Devil, "that he must take a staff and strike the earth with his power to make mountains and valleys. And then he will be able to cover the earth with heaven."¹⁹

The hedgehog is also found in a Latvian legend. God had made the Earth so wide that he could no longer fit it under the vault of Heaven. The hedgehog, who was just passing by, asked God the reason for his perplexity. God recounted his cosmogonical mishap, the hedgehog reassured him: "It's not serious," he said. "Just press a little and the Earth will go under the vault of heaven." Pressing him, God made mountains and valleys. To reward the hedgehog, he made him a garment of needles, so that no enemy could come near him.²⁰

This cosmogonic myth differs not only from biblical traditions but also from Mediterranean ones. The God, whose cosmogonic troubles we have seen, has nothing of the creator God of the Old Testament, nor of the creator or sovereign gods of Greek mythology. Indeed, the mythic landscape itself is altogether different. It lacks the scale, the grandeur of the Greek cosmogony biblical. Of course, the primordial Great Waters are present, but the setting and characters of the myth are rather modest: a Dum-

¹⁸ A. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, pp. 7 ff. The devil curses the bee to eat its own excrement but God blesses it: nothing will be sweeter than you!

¹⁹ Dăhnhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

²⁰ Dăhnhardt, p. 128. The analogy between the Romanian and the Latvian variants is remarkable; it will have to be taken into account when discussing the hypothesis of the spread of these legends by the Bogomils; cf. further on.

God who creates against his will, or at the Devil's suggestion and with his help, and who no longer knows how to finish his work; a Devil who sometimes shows himself to be more intelligent than God but who uses childish subterfuges (hiding a bit of mud in his mouth, trying to drown God by pushing him into the water, etc.); the bee and the hedgehog. This humble and dull mythical universe is not without significance. Whatever the origins of this cosmogonic myth, it seems certain that it circulated in popular circles and had to adapt to a fringe audience. The myth can be reduced to the following elements:

- 1) Pri mordial Waters ; 2) God walking on the Waters ; 3) The Devil who makes his appearance at the very beginning of the story or whom God meets later, or whom he involuntarily creates from his shadow, spit or stick ; 4) the "seed of earth"²¹ that lies at the bottom of the Waters, whose existence only God knows, and with which alone he alone can make the World, but which for unknown reasons he is unwilling, or unable, to bring forth himself and sends the Devil to seek it; 5) the triple immersion of the Devil and the inability to take clay in his name;
- 6) God's creative power, which increases prodigiously the few strands of sand or the scraps of clay the devil brought under his fingernails. But there is something "magical" and "automatic" about this creation: the Earth grows from the "seed" of the c am in the way that in the *mango trick* a mango tree grows vertiginously from its bud and bears fruit in a few seconds; or the Earth expands "automatically", without God's knowledge, only because the Devil tried to drown it in its sleep ; 7) what is really striking in these mythological stories is *God's weariness after creating the World*. God wants to rest or feels the need to sleep: like the peasant after a day's work, he falls fast asleep, so that he does not even feel the Devil pushing him. It is true that God is often anthropomorphized in such popular stories. However, in the myth

²¹ The same expression is found in a Caucasian variant (Dähnhardt, p. 53) and in voguli (ibid. , pp. 66-7). The image of the Earth rising vertiginously from a "seed" merits special study, cf. the cosmogonic egg or primordial dial embryo (Hiraiyagarbha) floating in the primeval ocean.

Our God's weariness and sleep seem unjustified, for, after all, God has done nothing : It was the Devil who sank three times (and he did not sleep only for that) , and in fact the Plînînt was considerably dilated only by "magic" ; 8) this negative and unexpected note, revealed in the character of God, is further aggravated in the second part of the myth, when God recognizes himself unable to solve a small postcosmogonic mess, and must ask the advice of the hedgehog or the Devil.²² Physical fatigue, the same physical fatigue that had forced him to lie down and sleep soundly, *is now accompanied by mental fatigue*; suddenly, God, who had seemed omniscient (he knew the essentials: where the "seed of the earth" is found and how the World is created), shows a strangely diminished intelligence : although his creative faculties are still intact (as in the Bulgarian version in which he creates the angels, then the bee), his mental inertia seems to be total; and not only the Devil knows the solution but also the hedgehog, so — although the story does not tell us so — one of God's creatures.

More than "dualism", these negative elements — God's weariness, his deep sleep, the decline of intelligence — are those which give an absolutely distinctive character to the Romanian and South-East European cosmo gonie myths. For, as we shall see in a moment, the "weariness" or the "fall" of God are not an integral part of this myth as it is known in Central and North Asia.

Whatever the origins of this mythological theme, one thing seems obvious to us: the dramatic character of the last stories we have analyzed is due less to the antagonism of the Devil than to the passivity of God and his incomprehensible decadence. We need not repeat that this God has nothing in common with God.

²² Of course, the "prehistory" of this motif is to be sought in the necessity of God's having given God the desolation of the existence of valleys and mountains; they were created later and out of necessity; in the beginning, the Earth was flat — *as* we know, the perfect plain is a paradisiacal syndrome in many mythologies, both Indo-Iranian and "primitive": the world was flat at the beginning of creation, and will be flat again at the end of the cycle, when creation will be symbolically or concretely reiterated. But the fact remains that God did not know where to stop when he blessed the handful of earth to grow and get bigger. further evidence that this vertiginous growth was of the order

"magic" and escape the Creator's control.

the creator and cosmocratic god of Judeo-Christianity. And although the religious life of all these peoples of South-Eastern Europe is inspired by the Christian faith, and has its source in the belief in a trinitarian God, in the cosmogonic legends we are dealing with, as in other folkloric themes, we are dealing with a different kind of God; suffering from loneliness, needing a companion with whom to make the World, distracted, tired, and ultimately unable to complete creation by his own means alone.

This God may be compared to the *deus otiosus* of so many "primitive" religions, where, after creating the world and mankind, God disinterests himself in the fate of his creation and withdraws into Heaven, leaving the completion of his work to a supernatural Being or a demiurge. We do not claim that the *deus otiosus* of archaic societies - as found, for example, in the Selk'nam, the Bambuti and so many other African peoples²³ - survives in the beliefs of the peoples of South-Eastern Europe. This is not necessarily a survival from very distant times, but of

in other words, the negative characters detected in our cosmogonic myths are

likely to be interpreted as a popular and, in fact, recent expression of a *deus otiosus*, of a God who withdrew after creating the World, who, consequently, is no longer at the very center of the cult. It should be added that the theme of a "distant God" plays a major role in Romanian religious folklore, and is just as abundantly attested in other peoples of south-eastern Europe. According to these beliefs, God used to come down from time to time to walk the Earth, accompanied by St. Peter, but because of human sins he gave up these visits

and retired to Heaven for good. God's departure finds its immediate justification in the depravity of humanity. God

retreats to Heaven because humans have chosen evil and sin. It is a mythical expression of God's disassociation from evil and sinful humanity; we will have occasion to point out others. But it is obvious that this God who withdraws and turns away is not the God of Judeo-Christianity.

²³ Cf. examples in our *Traité d'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1949, pp. 52 ff., 55 ff.

"Dua il. sm " sIav .?

Where does this conception come from of a God who creates the World with the help of the Devil, who falls asleep after creation, who escapes untouched by the Devil's attack, but who, at least in some variants, proves incapable of accomplishing his cosmogonic work by himself? As I have already said, an attempt has been made to interpret these Balkan legends as the expression of Bogomilic beliefs. After Veselovskij, Hasdeu and Dähnhardt, Slavists such as Jordan Ivanov, F. Haase²⁴ and others have supported this hypothesis with various arguments²⁵. The problem of Bogomilism is considerable, and we do not intend to discuss it here in its entirety.²⁶ We note, however, that the hypothesis of the Bogomilic origin of the cosmogonic myth is not without difficulties. First, the myth is not found in any Bogomilic text. Moreover, the myth is not attested in Serbia, nor in Bosnia, nor in Herzegovina, although Bosnia remained an important center of the sect until the 15th century.²⁷ Although, according to Toth Szabo Pal, remnants of Bogomilic beliefs survived in Hungary until the 15th century,

²⁴ Especially in his work *Vo/lcsg/aube unde Brauchtum der Ostslaven*, Breslau, 1939, pp. 231 ff.

²⁵ In his study, E. Turdeanu has shown that a large number of alleged beliefs bogomilic are already attested in apocrypha which have nothing in common with bogomilism and are even anterior to it. Dem. Russo had already criticized B. P. Hasdeu's hypothesis and had pointed out the patristic precedents and parallels of the popular texts that Hasdeu considered heretical and especially bogomilic; cf. *Studii bizantino-române*, Bucharest, 1907 and *Studii e critice*, Bucharest, 1910. N. Minissi finds Turdeanu's interpretation too rigid; cf. "La tradizione apocrifia e le origini del Bogomilismo", *Ricerche slavistiche*, m, 1954, pp. 97-113, spec. pp. 111 ff. Note that Turdeanu studies only apocryphal literature and not oral traditions.

²⁶ An exhaustive bibliography will be found in Dimitri Obolensky, *The Bogomils. A study in Ba/Jean Neo-Manichaeism*, Cambridge, 1948, pp. 290-304, to be supplemented by the studies of Turdeanu, Minissi, Alois Schmaus, "Der Neumanichismus auf dem Balkan" (*Saeculum*, II, 1951, pp. 271-299) and H.-Ch. Puech, "Catharisme médiéval et bogomilisme", in *Oriente e Occidente nel medioevo*, *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, XI, *Convegno "Volta"*, Roma, 1957, pp. 56-. See also O. Bihalgi-Merin and A. Benac, *The Bogomils*, London, 1962. Georg Wild, *Bogomilen und Katharer in ihrer Symbolik*, Wiesbaden, 1970.

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27 Cf. H.-Ch. Puech, *op. cit.*, pp. 69 et seq. with the bibliography,
p. 69, n. 2.

and would not have disappeared until after the Reformation²⁸; although a dualistic creation myth has been recorded in Hungary²⁹, the cosmogonic motif that concerns us has not been found. On the other hand, as we have seen, variants have been picked up in different parts of Russia, in the Ukraine and in the Baltic regions, where Bogomilic beliefs never penetrated. Moreover, the myth is found neither in Germany nor in the West, although the Cathars and the *Patarines* have spread as far as southern France, Germany and the Pyrenees a large number of folk motifs of Manichaeic and Manichaeic origin. bogomilica. ³⁰ Finally, as we shall see, the attestation densest myth is found among the Turco-Mongol peoples of Central Asia.

Some Russian scholars, and more recently Uno Harva, have attributed to the Russians the diffusion of the myth beyond the Ural.³¹ But if it is admitted that the Russians did not get it from the Bogomils, how did they get it? Some scholars have tried to explain bogomilism by the pre-existence of a strong religious dualism among the Old Slavs. ³² The idea of "Slavic dualism" has its roots in a piece of information by Helmold (*Chronica Slavorum* [I, 52], written between 1164-1168). After having enjoyed great authority, this testimony of Helmold's was rejected by Aleksander Brickner, who assumed that Helmold had retrospectively applied the Christian conception and iconography of the Devil to Slavic paganism.³³ But his hypercriticism

²⁸ N. Cartoian, *Cărțile populare în literatura românească*, I, p. 32.

²⁹ Cf. H. von Wlislock  *Volks glauben und religiöser Brauch der Magyaren*, Münster, i. W., 1893, p. 93; Dänhardt, p. 99.

³⁰ On the diffusion of an Iranian dualist theme as far as Brittany (cf. P. Sebillot, *Contes des Provinces de France*, Paris, 1920, pp. 209 ff.) and in Provence (P. Sebillot, *Folie/ore de France*, Paris, 1904-1907, III, p. 4), see A. H. Krappe, "A Persian Theme in the Roman de Renard" (*Modern Language Notes*, 58, 1943, pp. 515-519), spec. p. 516. Gaston Paris had already indicated its Manichaeic origin (cf. *Journal des Savants*, 1894, p. 606, n. 3).

³¹ Cf. Uno Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker*, p. 102.

³² Jordan Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 361 and unnn., had rejected this hypothesis, but see also F. Haase, *Volks glaube u. Brauchtum der Ostslaven*, pp. 241 et seq.

³³ Aleksander Brtkner, *Mitologia slava* (traduzione dal polacco e note di Julia Dicksteinówna, Bologn' 1924), pp. 203 ff., 207 etc. Same argument in Ivanov, pp.

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361 ff. Cf. B. O. Unbegaun, "La religion des anciens Slaves" (in *Mana*, 2, il, 1 948), p. 420.

Aleksander Brickner now seems outdated; scholars like V. Pisani, G. Vemadski, Roman Jakobson, Evel Gasparini lend credence to Helmold's testimony and also accept the "dualism" of the primitive Slavs³⁴ This new methodological orientation is reinforced by the similarities - recently brought to light - between Slavs and Iranians³⁵ on the one hand, and between Traco-Frigians, Iranians and Slavs on the other³⁶. *Apriori*, it is not excluded that certain "dualistic" beliefs spread in the Balkans and the Carpathian-Danubian regions may represent remnants of religious beliefs of the Thraco-Scythian substratum. ³⁷

It should also be added that "dualistic" tendencies manifested themselves quite late among the East Slavs. Gershom Scholem wonders whether Sabbatarianism in Poland was not influenced by the Russian sects which developed particularly in the Ukraine after the great schism of the Scots.³⁸

There is no need to take part in this dispute : our study is not religious dualism, but only its incidences with the theme of cosmogonic immersion. This myth, containing the sinking of the Devil or of a water bird, followed by the creative work of God, is attested in 24 points of the Balto-Slav domain (6 in Ukraine and 11 in Belorussia), and in 12

34 Cf. V. Pisani, *Le religion i dei Celti e dei Balto-Slavi ne/I ' Europa-precris tiana*, Milan, 1940, pp. 49 ff. ; G. Vemadsky, *The Orig ins of Russia*, Oxford, 1959, pp. 11 8 ff. ; R. Jakobson, "Slavic Mythology", (in Funk and Wagnal, *Dictionary o/Folklore, Myyhistory an Legend*, II, 1950, pp. 1 025 et unn.) ; E. Gas parini, *Credenze religiose e oblihi nuziali degli antichi Slavi*, pp. 54 et seq. and passim. Alois Schmaus shows more skepticism: cf. "Zur altslawischen Reli gionsgeschichte" (*Saeculum*, IV, 1 953, pp. 206-230), pp. 223 ff. On the conception of divinity among the Slavs, cf. Bruno Meriggi, "Ilconcelto del Dio nelle reli gioni dei popoli slavi" (*Recerche Slavistiche*, I, 1 952, pp. 148-1 76).

3s Cf. R. Jakobson, op . cit. , p. 1025 ; K.. H. Menges, "Early Slavo-Iranian con tacts and Iranian influences in Slavic mythology" (*Symbolae in honorem z. V. Togan*, Istanbul, 1 950-1 955 , pp. 468-479_.

36 Cf. R. Jakobson, *ibid.* ; Ivan Popovic, "Iliyro-Slavica" (*Annali, /Istituto Uni versitario Orientale*, Napoli, Sezione linguistica, I, 2, 1959, pp. 1 65-176); V. Pisani, "Baltic, Slavic, Iranian" (*Ricerche Slavistiche*, XV, 1 967, pp. 3-24).

37 Cf. Ugo B ianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, Rome, 1958, pp. 42 ff. The Aihaism of South-Eastern European folklore is beyond doubt; cf. further on chap. V.

38 G. Scholem, "Le mouvement sabatai"ste en Pologne" (first article, *Rev. Hist.*

Re/. , t. 143, 1953, pp. 30-90), p. 38.

points of the Finno-Ugrian territory. Based on these facts, I. Grafenauer saw in this cosmogonic myth proof of the Old Slavs' belief in a Supreme Being.³⁹ The hypothesis was opposed by Fr. Bezlaj, who criticized Grafenauer for arguing on too narrow a basis.⁴⁰ Rightly, E. Gasparini retorted that this cosmogonic myth is one of the most widespread on the globe and that its diffusion in Eurasia is particularly intense (*op. cit.*, pp. 4 ff.).

Independent of Grafenauer, Evel Gasparini had tried to emphasize the conception of the Supreme Being in primitive Slavs. As far as can be judged from his as yet provisional data, Gasparini regards the myth of the "fishing of the earth", as embodied in the Slavs, as the result of a strong influence of lunar mythology.⁴¹

But Gasparini insists on Helmold's indication that the Slavs do not dispute the existence of a single god in heaven (*non diffentur unum deum in coelis*), but assume that this god is interested only in celestial affairs (*coelestia tantum curare*), leaving the government of the world to inferior divinities created by him (*hos vero distributis officiis obsequentes de sanguine eius pro cessione*). Helmold calls this God *prepotens* and *deus deorum*, but he is not a God of men: he reigns over the other gods (*coeteris imperitans*), and has no further connection with the Earth.⁴² Gasparini likens this "remote God" to the celestial gods of the Finno-Ugrian and Turkish peoples of central Asia: sublime and creative gods, but passive, without idols,

39 I. Grafenauer, 'Ali je praslovanska beseda "bog" iranska izposojenka', in Slovenski Etnograf, V, 1952, pp. 237-250; E. Gasparini, 'Religious beliefs and marriage obligations', p. 4

40 Fr. Bezlaj, 'Nekaj besedi o slovenski mitologiji v zadnjih desetih letih', in Slovenski Etnograf, II-IV, 1951, p. 348; Gasparini, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

41 Cf. Corso di Storia della Lingua e Letteratura Russa (Anno accademico 1949-1950, curs litografiat, Venice, 1950), p. 188; cf. also La civilizzazione matriarcale, pp. 90 et seq.; id., Danze e flabe del mondo slavo, Venice, 1955, lithographed course, pp. 113 and un.

42 Cf. Credenze religiose e obblighi nuziali degli antichi slavi, pp. 54 ff. Gasparini considers this passage of Helmold's as the most important document of the religious history of the primitive Slavs, more important even than the text of Procopius; *ibid.*, p. 68.

fir! cult (*ibid.*, pp. 64 ff.). He concludes that with the Old Slavs, as with the Finno-Ugrians, the celestial God withdraws from the World and becomes a *deus otiosus*.⁴³

We postpone discussion of these theses for another time. For the moment, let us recall nwnai that in the cosmogonic sinking myth God's passivity manifests itself in a rather characteristic landscape and scenario, involving primordial Waters, antagonism of the adversary and weariness, i.e. the mental inertia of the Creator after He has created the World. It is good therefore to limit our research strictly to these mythological motifs.

Some Russian legends

So far I have cited only one Russian version (see p. 83), and this is because the Russian documents are particularly unusual, especially for the fact that the Devil manifests himself in the form of a water bird. This is the case of the legend of the Sea of Tiberias, an apocrypha included in the "List of Divine Books" that we possess in manuscripts from the 15th and 16th centuries.⁴⁴ When there was neither Heaven nor Earth, but only the Sea of Tiberias, God flew in the air (probably in the form of a bird). He saw a water bird (*gogol*) floating on the waves. It was Satan. "Who are you," God asked him, "I am God, and what do you call me?" Satan answered, "You are the God of Gods and the Lord of Lords. God sent him to the bottom of the sea and proclaimed him greater than the angels. But when Satan wanted to raise his throne above the clouds, God commanded Michael the archangel to strike him down.

The Christian elaboration of the legend leaves no room for doubt, but the characteristic feature – the Devil's omomorphy – is

⁴³ Ibid. He also finds other similarities between the Slavs and the Finno-Ugrians, for example in wedding and funeral customs, in alternating songs and the musical range, in dress, etc.; cf. E. Gasparini, "Firutl e Slavi" (Anli dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale, Sezione Slava, Napoli, I, 1958, pp. 77-105).

⁴⁴ A bibliography of first editions and critical studies will be found in Dähnhardt, I, p.

45 , n. 1 . See Jordan Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 287-311 ;
H.-Ch. Puech, *Le traité contre les Bogomiles de Cosmas le Prêtre*, pp. 129 ff.

of course of Central Asian origin. We notice that God does not know the existence of the Devil, whereas the Devil knew that his interlocutor was the "God of Gods". One can interpret this episode as an effort to prove that God was unaware of the origin of evil. But this dissociation of God from Evil and the Evil One sometimes leads to a clearly dualistic position. A variant picked up in parts of Tver tells that neither God nor Satan were created and that no one knows where they came from. Satan is similar to God, with the difference that he cannot create anything without God. The myth ties together the familiar pattern: God commands Satan to go under, but the Devil hides a few grains of sand in his hand, and when the Earth begins to expand, these few grains of sand become mountains.⁴⁵ In another variant, the Devil proposes to God to become his blood-brother: "You be the younger and I the elder brother".

great!" And as God bursts out laughing, he declares himself pleased to be the youngest. But God makes the sign of the cross and the Devil disappears.⁴⁶ The old, strongly Christianized motif of the God (Christ)-Devil consanguinity is dissolved in this legend. The idea that the Evil One is God's elder brother is very probably of Zurvanite origin (see further pp. 107 ff.).

A Belarusian legend puts things differently. There was a duck at sea, and the Devil asked it what it was doing there. "I'm a water bird, the duck replies, I belong at sea." The devil orders him to fetch some clay, and the duck sinks three times. God arrives and asks where he got the clay. "The duck brought it to me," replies the devil. — Then let's make the earth together, suggests God. The devil dives in his turn, but hides a bit of millet in his mouth: spitting gives birth to mountains. But God's ignorance of the origin of clay seems to be an aberrant development; it is found in only a few examples (cf. the buried myth, p. 104). Order

⁴⁵ Dähnhardt, I. pp. 338-339, after Zivaja Starina, IX, pp. 393 and unn.

⁴⁶ Dähnhardt, I, p. 48 after Veselovskij.

⁴⁷ W. Schmidt, Ursprwug der Gottesidee, XII, pp. 56-57, after Dobrovolskij.

in which the characters of the myth appear – the duck, the Devil, God – is equally strange. In all likelihood, the adversary in the form of paslre gave rise to two distinct characters: The Devil and the duck.

indeed, in another Belarusian variant, the Devil sinks in the form of a swan and brings a little millet with which God makes the World. The swamps and mountains are made with the Devil's hidden debris in his mouth.⁴⁸ A northern Russian version depicts God and the Devil as diving ducks, white and black respectively.⁴⁹ This is probably a result of an influence of the legend of the Sea of Tiberias.⁵⁰

As we have seen, the Russian versions add a new element: the omission of the Devil, and in some cases of God. This feature is specified *in the* myths of the Eurasian peoples, especially the cattle breeders, among whom, according to F. Fior, the cosmogonic diving theme constitutes a kind of "Signatur".⁵¹ It is impossible to present the complete record. The essential documentation will be found *in* volumes IX-XII of *Ursprung*

48 W. Schmidt, op . cit., pp. XI, pp. 57-58. Ukrainian versions approximate the Balkan form: God asks the angel Satanai!! to bring clay on his behalf. Satan hides a little in his mouth, and, spitting it makes the mountains C'md God adoane, Satan tries to drown him (Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, pp. 13 ff.; Dähnhardt, p. 55). According to another variant, God finds the Devil in the foam.

He gave him two wings and made him an angel. Which is to say that God was striving

to "form" and "spiritualize" a Being whose origin he does not know, but which soon reveals itself to be the Adversary.

earth – and from this point on, the story develops as in the first variant (Dähnhardt, p. 55). According to a Rutean variant, the archangel S atanai!! dives three times and hides a bit of mud in his mouth (Dähnhardt, p. 52).

49 U. Harva, *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Voi/er*, p. 97, after Veselovskij.

50 But the image of "God in the form of a bird" is also found in other contexts of Eastern European religious folklore. Cf. the Galician carols (more specifically, from the Dniester region) which speak of three doves squabbling. They melt, bring sand and make the Earth (Dähnhardt, p. 59). in a Ukrainian variant, God, Peter and Paul stood in three maple trees in the middle of a blue sea. They dive in turn to the bottom of the sea to fetch the golden sand needed for Creation, but only God succeeds (Dähnhardt, *ibid.*).

st F. Fior, "Die Indogennanen in der Volkerkunde. Gedanken um das Problem der Urheimat" (in Hirt Festschrift, Heidelberg, 1936, vol. I, pp. 69 ff.), p. 102.

der Gonesidee by Wilhelm Schmidt. The eminent ethnologist utilized, supplemented and integrated the material collected by Veselovskij, Dähnhardt and Harva. in the last volume of his enormous work,

W. Schmidt has attempted a historical analysis of this cosmogonic myth, with which we do not always agree.⁵²

Cosmogon ical diving in ugrien i

Let's start by recalling some Ural-Ugrian myths. The Ceremians tell that before the creation of Lwnii, Keremet, the brother of Dum nezeu (Yuma), swam in the form of a duck. At Yuma's request, Keremet dived down and brought up a bit of millet, but kept some in his mouth. God had made the Earth flat and smooth, but by spitting, Keremet created the mountains.⁵³ At the mansi (voguli), the Supreme Being Kors Torum Kors sent several diving birds in turn to search for sand at the bottom of the sea. God's adversary does not appear in this myth.⁵⁴ There are several versions of the Voguls. According to one of them, it was Elempi, the son of the First Couple, who brought the clay of merging in the form of a waterfowl.⁵⁵ According to another variant, the First Couple lived in a house in the middle of the Waters. In a

^{s2} Ursprung d. Gottesidee, XI, pp. 11 5-173. It is unnecessary to indicate all the passages in the earlier volumes of Ursprwig in which W. Schmidt studied that

"Tauchmotiv. One will find his first attempts at a synthesis in Ursprung, vol. VI (1935), pp. 32-42, and "Das Tauchmotiv in Erdschöpfungsmythem Nordamerikas, Asiens und Europas" (in Mllanges de Linguistique et de Philologie offerts a Jacque Van Ginneken, Paris, 1937, pp. 111 -1 22.) These pages were written when I became aware of Ugo Bianchi's article "Le dualisme en histoire des religions" (Rev. Hist. Rel., t. 159, 1961, pp. 1-46). See also Alan Dundes, Earth-diver: Creation of the Mythopoeic Male" (American Anthropologist, t. 64, 1 962, pp. 1032-1 051): an attempt at psychoanalytic interpretation.

^{s3} Strauss, Die Bulgaren , p. 16; Dihnhardt, p. 60. According to a Mordvinian variant, God spits into the Water, and out of his spittle comes S aitan su b the form of a bird (Dihnhardt, p. 62).

^{s4} Dihnhardt, pp. 62--63, after Veselovskij.

^{ss} Diihnhardt, p. 66, after Lucien Adam. *Revue de Philologie et d'Ethnographie*, I, 1874, p. 9. Cf. W. Schmidt, *Ursprung*, XII, pp. 39--O. See also U. Harva, *op. cit.*, p. 98, after Munk.âcsi. W. Schmidt, p. 41, rightly points out that this myth involves many motives extraneous to the cosmogonic sinking theme.

On that day they saw an iron pillar sinking and returning to the surface with a mile in its beak. In the morning the earth was done; on the third day the waters were all gone.⁵⁶

Finally, a third vogula variant is reminiscent of *dej a* found in Mordvin and Eastern European legends. From his place above the clouds God spits into the waters. From this spit a lump is formed and after a while God hears a noise. "Who is making the noise?" he asked. "It is I, Satan. Come, come with me above the clouds," said God. S atanael went up, and God asked him if together they could make the world. "Of course," replied Satan, "we can take earth seed from the bottom of the sea." He dived down and scooped the seed into the sole of his foot, hiding some in his mouth. When, blessed by God, the earth begins to expand, Satan spits, thus giving birth to mountains.

Let us now mention a few myths of the Samoyans, who constitute the northern branch of the Uralians. According to a text published by Lehti salo, Num, the supreme God, commands the swans and geese to dive to see if there is land at the bottom of the sea. The birds return and find nothing. God then sent the polar diver. After six days he returned to the surface: he saw the land, but was unable to bring any more. The bird

/juru sinks in her turn and on the seventh day she comes back with a little bit of mud in her beak. After Num had made Earth, "from somewhere" came

"an old man" who asked permission to rest. Num n refused at first, sending him to go down to land, but he finally relented. In the morning, he surprised the old man on the edge of the island about to destroy it. He had already destroyed a good part of it. Num summoned him to leave, but the old man demanded as much land as he could hold with the end of his staff. He disappeared into this hole after declaring that from now on he would live there and kidnap

⁵⁶ Dăhnhardt, p. 63, after Munkâcsi, W. Schmidt, XI, pp. 41-42

⁵¹ Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, p. 14; Dăhnhardt, pp. 66-7; Feldman op . cit., pp. 383 ff. ; Harva, p. 95; W. Schmidt, XII, pp. 42-43. The myth then narrates the

~~creation of the Heavens, the creation of man, and the episode of the dog, which we shall summarize hereafter according to a Samoyed variant (p. 1 07).~~

people. Dismayed, Num recognized his mistake: he had thought the old man wanted to settle *on* Earth, not *under* it.⁵⁸

Let's note a few facts: Num sends the waterfowl⁹ and not the Devil to sink ; the Adversary makes his appearance *after the* creation of the World, but immediately endeavors to destroy it; finally he descends below the Earth and declares himself hostile to men, i.e.

reveals himself as Lord of the Kingdom of the Dead. The secret lesson of

The myth is that Num has nothing to do with the forces of evil which destroy Creation, nor is he responsible for the death of mankind. (Although Death comes to the World because of his lack of insight: cf. the Myths explaining the origin of death by accident, or by God's carelessness, or by the stupidity of the First Men.)

Another Samoyed myth presents, from the beginning, the antagonism between Num and Death. As Ngaa (Death) claims to be greater than Num, Num forces her to make the Earth. Ngaa dipped her hand in the water to dig out sand, but the sand ran through her fingers. Num created the World and asked Ngaa to put a whale under the Earth to give it stability. But as the Earth continued to shake, Num commanded him to fix it with a large stone and Ngaa did so: these are the Ural Mountains. "Now that we have made the world," said God, "we must find a master." And out of a little earth he made man. He made also a dog, which he commanded to guard the man. But when God was missing, Ngaa lured the dog, promising him a fur coat if he would let him come near the man; he came near and devoured him. Num created a human couple and punished the dog to feed on excrement.⁶⁰ The "dualistic" elements are well sub

^{ss} T. Lehtisalo, "Entwurf einer Mythologie der Jurak-Samojeden" (Mim . de la Sociltl fmno-ougriene, Lii, 1924), pp. 8 ff. ; W. Schmidt, Voi. XI, pp. 11 -12 ; cf. also voi. m, pp. 352 and unn.

^{S9} A Samoan m it of Turusansk tells of seven survivors being carried by a drifting boat after the flood. The waters rise almost to the sky. The people pray to a shallow, shallow prig to look for land. After seven days the bird returns bringing earth, sand and grasses. The people throw everything on the Waters and at their prayer, Num made Earth for them again : cf. Walter Anderson,

"Nordasiatische Autsagen" (Acta et Commentationes Universitatis Dorpatensis B. Humaniora, IV, 3, Dorpat, 1923), pp. 17 ff.

⁶⁰ Lehtisalo, op. cit., pp. 9 ff. ; W. Schmidt, XII, pp. 12-13.

The theme of cosmogonic diving is almost forgotten (Ngaa is content to sink his mine in the Waters), but God's adversary, Death, collaborates from the beginning in the making of the World.

High here , Mongolians

Among various Turkic peoples, cosmogonic myths show even more clearly the fusion of the two originally independent motifs: 1) the waterfowl which, at God's command, dives down to fetch clay ; 2) God's adversary, who – omomorph or anthropomorph – performs the same action but endeavors, among other things, to make a World for himself, or tries to ruin Creation Thus, in a myth of the Tartar Lebed, a white swan dives down at God's request and brings a bit of clay in his beak. God makes the earth flat and smooth; but he sends another bird and with the material it brings makes mountains. Only later the Devil arrives and makes the swamps.⁶¹

A myth of the Tatar Abakan, also recorded by Radlov, tells that in the beginning there was only a duck. She made a friend – another duck - and sent it to fetch sand. "The 'friend' sank three times, but he kept a little sand for himself and the duck said to him:

"It will turn to stone." The "friend" asked for a bit of earth for himself, and finally got as much as he could cover with the end of his stick.⁶²

in this last version, God – om omitomorph – makes his a companion like himself. He helps him in the making of the World, but, albeit in a watered-down form, he behaves like his adversary. The myth is confusing, for Erlik Khan appears later and dishonors the man, and although we are not told where he comes from, we know that he is the Lord of Hell. The duck created by God, who had deceived him

⁶¹ W. Radlov, *Aus Sibirien* , Leipzig, 1884, II, p. 360; cf. also W. Schmidt, *Ursprung der Gottestidee*, vol. IX (1949), pp. 121 ff.

⁶² W. Radlov – H. T. Katanov, *Proben der Volkslitereatur der turkischen*

St IX, Teil St. Petersburg, 1907, pp. 222 ff. ; W. Schmid  Ursprung, IX, pp. 512 and unn. ; **XI**, pp 22-23. The myth then recounts the man's ere.acea and the episode of the dog; Erlik Khan tempts him with a fur, approaches the man and defiles him.

requiring for him the hole made by the stick, turns out to be "The Devil.

The dualistic character is quite evident in Altai Tatar myths. In the beginning, when there were neither Heaven nor Earth, but only Waters, God and "man" floated together in the form of black geese. "Man tried to rise higher than God and fell into the water. He asked for God's help and God caused a stone to rise up out of the water and t h e man sat on the stone. Then God sent him to bring him clay. But t h e man kept a little in his mouth, and when the earth began to expand, the clay began to swell. He was forced to spit it out, thus giving birth to swamps. God said to him, "You have sinned, and your subjects will be evil. My subjects will be believers; they will see the sun, the light, and I will be called Khurbystan (=Ohnnazd). And you will be Erlile. "63

The syncretism with Iranian ideas is evident⁶⁴. But the cosmogonic diving scenario is almost entirely preserved. The Identity between 'man' and the Lord of Hell, Erlik Khan, is explained by the fact that the First Man, the mythical Ancestor, is also the First Dead. The "dualistic" element and especially the First Man-God antagonism is a further development, elaborated after the paradigmatic God-Devil antagonism.

In Altai-Kizi, Ulgen plays a less glamorous role. He descends into the primordial Waters to create the World; but he knows neither what to do nor how. He sees a man approaching Who are you? Olgen asks him, "I want to make the Earth," replies the other. God gets angry.

⁶³ W. Radlov, *Aus Sibirien*, II, pp. 3-5; a more elaborate version was published by Radlov in the first volume of his *Probeta der Volksliteratur*, I, pp. 175--184; cf. also W. Schmidt, *Ursprung*, IX, pp. 102-104, 112 and unnn.; 126 and unnn.; XI, pp. 15-17. The myth then narrates the creation of man. Erlik Khan asks for as much land as he can cover with his staff. He strikes the earth and dangerous animals God finally sends him underground. The antagonism between Erlik and God does not necessarily indicate a "dualistic" conception. In the inscriptions palco-turkish, Erlik is the God of Death; cf. Annemarie v. Gabain, "Inhalt und magische Bedeutung der alttürkischen Inschriften" (*Anthropos*, 48, 1953, pp. 537-556).

⁶⁴ Cf. Ugo Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, pp. 183-185.

I know where to find the necessary material", replies the man. God orders him to dive to the bottom of the sea. The "man" finds a mountain, breaks off a piece and
and put it in his mouth. He gave some of it to Olgen, who held it out

fleu Earth. But he kept a little more in his teeth, and spitting he made mountains. The "man" asked for as much earth as he could cover with the end of his stick and disappeared into the hole.⁶⁵

in these four Tatar myths, cosmogonic diving con is the central motif, but the characters who carry it out differ from one to another: a white swan (Tartar Lebed), a second "duck" (Abakan), "man" in the form of a black goose (Altai), "man" (Altai-Kizi). Different are also the respective "positions" of God and his Adversary: the latter arrives after Creation (Lebed); he is created by God (-Fowl), whom he helps to make the World (Abakan); he is present with God in the form of a black goose (Altai); he knows where the necessary material to make the World is (Altai-Kizi). The adversary endeavors in vain to bring about a parallel Creation; he succeeds only in devastating or ruining God's Creation (swamps, mountains, underground infernos). He is the Evil One, but also the King of the Dead (Abakan, Altai, Altai-Kizi) . in all variants, only God commands the cosmogonic sinking, either of birds, either to his companion (the second duck, "the man") or to the unknown character he meets ("the man"; Altai-Kizi). And only God has cosmogonic power; he creates the World from a fragment. In the Altai-Kizi myth, God doesn't know where he is the primordial substance and "man" is the one who informs it. But this reason is quite rare.

At **Mongoli** the variants are even more complex. Ocirvani and **Tšagan-Šukurty** descends from Heaven on the primordial sea. Ocirvani asks Tšagan-Sukurty to dive down and fetch him clay. Having spread this clay on a turtle, they both fall asleep. The devil, Sulmus, arrives and tries to drown them, with the known result: the considerable extension of the Earth. ⁶⁶ According to

⁶⁵ Dihnhardt, I, pp. 70-71 , dupi Potanin ; Harva, op . cit., p. 94 (same source) ; cf. also W. Schmidt, XI, pp. 19-20.

⁶⁶ W. Schmidt, XI, p. 24, dupi Potanin, cf. also vol X (1952), p. 53.

In a second variant, Ocurman, who lives in Heaven, wants to create the Earth and is looking for a companion. He finds him in T^{agan-Su} kurty^{gan-Sukurty} and sends him to bring him hum on his behalf. But T^{agan-Sukurty}

is filled with pride: "Without me you wouldn't have gotten huma! "he shouts, and then the huma slips through his fingers. When he melts for the second time, he takes the oil in the name of Ocurman. After

Creation appears Sulmus who asks for a part of the Pfilnînt, exactly so much

as far as he can reach with the end of his stick. Sulmus hits the ground with

the staff and the serpents.⁶⁷ The appearance of the serpents can be seen as a "dualistic" modification of an older theme: the hole through which the God of Death descends under the earth. As already noted by Ugo Bianchi⁶⁸ , we have in this last Mongol myth two figures of

Evil beings: the jealous and truculent collaborator (T^{agan-Snkurty}) and

The myth unifies or juxtaposes two different dualistic motives: 1) identification of the adversary-rival

with the protagonist of the sinking ; 2) the evil one who arrives, it is not known from where, when the Earth is already created, and demands a part of it, or tries to destroy it.

The single, the dumb

The Buryans know the myth in several versions, some of them quite different. One legend shows Sombol-Burkhan standing on the primordial waters. He spots a floating bird with twoteen chicks: "Bird, dive down to the depths of the sea and bring me earth, black earth in the beak and red earth in the feet!" Receiving these substances, he sows them on the Waters and thus the World was born.⁶⁹ According to another variant , the waterfowl dives at the command of God (Burkhan) and brings him red earth. God makes the World and then man.^{1.10}

67 W. Schmidt, XI, pp. 25-26, after Potanin. Cf. also X, pp. 53-54. The cosmology and mythology of the Mongols are known to have been strongly influenced by Buddhism and Indian speculations (Ocirvani - Vajrapani). The survival of the cosmogonic diving motif is all the more remarkable.

68 Ugo Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, p. 162.

69 Uno Harva, *op. cit.*, p. 104; W. Schmidt *op. cit.* X, pp. 205-206.

70 W. Schmidt, *op. cit.* XI, after A. Bastian. Cf. and Uno Harva *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Sometimes there are three deities — Essex Burkhan, Maidari-Burkhan and Sibegeni-Burkhan⁷¹ — who send a bird water to bring them clay, with which they create the World. The three gods then create the first human couple.⁷²

Some variants add a dramatic episode to the diving: diving into the depths, the aquatic bird encounters a crayfish and the crayfish asks it where it is going. When the crayfish finds out why, he gets upset. "I've always lived in the water and I've never seen its bottom," he cries, and threatens the bird that he will tear it to pieces with his claws. But Sombol-Burkhan gave the bird a magic formula and it allowed him to touch the bottom of the sea.⁷³

Alarsk circle of the Buria know a myth analogous to the population of Altai-Kizi. Burkhan descends from Heaven to create the World. Solmo, the Devil, reveals to him where the Earth is. God sends him to fetch it and sows it on the sea saying: "Let the World Be Done!" Solmo's asking for a little piece of land they poke the stick — and out of this hole come all sorts of reptiles and prinejdiodious animals.⁷⁴

Although they are today further north and east than any of the Turkic peoples, the Jacobites know the myth in highly Christianized variants, more closely approximating Russian and South-Eastern European forms. According to a version published by Priklonskij in

⁷¹ Essex Burkhan is, without doubt, Esege Maian, the Supreme Being of the Buriatis. Maidari=Maitreya, and S ibegeni=Sakyamuni. On Buddhist influences in central and northern Asia, cf. M. Eliade, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase*, Paris, 1951, pp. 430 ff. (2nd ed., 1968, pp. 385 ff.). The name Burkhan (Burkan, Burchan) means "God" in Central Asia. Cf. W. Schmidt, *Ursprung*, X, pp. 573 ff.; Dominik Schroder, "Zur religion der Tujen des Sininggebietes" (*Anthropos*, XLVII, 1953, pp. 202-259, p. 203).

⁷² U. Harva, op. cit., p. 104. W. Schmidt, vol. XI, pp. 27 ff. (after K. le mentz).

⁷³ U. Harva, pp. 105 ff. Among the Votyak people of the Sarapul region, the Devil, diving to fetch clay for God, encounters a crayfish. He informs him that he has not yet seen land although he has lived in the sea for 120 years; Harva p. 106. Harva rightly remarks that in this legend the Devil has replaced the original diver, the waterfowl (*ibid.*).

⁷⁴ Harva, op. cit., p. 94; W. Schmidt, *ibid.* XI, pp. 28-29. in another variant, The devil hides clay in his heels to make mountains; Harva, p. 98; W. Schmidt, XII, p. 29.

in the beginning there were only Waters. The supreme being, Yilriln ajy-tojon (White Lord Creator), saw a lump of foam on the Waters and asked: "Who are you and where do you come from?" The lump of foam replied that he was Satan and that he lived on the land at the bottom of the Waters. God says to him, "If there really is land under the sea, bring me a piece of it." Satan sinks. God blesses the piece of land and sits on it. Satan tried to drown him and began to drag the earth, but it became more solid and stretched out.⁷⁵

A variant taken by Shieroshewskij puts Crist with his older brother S atan. "You boast that you can do everything and think yourself stronger than me. Well, bring me some sand from the bottom of the sea!" Satan dived twice, but the sand slipped through his fingers. The third time, transforming himself into a thorn, he managed to get some clay in his beak. Christ blessed him and made the Earth as smooth and flat as a plate. But Satan had hidden a bit of clay. Christ discovered the deception and punched him in the back of the head. He spat and the mountains appeared.⁷⁶

in srrrřit, in a variant of the Northern Yachtsmen, instead of God appears "Mother of God". She wanted to make the World and, to this end, she created two water birds, a robin and a wild duck to bring clay from the bottom of the Sea. But only the wild duck managed to fetch it. The robin claimed to have found nothing, and the "Mother of God" cursed him to dive henceforth to forage for food. Then she made the Earth.⁷⁷ This last version is the only one in which the diving is performed by waterfowl, a peculiarity that may be a reminiscence of pre-Christian myth. (Note, however, that in the second version, the Devil transforms himself into a thorn in order to bring clay to

^{1s} W. Schmidt, vol. XI, p. 57, after V. L. Priklonskij, "Trigoda o Jakutskoj oblasti", (Zivaja Starina, IV, 1 891, pp 43--66), p. 66.

⁷⁶ V. L. Shieroshewskij, Jakuty, St. Petersburg, 1 896, p. 65 3, summarized in Uno Ha.iv ♦ op. cit. , pp. 92-93 and W. Schmidt, XI, pp. 57-58 and XI, p. 34.

⁷⁷ Tretjakov, summarized by Harv ♦ op. cit. , p. 105, and W. Schmidt, XI, p. 58. See other variants in Dähnhardt, p. 70; Feldman, p. 375; W. Schmidt, XI, pp. 58-59; xn, p. 35.

surface.) The adversary of God (Christ) is no longer the Evil One, the Lord of the Dead (Erlik Khan, "the man", Ngaa, etc.), but Satan.

The diving gannet is also present in a The myth of the jenise: the great Shaman Doh flew over the waters in the company of swans, diving robins and other water birds. As he could find nowhere to rest, he sent the robin to fetch him earth from the bottom of the sea. On his third dive, the bird managed to get a bit of clay in his beak, and Doh made an island.^{1a}

Birds, especially waterfowl, play an important role in Central and North Asian mythologies. Epiphanies of God, the Demiurge or the mythical Ancestor, birds appear

"at the origins" and their appearance is the foreshadowing of a creation or of a change in the structure of the world, or of the founding of a nation or a dynasty. in a cosmogonic myth whose diffusion covers

In Siberia and Central Asia, the World is born from an egg floating on the Primordial Ocean. The costume of the Siberian shamans contains an omitomorphic symbolism that is often quite obvious: in ecstasy, the shaman is able to fly in the air or dive into the depths of the sea.⁷⁹ As we shall see later, we find diving birds in North American cosmogony; sometimes even the species mentioned in North Asian myths. Moreover, the theme of cosmogonic diving belongs to the mythologies of India and Indonesia, although it is not about birds and amphibious male ani. This considerable diffusion poses problems that we discuss below. But it is only in Eurasia that scufun dization involves an adversarial protagonist of God, i.e. it has developed in a 'dualistic' sense. It is important to examine the origin of this development.

Iran

As we have already seen, the first scholars to deal with our myth sought its origin in the classic terrain of dualism, Iran. Now, the cosmogonic diving motif is not attested in Iran. If

^{1a} Uno Harva, op. cit. pp. 1 03-104.

79 Cf. M. Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, pp. 149 ff. (2nd ed., pp. 136 ff.).

It is an Iranian creation, so it had to take place outside Iran in a syncretist environment. Iranian religious ideas and cosmological concepts spread to north-west India and Tibet as well as to central Asia and Siberia. All these ideas and beliefs were not, moreover, "dualistic" (cf. the myths, symbols and rituals relating to the cult of Mithra, or of the Cosmocratic Saviour, or of the "man of light", etc.). We have had occasion above to point out certain Iranian influences in the mythologies of the Mongols and the Burids (cf. also Khurbystan=Ohnnazd, among the Altai Tatars). Let's try to see if, despite the absence of the cosmogonical diving theme, at least some of its constitutive elements are not to be found in Iran.

It seems that at least two constitutive motifs of our myths are attested in Iranian traditions which pass as *zurvanist*. The first motif recalls the sudden mental inertia of Dum nezeu in Balkan legends. According to an indication of ~~E~~? confirmed by other sources, Ohnnazd, after creating the World, no longer knew how to make the Sun and the Moon. Ahriman, he knew, and told the demons: Ohnnazd had to lie with his mother to make the Sun, and with his sister to make the Moon. A demon hurried to communicate the recipe to Ohnnazd.⁸⁰ No Zoroastrian text mentions this episode, although incest was encouraged by the Zoroastrian priest, who justified it by attributing it to Ohnnazd.⁸¹ But what interests our study is not incest as a means of creation, but the theme of the Creator's inability to complete his work and the predicament he finds himself in by forcing him to turn to his adversary, a demonic Being. The fact that Emile uses this motif for polemical purposes does not necessarily compromise its authenticity. We are probably dealing here with a non-Zoroastrian tradition, strongly "folklorized".

⁸⁰ Eznik, *Contre les sectes*, book 11, chap. 8, text translated in R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 43-39; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 435-436, an excerpt from *Actes d'Anâhidh*, in which the myth has this sequel: Ahriman threatened and overthrew Pimînîn with the aid of a frog which had absorbed the Waters. An Ahrimanic being, *muse.a*, pinching the frog by the nose, forces it and forces out the waters.

⁸¹ Cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 15 1 ff. Ohnnazd's "cosmogonic" incest

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has its counterpart in a Mandaean tradition; Zaehner, *ibid.* , pp. 1 52 ff.

The second constitutive motif of our myth that can be linked to an Iranian source is the God (Christ)-Satan brotherhood. Recall the Cheremian myths (in which Keremet is God's brother) and the Jacobite (Satan, the elder brother); also the Russian story in which Satan proposes to God that he should be his elder brother; the Russian Tver variant, according to which neither God nor Satan were created; also the Mordvin and Gypsy variants which emphasize God's solitude and his desire to have a brother or companion. Now, according to information transmitted by Euthymius Zigabenus, the Bogomils believed that Satan was the first-born of God and Christ the second.⁸² Belief in the equality, i.e. in the "cons ang divinity" of Christ and Satan, was shared by the Ebionites⁸³, which may lead to the supposition that such a conception may have circulated in a Judeo-Christian milieu. The idea that God has established, from the beginning, a good and an evil principle, abandoning the present tense to the angel of Darkness, and reserving the future time to the Angel of Truth, is already familiar to the Essenes⁸⁴; but it is doubtless a Iranian influence.

⁸² Euthymius Zigabenus, *Panoplia Dogmatica*, (Patr. Graeca, vol. 1 30), col. 1 290. John Exarch, at the beginning of the tenth century-1 was already familiar with this tradition (cf. Obolenski, *The Bogomils*, p. 1 22). Its popularity in Bogomilian circles is confirmed by a number of apocrypha and literary texts of the sect (Obolenski, p. 1 86).

⁸³ Epiphanius, *Panarion*, XXX, 16.

⁸⁴ Manuel de Discipline (= *Le rouleau de la Regie*), m, 20; IV 1 6-20; cf. Dupont-Sommer, *Les Ecrits essniens decouverts prs de la mer Morte*, Paris, 1 959, pp. 94, 96. R. P. Jean Daniélou, *Thlologie du judéo-christianisme*, I, Paris, 1958, p. 69, has already brought these ideas of the Ebionites closer to Essene doctrine.

^{as} A. Dupont-Sommer, op. cit., p. 93, n. 2, and *Nouveaux aperçus sur les manuscrits de la mer Morte*, Paris, 1958, pp. 1 57-1 72. Cf. et H. Michaud, "Un mythe zeivanite dans un des manuscrits de Qurnri" (*Vetus Testamentum*, V, 1955, pp. 1 37-147); J. Duchesne — Guillemin, "Le zeivanisme et les manuscrits de la mer Morte" (*Indo-Iranian Journal*, I, 1 957, pp. 96-99); id., *The Western Response to the Zoroastrian*, Oxford, 1958, pp. 49 ff. For Iranian influences on late Judaism, cf. G. Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte*, II (*Numen*, II, 1 955, pp. 47-1 34), pp. 1 09 ff.; id., "Quelques rapports entre Juifs et Iraniens A l'époque des Parthes" (*Vetus*

~~Testamentwn, Supli -mond IV, Leiden, 1957 , pp. 1 57-241); id., Iranisch-
LORD semitische Kulturbegegnwig in parthischer Zeit, Cologne and Opladen, 1960,
spec. pp. 51 ff., 62 and unn.~~

as far as our myths are concerned, just like the Bogomilic traditions to which we have referred, they can be approximated to a zur vanit myth transmitted, among others, by Eznik and Theodor bar Konai, explaining the birth of Ahriman and Ormuzd. When nothing existed, Zurvan had for a thousand years offered a sacrifice in order to have a son. And since he doubted the efficacy of his sacrifice (Emile: "What good is the sacrifice I offer?"), he conceived two sons: Ohnnazd, "by virtue of the sacrifice offered", and Ahriman, "by virtue of the above doubt" Zwvan decided to make the first-born king. Ohrmazd heard his father's thought and revealed it to Ahriman. Ahrimazman slipped his mother's sin⁸⁶, and went out. But when he told Zurvan that he was his son, Zurvan replied:

"My son is fragrant and bright, but you are dark and stink." Then Ohnnazd "bright and fragrant" was born, and Zurvan wanted to anoint him king. But Ahriman reminded him of his vow to make the firstborn king. In order not to break his oath, Zurvan granted him kingship for 9,000 years, after which Ohnnazd would reign. Then, Eznik continues, Ohnnazd and Ahriman "began to make creatures. And all that Ohnnazd created was good and upright, and all that Ahriman made was evil and wicked."⁸⁷ Note that the two gods are creators, although Ahriman's creation is exclusively evil. Now, this negative contribution to the cosmogonic work (mountains, swamps, snakes and primeval godlike animals, etc.) is an essential element in the versions of the cosmogonic diving myth in which the Adversary of God also plays a role.

"By the making of sacrifice the whole Creation was created" is written in the great Bundahišn (ID, 20; Zaehner, p. 336). As has

⁸⁶ Eznik got it right that Zurvan was a hermaphrodite. But other authors speak of a "mother" (Theodor bar Konai, Yohanmân bar Penkaye) or Zurvan's "wife" (Theodor Abu Qurra), cf. Zaehner, op. cit. pp. 63 et un., 423, 428.

⁸⁷ See the texts reproduced in Bidez-Cumont, *Les mages helUnisb*, Paris, 1938, Voi. II, pp. 89-92, and in Zaehner, op. cit. op. cit. pp. 421 ff. and their discussion, *ibid.* pp. 54 ff. This myth has recently been discussed by M. Molé, "Le probleme zurvanite" (*Journal asiatique*, t. CCXLVI, 1 959, pp. 43 1 -- 70), pp. 459 ff.

and by G. Widengren "Das Prinzip des Bösen in den Ostlichen Religion" (in *Das*

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Bose, Studien aus dem C. G. lung-Institut, Band XIII, Zürich, 1961, pp. 25- 1),
pp. 45 et seq.

noted⁸⁸, Zurvan's sacrifice is comparable to that of Prijapati in the Brahmanical texts and without doubt – with its disastrous consequences – constitutes a ritual error. Evil is the result of a technical accident, an inadvertence on the part of the divine who officiates the sacrifice. Evil has no ontological status of its own: it depends on its involuntary author, who limits its ontological status.

the term of its existence. Late authors (Sahristini, Murtazi, Razi, Mas 'fidi) also mention the views of the Zurvanites and other sectarians, who have tried to explain Ahriman, either as deriving from an evil thought of God (Zurvan), or as affirming that there has always been something evil *in* God. ⁸⁹ Zurvan would be the "divine totality" par excellence, *coincidentia oppositorum*, of which androgynism is but one aspect.

It is not now to deal here with the considerable problem of the relationship between so-called "Zurvanized" ideas and Mazdaism. It would be important to know whether the Iranizers agree that "in Githas there is no *apriori* rejection of the idea that the Spirits of Good and Evil could have the same origin" (Mole, p. 460). But for our discussion it is important to recall: 1) the consanguinity of the representatives of Good and Evil is a theme attested elsewhere and especially in Christian religious folklore⁹⁰, and 2) this conception has a "prehistory" attested both in Indian speculations on the consanguinity of the *devas-asuras* and in more archaic beliefs on divine bi-unity⁹¹- We will later measure the importance of these beliefs for the understanding of our myth.

⁸⁸ G. Widengren, *Religionens värld* (2nd ed., Stockholm, 1953), p. 71; id, "Das Prinzip des Bösen", pp. 46 ff.

⁸⁹ See the texts in Zaehner, *Zurvan*, pp. 433 ff., 443, 451; cf. also U. Bianchi, *Zaman i Ohrmazd*, Turin, 1958, pp. 157 ff.; M. Molé, op. cit., pp. 462 ff.

⁹⁰ Cf. for example, the cycle of legends crystallized around the struggle between a Saint and his devilish sister who steals and kills children. See M. Eliade, "Notes on demonology" (*Zalmoxis*, I, 1938, pp. 197-203).

⁹¹ Cf. M. Eliade, "La coincidentia oppositorum et le mystère de la totalité" (*Eranos-Jahrbuch*, XXVII, Zurich, 1959, pp. 195-236), reproduced in Meph istophlé et l'Androgyne, Gal.limard, 1961, pp. 95-154.

Bilan of the Iranian parallels discernible in our cosmogonic myths is as follows : 1) the zurvanite conception of the Ohnnazd-Ahriman brotherhood is found in verses emphasizing the consecration or friendship between God (Christ) and the Devil ; a large number of these verses are attested in central and northern Asia (see above pp. 97 , 103) which seems to rule out a Bogomilic origin; 2) Ohnnazd's inability to create the Sun and the Moon recalls the postcosmogonic mental inertia of God *in* certain Balkan legends. But in a few Russian, Central Asian and Siberian variants, the Devil's knowledge is even more considerable: he knows where the material necessary for Creation is to be found (cf. above Belarusian legends, the legends of the Vogule, Altai-kizi, Buriate, Yakut). This mythical motif does not seem to come from an Iranian model.

The third parallel can also be taken into consideration: the reason for the contract between God and Satan. I quoted above (p. 85 , n. 13) a Bulgarian legend in which Satan is born from the shadow of God.

nezeu (on his orders, by the way) and offers to share with him the Uni

verse. Šahristani knows a tradition according to which the Devil obtains from Ohnnazd the right to do evil and seals this contract in front of two witnesses.⁹² It is not necessarily a zurvanite idea. The notion of a contract between Ohnnazd and Ahriman is implicit in the 9,000-year arrangement given to Ahriman's reign.⁹³

What conclusion can be drawn at this point in the research? The two or three reasons that we have examined can be linked to Iranian syncretistic traditions, probably of 'Zurvanite' origin. In some versions of our myth, the figure of the Devil is reminiscent of the Prince of this world in Gnostic-Manichaean speculations. Iranian influences may have contributed to the development of the current aspect of our myth. But it is also probable that more often than not these influences have merely

⁹² Text in Zaehner, op. cit., p. 434. See *ibid.* p. 451, a passage from the Murtaza Razi, in which it is said that Yazdan (God) and Ahriman making peace entrusted their swords to the moon. He who should break the contract before the

appointed time was to be slain with his own sword.

93 See also U. Bianchi, *Zmnan i Ohrmazd*, pp. 95 and unn.

emphasize and broaden in a dualistic sense an existing religious conception in which antagonism and tension between the polar figures played an essential role. We will come back to this problem when we shall endeavor to represent how the original scenario of the cosmogonic foundation was transformed into the myth as we have studied it, articulated around the two antagonistic supernatural Beings. But we must first present some variants recorded outside the "dualistic" area.

North American Cosmogonies

Dähnhardt had already signaled a number of American myths.⁹⁴ A typical example is provided by the Mandan myth. Before the earth exists, the Master of Life creates the first man. This

And he met a robin or a duck, and said to him, "You dive so well, dive down into the deep and bring me some land." Man spread him on the waters, uttered a formula and created the Earth. different animals to sink.

The myth is widespread in much of North America,⁹⁶ especially in the northern and eastern forested regions, among the Algonkin, Athapaskan and Iroquois. It is also common in the Plains as far as the Shoshoni, Arapaho and Iowa populations. It is unknown among the Eskimo and most of the tribes of the northwest coast. (It has, however, been found among a Kwakiutl tribe on the island

Vancouver, and to a Chinook tribe in Oregon, kaplameti) in California, the motif is found in the traditions of several populations: Wintu, Maidu, Miwok, Yokut, Mono and Salina. In the Pueblos region and south of the Prairies, the myth is unknown.⁹⁷ Dähnhardt

⁹⁴ O. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, I, pp. 75-88.

♦ Maximilian, Prinz zu Wied, *Reise in das Innere von Nordamerika*, Coblenz, 1839-1841, II, p. 152, quoted by Dähnhardt, p. 75.

⁹⁶ Cf. James Teit, 'Kaska Tales' (*Journal of American Folklore*, XXX, XXX, 1917, pp. 427-473), pp. 427 and 428; Gladys A. Reichard, 'literary Types and Dissemination of Myths' (*ibid.*, XXXIV, 1921, pp. 269-307), pp. 269; Stith Thompson ♦ *Tales of the North American Indians*, Cambridge, Mass., 1929, p. 279, n. 30.

⁹⁷ Cf. Gudmund Hatt, *Asiatic influence in American Folklore* (København, 1911).

122 FROM ZALMOXIS TO GENGHIS -HAN
949), pp. 14-15.

and, according to him, the Uno Harva thought they recognized the cosmo gonic scuftm.dation in the myths of two tribes of southern Brazil, the Kain gang and the Are, but it is really the myths of the flood.⁹⁸

The diving animals are birds⁹⁹, especially the duck bottom-dwelling¹⁰⁰, in two cases (Yocut, Wintu) the moorhen¹⁰¹, the red-headed duck (associated with the turtle in Arapaho septentrionali) ¹⁰², but also in large numbers, swimming patrupeds¹⁰³, crustaceans (Yuchi) ¹⁰⁴, insects (Cerokee) ¹⁰⁵ and fish (an Iroquois myth) ¹⁰⁶. In some cultures, as in the cosmogonic myth of the Arapaho tribe, which is part of the Sun Dance, the Supreme Being and the Ancestor, both transformed into ducks, sink together.
¹⁰⁷

⁹¹ Dähnhardt, op. cit., I, p. 87; Harva, op. cit., p. 1 077. Cf. G. Hatt, op. cit, p. 15, n. 1, which also quotes this conclusion by P. Ehrenreich : "Die in Nord amerika so gewöhnliche Vorstellung von einem Urwasser, aus dem die Erde durch Tiere herausgefischt w scheint in SUDamerika zu fehlen" (The image of a Primordial Water from which animals fish the Earth, so commonplace in North America, seems to be missing in South America) (Die Mythen und Legen den der der SUDamerikanischen Urvölker und ihre Beziehungen zu denen Nordamerikas und der alten Wetl, Berlin, 1 905, p. 29). Let it be added, however, that in North America cosmogonical submergence is also often part of flood myths. Contamination of the two motives is especially frequent among the Algonkine tribes ; cf. ete will examples in H. B. Alexander, North American Mithology (=The Mythology of Ali Races, vol. X, Boston, 1916), pp. 42 ff. ; Sir James George Frazer, Folc-lore in the Old Testament, London, 1 91 9, I, pp. 295 ff. There is obviously a similarity of structure between the flood myths and the aquatic cosmogonies; the flood restores the chaos before creation; the surviving couple who, after many vicissitudes, find the land is homologous with the First Cupid.

⁹⁹ Some bibliographical indications in Hatt, p. 14, n. 3.

¹⁰⁰ See the examples cited by W. Schmidt, in Ursprung d. Gottesidee, vols. II, pp. 262 (Miwok), 274 (Yokut, cf. also voi. V, p. 301), 288 ff. (Salina), 423 (Lenape), 673 et seq. (Atsina), 685 et seq. (Arapaho), 759 (Ceien).

¹⁰¹ Examples cited in W. Schmidt, vol. II, p. 278; V, p. 207.

¹⁰² Cf. W. Schmidt, vol. II, p. 688.

¹⁰³ Cf. Hatt, p. 14 , n. 3.

¹⁰⁴ Hatt, p. 14, n. 4.

¹⁰ Ibid. , n. 5 quoting James Mooney , Mith of the Cherolcee, Washington, 1 900, p. 239.

¹⁰⁶ Dahnhardt, Natursagen, I, P. 85 .

¹⁰¹ An analysis of this myth will be found in W. Schmidt, vol. II, pp. 700, 715 and unn.

A common feature of all these myths is that they contain neither conflict nor opposition between the diving animals and the character who creates the Earth. ¹⁰⁸ This is all the more surprising because North America is an area where various "dualistic" conceptions have developed. ¹⁰⁹ What is more, dualistic conceptions are even found in certain cosmogonic myths. Let us recall the central theme of Californian cosmogonies, centred on the conflict between the Creator and the Coyote. The Creator wants to make the world paradisiacal and man immortal; the Coyote introduces death and ruins the earth by giving birth to mountains, destroying food, etc. But the Coyote plays no part in the cosmogonic submersion. ¹¹⁰ As we shall soon see, the absence of the dualistic character is a decisive element in the chronology of the forms of this myth.

¹⁰⁸ W. Schmidt notes that, in contrast to North Asian myths, North American myths emphasize the extreme depth of the ocean (cf. Ursprung, vol. VI, pp. 40-1). The submersion sometimes lasts six years (as in a myth of the Maidu tribe of the Northwest; cf. Ursprung, II, p. 110), and the underwater adventures are recounted in great detail; cf. the myths of the Yokut (Ursprung, II, pp. 273 ff.), Salina (ibid., pp. 288 ff.), Black-footed (ibid., p. 665), Sea-bellied (p. 674), Arapaho (pp. 685, 688, 692 ff, 887), Ceien (759). But see also the myths of the Samoans (Ursprung, m, p. 352) and the Voguls (Feldman, op. cit., p. 381).

¹⁰⁹ Some of these conceptions are discussed by U. Bianchi, // *dualismo religioso*, pp. 69 ff.

¹¹⁰ Diihnhardt compares a fairly widespread myth among the Algonquins and Iroquois (twins quarrel in their mother's womb and one of them comes out through a rib) with the Iranian tradition of the prenatal quarrel between Ohnazd and Ahriman and concludes the Iranian origin of the North American myth. (Natarsagen, I, pp. 1-79). The conclusion does not stand: the distance between Iran and the eastern forest region of North America is considerable, and we find the myth nowhere between these two points (cf. also G. Hatt, op. cit., p. 22). As a parallel to the Transylvanian Gypsy legend (see above p. 82), in which the stick thrown by God into the water turns into a tree and out of the trunk of the tree comes the Devil, W. Schmidt quotes this myth of the Wawenock (Algonkin of the Northwest) people: The civilizing hero Gluskabe made himself out of a piece of earth left over after the Creator had made the first humans (see Ursprung, vol. VI, pp. 39-40). Cf. also the Koryak myth of the origin of the Raven, made from the dust produced by the sharpening of the knife of the supreme Being (ibid., vol. m, p. 403). The underlying idea is the same: the substance produced or used by God for his creative work is liable to give rise to Beings who later rise up against Creation and even against the

In Aryan day

in India the cosmogonic diving myth has developed into something quite different. The diving animal is a wild boar: it descends to the bottom of the sea and lifts up the Earth. But the identity of this cosmogonic boar has been interpreted differently over time. The Tait tinya Saiphita (VII, 1, 5, 11 and mm.) presents the exemplary image of the primordial Waters and Prajapati, moving like the wind above the waves. He sees the Earth and, transforming into a boar, descends into the deep and lifts it up. The Taittiriya Brahmal}a (I, 1, 3, 5 ff.) gives further particulars : in the beginning when there were only Waters, Prajapati saw a lotus leaf and thought that there was something on which it was resting. He took the form of a wild boar, dived down and found land. Breaking off a piece he came to the surface and spread it on the lotus leaf. Satapatha Brâhmal}.a (XVI, 1, 2, 11) adds this important detail, that a boar called Emuṣa raises the Earth.

Now, the boar Emusha is already attested in the *Rig-Veda* (I, 61 , 7; VIII, 77, 1 O) where he is charged with guarding, on the other side of the mountain, a hundred buffaloes and a plate of rice. Indra shoots an arrow with his bow which pierces the mountain and kills the boar. The name *emusha* is of course not Aryan but, following Kuiper, Austro-Asiatic. Kuiper showed that the myth is found exclusively in the hymns of the Kat:iva family. 111 This name is not Aryan, and Hillebrandt believed that the KaQva family did not belong to the elite of the Vedic priestly families. 1 12 This family probably knew less of Aryan traditions1 13 but had access instead to the pre-Aryan mythological wealth, muQcJa or proto-mUQQa.

Kuiper thinks that the boar of cosmogonic myth had nothing to do, originally, with the rigvedic *emus*.114 We do not share this view

111 F. J. Kuiper, 'An Austro-Asiatic Myth in the Rig-Veda' (Mededelingen der koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen, Amsterdam, n. ser., XI, 7, 1 950, pp. 163-1 82), p. 173.

112 Cf. Alfred Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* (2nd ed., Breslau, 1927-1929), vol. II pp. 58, n. 3, 256, 426, n. 2.

113 Cf. F. B. J. Kuiper, op. cit. , p. 179.

114 Jbid. , pp. 1 77 ff. On the wild boar myth, cf. also Macdonell, in *Journal of*

Royal Asiatic Society, XXVI, 1895, pp. 178-189; Jarl Charpentier, *Kleine Beiträge zur indo-iranischen Mythologie*, Uppsala 1911, pp. 49 ff.

opmle. Gonda has made convincing arguments in favor of the identity of the wild boar *enuša* in the two mythical complexes. 11s It can therefore be assumed that we are dealing with a myth involving cosmogonic submergence, already known to Austro-Asiatic peoples and which was assimilated and developed by Brahmanism. For as we have seen, in the Brahmanic texts, Prajapati is the one who transforms himself into a boar in order to raise the Earth from the bottom

In *Ramayarza* (II, 1 10, 3), this role falls to of Brahma. But in *Vishrzu Puraria* (I, 4, I ff.), the coalescence between Brahma and Vishnu is already perfect: Brahma-Vishr.iu, in the form of a wild boar, descends to the bottom of the ocean and lifts up the Earth. in

Bhagavata Piuiirza (I, 3, 7), the boar is an *avatar* of Viši:iu.1 16 The fact that a Great God is the one who submerges in the form of an animal emphasizes the archaism of the myth (indeed, this motif is not found among the shepherd peoples of Central Asia). On the other hand, it should be added that in most Indian versions it is not about the original Creation, but about the re-creation of the World after "a great dissolution". From a certain point of view one can compare these repetitions of creation with the Deluvian myths. But as I have already noted (above, p. 12 1, n. 98) there is a similarity of structure between the aquatic cosmogonies and the Diluvian myths.

For Indian thought, which repudiated the idea of an absolute beginning in time, and which elaborated in hallucinatory terms the doctrine of cosmic cycles, cosmogony was confused eventually with every new beginning of the world.

Variiha-avatiira enjoyed great popularity in Hinduism. He has sometimes been regarded as the most perfect incarnation of the Viksi:iu and has never ceased to demand the attention of Indian artists.1 17 Dat fid

ns J. Gonda, *Aspects of early V❖uism*, Utrecht, 1 954, pp. 139 ff. It is certain that the boar played an important role in the cultural complex of archaic agricultural societies; cf. Gond❖ ibid. , pp. 141 ff.

116 in a verse from Ceyl❖ Rahu, the demon who causes eclipses, asked him to set a lotus seed on the waves. When the seed had grown, Rahu descended on its stem. The water was so deep that it took him four days to return to the surface (Cf. H. Pmer, *Village Folie-Tales of Ceylon*, 1-il, London, 1916-191 9, vols. I, pp. 47 and unn.) But there is probably a confusion between the demon Rahu and the boar

Raghu ; cf. W. Ruben ¹¹⁰ über die Literatur der vorarischen Stämme Indiens (Deutsche Ak.ad. d. Wissenschaften, B erlin, Institut fUr Orient forsch., Veroff., 15, 1 952), pp. 51 ff.

¹¹¹ Cf. J. Gonda, op . cit. p. 1 40, n. 66.

that certain religious conceptions and practices that flourished in Hinduism seem to have their roots in the pre-Aryan substratum, the popularity of *variha-avatiira* could be explained by its pre-Aryan origin.

Pre-Asian India and Southeast Asia

Indeed, the cosmogonic diving myth is attested among several aboriginal populations, especially the Munda tribes. 118 Here is how the Bihor peoples of Chota Nagypur recount it: The supreme spirit, Singbonga, who is in the nether world, rises to the surface of the Waters on the notched stem of a lotus. He sits on the lotus blossom and orders the tortoise to fetch some clay from the bottom. The tortoise complies, but by the time it rises to the surface, the clay has softened. Singbonga then commanded the crab to skin itself

ropes. It took clay between its paws, but, like the frog, lost it on the way back. Finally Singbonga sent the leech; it

He swallowed a bit of clay and deposited it in the mine of the Supreme Spirit, who made the Earth. 119 A similar myth is found among the Santali: Marang Buru sends fish, crab and leech to sink.

120 The mUQ4a peoples tell it in almost the same terms 121 Myth

118 We shall find a synoptic picture of the variants of the myth in central and northern Asia, India and Indonesia in L. Walk, "Die Verbreitung des Tauchmotif in der Unneerschopfungs- (und Sintflut-) Sagen" (Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien, LXI, 1933, pp. 60-76). Cf. and R. H. Lowie, "Zur Verbreitung der Autsagen" (Anthropos, XXI, 1926, pp. 615--616). The Indian variants are recorded in Stith Thompson and Jonas Balys, Motif and Type Index of the Oral Tales of India, Bloomington, Indiana, 1958, pp. 15-16.

119 Rai Bahadur Sarat Sarat Chandra Roy, The Bihors, a little known jungle-tribe of Chota Nagpur, Ranchi, 1925, pp. 39-40; G. Hatt, op. cit., p. 25.

120 Sarat Chandra Chandra Mitra, "Schöpfungsmythe der Bihor und ihre Parallele bei den Santal und in Nordamerika" (Anthropos, XXVI, 1931), p. 599. Cf. another variant, in Adolf Basti, Volkerstimme am Brahmaputra, Berlin, 1883, p. 125, reproduced by Alfred Kuhn, Berichte über den Weltanfang bei den Indochinesen und ihren Nachbarvölkern, Leipzig, 1935, pp. 2A-25.

121 W. Schmidt, Das Mutterrecht, Wien-Mödling, 1955, p. 40. W. Schmidt (ibid.) also cites the variants gond, agori and bondo. Verer Flwin, The Baiga, London, 1934, pp. 308-311, gives a long version of the myth among the Baiga tribe,

where the diving is performed by the crow (the daughter of the Creator, Bhagavan) and the earthworm.

also seems to be known by the Savara (= Saora, mu9<Ja tribe) : the world had been submerged and everything had been destroyed, except for a couple who were saved in a tigvl. Kittung's (the Creator's) mouse brought up the plummet from the bottom of the ocean and Kittung spread it over the waters. 1 22

The myth is found among the Garo people of Assam, Singpho, Sema Naga etc. latl version garo : the god Tattara Rabuga, deciding to make the Plmant, asked the goddess Nosta-Nopantu to fulfill his wish. The goddess sent a large crab, but the water was too deep and the crab turned away. Nosta-Nopantu asked

then a small crab would sink in turn. But the little crab was afraid and quickly returned to the surface. Eventually

urmi she sent a scarab beetle, Chiching B arching, and he brought a bit of clay with which Nosta-Nopantu made the Plmîntul. 123 The Singpho relate that the gods Mutum and Muta came down from Heaven and took a handful of earth from under the Waters, with which they made the World. 124 The Kachari (Sema Naga) speak of the crabs which bring the clay needed by the Creator. 1 25 Among the Shans of B irmania, the ants are the sinking ones. 126

Among the Negritos Semang people of the Malay peninsula, the Menik Kaïen and Kintak Bong tribes believe that the Plmant was brought from the deep sea in the form of dust by the scarab beetle

Taheum. The Kapaw n bear presses with its paw, otherwise the earth would have continued to grow up to Heaven. 127 In this version, the insect does not seem to have been sent by a deity, but sinks of its own accord.

initiative. A similar myth was discovered among the Kenta people of the Malay peninsula: in the beginning there were only Waters. The supreme being lived in the sky; next to him was the Sun. From the bottom

122 Verrier Elwin, *The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 8♦87.

123 A. Playfair, *The Garos*, London, 1909, pp. 82 ff. ; cf. also R. Lowie, *op. cit.*, pp. 615-616; G. Hatt, *op. cit.*, p. 25; A. KUhn, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

124 A Ktlhn, *op. cit.*, p. 23 (Nr. 25).

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¹²⁴ J. H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, London, 1921, p. 380, n. 1; A. KUhn, pp. 24-25 (No. 26).

¹²⁶ L. Walk, op. cit., pp. 65, 74.

¹²⁷ Ivor H. N. Evans, *Studies in religion1 Folk-lore and Custom in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula* Cambridge, 1923, p. 154; id, *The Negritos of Malaya*, Cambridge, 1927, pp. 159-160; G. Hatt, p. 31; A. KUhn, p. 25 (No. 31); cf. also W. Schmidt, *Ursprung, m*, pp. 158 ff., 167; VI, p. 233.

Tahoba (a scarab beetle) brought him a clod of earth. It soon began to grow to such an extent that, as it turned out, if the bear had not pressed it, there would have been nothing but mountains and no plain. 123

Cosmogonic diving is known only sporadically in Indonesia and Micronesia. The Dayac people of north-west Borneo speak of two Creator Spirits descending into the primeval sea in the form of birds and bringing two pieces of earth the size of a chicken's egg. One of the birds makes its egg into Heaven, the other into Earth. But the Earth is too vast, and the two Spirits are obliged to compress it, thus giving birth to mountains. 129 This last detail recalls several ballet variants.

canice. But the myth betrays a contamination with a different theme: that of the cosmogonic egg.

in the traditions of the Toba-Batak people of Sumatra, a young girl comes down from the sky, sends an earthworm to fetch clay and kneads the Earth.¹³⁰ According to another variant, an earthworm and a large scarab bring a handful of earth from the sky. 131 This last form is characteristic: indeed, the celestial origin of the Earth is the dominant motif of the Indonesian and Micronesian cosmogonies.

In Melanesia, cosmogenic diving is unknown than in New Britain among the coastal tribes of the Gazelle Peninsula. It is the civilizing heroes, the To-Kabinana and To-Karuvu brothers, who fished the Earth from the depths of the sea. The same history

¹²⁸ P. Schebesta, *Bei den Urwaldzwerge von Malaya*, Leipzig, 1927, pp. 21-23, 242. A. KUhn, p. 25 (Nr. 34); G. Hatt, p. 31. The vertiginous growth of the Earth is, we are reminded, one of the characteristic notes of the Southeast European and Central Asian variants. Chinese cosmogonic traditions know "living lands": these are "lands growing out of themselves"; cf. H. Maspero, "Legendes mythologiques dans le Chou King" (*Journal asiatique*, 1924, pp. 1-100), p. 47, n. 1.

¹²⁹ W. Schmidt, *Grundlinien einer Vergleichung der Religion und Mythologie der austronesischen Volker*, Vienna, 1910, p. 7; G. Hatt, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹³⁰ A. KUhn, *op. cit.*, p. 27, quoting A. Bastian, *Die Denkschlöpfung umgekehrter Welt aus Kosmogonischen Vorstellungen in Cultur und Uncultur*, Berlin, 1896, pp. 11-12.

¹³¹ A. KUhn, *op. cit.*, p. 26 (No. 36), after J. Wameck, *Studien über die Litteratur der Toba-Batak*, Berlin, 1899, pp. 123-124.

richer circle❖, in the southern region of the New Hebrides.¹³² In Micronesia, the cosmogonic diving motif undergoes a process of erosion and contamination with other mythic motifs and eventually disappears.¹³³

In summary, while in Hindu traditions a Great God is depicted in the form of a wild boar, among the Aboriginal peoples of

India, Assam and the Malay peninsula diving is commanded by a Creator Being and performed by amphibious animals. In Exceptionally (in a half-blood version), the diving animals are instructed by a Creator Being. They dive three times, like the birds of certain Siberian variants or like the Devil of the South-Eastern European genus.¹³⁴

¹³² Ronald B. Dixon, *Oceanic Mythology* (= *The Mythology of all Races*, vol. IX, Boston, 1916), p. 105. In the Philippine archipelago of Pintados a sea eagle fetches clay from the bottom of the sea; cf. L. Walk, *op. cit.*, pp. 65, 74. Walk also cites a legend of the Gilbert Islanders concerning the origin

Samoa, but the reason for the dive is almost gone Na Arcan (Mr. Spider) calls his brothers, Val and Polyp, and shouts to them: "Polyp, go and mix the sand with the stones! Val, wash the sand and stones and gather them together (Walk, pp. 63, 65, 74). A whole series of oceanic myths speak of a huge fish brought up from the bottom of the ocean and cut up with knives; this is the reason why the islands are ruffled and boulder-strewn, criss-crossed by mountains. (Dixon, *op. cit.*, pp. 43 ff.)

in New Zealand and Hawaii, protagonist of the Earth's fishing under

The giant fish is Maui; cf. the text and commentary in Katharine Luomala, *Maui-of-a-thousand-Tricks : His Oceanic and European Biographers*, Honolulu, 1949, pp. 45--47, and s. v. earth-fishing.

¹³³ It is found in a poorer form among certain tribes of north-west Australia; the demiurge W6loro sinks his mine in the ocean and takes out a little earth; cf. H. Petri, *Sterbende Welt in Nordwest Australien*, Brunswick, 1954, p. 105.

¹³⁴ The series of two unsuccessful attempts followed by a third, crowned by success is also found in other types of creation myths. The Tai and the Chinese, for example, tell the story that when the world **was** covered with water, the Lord from Heaven sent three heroes in turn to settle the earth and make it habitable; cf. Henri Maspero, *Les religions chinoises*, Paris, 1950, pp. 189 ff. (The gist is already to be found in the article of 1924, *Legendes mythologiques dans le Chou-King*.) According to a Moslem tradition, handed down by Tabari, **Allah** had sent the angel Gabriel to Earth to bring a handful of dust necessary for the creation of man. But following the insidious advice of the Devil (= Iblis), the Earth refuses. The second messenger, Michael, was no more successful. But the third, 'Azri'il, overruled the Earth's refusal and brought the dust requested by God. In reward, **Allah** did not give me '**Azri'il** the angel of Moitia : it is he who takes possession of the souls of the dead ; cf. Tabari, *Annales*; ed. Goeje, I, 87; quoted from H. Schwarzbaum, "The overcrowded earth"

(Numen, N, 1957, pp. 59-74), p. 64.

The only cases in which it is not amphibious animals but birds belong to another geographical and cultural area (cf. the Dayak legend of the two Creator Spirits who dive in the form of birds, and, at Toba-Batak, the rune sent by the young celestial girl).

Origin and diffusion of the myth

The question of the origin and diffusion of this myth has fascinated scholars. Dähnhardt believed in an Iranian origin (*op. cit.*, pp. 14 ff.). But it turned out that the myth is not attested in Iran. Uno Harva was thinking of India, where the oldest written records are to be found, clearly referring to the cosmogonic immersion.¹³⁵ The two scholars explained the North American versions by the diffusion of the Asian myth in its "dualistic" form; consequently, the diffusion must have occurred quite recently (perhaps during the Middle Ages). On the one hand, the American myth of the cosmo gonc submersion never contains the dualistic element, which is so characteristic of the South-East European and Central Asian variants. How can it be explained by the fact that, having passed through northern Asia into North America, the myth has lost the very element which, *a priori*, should have been of the greatest interest to people who are passionate about the "dualistic" problem and, in particular, the antagonism between the Creator and the Coyote. On the other hand, the myth can be found among archaic ethnic groups (Yuki, Maidu, etc.), which are entirely lacking in recent Asian influences.¹³⁶

Also accepting the Asian origin of the North American versions,

Wilhelm Schmidt proposed a very different chronology. For the scholar author of *Ursprung der Gottesidee*, the diffusion of

¹³⁵ Cf. Die religiösen Vorstellungen der Altaischen Völker, p. 108 ; id. [= Uno Holmberg], Finno-Ugrian, Siberian Mythology (= The Mythology of All Races, vol. IV. Boston, 1927), pp. 328, 331.

¹³⁶ In a recent article, Earl W. Count broadly accepts Dähnhardt Harva's hypothesis of the recent origin of North American myths : "The Earth-Diver and the Rival Twins : A Clue to time correlations in North-Eurasian and North American Mythology" (Selected Papers of the XXIXth International Congress of Americanists, edited by Sol Tax, vol. 10, Chicago, 1952, pp. 55-62).

had to be realized in a very distant epoch, and this for one reason: certain North American ethnic groups, which possess the cosmogonic diving myth, represent an *Urkultur* (i.e. a nomadic hunter-gatherer culture), whereas in central and northern Asia, the myth is an integral part of the religious traditions of the shepherd peoples belonging to a younger culture (*Primärkultur*). Given that domestication was unknown in North America, the myth had to come with the first waves of North Asian populations who did not know domestication. These populations still at the stage of hunting and fruit-gathering would have crossed from Asia to the Americas before the disappearance of the Behring Isthmus (i.e. around 25 to 1500 years BC).

On the other hand, W. Schmidt also supported the North Asian origin of the Austro-Asiatic peoples, and especially of the aboriginal tribes of India and Indochina, in whom cosmogonic immersion is attested.¹³⁷ According to W. Schmidt, the myth was part of the common heritage of the Paleolithic populations of North Asia; from there it spread southward with the Austro-Asiatics, and to America before the rupture of the Behring Isthmus, with the ancestors of the Maidu, Patwin, Wintu, etc.¹³⁸

It remains for paleontologists and ethnologists to judge the truth of this hypothesis. It should be noted, however, that W. Schmidt attached exaggerated importance to the disappearance of the Behring Isthmus for the chronology of North American cultural traditions. Communications between the two continents continued almost without interruption, and Asian influences continued into the Neolithic and even later into the Metal Age.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ But Herman Bauman has remarked that the myth is not known to Austro-Asians proper, but only to the Gonzi, the Munda and other populations improperly called by W. Schmidt "Austro-Asiatic"; cf., "P. Wilhelm Schmidt und das Mutterrecht" (Anthropos, vol 53, 1958, pp. 212-228), p. 215.

¹³⁸ W. Schmidt, Ursprung d. Gottesidee, vol VI, pp. 40 ff., 233; vol. XI, pp. 166 et seq.; id. Das Mutterrecht, pp. 40 et seq.

¹³⁹ Cf., e.g., Josef Haekel, "Kosmischer Baum und Pfahl in Mythos und Kult der Stämme Nordwestamerikas" (Wiener volkerkundliche Mitteilungen, VI, Jahrgg., N. F., Bd I, nr. 1 --, 1958, pp. 33-81), spec. pp. 73 ff. The problem of communications between Asia and America via the Behring Isthmus has been exhaustively studied by Alan L. Bryan, "Early Man in America and the Late Pleistocene Chronology of Western Canada and Alaska" (Current Anthropology, X, Oct. 1969, pp. 339-367; see especially pp. 350 ff.).

Wilhelm Schmidt's hypothesis has recently been modified by one of his most brilliant disciples¹⁴⁰ Josef Haekel. This scholar starts from W. Schmidt's observation that between the two major groups in which the myth of the ScufundAri is attested, especially the northern and southern Californians and the eastern, central and western Algonkin, there were probably historical relationships (cf. *Ursprung*, V, p. 734). Now, the prehistoric cultural complex of central California lies at the center of the region of the cosmogonic sinking myth. It is the oldest level of Central California prehistory,

- around 2500 *B.C.* - with those *charmstones* as specific objects. On the other hand, prehistoric stone objects of the same type, called *plummets*, have been found in Archaic period settlements ("Neolithic" hunters without pottery) in the easternmost part of North America (stretching from Maine, on

Atlantic coast, all the way to Georgia and Tennessee), where another center of our myth is located. Between the prehistoric cultures of California and those of the East there were certainly relationships. On

above, those North American *plummets* and *charmstones* corroborate similar stone objects in the Neolithic settlements of northern Eurasia.¹⁴¹ It is therefore likely that the myth of cosmogonic submergence passed from North Asia to America with the earliest waves of Neolithic culture, during the third millennium.

¹⁴¹ If our myth was disseminated in America during Neolithic times, its "origin" is certainly older. As to the region in which it may have originated, two hypotheses have been advanced.

Postulating that the Primordial Waters motif could not have originated

¹⁴⁰ Cf. R. Beardsley, "Culture Sequence in Central California" (American Antiquity, XIV, 1948), pp. 24 ff.

¹⁴¹ Josef Hekel, "Prof. Wilhelm Schmidt Bedeutung für die Religionsgeschichte der vorkolumbischen Amerika" (Saeculum, VI, 1956, pp. 1-39), pp. 26 ff. In Haekel's opinion, the myth could not be considered the oldest of the North American cosmogonies. The motif of creation by a spiritual act of the Supreme Being, or with the aid of a primordial substance, is attested in even older strata of culture: those of the hunters and gatherers of the glacial and post-glacial eras (ibid., p. 27). For a contrary view see R. Pettazzoni, "L'idée de Création et la notion d'un Créateur chez les Calé-

forniens" (Proceedings of the 32 International Congress of Americanists [Copenhagen, 1956], Copenhagen, 1958, pp. 238-24).

in the imagination of continental peoples, Harva had proposed India as the original hearth.¹⁴² The hypothesis of a southern and maritime origin is also supported by A. B. Rooth: *"It is logical to seek the origin of the conception of the primeval ocean in a coastal or island area, where it would seem natural. We may draw the following conclusion from this reflection : this myth seems to have originated in the eastern Asiatic coastal area, from whence it spread westward across Siberia and eastward across the North American continent.* (It is logical to look for the origin of the Primordial Ocean conception in the coastal and insular area where it would seem natural. We may draw the following conclusion from this reflection : this myth seems to have originated in the East Asian coastal area from where it spread westward along Siberia and eastward along the North American continent." ¹⁴³

However, Gudmund Hatt has observed that cosmogonical scufWldation is especially prevalent in the mythologies of continental populations, and is less frequent in maritime populations. Indeed, the myth is not found on the Pacific coast of Asia; it is, on the contrary, attained by populations living in the interior of the Malay peninsula (Semang, etc.) and by the aborigines of India, and disappears precisely in essentially maritime cultures, for example in Micronesia. So it seems that it was not the oceanic landscape that inspired the cosmogonic sinking motif, but rather the image of the great lakes of northern Asia. ¹⁴⁴

The structure and sign ification of cosmogenic diving

We must be careful, however, not to attach too much importance to the correspondences between the geographical environment and the myth's landscape. The latter is the apaJline of an imaginary world and, in relation to the cosmic environment, is in the situation of *Madame Bovary's* relationship with an adulterous

¹⁴² One Harv' Die relig. Vorstellungen, p. 108. We, too, suggested the same

origin in an article of our youth, "A Volume of Literary Research" (Vremea, July 3, 1934).

¹⁴³ Ana Birgitta Rooth, "The Creation Myths of the North American Indians" (Anthropos, 52, 1957, pp. 497-508), p. 500.

¹⁴⁴ G. Hatt, Asian Influences in American Folk/lore, p. 30.

real. The primordial waters are an almost universally widespread motif and it is not necessary to look for its origin in a precise geographical area. It is an exemplary image of mythical geography. Now, the theme of cosmogonic diving already presupposes the image of the primeval ocean, and it is from this image that we must start when analyzing the structure and development of our myth.

Depending on the image of primordial Waters, the theme of cosmogonic diving must be very old. It's likely to have spread from a single center. The penetration of the myth into America before the third millennium indicates that it was already known to prehistoric peoples of central and northern Asia.¹⁴⁵ In all probability, the original form of the myth presented the Creator himself sinking into the depths of the Waters in the form of an animal to bring the material for the creation of the Earth. As we have seen this form is found in India and in some North Asian and North American versions.¹⁴⁶

The episode of the theriomorphic Creator sinking into the depths of the ocean later evolved into what we might call the second phase of the myth: from now on, the Creator orders the shores, servants or auxiliaries to dive. It is from this second phase that the dramatic and ultimately 'dualistic' possibilities of cosmogonic submergence develop. The peripheries of the immersion and of the cosmogonic work that follows it are now invoked to explain the imperfections of Creation. Since it is no longer the Creator who dives to procure the substance of the Earth, the work being accomplished by one of his auxiliaries or servants, it is possible to introduce an element of insubordination into the myth, thanks to this episode,

¹⁴⁵ Waldemar Jochelson asserts that, unknown among the Koryak, the myth is found among the Chukktchis and Yukagiri, but cites no facts to support this assertion; cf. *The Koryak. Religion and Myths* (= *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, VI, L Leiden — New York, 1905), pp. 351 and unnn.

¹⁴⁶ The immersion of an omotomorphie god seems to be attested in cave paintings and Bronze Age pottery from northern Europe and western Siberia; cf. Karl Jettmar, "Die Aussage der Archäologie zur Religionsgeschichte Nordeurasiens" in Ivar Paulson (et al.), *Die Religionen Nordeurasiens und der amerikanischen Arktis*, Stuttgart, 1962, p. 313.

of antagonism or opposition. The 'dualistic' interpretation of Creation became possible through the progressive transformation of God's theriomorphic auxiliary into his 'servant', or companion, and finally into his adversary.

It would be in vain to hope that we could reconstruct the different stages that separate, for example, the myth as we find it in aboriginal India and North America from the 'dualistic' forms of Central Asia and South-East Europe. But we can imagine, at the most at least broadly speaking, this long process of transformation before

all, we have to take into account archaic cosmogonies and mythologies (probably of lunar structure), which explain the World and human existence through a system of oppositions and tensions, without however reaching ethical or metaphysical "dualism". The polarities discernible in the cosmos and in human life (day and night, up and down, chaos and creation, winter-summer, virtual-manifested, man-woman, birth-death, etc.) served as an illustration and model of the periodic renewal of the universe and of Life; they also constituted the "theory" designed to explain the whole of reality and, above all, the human condition. It is to be supposed that such conceptions were more or less articulated in the pre- and protohistoric civilizations of Central and South-East Asia, and, of course, elsewhere.¹⁴⁷

We have no reason to believe that such conceptions The latter would have disappeared in the regions where "dualist" systems would later be found, nor, consequently, that the latter are exclusively late Iranian influences. Given the conservative nature of religious ideas, it is to be believed that these archaic conceptions have survived under the impact of later influences, and have undergone much modification. We fail to explain the different forms of our myth — from its hypothetical "primal state" (The theriomorph Creator sinks into the depths of the Ocean) to the South-East European variants (The Devil

¹⁴¹ It is not our intention here to discuss this problem. See Carl Hentze, *Bronzegerät, Kultbauten, Religion, im ältesten China der Shangzeit* (Antwerp, 1951; cf. also our remarks in *Critique*, No. 83, April 1954, pp. 33 ff.). On the "origin" of the Dualsysteme, cf. Herman Baumarut, *Das doppelte Geschlecht*, B

erlin, 1955, pp. 31-4, ~~33-34~~, and passim. See also M. Eliade, *The Quest, History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago, 1969), pp. 127-175 ("Prolegomena to Religious Dualism").

performing the immersion at God's command) – rather than by undergoing a series of successive modifications, taking place at different times and under the impulse of new religious ideas. The dramatic peripatetics of diving are likely to explain both the appearance of Death and of mountains and swamps, the "birth" of the Devil and the existence of Evil.

Needless to assume that this myth has been repeatedly re-invented. But one guesses the reasons why it has been continually reinterpreted and revalorized. It could, for example, illustrate that *otiositas* of God after the creation of the world, as among the Finno-Ugrians and in Eastern Europe. It also lends itself to contaminations with dualistic, Manichean and Bogomilic elements, as probably happened in Russia and the Balkans. But since cosmogonical cosmogony is not attested in the Mediterranean, nor in the ancient Near East, nor *in* Iran, while it is widespread throughout Eurasia, its presence in oral Europe cannot be explained solely by late Gnostic or Manichean influences. These only explain its "dualistic" aspect. The archaism of the myth in its predualistic form leads us to regard it as already part of the religious heritage of the protohistoric populations of south-eastern Europe. The fact that so many other elements of archaic culture survived until the threshold of the twentieth century in the Balkans and Eastern Europe makes such a hypothesis less hazardous than it might at first appear. 148

But let us hasten to add that the interest of the cosmogonic diving myth does not lie in its "history", which is otherwise so difficult to reconstruct. Its importance, it seems to us, lies in the fact that it represents the only "popular" cosmogony in south-eastern Europe. 149 The fact that this archaic myth, continually reinterpreted and revalorized, has been accepted by the peoples of this region proves that it responded to a deep-seated need of the popular soul. On the one hand, it gave

148 Cf. Leopold Schmidt, *Gestaltheiligkeit im bäuerlichen Arbeitsmythos*, Vienna, 1952; Dr. Jaap Kunst, "Cultural relations between the Balkans and Indonesia" (in Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, Medeling, n° CVII, Amsterdam, 1954); see below chap. V.

149 It is well known that non-biblical cosmogonies have disappeared from the folklore of western Europe.

dental. Paul Sebilot had observed that there is no cosmogonic myth in the folk

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traditions of France (see Folk/ore de France, vol. I, 1905, p. 1 82.)

the imperfection of Creation and the existence of evil in the world. On the other hand, it revealed aspects of God which Christianity clearly denied, but which had obsessed the joyful imagination of archaic man and which, after all, never ceased to raise questions and speculation. One of these aspects of God, emphasized in Balkan legends in particular, was his *deus otiosus* character, which clarified the contradictions and sufferings of human life. Another aspect was the mystery of a comradeship, a friendship, or even a consanguinity between God and the Devil, a mystery which had troubled the human spirit long before Zurvanism, and whose historically attested solutions constitute almost a phenomenology of divine bi-unity or of that *coincidentia oppositorum*.

- in popular circles, where the myth circulated — of thematic reflections, but rather of images, scenarios and symbols that helped the audience to grasp a deeper, and much more mysterious structure of divinity.

Although, continually reinterpreted, the myth of the sinking of the Moggonic cosmos has preserved, in its most recent versions, the landscape of the gynean fold: the Great Waters before Creation and God sending a being diving into the deep. An extremely archaic image, of course. ¹⁵¹ Apart from its immediate context - which depends in each particular case of the development of the narrative fabric — **the** imagery of the primordial waters and the cosmogonic mystery that follows have a function at a deeper level of psychic life. The primordial waters and the cosmogonic mystery are part of this imaginary world that is increasingly recognized as a constitutive dimension of human existence. It is not uninteresting to note, once again, how this imaginary world is populated by **symbols**, figures and scenarios that come down to us from the earliest times

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Mircea Eliade, "La coincidentia oppositorum et le mythe de la totalité" (Eranos-Jahrbuch, XXVI, Zürich, 1959, pp. 195-236), reproduced in the volume Mephistophiles et l'Androgyne, Galimard, 1961.

¹⁵¹ See also F. R. Schröder, "Die Göttin des Urmeeres und ihr männlicher Partner" (Paul-Braunes, Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprachen und Li

teratur, 82, 1960, pp. 241-264) and Kurt Schier, 'Die Erdschöpfung aus dem Urmeer und die Kosmogonie der Volosp4' (Märchen, Mythos, Dichtung = Festschrift Friedrich von der Leyens, MUnchen, 1963 , pp. 303-334).

prehistory. Continuity at the level of images and the logical mythic scenario was maintained, despite the many vicissitudes at the level of narrative and disturbances at the level of religious and moral ideology. This is an important observation. For, by endeavouring to recognize such continuities linking the world in which we live with the revolved worlds of prehistory, modern research - both in the field of paletno logy and the history of religions and in depth psychology — has succeeded in renewing human knowledge.

1951-1961 .

VOIVODE DRAGOȘ AND "RITUAL HUNTING"

The "official founding" (as E. Lozovan puts it)¹ of the principate of Moldavia is linked, in the historiographical consciousness of the chroniclers and their readers, to a legendary event: the hunting of the buzzard (bour) by a Romanian from Mara Mures, Dragos, who later became the first voivode of Moldavia. It is not our task to reveal the historical realities camouflaged or transfigured in this legend. The origins and beginnings of the state of Moldavia are a matter of the medieval history of Romanians and we have neither the competence nor the intention to deal with it in these pages. Our research is on a completely different level: we are not interested in the possible "historicity" of a hunt for ibex, but in the exact opposite: the mythology underlying the legend developed around such a hunt.

Certain peoples, ancient and modern, have preserved myths and

more or less fragmentary mythological memories of their "origins". Exalted by romantic historiography, these fabulous traditions were later "demythologized" by critical and rationalist historiographers. Far be it from us to minimize the results of this painstaking and admirably rigorous research. But whatever their usefulness in the nineteenth century, we wonder whether such "de-mythologizing" efforts are worth the trouble of being united. To endeavor further to prove the non-historicity of a myth or legendary tradition would be time wasted. Today it is accepted that myth and legend are "true" in a different sense than, for example, a historical fact is considered "true". There are two different ways of existing in

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¹ Eugen Lozovan, Villes, campagnes et routes de la Romania Orientale (in F. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunen*, vol. V, Berlin, 1962, pp. 327-362), pp. 348 ff.

world, of two different approaches of the spirit in interpreting the world; modes of existence and activities of the spirit which are not mutually exclusive. A people, like an individual, can be aware of its responsibilities in history by courageously assimilating them, while at the same time enjoying the old myths and legends and creating new ones; for the latter give an account of other dimensions of human existence.

We will not go further with these preliminary remarks. Suffice it to say that from our perspective, Dragoș and the hunt of the fallow deer are part of a universe of symbolic structure, which it is important to explore carefully and understand. In other words, what interests us first and foremost is to decipher the meanings of the legend and to reveal the spiritual value system in which similar myths and legends were able to be born and flourish. Although we must here address the question of the origin and circulation of the theme

our myths, let's admit at the outset that it doesn't seem to us to be a crucial question.

The question is not : *where does* the legend come from, but to know, assuming that it really comes from somewhere, *why* this people borrowed *this* legend and *what it did* with it after assimilating it.

Reviewers

Early chroniclers briefly record the tradition. "In the year 6867 (= 1 359) from the creation of the world, by the will of God, the land of Moldavia was begun. And they began thus: There came Dragoș voievod of Maramureș, from the country of Hungary, to hunt after a juniper and donmi 2 years. "2 The same information is found in almost identical terms in the *Letopiseț* de la Bistrița and in the *Cronica sârbo-moldavă de la Neamț*.3 The *Cronica moldo-polonă* adds some details: "With

² Ioan Bogdan, *Vechile cronici moldovenești pînă la Ureche. Texte slave cu studiu, traduceri și note*, București, 1891 , p. 1 93.

3 Ioan Bogdan, *Cronice inedite atingătoare la istoria Românilor*. Adunate și publicate cu traduceri și adnotațiuni, Bucharest, 1895, pp. 49-100. Texte repro-

The will of Dunmezeu, the first voivode Dragoș came as a hunter from the country of Hungary from the place of Maramureș, on the trail of a jaguar, which they killed by the waters of Moldavia, and they rejoiced there with his boyars and they loved the land and were their lord for two years. "4

The most extensive version is given by the so-called Anonymous Chronicle.

"And there was among them a brave and valiant man by the name of Dragoș, and they and his companions set out to hunt wild beasts, and they tracked a buzzard under the high mountains, and they followed the buzzard over the high mountains, and they crossed the mountains, and they followed the buzzard to some very beautiful and beautiful places, and they came upon the buzzard on the shore of a water, under a willows, and they killed him and feasted on their venison.

And the thought came into their hearts from God, that they should seek a place to live and to settle there, and they all came together and decided to stay there, and they returned and told all the others of the beauty of the land and its waters and springs, that they might settle there also; And their companions liked the thought, and they determined to go where their companions had gone, and they sought to choose a place, for it was deserted all around, and on the outskirts the Tartars were wandering with their flocks, and they prayed to Vladislav, the Hungarian king, to let them go, and Vladislav the king with great mercy let them go.

And they went from Maramureș with all their companions and their wives and their children over the high mountains, and cutting down the forests and removing the stones, they crossed the mountains with the help of God and they liked the place and they settled there and they chose a wise man from among them by the name of Dragoș and they called him lord and prince. And from that time, by God's will, they began the land of Dragoas.

And Dragoș first went down to the water of Moldavia (namely Bourenii), then they went down to Baia and other places from

Bucharest, 1945, pp. 247 ff. See then Dan Simonescu, "Tradiția istorică și folclorică în problema "întemeierii" Moldovei" (Studii de Folclor și Literatură, București, 1967, pp. 27-40); C. C. Giurescu, "Valor istorică a tradiției conservate de I. Neculce" (ibid., pp. 439-495).

⁴ I. Bogdan, Vechile cronicile moldovenești până la Ureche, p. 223; G. Brătianu, op. cit., p. 248.

along the waters and springs and they made a seal for the whole country a head of a juniper. s The legend is related by the Romanian-speaking chroniclers who followed. The version presented by Ureche is the most complete, and seems to have served as a source for other chroniclers. Ureche essentially reproduces the story narrated in the *Cronica Anonimă*, adding a few details of interest. "For the shepherds of Ardei, which is called Maramureș, were wandering in the mountains with their beasts, when they came upon a beast called bour, and after a long chase, which they ran through the mountains with their dogs, they brought it out to the Moldavian water. There they found the tired beast and killed it in the place where it is now called Boureni, if they have dismounted the village, and the country's hierul or bour's head seal is sealed. And the bitch, with which they drove that beast, they killed, and they called it Molda, and then from the name of the bitch Molda Molda Molda Molda, and then from the name of the bitch Molda they called it Molda, or, as some call it, Moldova; and the countries for the name of the water they named it Moldova. "6

Ureche does not mention Dragoș at all. He speaks of several lord's sons who came hunting from Maramureș. In the fragment attributed to Stolnicus Cantacuzino, too, there is only mention of a few shepherds who, moving with their flocks through the forest, encountered a jaguar and, spotting it, crossed the mountains.⁷ As R. Vuia remarks, this tradition presents a quite rational explanation, almost devoid of legendary elements, of the founding of the Principality of Moldavia.⁸ But it is obvious that it is a process, conscious or unconscious, of "de-mythologization": the shepherds substituted themselves for the hunters. Ureche thus uses the "etymological evidence (the Molda river got its name from the Molda bitch, the bour was knocked down in Boureni), which also betrays the effort to rationalize a legendary tradition, while at the same time making it more "historical" and more "natural". How much this trend is a

mologist satisfied the taste of the time, we can see from the notes

⁵ Cronica Anonimă in I. Bogdan, Vechile cronici românești pînă la Ureche, pp. 237-238 ; G. Brătianu, op . cit., pp. 248 ff.

⁶ Grigore Ureche Vornicul and Simion Dascălul, Letopisețul Țării Moldovei, ed. C. C. Giurescu, Craiova, 1934, pp. 4 et seq., G. Brătianu op. cit., p. 250.

¹ M. Kogălniceanu , Chronicles of Romania, p. 110.

¹ R. Vuia, "The Legend of Dragoș" (Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională, I., Cluj, 1922, pp. 300-309), p. 302.

marginal to Ureche's Chronicle (the name Suceava would come from ungurescul *o ci*, "blănaru" etc. . . .)⁹.

in his Polish poem, Miron Costin develops and complicates the legend of Dragoș by introducing, among other things, elements of folk poetry: the young hero is preparing to leave to try his powers, his mother tries to hold him back by reminding him of the dangers that await him, etc.¹⁰ For this reason, Miron Costin's poem seems less useful to our research, as the *versiwea* narrated by Cantemir (probably borrowed from Costin). As for the details brought by Bandinus, they betray a "literary" origin, the author having scattered them from some late sources (Ureche's annotations, the Hungarian Chronicle – "Hungarian Letopisețul"), or having partially invented them according to his literary memories.¹¹

"Ritual hunting" and "animal hunting"

We will examine the possible sources of this tradition later. But since we intend to discuss the legend of Dragoș in the perspective of the history of religions, let us try to outline its structure. It is, of course, a "ritual hunt", for the pursuit of the *zimbri* results in the discovery of an unknown country and ultimately in the founding of a state. This mythical theme is extremely widespread, either in the form of origin myths (the origins of peoples, states, dynasties, etc.) or folk legends highlighting the unexpected consequences of the pursuit of an animal. In other words, the legend of Dragoș is only one of the many variants of the "ritual hunting" theme.

R. Vuia has already sketched, after P. Cassel, a picture of several vari-

⁹ M. Kogălniceanu, *Chronicles of Romania*, pp. 378-379.

¹⁰ R. Vuia, *op. cit.*, p. 302 See also E. Lozovan, "Rurik et Dragoș" (*Revue des Etudes Roumaines*, XI-XII 1969, pp. 61-79), pp. 66 ff.

¹¹ Indeed, there are three brothers, Domucus, Volocha and Dragoș (al whose name was given to a river, etc.). V. A. Urechia, *Codex Bandinus*. Memoir on the writing of Bandinus of 1646, followed by the text, accompanied by deeds and

documents (Annals of the Romanian Academy, Memoirs, Historical Section, series 2, tom. XVI, 1 893-4, pp. 1-355, Bucharest, 1 895), pp. 306-307 ; cf. also pp. 1 28-1 30. On Bandinus see further on chap. VI.

important¹² : an Indian prince chases a deer and wanders into unknown lands; attracted by a deer, Dietrich finds himself in Hell; a Tyrolean hunter chases a deer and dies in the mountains; a hunted deer turns into a girl or a demon, etc.

It is not our intention here to repeat and complete the analysis of all these variants. What interests us for now is the guiding function that an animal assumes, whether it is encountered during the hunt or in other circumstances. Thus, for example, according to Gregoire of Tours, a deer shows Clovis his ford across the Vienna River, swollen by the waters, when he was preparing to attack Alaric and the Goth army.¹³ In another place (*Hist.* IV, 44), the same author relates that the Burgundian general Mummolus, while running to the aid of the Goths besieged by the Lombards, managed to cross the Iser because a "wild animal" showed him the ford. The theme seems to have been quite popular in the West; Fredegair records that a wild animal showed the Vandals the passage through Gibraltar, and so they managed to cross from Spain into Africa.¹⁴ According to another tradition, a deer led the Franks pursued by the Saxons across the Main.¹⁵ Pio Rajna recalls an episode from the *Vie de S. Severin*, written at the beginning of the 6th century (Severin died in 482): a group of believers from Novico, on their way to the Sîmt, are surprised by a blizzard in the mountains.

A dream empowers the group leader. Indeed, the next day a bear shows himself to the faithful and leads them 200 km.¹⁶ Another

¹² R. Vuia, op. cit. pp. 303-304, summarizing P. Cassel, *Einleitung und Deutung des Buches der Sieben Weisen Meister*, Berlin, 1891, p. 104. Unfortunately the fundamental work of Carl Pschmidt, *Die Sage von der Verfolgung Hinde* (Inaugural Dissertation, Greiswald, 1911), seems to have escaped R. Vuia.

¹³ Fredegarius, *Historia Francorwn*, IT, 37.

¹⁴ Fredegarius, *Historia Francorwn*, IT, 60.

¹⁵ Thietmar of Merseburg, VI, 53; Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen* (1816), no. 455.

¹⁶ Mon. Germ. Hist. Auct. ant., t. I, 2, p. 22; Pio Rajna, *Le origini dell' epopea* In connection with the same text, F. Altheim (*Geschichte der Hunnen*, 1, 1959, p. 235) refers to an article which was inaccessible to us: H. J. Diesner, in: *Wissenschaftl Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther Universität (Hale Wittemberg)* VII, 1958, p. 111-170.

tradition tells us of the adventure of Lopichis, an ancestor of the historian Paulus Diaconus: a prisoner of the Avars, he manages to escape and is led by a wolf to his homeland.

For understandable reasons, the story of the Hun invasion, as told by Iordanes, has enjoyed unparalleled popularity. The invasion of Europe by the Huns in 375, although only one in a series of invasions by the peoples of the Eurasian steppe, had considerable repercussions: it is understandable why the event could not be forgotten. Iordanes relates, after Priscus, that the Huns lived beyond the Meotian marshes, devoted exclusively to hunting. One day when the Hun hunters were searching for their hunt

a deer appeared unexpectedly on the banks of the Meoti river and then plunged into the marshes. The animal acted like a guide: it moved forward a little and then stopped, so that the hunters could follow it and finally crossed the Meotian marshes on foot, which they had thought as impassable as the sea. When they reached the land of the *Scythians (Scythica terra)* the deer disappeared. The Huns, who did not know that there was another world beyond the marshes, were filled with admiration for the land of the Scythians. They believed that the ford through the marshes, hitherto unknown to them, had been revealed to them by divinity.

back among their own, they praised *Scythica terra* and convinced them and the others to follow, following the ford indicated by the deer.

¹⁷ Paulus Diaconus, Hist. l. Ang. IV, 37; cf. Grimm, Deutsche Sagen, n. 407 ; C. Pschmidt, op. cit., p. 39 et seq. F. Altheim, after recalling that, according to G. Baesecke, *Verh. Frihgeschichte d. deutschen Schrijft*. I, p. 334, these two legends are solid, concludes that they betray the influence of the knightly peoples of Asia on the Germans (Gesch. d. Hunnen, I, p. 235). See further.

¹⁸ Pio Rajna, op . cit. , pp. 250-251, cites four other examples: in Chanson des Saisnes, a deer crosses the Rhine, showing the ford of the French ford ; in Fierabras, a deer leads Richard of Normandy through the swift current of the Aogot ; in Karlamagnus Saga, a white stag, at Charlemagne's request, leads him across the Gironde ; in Chevalerie Ogier, Charlemagne is led by a white stag through the Alps. These examples, already discussed by Gaston Paris, Uon Gauthier and Carl Pschmidt, have been taken up and corpieted by A li Krappe, "Guiding Animals"

(*Journal of American Folklore*, 55, 1942, pp. 228-246), pp. 23-37 See also C. Pschmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 and *unn.*, 40 ff.

And when they had come into the land of the Scythians, they sacrificed to Victory all the prisoners whom they had captured. 19

SA we note the following elements : 1) the Huns were unaware of the existence of a territory beyond the marshes, for they lived isolated from the rest of the world; 2) they were only hunters; spotting the deer they followed it at first as you follow the hunt, but soon realized the "divine" nature of the incident, for the deer stopped from time to time to wait for them; finally she was no longer hunted but was a guide and disappeared when the hunters fled in safety to the other side of the Meotida marshes ; 3) once back in "Scythia" with all the Hun people they behaved like hunter-warriors: The first prisoners were sacrificed to Victory. The transition to a warlike state was made "natural". It is indeed known that the Huns practiced warfare in the style of the hunters of the Eurasian steppes, imitating the behavior of the camel herdsmen in pursuit of deer.

Myths of origin

We will return to this Hunic myth. Let us first complete the comparative file, starting with the Greco-Latin world. Describing the land of Picenum, Strabo (V, 4, 2) relates that the Picentines originated in the land of the Sabines: a woodpecker led their ancestors to their new homeland. This, Strabo adds, explains their name, for they call this bird "picus" and keep it as a bird

¹⁹ Iordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum sive Gothorum*, 1 23 et seq., (ch. 24). On the importance of this character, cf. F. Altheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 6 ff. See also Procopius of Caesarea, *Bell. Goth.*, IV, 5, and Karl Dietrich, *Byzantinische Quellen zum Länder-und Volkerkunde*, 191 2, II, p. 4. J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge*, Leipzig, 1 903, p. 529, thinks that Procopius refers to the Proto-Bulgarians. Pius Rajna was inclined to think that the Huns had borrowed the legend from the Goths, or that the story told by Priscus-Iordanes was passed through a

"Gothic creuzet"; *op. cit.* , p. 252. Iordanes, however, was not a Goth but a German; cf. F. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, vol. V, p. 27. A. H. Krappe concludes that since no Germanic tradition precedes the legend of the arrival of the Huns in Europe (375), the theme must be of Hunnic origin; *op. cit.*, pp. 240 ff.

But Krappe negli jase certain Greek and Latin traditions which we shall discuss below. See also G. Moravcsik, "Die Hürmische Hirschsage" (in : Festschrift für F. Altheim, Berlin, 1969, pp. 114-119).

consecrated to Mars.²⁰ In another passage, Strabo recalls the myth about the origin of the Samnites: once the Sabines consecrated to Mars all the children born during the year; when they reached maturity, they were sent colonists, and a bull showed them the way.²¹ After the Samnites, continues Strabo, come the Hirpinites: they take their name from the wolf, who served as their guide to their settlement; for "hirpus", explains our author, is the Samnite word for "wolf", a tradition attested by Festus.²²

These three origin myths have a common element: an Italic people formed an independent ethnic group, uniting an animal that served as their guide; this animal is "consecrated" to a god, which may mean, in some cases, that it is the god's representative or his epiphany. In both cases, the people which was formed in the wake of such a migration took the name of the animal-causa: picentini, hirpini. The number of Indo-European tribes and peoples whose ethnic name derives from an animal is considerable. ²³ Even the name of Italy, * *Vita/ia*, was said to derive from *vitulus*, "juncan". But that is another matter. The mythical theme that interests us concerns the founding of a colony, or the formation of a people, following in the footsteps of an animal-tracker. R. Merkelbach points out that this mythical theme is not unique to the Italic peoples.²⁴ Calli mach tells in his Hymn to Apollo (65 sq.) how B attos, on his way to Libya, was led by Apollo in the form of a

²⁰ The woodpecker as bird of Mars is also attested in the legend of Romulus; along with the she-wolf, the woodpecker had fed the twins ; Plutarch ♦ Romulus, 4, 2; cf.

F. Altheim, A History of Roman Religion, London, 1938, p. 66 ff. ²¹ Strabo, Geography, V, 4, 12.

²² Festus, Epit. 1 06 MÜler; cf. F. Altheim, op. cit. On the religious meanings of the ethnic name wolf, see chapter I.

²³ Richard v. Kienle, " Tier-Volkemamen bei indogengennanischen Stämme" (Wörter und Sachen, XIV, 1932, pp. 25--67).

²⁴ Reinhold Merkelbach, "Spechtfahne und Stammesgeschichte der Picentes" (Studies in honor of Ugo Enrico Paoli, Aorența, 1 955, pp. 51 3-520), p. 514. The importance of this article cannot be sufficiently appreciated. Merkelbach points out that the animal on the banners must be related to the myths of origin of the

ancient peoples of antiquity. In other words, by following the standard, the army reactualizes the mythical event of the founding of the nation.

raven; the god indicated the place where he was to build his city, Cyrene. Apollo's white ravens had also led the Boeotian emigrants.²⁵ This is a motif which is quite familiar in the Mediterranean world: letting an animal choose the site of a city or sanctuary. It happens that an oracle announces the appearance of an animal and gives advice that it should be followed. This is perhaps a late, „**raționalizare**“; originally, the animal itself had an oracular function; its epiphanies and its movements constituted the oracle.

The oracle of Delphi urges Cadmos to follow a cow; the cow goes to the grove of Ares, and where the cow sits down Cadmos builds the city of Theba.²⁶ According to one tradition, a cow also shows Ilos the place where Troy was to be built.²⁷ A sow led the exiled Trojans to Lavinium, probably the oldest settlement of Ostia.²⁸ Atheneus transmits to us a tradition preserved by Creophylus, according to which Ephesus was built on the spot where a wild boar, whose appearance had been announced by an oracle, was reached and doted by the future inhabitants of the city.²⁹ Needless to multiply examples. Let us only recall that animals not only indicate the location of a city or a settlement, but also serve as guides in desperate, seemingly hopeless situations. Calsthene, the earliest historian of Alexander the

²⁵ Schol, Aristophanes, *Nub.* 133, quoted by A. H. Krappe, p. 230, n. 22.

²⁶ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, III, 4, 1; cf. Pausanias, IX, 12, 1 f., IX, 19, 4. See the discussion of this episode in A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, I, Cambridge, 1914, pp. 54 ff. See also F. Vian, *Les origines de Thebes, Cadmos et les Spartes*, Paris, 1963 pp. 78 ff.

²⁷ Tzetzes, *Scholia in Lycoph.*, 29 ff. Cook, *Zeus*, I, pp. 468 ff. Another variant of the same tradition was recorded by Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, ID, 12, 3. See also the commentary by Frazer, Apollodorus, Apollodorus, *The Library*, New York, 1921, p. 38.

²⁸ Dionysius of Halicarnasus, I, 55 ff.; A. H. Krappe, p. 229. It is appropriate to recall the rites of the founding of Mandaean villages: a bull let loose for a time is pursued and sacrificed and its "monk" constitutes the center of the new settlement; cf.

L. Frobenius, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas*, Zurich, 1933 pp. 179 ff. But in this case it is a question of a foundation ritual — and not only of the indication of the territory of the future city.

²⁹ Athenaeus, VIII, 62; A. H. Krappe, op. cit., p. 229. The myth still survives perhaps only as a literary cliché in the early Christian chroniclers: the horse would

have shown Constantine the route of the future walls of Constantinople; cf. the references to Krappe, p. 229, n. 11.

Mare, tells how the guide who led him through the desert, to the oracle of Ammon, losing his way, Alexander and his army were led by two serpents. 30

As we have seen, the appearance and pursuit, and possibly the killing of a wild or domestic animal, are related to the birth of a people, the founding of a colony or a city, the consultation of an oracle by the creator of the first European empire:

an animal decides the *orientation* in an unknown territory or rescues a human group in a no-win situation; this act is not only "miraculous", it marks the *beginning of* a new historical reality: city, state, empire. We will see later that the revelations made by animals also refer to other realities.

Let us emphasize for the moment the difference between the legends of Dragoş, that of the crossing of the Meotida marshes and all the others: in the first, the animal-guide is chased by hunters; in the others the animal appears in a critical situation, but it is not a hunt; indeed, the animal is considered from the beginning as a guide sent by the gods (even if it is chased and killed, as in the legend of the foundation of Ephesus: the oracle had already announced the boar's appearance and prescribed its pursuit and slaughter in order to find the center of the future city). The last part of the Huns' version can be considered as belonging to this second category: from a certain point on, the deer is no longer hunted; it behaves as a guide and the Huns consider it as sent by a divine power.

Hunor and Magor

The Hungarian legend of Hunor and Magor develops the same motif. Hunting on the steppe, the brothers Hunor and Magor, **sons of** the giant Men roth, spotted a deer and chased it through the Meotida marshes to a fertile plain. There the deer disappeared, but as the place

³⁰ Fr. Gr. Hist. 124 F 14 a; see further references in Merkelbach, p. 314, n. 1. Cf. and A. H. Krappe, p. 321 and notes 33-34.

seemed good for grazing, Hunor and Magor returned home to ask their father's permission to settle there with their companions. Six years later, word of the songs and music drew them back to the steppe. The wives of the son of King Bereka (Bedar) and the daughters of King Dula were celebrating a feast (*festum tubae*) about which we are given no further information. Hunor and Magor abducted the women and girls and their descendants became the ancestors of the Huns and Hungarians.³¹

Comparing this legend with that of Dragoș, R. Vuia considers that "in substance their content is identical"³²— He even discovers two similar details: 1) Hunor and Magor find the land favorable for the growth of flocks (*pro armentis nutriendis ipsam conspexerunt opportunam: Chron. Hungaricum*), and in Ureche's Chronicle the hunters "all of them thought it a good place for food"; 2) in the Hungarian legend the two brothers ask their father for permission to move to Meotid³³ and in the Romanian legend, Dragoș and his companions ask Vladislav, the Hungarian prince, for permission to leave.³⁴ And yet, not excluding the possibility of a borrowing, R. Vuia is inclined to consider the Romanian legend a variant of an international theme of Indian origin.³⁵ The late Gh. Brătianu believed that the Hungarian legends, in connection with the conquest of Pannonia and Transylvania, directly influenced the tradition "dismounts" of the "Hungarian" Romanians from Maramureș.³⁶

³¹ Simonis de Keza, *Gesta Hungarorum* (= *Chronicon Hungaricum*, ed. Al. Horănyi, Vierme, 1781, cap. I, pp. 31–32, passage reproduced by R. Vuia, p. 306), and *Chronicon Pictum*, I, pp. 250 ff. Hungarian scholars regard the legend as depending on the Hunnic version; cf. Sebestym, quoted by R. Vuia, p. 308, n. 1. On Simon Keza's sources and method, cf. Kurt Wais, *Fruhe Epik Westeuropas und die Vorgeschichte des Niebelungenliedes*, I, Tübingen, 1953, pp. 32 ff. On the problem as a whole, cf. Michael de Ferninandy, "Studien zu den Quellen der ugrischen Mythologie" (*Ural-Altaische Jahrbucher*, 28, 1956, pp. 18–34); id., *Worterbuch der Mythologie*, Teil II, pp. 227, 233, V. and : Otto J. Maenchen-Helzen, *The World of the Huns. Studies in their History and Culture*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1973, pp. 444–459.

³² R. Vuia, op. cit., p. 306.

³³ R. Vuia, *ibid.* p. 306, n. 2

³⁴ R. Vuia, *ibid.*, p. 309.

35 Gh. Brătianu, Tradiția istorică despre întemeierea Statelor românești,
pp. 125 ff.

We do not intend to discuss the issue of the Romanian historical tradition regarding the foundation of the Principality of Moldavia.³⁶ But it is important to distinguish the three different realities: 1) *the historical event or process of the founding of the principality by Romanians descended from Maramureș*; 2) the tradition about this event as it was recorded, interpreted and presented by the first historiographers³⁷; 3) the myth of the founding, comprising as essential elements the chasing of a juniper by a group of hunters, the crossing of the mountains, the killing of a wild animal and the decision to settle in a newly discovered land.

It is possible that early historiographers may have known the Hungarian chronicles recounting the legend of Hunor and Magor and may have shifted its content or certain elements. But this in no way means that a similar legend would not have circulated among Romanians as well.³⁸ For, as we have seen, the mythical theme of the animal leading an ethnic group to its future homeland is widely attested in Italy and in the Hellenistic world. On the other hand, contrary to R. Vuia, the two traditions – Hungarian and Moldavian – are not "identical". In the first case, a deer guides Hunor and the Magor along the marshes, then disappears. In the second case, It's about a jaguar and a real hunt that ends in the animal's death. If a similar legend did not exist in Romanian folklore, it is hard to imagine why the chroniclers did not follow the Hungarian version entirely – for the motif of the miraculous stag exists in Hungarian folklore, and its final demise is a more dramatic and therefore more seductive element than the killing of the deer. R. Vuia's hypothesis that it was a The "heraldic legend"³⁹ is not appropriate: because the coat of arms of Moldavia was a zebra, the Hunor and Magor version would have been adopted,

³⁶ We refer to the book by Gh. Brătianu and, for the recent bibliography, to the study by Eugen Lozovan, cited in note 1, Pages from N. Iorga, *Histoire des Roumains*, Paris – Bucharest, 1937, vol. II pp. 341 et seq. are still valid.

³⁷ Gh. Brătianu emphasizes the fact that the earliest Slavonic letopica – those of Bistrița and Putna and the Anonymous Chronicle – were written about a century after

the events related; Tradiția istorică, pp. 121 -122.

³⁸ Nothing can be decided on the "origin" of the recorded oral folk tradition treated by S. Fl. Marian, Tradiții populare române, Bucharest, 1895, pp. 40-3.

³⁹ R. Vuia, op. cit. , p. 303 .

by replacing the roe deer with the juniper. But then, one wonders why the Hungarian tradition was not followed in its entirety, i.e. preserving the all-important element of the final *disappearance of the* fallow deer. It is useless to assume that this new element – **the** killing of the beast – was introduced because the Romanian lords and boyars enjoyed themselves hunting deer.⁴⁰ The Huns were essentially hunters, and yet the deer miraculously disappears after having guided their ancestors across the Meotida marshes. To repeat, the mysterious disappearance of the deer-animal is a dramatic element of great dramatic effect, and we do not see why it would have been suppressed if Dragoș's legend were merely a transposition of the Hungarian version.

Zebu and bull

The theme of the "ritual hunting of the fallow deer" is certainly autochthonous. Among the Dacians this animal already enjoyed religious prestige. It figures in the middle of a shield found at the Red Stone⁴¹ and an inscription preserved in the *Palatine Anthology* relates that Trajan consecrated to Zeus Cassius, near Antioch, a golden-covered horn of a Zebra taken from Dacian treasures.⁴² We still know very little about this subject from the Nephi. But whatever the role of the zebra in Dacian mythology and religion, it was certainly part of a mythical-ritual ensemble of mythical origin of mythical origin, rooted in prehistory. It is obviously a rather complex mythico-religious ensemble. We need only recall the role of the bull in the ancient Near East and in the Mediterranean.⁴³ The bull, wild or domesticated, is present in both heroic and fertility contexts: bullfighting is a heroic initiatory test, but the slaughter of a bull is also a

⁴⁰ Jbid. , p. 309.

⁴¹ Istoria României, Bucharest, 1960, I, p. 336.

⁴² Palatine Anthology, VI, p. 332.

⁴³ See M. Eliade, *Traité d'Histoire des Religions*, Paris, 1949, p. 85, and the recorded bibliography, pp. 11–3 and unnn. Cf. and A. Alvarez de Miranda, "Magia y Religion del toro norteafricano" (Archivo Español de Arqueología, Madrid, 1954, pp. 1-4).

bull carries cosmogonic meanings. Storm gods as well as heroes have been compared to bulls, and in the Avesta the bull already figured on the standard (*gaol draflo*)⁴⁴– The acrification of the bull played an important role in the Mysteries of Mithras. The capture of the bull by Mithra is part of an archaic Indo-Iranian myth; it was an essential moment in the New Year festivities⁴⁵ – the episode thus had a cosmogonic significance. In all likelihood, the Mithras Mysteries were established in northwest Iran, Armenia and the Caucasus. At the beginning of the Christian era, there was still the rite of the crying of a stolen bull in the Caucasus.⁴⁶ The Mysteries of Mithras are known to have been quite popular in Dacia.⁴⁷ This is neither the first nor the last contact of these people with Iranian spirituality.

These brief indications do not pretend to circumscribe a huge subject. But they do introduce us into the religious universe likely to make our myths and legends intelligible. It is important now to approach the prehistory of "ritual hunting", beginning with the mythical-ritual function of the main animals of our legends; the bull (– the bull (– the jaguar) and the stag. In addition to what we have just said, the Indo-European peoples were quite quick to valorize the bull religiously and mythologically, and a large number of tribes took the bull as their eponym.⁴⁸ Certain gods are tauromorphs or are accompanied by bulls. Mythical-ritual scenarios and related symbolism extend over millennia. In folklore, as in myth, the bull symbolizes strength, courage and aggression. To limit ourselves to just one example, we need only read the pages

⁴⁴ Yasna, 10, 14; cf. F. Altheim, *Gesch. d. Hunen*, I, p. 203, n. 14, bibliography on tauromorphic standards.

⁴⁵ G. Widengren, "Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte" (Nwnen, 1954, pp. 16-18, II, 1955, pp. 47-134), II, p. 94; cf. Ipp. 51 ff.

See also G. Widengren, *Die Religionen Iranus*, Stuttgart, 1965, pp. 41 et urm.

⁴⁶ F. Cumont, *Journal of Roman Studies*, 21, 1937, pp. 63-71.

◆ The essentials of the documentation are in L. W. Jones, *The Cults of Dacia*, (Univ. of California, Publ. Philol., IX, 8, 1929, pp. 245 ff.). O. Floca, "I culti orientali nella Dacia" (*Ephem. Dacoromana*, VI, 1935, pp. 204 ff.).

⁴⁸ Richard v. Kienle, *Tier-Volkernamen bei indogermanischen Stämmen*,

J. Weisweiler on the role of the bull in Irish folklore.⁴⁹ On the other hand, in the same folklore, the hero is compared to the stag, and in the topography of Gaul there are more names derived from "stag" than those which have as their origin the term designating *the bull*.⁵⁰ J. Weisweiler even went so far as to distinguish two cultures in the Celtic tradition: that of the bull, of Mediterranean origin and pastoral structure, and that of the stag, of North-Eurasian origin, elaborated by prehistoric hunters. Both cultures are pre-Indo-European.

We will return to this question. We note for now how much these two archaic 'cultures' have influenced each other in Western Europe. The deer and the bull are already depicted in the rock drawings of Iberia and Liguria.⁵¹ And on the Gundestrup ark the god is depicted between a stag and a bull. The stag is called "wild ox" (*oss allaid, dam aliai, ag allaid*), the deer, "wild cow" (*bo allaid*) and the young deer "wild calf" (*loeg allaid*).⁵² Ecclesiastical authorities, between the 5th and 7th centuries, also denounced and stigmatized *cervulum seu vitulum facere*, i.e. peasant rites involving masks and disguises borrowed from deer and bulls. s3

Deer's religious role

All this shows how complex the issue is. Since prehistory, different cults and religious systems have influenced each other. Symbiosis and syncretism took place long before the age of the "great encounters" between religions. Since Neolithic times, if

⁴⁹ J. Weisweiler "Vorindogennanischen Schichten der irischen Heldensage" (Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie, 24, 1954, pp. 10-55, 165--197), pp. 28 and unnn. On the role of the bull in the Celtic regions, cf. Jan de Vries, *LA Religion des Celtes*, Paris, 1963, pp. 184-188.

^{so} J. Weisweiler, op. cit., p. 193.

^{s1} Franz Altheim, *Italien und Rom* (1941), I, p. 82

^{s2} J. Weisweiler, op. cit., p. 194.

^{S3} Ibid., p. 193, with references recorded in footnote 4. Bibliography on *cervulum facere* is huge. We'll come back elsewhere.

not somehow from the Upper Paleolithic, it is difficult to find "pure" religious concepts, i.e. completely independent of earlier and contemporary religious creations. Take, for example, the role of the stag in Eurasian mythologies and religions. The problem is huge and only concerns our research in part. Dar este important să cunoaștem substratul religios al unui mit cum este cel al venirii hunilor în Europa. J. Weisweiler amintea, după F. R. Schröder, cultul cerbului care se întinde spre est până în China și Japonia și în sud până în Italia (Val Camonica ; Diane de Nemi etc.), Illyria, Greece (Artemis), the Black Sea, the Caucasus and Asia Minor (the Hittite god of the storm riding a stag, etc.).⁵⁴ We shall return to the mythology of the stag in Central Asia and South Iberia, with particular emphasis on a few Indian myths rarely brought into connection with our theme. For the time being, let us recall that deer masks are attested in Europe from the remotest antiquity to modern times.⁵⁵ The famous Paleolithic "sorcerer" of the Trois-Frères cave (Ariege) is represented with a deer's head adorned with huge antlers.⁵⁶ And on a slate plate from Lourdes is engraved a man adorned with deer antlers and a

⁵⁴ J. Weisweiler, *Vorindogermanischen Schichten der irischen Heldensage*, pp. 191 et seq. ; F. R. Schröder, *Sladi und die Goner Skandaviens*, Tübingen, 1941, pp. 90 and unkn. ; cf. also J. Wiesner, "Zur Hirsch in der Frühzeit" (*Pisciculi, Festschrift für F. J. Dölger*, Münster i. W., 1939), p. 309 ff. ; Helmut Rosenfeld, "Die Dioskuren als leuchtendes Pferd und die Alken "Elchreiter" der Vandalen" (*Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, 89, 1940, pp. 1 ff. ; id., "Die vandalschen Alken "Elchreiter" der Ostgermanische Hirschkult und die Dioskuren (Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift, 28, 1940, pp. 245 ff.) ; cf. also Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, I, (2nd ed., 1956), pp. 363 ff. and the studies by Karl Hauck and O. Hofler cited in notes 55 and 60. On the Celtic wax cult, cf. Jan de Vries, *La Religion des Celtes*, pp. 112 ff., 181 ff.

The stag, mythical ancestor of the Celts, O. Hofler (n. 55), 40 (with bibliography).

⁵⁵ See the bibliography given by Leopold Schmidt, *Masken in Mitteleuropa*, Vienna, 1955, p. 25, nos. 92-100 ; Otto Hofler, *Siegfried, Arminius und die Symbolik*, Heidelberg, 1960, pp. 32 ff. and notes 66-94.

⁵⁶ The drawing has been frequently reproduced: see lastly J. Maringer, *L'homme préhistorique et ses dieux*, Paris, 1958, fig. 19 ; S. Giedion, *The Beginnings of Art*, New York, 1962, fig. 340-341, pp. 504-505. This is probably a 'master sorcerer', representative of a Donm of the Beasts, for he has the face of an owl, the ears of a wolf, the long beard of a black goat and the tail of a horse. The wizard is ready to dance, his eyes fixed on the different animal species engraved on the rock.

horse's tail.⁵⁷ The hunting and killing of deer is depicted in Bronze Age rock drawings from Sweden.⁵⁸ In Eclida, the stag is connected with Odin and the World Tree.⁵⁹ A stag adorns the top of the iron standard found in the 7th-century Ship burial at Sutton Hoo (Suffolk).⁶⁰ The function of the stag as a funerary animal and guide of the dead to the afterlife is widely attested in Germanic traditions.⁶¹ It is believed that the dead sometimes appear in the form of stags.⁶² There is also a custom of wrapping the dead in deerskins⁶³, no doubt due to the animal's role as a psychopomp.

But the funerary function of the stag is not the most important. Its solar character is also attested. In an Icelandic poem from the eighteenth century, the "sun deer" is depicted with its feet on the ground and its antlers reaching the sky.⁶⁴ As we shall see, the golden deer is also known in India. In ancient popular belief

The sun is conceived of as a deer running in the sky.⁶⁵ Let us conclude here these few indications on the European record of the deer. We shall have the opportunity to complete it.

J. Weisweiler believes that the deer cult and myths originated in northern Europe.

"Hyperboreans" who inhabited these regions in pre

⁵⁷ J. Marer, op. cit. fig. 31, after Breuil.

⁵⁸ Cf. Oscar Almgren, *Nordische Felszeichnungen als religiöse Urkunden*, Frankfurt a. M. 1934, pp. 110, 125 etc.

⁵⁹ *Grimnismal*, 26; F. R. Schröder, op. cit., pp. 48 ff

⁶⁰ Karl Hauck, 'Herrschaftszeichen eines Wodanistischen Königtums' (*Jahrbuch für Fränkische Indesforschung*, 14, 1954, pp. 9-6), pp. 99 ff. Stags and deer-ornamented badges are quite common among the Old Germans; cf. O. Hofler, op. cit. pp. 45 ff. Bronze stag's heads mounted on masts are also attested on Scythians; cf. A. Salmons, "An Unknown Scythian Find in Novoeherkask" (*Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua*, X, 1936, pp. 54-60, fig. 1-5).

N. Tchlenova, "Le cerf scythe" (*Artibus Asiae*, XXVI, 1963, pp. 27-70).

⁶¹ Cf. Bibliographical references to K. Hauck, p. 20 and O. Hofler, p. 45.

⁶² W. E. Peuckert, in *Handwörterbuch d. deutschen Aberglaubens*, IV, pp. 93 et seq.; Hofler, p. 44.

⁶³ O. Hofler op. cit. p. 45 and footnote 147.

⁶⁴ J. Weisweiler, op. cit., p. 191.

⁶⁵ O. Schrader - A. Nehring, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, I, Berlin - Leipzig, 1917-1923, pp. 503 ff.

⁶⁶ Weisweiler, op. cit., p. 196.

historical. As evidence of such influences, Weisweiler cites arctic words surviving in Celtic languages.⁶⁷ We do not intend to discuss this hypothesis as a whole. Let us note, however, that the stag already had a religious role in the Paleolithic hunters of France (Trois-Freres cave, etc.). In other words, it is found, as believes Weisweiler, in connection with the culture of the Paleolithic hunters, but they were not "Hyperboreans" to begin with. To the extent that we can speak of a Hyperborean culture, it was probably

the direct or indirect heir of the Franco-Cantabrian Upper Paleolithic culture. With conditions remaining almost the same as in the Ice Age, the 'Hyperborean' hunters prolonged in the northern and arctic regions a culture that had disappeared in the south in

climate change. Consequently, if Weisweiler has perhaps right to conclude that the Indo-Europeans borrowed the "deer culture" from the "Hyperboreans" and spread it south and west, it is certainly not right to consider this culture as a Nordic creation. Northern Eurasia received and preserved, adapted and enriched a culture and a spirituality which had already known a brilliant creative epoch in the Franco-Cantabrian Paleolithic.

Deer hunting in India

Similar phenomena are found in other epochs and in different environments. Let us examine deer-hunting myths in India and compare them with similar myths in Central Asia. One will see in what sense an archaic and widespread myth is being reinterpreted

and revalorized in different religious contexts. In Indian literature, *sarabha* also means a fabulous animal and a deer. The *Dhumakiiri-jiitaka* (No. 413 of the *Jataka* pali) alludes to some *sarabha* who, mad with flies, approached the fire of a goat-herder who was spreading a lot of smoke.⁶⁸ Similarly, in the *Sarrabhaminga-jiitaka* (No. 483) the following story is found : King Brahmadatta goes hunting with his retinue.

⁶⁷ Ibid. , pp. 196-197.

⁶⁸ Jean Przyluski, 'An Ancient People of the Punjab: The Salva' (*Journal Asiatique*, 214, 1929; pp. 311-354), p. 321 .

Out of a bush comes a *sarabha*. "These animals have a miraculous ability to dodge arrows. He stooped to let pass the arrow that the king sent him and then resumed his race. "Brahmadatta followed him for a long time. When he reached a pit full of dirty water, *sarabha* surrounded it but the king sank. *Sarabha* who was none other than the reincarnated Boddhisattva pulled him out

out of the pit the man who was going to kill him and teach him the Law. In a

The other day, the king went to his park to shoot a bow. As he sights his target, Saka, king of the gods, makes him *sarabha*'s image appears and Brahmadatta refrains from shooting the arrow. He declares that in gratitude for a boon he cannot kill *sarabha*. "This is not the hunted," retorts Saka, "it is Asura. If you did not kill him you would become the sovereign of the gods. ' But the king persists in his resolve, and then S akka praises him, wishing him long life and apotheosis after death.⁶⁹

Let us note this feature: *sarabha* is not an ordinary widow, but an Asura, a being at once divine and demonic. Who the downer becomes equal to the King of the Gods. A similar tradition was preserved in Brahmanical circles. In the *Mahabharata* {I, 65 , v. 2534 and I, 67 , v. 2663) *Sarabha* designates an Asura whose incarnation is the hermit-king Paurava. "in *Puriiria*, the Asura *Sarabha* is a redoubtable eight-legged monster, stronger than a lion, and VisJ.lu's opponent. "70

in a story from the Vinaya of *Mahasamghika* Vinaya we find a slightly different myth. A gold-colored deer flies north floating in the air. The wife of the king of Benares sees him and wants his skin to make a pillow. A hunter heads north into the snowy mountains. A *rihsi* reveals to him that "a king of the golden-colored deer" often comes flying, and sits on a tree. The hunter sits on the lookout and sees the king of the stags approaching through the air. "His body spread a glow

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 322-23; the Sanskrit *sarabha* has its equivalent in Pali *sarabha*.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 323; Przyluski believes that *Jarabha*, which first designated a

species of animal, the emblem of the Salva tribe, designated a fabulous and divine animal when the tribe became the royal clan of the confederacy (ibid. p. 325). This explanation, in the best evolutionary tradition, does not hold water.

that lights the mountain passes. "The hunter managed to catch it in a net and brought it to the queen. "She began to leap for joy. She was overwhelmed by the intensity of her affection, she reached out and embraced the deer, but because of the gravity of the sins on her soul, this gesture made the golden color of this king of the deer fade instantly. The queen said, 'This deer is nothing but an animal of beauty; let him be let go.'"71

Let's emphasize the solar character of the Stag King and his relationship with the Queen, a theme that deserves a special study. For now

let us present another myth of Indian origin, preserved in the Siamese chronicle *Suvariria Khamdeng*12- One day Visukamma

(= Visvakarman, the divine maker) metamorphosed into a Tharai Khăm, i.e. a golden deer, and stood in the park of King P 'raya CăiaQ1. He then commanded his son Suvai:tQ.a Khamdeng to pursue the Golden Stag and

take him alive. SuvaJJ}.Qa " he assembled an army of twenty thousand men, of whom he chose thirty-two of the most agile and swift, whom he called hunters, and wrapped their heads with a tall turban shaped like Tharai's ears and horns. Îi

And he put on garments of the color of the beast, the skirts of which were so arranged that they fell like a stag's tail. The others took each one a lasso." They followed him for two or three months, without being able catch. C'md the army was asleep The Golden Stag was asleep too. "Barely

they'd catch up with him and he'd make himself invisible again. He'd be waiting for them, and he'd be waiting nearby

"he resumed his race." Then the prince asked his father for reinforcements. With a sizable army, they resumed pursuit and chased the deer to the foot of Doi Ang Salong. There a woman, Nag In Lăo73, came out to see the prince. She fell in love with him, invited him into a cave, her abode, and "tasted the pleasures of love". After spending a long time in those places, the army resumed its journey and

71 Translation by E. Chavarmes, *Cing cents contes*, no. 341 , reproduced by Przy luski, op. cit. pp. 3 37-338.

¹² Annales du Sian, Première partie; Suvaṭṭa, JO Khamding, Suvaṭṭa, JO K'om Khăm, Sinhanavati, translated by Camille Notton, Consul of France, Paris, Limoges, Nancy, 1926, pp. 3--6. Indian names abound. See also J. Przyluski, op. cit., pp. 343 et seq.

⁷³ Nang = lady; In = Indra ; Lao = to cut, to polish. (Camille Notton, op. cit., p. 5, n. 3).

through the forests to the foot of Mount Usupabatta. There the Golden Stag disappeared and was never seen again. They made camp there and put Prince Suval}l}a in the middle.

Let's keep the essentials in mind: 1) a divine **beast** meta morphs itself into a Golden Stag and settles right in the king's park as if to challenge him ; 2) the king failing to capture it, commissions his son to do it ; 3) the prince goes hunting with a sizable army, led by 32 hunters disguised as stags ; 4) although the Golden Stag is always seen by the hunters, he proves invincible ; 5) the prince falls in love with a woman from that land and falls in love with her ; 6) he lingers a long time in that place but the Stag is waiting for him ; 7) finally, the prince and the anata resume the hunt but when they reach the foot of a mountain, the Stag disappears. Very probably, the 32 hunters disguised as deer reflect the memory of a society of men practicing certain rites (**cervulumfacere**). The deer's behavior seems to us to be quite striking; it allows itself to be chased over a vast territory and does not disappear until it has reached the end of the road. It is as if he wanted to force the prince to perform a "founding rite"; in fact, we later learn that the prince had become a very powerful sovereign, with the mythical Boar. The erotic episode is part of the same scheme of sovereignty: the future king marries a woman from

"land", a folkloric image of the divinities of the Earth, incamining **auto htonia**. Przyluski wonders, "Wasn't this hunt a rite allowing the ascension from the condition of *raja* to the rank of supreme sovereign? This would explain the enigmatic formula in **Jataka** No. 483, according to which the one who captures a **sarab ha** acquires the power of the king of the gods, in other words, he obtains universal kingship."⁷⁴ Przyluski saw the relationship between the hunting of a **sarab ha** and the attainment of universal sovereignty. But in India as elsewhere, this ritual hunting may have different purposes.

Camille Notton cites a Wa tradition that attributes to Mang Rai the pursuit of a golden deer when he conquered Xieng-Tiing territory.⁷⁵ "Another legend in the chronicle of Xieng Măi also attributes to the same character the pursuit of a deer and its young

74 Op. cit. pp. 34345.

7 ♦ Gazetteer, voi. I, p. 518, quoted by C. Notto ♦ Annals of Siam, p. 4. n. 2.

her when he began to look for a settlement to found the city of Xieng Mãi. "76 We thus find in India and *in the* Hinduized regions the hunting of a miraculous stag (*sarabha* . Golden Stag. etc.) in connection with: 1) the conquest of a territory (or the founding of a kingdom); 2) the founding of a city; 3) the attainment of universal sovereignty; 4) a decisive experience, a kind of *metanoia* or religious conversion (cf. Stag-Boddhisattva).

These values and functions by no means exhaust Indian deer mythology. We have already alluded to the demonic character of the *sarabha* as it appears in Purāṇa. In a famous episode in the Ramayana (III, 40, 48 , 49) Marīcha, possessed by a demon, transforms himself into a golden stag with four golden horns adorned with pearls and lures Rama in pursuit of him. Thus Sita remains

alone, and Ravana finally manages to kidnap it.¹¹ The ambivalent character of the deer will hold our attention for a while away. Let us add that these myths and legends have circulated continuously from one people to another. The version emphasizing Bodhisattva transformed into a *sarabha* in order to convert the hunter king is probably the source of one of the most popular Christian legends, that of the conversion of the saint Eustace. The Roman general Placidus, a wealthy but charitably idolatrous Roman general, was passionate about hunting. One day, as he was traveling with his retinue, he encountered a stag of great beauty, and chased it to the top of a cliff. There, while Placidus was admiring his majesty, he saw a cross between its antlers, and the stag spoke to him in a voice of man, telling him that it was Christ whom Placidus unknowingly honored.¹² History, passing through the Arabic and Pehlevi versions, has its origin in Sanskrit sources.⁷⁹ But if Christ could have been asimi-

⁷⁶ C. Notton. op. cit p. 4, n. 2.

ⁿ According to J. Dansteter, Revue des Etudes Juives, II, 1881, pp. 300-302, this story has passed, via Persian, into Jewish religious folklore; King David chases a stag and arrives in the land of the Philistines, where he is taken prisoner by his brother Goliath. Cf. M. B. Ogle, 'The Stag-Messenger Episode' (American Journal of Philology, XXXVI, pp. 387-416), pp. 412 ff.

⁷⁸ Acta Sanctorum, vol. VI, pp. 123 ff. (September 20). The episode is amply commented on by Pschmidt, Die Sage von der verfolgten Hinde, pp. 45 ff., who also

studies the parallel legends of St. Hubert and Julien l'Hospitalier.

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⁷⁹ Cf. Geroul in Publications of Modern Languages Association, 19, 1940, pp. 335 and unn. ; M. B. Ogle, op. cit., p. 41 1.

⁸⁰ In other words, we will always find at the "origin" of a legend an archaic spiritual universe which not only preceded it, but also, and above all, prepared its emergence and "success".

Indo-Aryan, Finno-Ugrian, Altaic

As for the myths of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, emphasizing the pursuit of a stag⁸¹, they are of course alone with their art, in which the dominant motif is hunting scenes: galloping deer, winged griffons killing moufflons, birds of prey leaping on deer and moufflons, etc. Andreas Alföldi⁸² and Franz Altheim⁸³ have emphasized on several occasions the links between the animal armies of the Asian nomads and their myths of origin and conquest (*Landnahme-saga*). In a previous chapter I showed carac -

^{so} Cf. H. Ch. Puech, 'Le Cert et le Serpent' (Cahiers archéologiques, N, 1 949, pp. 17-60), pp. 29 and unnn. The same symbolism is attested in protohistoric China, in the Altai, in certain cultures of Central and North America (especially Maya and Pueblo); cf. C. Hentze, Comment ii /aut lire l'iconographie d'un vase en bronze chinois de la période Shang (Conférence I.S.M.E.O., vol. L Rom 1951, pp. 1-60); id., Bronzegerät, Kultbauten, Religion im ältesten China der Shang-zeit, Antwerpen, 1951, pp. 210 and unnn. See also Mircea Eliade, Images et Symboles, Paris, 1951, p. 216, n. 5.

⁸¹ Cf., inter alia, W. Eberhard, Lokalkulturen im Alten China. Part. I. : Die Lokalkulturen des Nordens u. Westens, Leiden, 1942, pp. 78 and unnn. ; S. Szaszman, "Le roi Bulan et le problème de la conversion des Khazars" (Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, XXXI, 1957, pp. 71 ff.).

⁸² See especially "Theriomorphic Weltbetrachtung in der Hochasiatischen Kulturen" (Archaeologische Anzeiger, 1931, col. 393-418); id., Der frühromische Reiteradel und seine Ehrenabzeichen, Baden-Baden, 1952.

⁸³ Cf. especially Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Altertum, II, Halle, 1948,

Literatur und Gesellschaft im ausgehenden Altertum (1950), II, pp. 15 ff; Attila und die Hunen, (Baden-Baden, 1951, pp. 76 ff; Niedergang der Alten Welt, I, (1952), pp. 320 ff; Geschichte d. Hunnen I, pp. 230 ff. See also F. Altheim and E. Trautmann, "Hirsch u. Hirschsage bei den Arier" (Germania, N. F., II, 1941, pp. 286-297 ; 349-357).

The archaic ter ter of this mythical-ritual ensemble in which the ancestor is a carnivore, an exemplary model of both the hunter and the invincible warrior.⁸⁴ Seen in this perspective, the hunt of a deer that leads to the discovery and conquest of a territory can be interpreted as the reactualization of a myth of origin: the mythical ancestor, the hunter, pursues a deer and conquers the future homeland of his descendants. Predictably, the peoples of the Eurasian Steppes, living in peripheral areas in relation to the centres of high civilization, have preserved similar archaic traditions for a longer time.⁸⁵ But this is not to say that other ethnic groups did not know similar traditions, nor that the nomads of the Eurasian steppes did not receive and assimilate certain elements of higher culture even before they reached the frontiers of the Roman, Persian and Chinese empires which they were to attack shortly afterwards.

F. Altheim recalls, after H. Jacobsohn, that the term *sarabha* has been preserved in the word vogul **suorp*, **lorp*, "moose."⁸⁶ And just as in India *sarabha* is a miraculous eight-legged cervid, adversary of the elephant and the lion, so in voguli the elan (*suorp*) is

a fierce beast sent from heaven. In a vogula poem people He asks Numi Tarem, the heavenly Father, to transform the moose into a four-legged animal; otherwise he will destroy the human species.⁸⁷ As F. Altheim notes, the Ugrians have preserved not only the cuvin tele, but also the mythical representations from Aryan times.⁸⁸

As for the specific motif of the animal art of stepping stones, it is also not a creation of Paleo-Siberian peoples. At Tell-Halaf,

⁸⁴ See above ch. 1 Cf. and E. Lozovan, "Du nom ethnique des Daces" (Revue Internationale d'onomastique, XI, 1961, pp. 27-32).

as R. Medelbach talks about "Gesetz von der Erhaltung des Alten an der Peripherie", op. cit., p. 520.

⁸⁶ H. Jacobsohn, Arier und UgroftMen (1932), p. 57; F. Altheim, Geschichte der Hunnen, I, p. 232. It is not, moreover, the only Aryan vocabulary borrowed by the Ugrians; cf., for example, the Mordvin azoro, "Lord" from the Indo-Iranian -asura;

H. Jacobsohn op. cit., p. 38; 138; F. Altheim, op. cit., p. 230.

^{s7} B. Munk,csi, quoted by F. Altheim, pp. 232-33. The German translation of the poem vogul has been published by F. Altheim, Niedergang der A/ten Welt, I, pp. 235 ff.

⁸⁸ Geschichte der Hunnen, I, p. 233.

i.e. in the area of influence of the Aryans of Mithani, a relief from the 10th century *BC* was found depicting a moose being attacked by a charioteer. The latter is not known from earlier Asia: it is a *gulo gulo*, a carnivore that lives exclusively in the northern sep part of Eurasia.⁸⁹ A similar scene is found on the Noîn Ula felt carpet (in Outer Mongolia): a winged predator (like the fabulous beasts of the Ostia) pounces on a moose. It is known that some of the Noîn Ula fabrics come from the Greco-Sarmatian region of southern Russia, or from Syria; some from China. as for the carpet with the scene of the moose-carnival wrestling, it is reminiscent in style of the animal wrestling in the art of the Russian sanate

southern Russia, but especially the gold plates of western Siberia.⁹⁰ The animal art of the steppes seems to have originated in southern Russia, i.e. in the Caucasus, and, as Rene Grousset is inclined to believe, ultimately dependent on the Mesopotamian world.⁹¹

It is obviously an art that is solidly linked to a specific religious conception and mythology. Taking stock of the research on the motif that concerns us, i.e. the hunt of a deer leading to the discovery of a territory, F. Altheim identifies its constituent elements in the Indo-Aryans: the name *sarabha*, used by the Ugrians; the oldest plastic representation on the reliefs found in the region occupied by the Mithannans. In other words, from the earliest times, the nomadic populations of central and northern Asia borrowed these mythical-religious elements from their Indo-Aryan neighbors.⁹² But as they descended towards India, the Aryans forgot the original motif (the theme of the charioteer chasing a deer) while the Ugrians and Altaians kept it and gave it new vigor.⁹³ On the other hand, as we have seen, the *sarabha* myth was also given new values in India. A proof

⁸⁹ See the bibliography in F. Altheim, *Geschichte d. Hunnen*, I pp. 234 ff.

⁹⁰ Cf. the discussion of the problems and bibliography in F. Altheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 236 ff. The pages of R. Grousset, *L'Empire des Steppes*, Paris, 1939, pp. 42-52, 623 ff. still remain the best introduction to the study of the animal art of the Steppes.

⁹¹ R. Grousset, *op. cit.*, p. 625.

⁹² F. Altheim, *Gesch. d. Hunnen*, I, p. 237

⁹³ Among the Tartars and the Chuvash the name of the elk or domestic elk is

bulan from bulmaq, "to find," with suffix n, i.e., "one who finds" ; cf. H. Gregoire (Byzantion, 12, 1937, p. 261), quoted by F. Altheim, L p. 239. But it is difficult to establish whether this is an old forgotten myth; cf. F. Altheim, *ibid.*

Moreover, it is a mythical-ritual scenario of exceptional richness, likely to be used in multiple contexts and for various purposes.

As for the Hunnic version of the *Landnahme-Saga*, it is certainly not the oldest, as Alföldi, A. H. Krappe and other authors believed. F. Altheim has recently discovered what he calls the Urbild of all versions in a legend related by the Greek grammarian Agatharchides of Knidos, who lived at the beginning of the 1st century B.C. According to this legend, lions had chased the Persian Erythros' horses across the Red Sea to an island. Erythros follows his herd of horses and their stewards and founds a city on the island.⁹⁴ As can be seen, this is a real hunt, not an animal-hunt revealing unknown territory. The archaic character of the legend is reinforced by the fact that it hunts wild animals (lions). The allusion to the founding of a fortress does not, of course, denote a recent date, for in this part of the world, fortresses have been known since protohistoric times.⁹⁵

When dealing with the religious beliefs and cultural values common to Eurasian nomads and the peoples of oral Europe, it is useful to consider two sets of facts: 1) the cultural analogies between the ancient Iranians and the Turco-Mongols; 2) the late Iranian (Sassanid and post-Sassanid) influences on certain Eurasian peoples before their irruption into the Roman and Germanic world. Karl Meuli has highlighted the similarities between the war and hunting techniques of the Iranians and the Turco-Mongols.⁹⁶ The Swiss scholar assumes that there is an element of

⁹⁴ Agatharchides, *Die mari Erythraeo*, 5 (G. G. M. I, (1885), p. 113), quoted from F. Altheim, *Geschichte d. Hunen*, V, p. 393. Erythros lived in winter at Puar gades, but in summer near the Red Sea (originally the Persian Gulf was meant).

⁹⁵ Ritual hunting, undertaken for the purpose of finding the settlement of a new village, is still practiced by certain African populations; cf. Helmut Straube, *Die Tierverkleidungen der Africanischen Naturvölker*, Wiesbaden, 1955, pp. 83-84. To we add that African examples are likely to shed light on certain aspects of our peoples. Indeed, in Africa, one can trace the continuity "ritual hunts" - in connection with initiation, secret societies, sovereignty - from the most archaic phases (hunter-gatherer cultures) to pastoral and agricultural cultures. Cf. Straube, pp. 198 ff. and passim.

⁹⁶ Karl Meuli, "Ein altpersischer Kriegsbrauch" (*Westöstliche Abhandlungen*).

Festschrift für Rudolph Tohu❖ Wiesbaden, 1954, pp. 63-85, with a rich bibliography).

specific to the cultures of the Central Asian warrior-herdsmen, i.e. to the horse-herding, knight-herding peoples.⁹⁷ Meuli leaves open the question of possible Assyrian influences.⁹⁸ Whatever the case, the similar characteristics found in different horseriding populations should caution against too rigid explanations of Turko-Ugrian influences on the populations of Central and Eastern Europe. Certain cultural elements thought to have been brought by Eurasian nomads may in fact be of Iranian origin, i.e., in other words, eight to ten centuries before the great invasions of the early Christian era.

And this is all the more true because certain peoples of the steppes were strongly influenced by the Sassanid culture.⁹⁹ Thus A. Maurodinov has shown at length how the proto-Bulgarian hoard from Nagyszentmikl6s betrays the influence of Sasanian art. Maurodinov concludes that Sassanid art had practiced its influence on the ancestors of the proto-Bulgarians, "and this influence was transmitted to them by their own artistic tradition"¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, Kopeny's archaeological excavations on the

Enisei (300 km south-west of Krasnoiarsk) have uncovered gold vessels from the 11th and 10th centuries showing post-Sassanian influences of the same type.¹⁰¹ This means that the invaders were ultimately bringing to Eastern Europe a culture in which the archaic heritage of the Eurasian warrior-hunters had been influenced by elements of Sassanid, Byzantine, Aegean and even Germanic culture.

Across Europe, but especially in the south-eastern regions, ethnic groups, different religions and cultures have met, confronted and influenced

⁹⁷ Op. cit., p. 77.

⁹⁸ Op. cit., p. 82

⁹⁹ On the brilliance of Sassanid culture, see Altheim, *Geschichte d. Hunnen*, pp. 195 ff, which also discusses the most recent critical literature on this issue.

¹⁰⁰ A Maurodinov, "Le Tresor Protobulgare de Nagyszentmikl6s" (*Archeologia Hungarica*, 29, Budapest, 1943), pp. 21 ff et seq. ; F. Altheim, *Gesch. d. Hunnen*, V, pp. 253 ff.

¹⁰¹ A L Mongalt, *Archaeology in the U.S.S.R.* (translated and adapted by M. W. Thompson, Penguin Books, Baltimore-Maryland, 1961), p. 261 and pi. 20, a.

F. Altheim also cites other examples of Proto-Bulgarian art of Iranian origin; cf. *Gesch. d. Hunnen*, pp. 259, 285.

at least three millennia before the age of the great invasions. Dacia was a land of encounters par excellence. From prehistoric times to the dawn of the modern era, oriental and Aegean influences never ceased. On the other hand, Iranian (Scythian) and especially Celtic elements played an important role in the formation of the people and of the civilization of the Geto-Dacians; as a result of these influences and symbioses the Thraco-Cymian substrate has received the specific cultural appearance, which distinguishes it from the Balkan Thracian cultures. Finally, there

Romanization brought the massive Latin contribution with the contributions of Hellenism in its syncretistic phase.

It was necessary to mention these few well-known facts, because they are not taken into account as a whole when interpreting certain archaic religious realities or certain folkloric creations. In short, the constitutive mythological elements of the legend of Dragoș pre-existed in eastern *Romania*. We have mentioned their Italic, Celtic, Mediterranean and Oriental parallels. We showed their *archaism*. This note is important because archaic religious behaviors and ideas are preserved not only in the marine areas of oikumenia, but also in certain particularly conservative regions such as the Carpathians, the Balkans, the Pyrenees. The paradox of Dacia, and of the whole of the Balkan Peninsula in general, is that it is both a 'spread', where diverse influences intermingle, and a conservative area, as is shown by the archaic cultural elements that survived here until the beginning of the 20th century. In other words, we should not imagine that the arrival of a wave of higher culture would, by its very "success", jeopardize the earlier forms of culture. Such a phenomenon occurs only in modern times, and especially at the level of material culture, and even then the "needle-turn" is never definitive.

Endnotes

It is important to dwell for a moment on some of the results of our research.

1. Whatever may be the influence of the Hungarian

tradition of Hunor and Magor on Romanian chroniclers, it can only be about

a stylistic influence. Even if it was reworked after the Hungarian mode, the legend of Dragoș could not be borrowed as it was by the early Romanian chroniclers. In terms of structure, the difference between the two versions is too important! : the deer-deer that miraculously disappears in the first ; the fallow deer, wisent and falcon in the second.

2. We must therefore assume the existence of a native legend involving the hunting and slaughter of a chamois as a test of type "heroic". This may be related to : a) either to a certain type of initiation (archaic Mediterranean bullfighting; Mysteries of Mithras); b) either with obtaining "sovereignty" (more precisely, a supremacy). All these religious meanings of ceremonial hunting and the sacrifice of a beast are attested in the ancient Near East and in the Mediterranean and Roman world, in the form of rituals, myths, legends or simple memories surviving at the folkloric level. The existence of a similar mythical-ritual scenario in Dacia is an open question. But it is certain that "imaginary universes" solidary with such mythical-ritual systems were known in Dacia and the rest of Eastern Europe, because they are found in folkloric creations.

3. By its structure, the Daco-Romanian variant is part of the hunter culture. But as is the case with other neighboring peoples, first and foremost the Hungarians, the "hunting ideology" turns into

"pastoral ideology". This process can also be seen in other Romanian religious traditions of pre-Christian origin; for example, the *cervulum facere* rite coexists with the ritual masquerade of the goat

(goat, heather) or is replaced by it. To what extent does this pastoral ideology is dominant in Romanian folk culture can be proved, among other things, by the fact that *Miorița* is the masterpiece of Romanian poetic folklore. The essential element of the ballad is the oracular prestige of the sheep. The oracular animal is

an extremely archaic faith, the legacy of a prehistoric hunter-gatherer culture, surviving in a pastoral cultural complex.

4. "Deer mythology" is also attested in Romanian folklore. But it is difficult to say which structures are autochthonous (i.e.

belong to Balkan proto-history) and which are the more recent contribution of oriental legends. As everywhere in Eastern Europe

Romanian popular religious traditions were built up through a series of successive alluviums.

5. I have seen how numerous and varied are the stories of the hunt of a deer; in pursuit of it one discovers an unknown country, or enters Hell, or meets Bod dhisattva or Christ, etc. In other legends which I have not studied, the pursued deer is a goddess, a witch, a demon, the lord of the realm of the dead, and he lures the hunter into the other world or into a feir or a magical world, etc. 102 It is possible, however, to decipher the fundamental element of unity underlying all these stories: the pursuit of a deer results in a radical change in the hunter's situation or way of being. It is a 'level break': one moves from life to death, from the profane to the sacred, from the ordinary condition to sovereignty; one encounters superhuman beings (goddesses, magicians, sorcerers) or the dead, gods or demons; one moves from the steppe to the fertile plain, from the larval state to the full and glorious existence, from anonymity to the full and glorious existence

to history or from dependence to autonomy. in all these cases the level break founds a new way of existing (and this is also true for the variants where the hero dies or enters another world). This is why these myths and legends, when we relate them to "historical" events, are *the beginnings* par excellence, the *origin*, *the founding act*, and later become the starting point and exemplary model in national historiographies.

6. As we have seen, other animals have fulfilled similar roles. Even if some variants are late, that is, of late origin "literary" (or simply reinvented for reasons of etymology) 103, the fact that it was necessary to reinvent or readapt them proves that legends depicting an animal satisfied certain needs of a deep *psyche*: they played a role in the dialectic of the human spirit, which forces man to be present in the world by revealing to himself his own mode of existence

102 Cf. W. E. Peuckert, article 'Hirsch' in *Han dworterbuch d. deutschen Aberglaubens*, vol. IV, spec. col. 93 ff. See also Karl von Spiess, *Mark steine der Volleskunst*, II, Berlin, 1942, pp. 73, 141 (Die gejagete Hinde).

103 I have not cited such examples, but there are others in Greek antiquity; cf. A. H. Krappe, *op. cit.*, pp. 228, 231 etc.

and ~~taking~~ responsibility Yet the source of all these myths, rituals, beliefs and legends lies in an extremely archaic magical-religious conception: *the animal* (i.e. the joyful relic force it embodies) *is the one that discovers the solution to a seemingly hopeless situation*, it is the one that breaks through a closed world and thus makes it possible to move on to a higher way of existence. This is, of course, a prehistoric conception, which is not surprising if we realize that for hundreds of thousands of years man not only lived by hunting, but also assumed a mystical consanguinity with the animal. This primordial past has never been completely abolished. The symbols, the meanings, the images which sprang up and constituted themselves in those fabulous times in which the animal represented at one and the same time the mystery of the world and the cipher which made the world intelligible have long since lost their function in consciousness, for they have become useless at the level of pragmatic day-to-day experience. But they still survive in imaginary universes: dreams, fancies, literary and artistic creations, etc., and they are invaluable to human knowledge.

THE CRAFTSMAN MANOLE AND THE MONASTERY OF ARGES

Folk poetry and religious folklore

In a book published in 1943, *Comentarii la Legenda Meșterului Manole* (Bucharest, Ed. Publicom, 144 pages), I attempted a first exegesis of the spiritual universe revealed by the famous Romanian baladă. Another work, *Manole et les rites de construction*, is intended to continue and develop this exegesis on a broader level, of interest to Romanianists and Balkanologists, folklorists and historians of religions alike. As the publication of this work has been postponed for various reasons, we intend, in the following pages, to trace its guidelines and to point out some of its results.

The study of the legend of the Monastery of Arges can be approached from different but complementary perspectives. If we leave aside the literary imitations, translations and adaptations of the ballads collected and published by Alecsandri — all aspects related to the history of literature and comparative literature — and confine ourselves exclusively to folkloric productions, several approaches are open to the researcher. The first problem is an aesthetic one: the literary value of the various variants recorded and their possible comparison with analogous folk creations from the Balkan Peninsula and Danubian Europe; 2. then the historical problem with its various aspects:

a) the circulation of the folkloric motif in South-Eastern Europe and in Danubian Europe ; b) possible borrowings and mutual influences within these cultural areas ; c) the identification of the "center of origin", the region where the ballad originated as a poetic work.

apart from these two points of view, which are of particular interest

the Romanian and Balkan stylists and folklorists, we must also take into account: 3. the folklorist's own perspective, which strives to collect and compare legends and analogous beliefs

and in other European peoples, even if they have not produced autonomous poetic creations ; 4. the ethnologist's perspective, which takes into account all the building rites attested almost everywhere in the world and endeavors to integrate them into different cultural structures ; 5. finally, the perspective of the historian of religions who, using the conclusions of folklorists and ethnologists, endeavors to discover the existential situation which gave rise to ideology and construction rites, and, above all, endeavors to make intelligible the theoretical universe founded on such a situation.

Research by L. Șăineanu, M. Arnaudov, P. Skok, P. Caraman, D. Caracoste a, G. Cocchiara and D. Găzdaru have made sufficient progress in the study of the Roman and Balkan ballad; we refer to their works for the details of the investigation and bibliography.¹ For our study, it will be sufficient to briefly recall the essential points of the dossier: *Mânăstire a Argeșului*, published for the first time by Vasile Alecsandri in his volume *Balade adunate și îndreptate* (Iași, 1852), was translated into French by the same author in his *Ballades et chants populaires de Roumanie* (Paris,

¹ L. Șăineanu. *Studii folclorice*, București, 1896 ; id [L. Șăineanu] "Les rites de construction d'après la poésie populaire de l'Europe Orientale". in *Revue de l'Histoire des religions*, t. 45 , 1902, pp. 359-396 ; M. Arnaudov, " Văgrădena nevasta" in *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija i na rodopis*, XXXIV, 1920. pp. 245-512 ; Petar Skok, "Iz balkanske komparativne literature, Rumunske paralele "zidanju Skadra"", in *Glasnik Skopskog naubtog društva*, Skoplje. 1929, pp. 220-242 ; P. Caraman "Considerații critice asupra genezei și răspîndirii baladei Meșterului Manole în Balcani", in *Buletinul Institutului de filologie română "Alexandru Philippide"*, I, Ia.e, 1934, pp. 62-102 ; Giuseppe Moriei, "La vittima dell'edifizio", in *Annali de/ R. Istituto superiore orientale di Napoli*, IX, 1937, pp. 177-216 ; D. Caracoste a, " Material sud-est european și formă românească", in *Revista Fundațiilor regale*, December, 1942, pp. 619-666 (study reproduced in *Poezia tradițională română* [București, 1969], II, pp. 185-223) ; G. Cocchiara, "Il ponte di Arta e i sacrifici di costruzione", in *Annali del Museo Pitrucci*, I, Palenno, 1950, pp. 38-81 ; D. Găzdaru. "Legenda del Meșterului Manole", in *Arhiva, Iași*, 1932, pp. 88-92 ; ed., "Contribuția Românilor la progresso culturale al Slavilor", III, in *Cuget românesc*, An. II, No. 3 , Buenos-Aires, 1952, pp. 155-159. In order to facilitate the footnotes, we shall content ourselves with referring to

~~MONASTERY OF ARCEB~~

~~the bibliography contained in our Commentaries and to the rich study by Lu-i~~
Cocchiara. The Italian folklorist does not seem to have known of our book, which
he nevertheless mentions (p. 71, n. 11 8); otherwise he would have taken into
account the researches of Găzdaru, Amaudov and Caracostea, whose results we
have made use of.

1 855 , pp. 1 43-158). Alecsandri's version being quite well known, we are grateful to N.-A. Gheorghiu for having made available to us his unpublished translation, which will be appreciated for its high poetic qualities. Gheorghiu : Manol.)

I *And hazelnut trees?*

*L' Argeş en aval,
 Dans le joii val,
 The Black Prince
 comes and he talks
 with nine ma♠ons,
 Masters, companions,
 And Mano/ tenth, their
 supreme master, So
 that they may choose
 A suitable place On his
 vast lands For a
 monastery.*

*And behold,
 suddenly, on their
 way, A shepherd was
 following them,
 playing the saflute;
 And as soon as he
 came up, The Prince
 said to him:*

*— Little shepherd,
 proud, Playing
 sweet tunes, Going
 upriver with your
 sheep, Or down to
 the water with your
 flock, Have you not
 seen, Where you
 pass by, walls you
 leave unfinished,
 Among pillars*

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by / know, Noble
ranks; Or else, know,
I'll wall you in,

have seen
walls

vz Wall all

And not finished

My dogs, when they see
them, howl and bark,

li

As if sensing
the death that
haunts them,
The Prince /'
hears

Work/ant sans treve, Leur
grantl mur s' elevve ;

And reperi
sudden,
Following
his way With
nine

maons,

Masters,
companions,
And Mano/
tenieme,
Their
supreme
master.

— The void my
walls! So you
journeymen
and master
maons, get
to work:

li /am

qu'

aussitot,

Ici, vous

/eviez

And build it

My beautiful

monastery

without

parei/ on

earth. I offer

*klais any work /ait,
The night was falling!
And for three nights,
Everything bellows
with noise!*

*So if you want to
finalize
Holy monastery*

*The Prince
commands and
rebukes them: Fury,
fury,
li threatens and wants
Bury them alive
Master maons and
companions
As they work tremble,
Trembling work. . . While
Mano/,
Lying on the ground,
As he falls asleep, he
dreams a dream,
Then, when he stood up
li tells them his dream:*

*— Dear Ma,ons
And dear companions,
I have /ait in my sleep,
a dream of a
dream. From
heaven I heard
Someone who says to
me: What we build will
fall at night,
Until we
Let us all decide to
marry the bride
Ou la sreur, venant
Porter la premiere
To husband or brother
For tomorrow's
breakfast.*

*Without a parei/
on thee, II will
have to swear
And commit ourselves,
And who first,
will come
tomorrow,
In the morning,
we'll kill him
and bury him!*

III

*A I' aube,
voici Que
Mano/ bondit
And that he
climbs up The
Remains of the
Walls,
Scrutanl the way,
Perfant the
distant. Helas,
poor master,
Who do you see?
Anne, her
darling, Prairie
Flower!
She would
come closer
And bring him
To drink, to eat. . .
On his knees,
weeping, he
prays to the
Lord:
— Verse on the
world, The rain
that floods,
Change the rivers*

*In to"ents on earth ;
Make the waters rise, so that
my me, weary,
Can't move forward!
God having pity
obeys Him and
Let the water soon
flow down from the
sky.
But braving the
downpour, His wife
crosses
Waters, torrents ...*

*And Mano/ sighs, His
 heart breaks;
 li signs, crying,
 And pray to the Lord:
 — Make a veni,
 A wind so strong, it
 bends the fir trees,
 Clear the pine trees,
 Cut down mountains
 As for his campaign,
 Braving the wind
 With a hesitant step,
 Arrive, epuisee.*

*But he is dumb, working
 and silent.*

W

*Other m(lfons, Masters,
 companions,
 Are all delivres,
 Ltl, when they see her,
 And Manol hugs her
 And, confused, he kisses
 her,
 Then climb with her up
 the ladder in her arms:
 — Don't be afraid at all,
 my dear, for we
 Let's have a joke
 and it'll take you
 away!
 And the wall
 grows and buries
 it
 First to the feet,
 Then up to the calves.
 And his poor dear
 Smile no more :
 — Mano/, dear Manol,
 O Master Mano/,
 The big wall is making
 me feel the pain, And my
 whole body is groaning!*

*And the wall
grows and
buries it
First to the feet, then to
the calves,
Après, to the
kidneys and then
to the breasts.*

*Poor AnM ignores
His purpose and
begs:*

*— Mano/, dear Mano/,
Master Mano/,
The big wall
squeezes me and
squeezes my
breasts,*

My dear little geint !

*But the wall
grows and
buries it*

From feet to kidneys,

*Après jusqu' jusqu'
aux seins Then*

jusqu' jusqu' au.x

*chin, Enfin jusqu'
au forehead.*

builds them so well

That you can't see

*no more; Yet you
can hear it*

From the groaning wall :

— Mano/, dear

Manol, O master

Mano/,

The big wall is

closing in and my

life is fading

away!

*L' Argeș en aval,
Dans un joii val,
Black Prince arrives
On the beautiful
shore, Say your
prayers
In the monastery,
The Prince and his guard,
delighted, look at him:*

*— You, dit-ii, maștrons,
masters, companions,*

*Tell me, without fear,
 IA hand on cczeur, If
 your science
 Can with ease Make
 for my glory And for
 my memory More
 beautiful monastery?
 Les dix grands
 ma◆ons, Maîtres
 compagnons, Sis sur la
 charpente, Du haut toit
 en pente, Repondeni
 joyeur: :
 And strong pride/them:
 — Like us, ma◆ons,
 ma◆ons,
 You won't find
 Never down here.
 Know, then, that we can
 build anywhere on
 earth
 Most beautiful
 monastery, Most
 dazzling
 And resplendent!*

*Now the Prince
 listens And orders
 in rage, To take away
 /'work of
 /'echa/audage, So that
 the good Ten masters
 ma◆ons
 Be abandoned La, on
 the framework Of
 the high pitched roof.*

*But the masters are
 skillful and make
 themselves wings
 that can see, wings
 that can fly;... . Un a
 un a descendent,
 But where they fall Jls
 dig their grave. Now,
 poor Mano/
 Le maître Mano/,
 Tout juste a /' instant
 Oii prend son elan,
 Entend a voix Sortir
 des parois, Une voix
 aimee, Faible et
 etou//ee,
 Weeping and wailing:...
 — Mano/, dear Mano/,
 The maitre Mano/,
 The big wall squeezes
 me and squeezes my
 breasts, My dear little
 whimper
 And my life goes out!
 li /' entend si pres
 Qu' ii reste egare,
 Et de la charpente
 From the very top,
 S' écroule Mano/.
 Et la ou son voi
 S' ecrasa au sol,
 Jail/it de /' eau c/aire,
 Sal/ee et amere,
 For in his poor wave His
 tears are flowing 12*

² See also Vasile Alecsandri, *Poezii populare ale Român ilor*, Editie îngrij ită

THE MASTER CRAFTSMAN MANOLE AND THE 59-1 64 (notes
de Gh. Vrabie, București, 1964, pp. 170-171)
and variants), MĂȘTREA APROȘULUI
MĂȘTREA APROȘULUI
m, pp. 7-58. Cf. and Ion Talos, "Balada Meșterului Manole și variantele ei
transilvănene" (Revista de Folclor, VII, 1962, pp. 22-56 ; p. 41 , bibliography

ARGES MONASTERY

(V. Alecsandri variant)

*On the Argeş in
the gios
On a beautiful
bank, Black Vlad
passes With ten
companions: Nine
great craftsmen,
calfe and masons
And the Monkeys –
ten, Which is also
the One who is
between. They're
all on their way to
choose a place in
the valley
And of
remembrance .
Here's how it went
That on the way he
was nagging A poor
shepherd boy from a
doinaş flute,
And as he saw him,
the Lord said to
him:
– Mîndre ciobănaş
Din fluier doinaş,
On the Argeş Up
With the herd you
went,*

*On Argeş In the gios

You were with the
herd. You didn't
happen to see a
deserted wall
And unwise
Instead of the
hawthorn, The
hazel-green?
– Yes, my God, we have
seen, Everywhere we
passed,
A wall forsaken
and unfinished.

The dogs, as soon
as they see him,
They flock to him
And barks like a
wilderness and
howls like the
dead. When he
heard him, the
Lord was glad,
and soon he was
gone, He rushed
to the wall with
nine masons,*

variants recorded in Romania and among Romanians in Yugoslavia); "Riturile
con construcţiilor la Români" (Folclor Literar, II, 1968, pp. 22 1 -262) ; Meşterul
Mano/e (Bucharest, 1973, 470 pages; the most complete monograph on this
subject published to date) : George Muntean, "Meşterul Manole
- semnificaţii ale episoadelor finale" (Limba şi literatură, XXV, 1 970, pp. 135-1 45) ;

MASTER-CRAFTSMAN MANOLE AND THE

Ovidiu Bîrlă, "Meşterul Manole", *Limba şi Literatură*, XIV, 1973, pp. 547-557;
M. Pop, "Arceşul Monastirii", *Revista de Folclor*, VII, 1962, pp. 68-78;
(Romanoslavica, IX, 1963, pp. 427-455); O. Papadima, "Neagoe Basarab, Meşterul
Manole şi vânzătorii de um bre" (Revista de Folclor, VII, 1962,
pp. 68-78; article reproduced in Ovidiu Papadima. Romanian Popular
Literature,

Bucureşti, 1968, pp. 60-118); Gh. Vrabie, Balada populară română, Bucureşti,
1966, pp. 69-1108; Lorenzo Renzi, Conti tradizionali romeni, Aorenţa, 1969,
pp. 75-86 (stylistic and aesthetic analysis of the ballad). The folkloric traditions
related to the constructions have been opportunely analyzed by Ion Taloş,
"Bausagen in Rumanien" (Fabula, X, 1969, pp. 196-211).

*Nine great
craftsmen, and
the monkeys —
ten, who also
make them.
- There's my wall!
Here I choose
Place of
monastery And of
remembrance.
So you great craftsmen
Caulkers and
bricklayers,
Soon you'll soon
be able to start the
Thing
So you'll do me in,
Here you shall be
my monastery
Like never before,
That I'll give you
riches
I'll make you boyars
And if not,
then I will
build you up
I will build you alive
Right in the
foundations! The
craftsmen were in
a hurry,
The advice,
Place measure,
Wide ditches dig
And always working,
The wall radica,
But anything
work,
The night is
falling! The next*

*day again,
Third day again,
On the fourth day, again
to no avail!
The Lord wondered and
then rebuked them
And then he'd scowl And
threaten them
To lay them alive, right to
the foundations!*

The great
craftsmen,
Calfe and
masons,
He was shaking while
working,
He
worked
shivering
Long
summer's
day, Day
till
evening;
And the Monkeys
stand
Neither
that he
worked,
nor that he
slept
And a
dream he
dreamed,
Then he
rose
And so say:
- Nine great
craftsmen,
Calfe and
masons,
You know what I
dreamt
Since when did
I go to bed? A
whisper from
above
Aievea told me
No matter
how we
work, the

night would break

*Until we decide
In the wall to
build the first
wife
The first little sister
Which came up
Mini at the break
of day, Bringing
dishes to husband
or brother. So if
you want
To start
Sjinta monastery
For the
remembrance,
We'll start
Let us all swear
And let us bind the
Mystery to keep it;
Every little wife,
Every little Mini
sister at the break
of day*

*First he showed up,
 Let us sacrifice
 her, let us build
 her in the wall!
 Manea woke up,
 And then it goes up
 On the picket fence
 And higher, on
 scaffolding,
 And in the field he
 looked, The road was
 searching.
 When, alas, what did
 he see? Who was
 coming?
 His wife,
 cfmp's flower!
 She was getting closer
 Ș; it brought him
 Lunch,
 Drinking wine.
 Ctt he saw her,
 His heart was leaping,
 He fell on his
 knees And weeping
 he said:
 - Give, Lord, to the
 world
 A rain with foam, To
 make sprinkles,
 Let it trickle,
 Let the waters rise,
 Proud to stop me, Stop
 her in the valley,
 Get her out of the way!
 The Lord is
 patient, his prayer
 is answered,
 The clouds
 gather, the sky*

*darkens.
 And suddenly it was
 pouring down, the foaming
 rain
 That makes sprinkles
 and spatters sprinkles
 .
 But however he fell,*

Mtndra

*didn't stop
her, But she
kept coming
And he was
coming
closer.*

*Manea saw
her, her
heart was
crying,
And again
she wept,
And again
she
prayed:*

*- Blow, Lord, a breath,
Blow it on the
ground, Brazii to
strip it,
Paltini to bend,
Let the mountains
overthrow, and let
the mountains
overthrow me,
To get in my way,
Let the Lord
be merciful,
His
prayer
obeyed
And a
wind
blew,
A wind on the
earth, Paltini
that doubled,
Brazi că
despoia
Munții*

raștură, lară

pe Ana

*Not in the day!
She always came,
On the road he faltered
And he was getting closer
And, bitterly,
There she goes!
The great
craftsmen,
Caulkers and bricklayers
Much cheered
up If a videa,
And Manea rages,
Proudly she
kissed, and took
her in her arms
On the scaffolding he climbs,
He put it on the wall
And, joking, he said:*

*- Hold on, my little
mfndruta, Don't you
be a snitch,
That we want to
joke and build you
up!
Ana – she trusted
And merrily he
laughed.
Jar Manea oft a
And the Wall
began to build,
Dream come true.
The wall was going
up
And it encompassed
her
Up to your ankles,
Until the meatballs.
And she, alas, she
didn't even laugh,
He always said:
- Monkeys, Monkeys,
Monkeys!
The evil wall is
squeezing me
Trupușoru mi frînge!
And Manea was
silent
And he was always
building ;
The wall was
going up And
encompassed
her
Up to your ankles,
To the meatballs,
To the meatballs,
To the meatballs,
To the meatballs,*

*But her, alas,
She was always
crying And always
saying :
- Monkeys,
Monkeys,
Monkeys!
The evil wall is
squeezing me, My
little tittie is squeezing
me,
My baby's breaking!
The monkeys peat
And always working.*

*The wall was
going up And
encompassed
her
Till the ribs Till
the tits
Up to the buttocks,
up to the eyes,
Incit, woe to her,
It was no longer
empty It could
be heard
From the wall that said
:*

*- Monoii, Monoii,
Craftsman*

*The evil wall is
squeezing me
My life is dying!
On the Argeş in
gios,*

*On a malfrumos
Black King
comes to
worship*

*At the monastery,
Falnică zidirea,
Monastire naltă,
Like no other.*

*The Lord looked
upon her And
was rejoicing
And so he said:*

*- You master
masons, ten great
craftsmen,*

*Call me right,
With my hand on the
pept,*

*If you've got
craftsmanship*

*another monastery
In remembrance,
Much brighter
And more beautiful?
And the great
craftsmen,
Caulkers and
bricklayers, How
to sit on the
sandstone Up on
the awning,*

*And he would
cheerfully watch
and then answer:
- Like us, great
craftsmen,
Calffe and
bricklayers,
Others are not on
this earth !
Find out that we know
Whenever we build
Another monastery
In Remembrance,
Much brighter and
much more beautiful!
The Lord is listening
And in thought he
stood, Then he
commanded
Scaffolding to ruin
He shall make the
ladders cold, And
the masons, 'Ten
great masons,
Let them leave me,
To rot Colo, on
the rafters Up on
the roof.
The craftsmen thought
And she was
making flying
wings
Made of light shingles.
Then he'd stretch them
out
He leaped into the
sky, but fell where
he fell,*

*His body was
splitting. And poor
poor Monkeys,
Monkey Craftsman,
When trying to
dive,
Here she was
From the wall
there came A
voice of a troubled
voice,
A much loved
voice, that moaned
with a heavy groan
And he always said:
- Monkeys,
Monkeys,
Monkeys!
The evil wall is
squeezing me, My
little tit weeps,
My baby is breaking,
My life is dying! As
he heard it,
Manea was getting lost,
His eyes were clouding ;
The world was turning,
the clouds were turning,
And from the rafters,
From the awning,
Dead the poor
man fell Where he
fell
What the heck!
A smooth jint,
With little water,
With salt water,
with wet tears!*

In the neo-Greek ballads, the construction that collapses every night is the Arta bridge. The version in Corcyra, used by Şăineanu, tells us of forty craftsmen and sixty laborers toiling in vain for three years. A genius (*sto-*

icheion) finally tells them that the bridge can only be finished by sacrificing the wife of the chief mason; hearing this, he falls senseless. Recovering, he sends a message to his wife, asking her to dress slowly, and just as slowly to come, late, towards noon, to the building site; he entrusts the message to a bird; but the bird advises the mason's wife to hurry up. Finding him sad and dejected, she asks him what has happened to her; the mason tells her that he has lost his ring under the bridge, she goes down to look for it. Then the mason sacrifices her. The woman dies weeping over her fate: there had been three sisters, she weeps, and all three perished in the same tragic way, Wla under the Danube bridge, the other under the walls of the Avlona fortress, and finally she, the youngest, under the Art bridge. And he wished her to tremble as her heart trembled

at this moment and wished that passers-by would fall from the bridge as her hair is falling now.³ In another variant, the voice of an archangel is the one announcing that the mason's wife must be built.⁴

In the Zakynthos version, the architect has the revelation in a dream;

dying, his wife complains that one of her sisters was built into the foundation of a church, the other into the walls of a monastery, and herself, the third, under the ^{Artas} bridge. In a variant from Trebizond,

the bricklayer hears a voice asking: "What will you give me to keep the wall from collapsing?" The mason replies, "I can't have a mother or a daughter, but a wife, yes, perhaps I could find a better one."⁶ There are even crueller variants, such as the Thracian version, in which the wife comes down in search of the ring, but the blacksmith-mason calls out to her: "I have the ring, but you will never come out of there!"⁷ Let it be added that it is not our purpose to examine all the non-Greek versions, of which there are a considerable number. ⁸

³ Translations of texts and bibliographical indications in Șăineanu, op. cit., pp. 362-363; Amaudov, pp. 389 et seq.; Caracostea, pp. 628 ff.; Cocchiara, pp. 38-39. Cf. also M. Eliade, Commentaries, p. 30.

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⁴ Comments, *ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵ Şăineanu , pp. 364-365; Cocchiara, p. 40.

⁶ Caracostea, p. 629; Comments, p. 31.

⁷ Caracostea, *ibid.*; Comments, *ibid.*

⁸ More than forty according to the research of N. G. Politis; cf. Cocchiara, p. 38, n. 3. But Gheorghios Megas recently states that he knows 264 variants; cf. *Laografia*, 18 (1 959-1 961), pp. 561-557. The number and arltaism of the versions

In the Macedo-Romanian version of *Cântilu a pontulu di Narta*, the heroes are three brothers, stonemasons. A bird reveals to the eldest that he must build the younger one's wife. One detail, foreign to both the Daxo-Romanian and the neo-Greek variants, is that the victim begs to have her chest left free so that she can continue to breastfeed her child.⁹ This detail is found in a variant from Herzegovina¹⁰ (the gypsy walled under the Mostar bridge), in a variant from Bosnia¹¹ (concerning the town of Tešanj) and in almost all the Serbian and Bulgarian forms. The latter contain the following story: for ten years the craftsman Manole, with two brothers, have been working in the town of

Tešanj without ever finishing it. A dream reveals to him that he will have to sacrifice the first wife who will arrive at the construction site the next day. The three brothers are bound by oath not to say anything to their wives, but only Manole keeps his vow. When his wife arrives and finds him crying because, he says, he has lost his wedding ring, she goes down to look for it and is walled up. She asks to have her sinus opened so that she may suckle her child, and after a while a spring

are impressive and must be taken into account in any systematic study of the genesis of the ballad. As we shall see, Cocchiara, following Politis and other scholars, is convinced that the true humus of the legend is to be found in Greece and invokes, among other reasons, the fact that building sacrifice is still current in Greece in the form of "shadow stealing" (p. 31). The argument does not hold water because as Cocchiara himself observes, pp. 46-47, the practice is extremely widespread throughout the Balkan Peninsula and Romania. Similar beliefs and legends are attested in Armenia (cf. H. Dj. Siruni, "Legend of the walled girl", *Ani. Anuarul de cultură armeană*, Bucharest, Bucharest, 1941, pp. 243-246) and in the Caucasus (see below p. 172, n. 28).

⁹ Kurt Schladenbach first studied *Die aromunische Bal/ode von der ArtabrUke*, in *Jahresbericht des Instituts für rumänische Sprache*, I, Leipzig, 1894, pp. 79-121. The article escaped the insight of G. Cocchiara, pp. 42-43, who uses the beautiful text published by V. Petrescu, *Mostre de dialectul macedo-român*, II, Bucharest, 1880, pp. 84-88, and the variants noted by P. Papa hagi, *Basme aromâne*, Bucharest, 1905, pp. 70 and 555.

¹⁰ Cf. Comments, p. 31 (citing de Paul Săbilot, *Les travaux publics et les mines dans les traditions et les superstitions de tous les pays*, Paris, 1894, p. 93, and *IA Revue des Traditions populaires*, VI, p. 691).

¹¹ Comments, p. 31, after Friedrich S. Krauss, 'Das Opfer bei den Südslaven', in

Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien , xvi, 1 887,
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pp. 1 6-21; id, Vollcsglaube und religwser Brauch der Sudslaven", MUnster, 1 890,
pp. 158 ff.

milk gushes from the wall.¹² A version of Trevensko ends with this reflection of Manole: "That is why it is not good to swear, because most of the time people are wrong."¹³

Serbo-Croatian folk tales collected in the early 19th century by Vuk Stefanovic Karagic and published in his masterly collection of folk songs speak of three brother princes who construct the fortress of Shkodër. A fairy (*Vila*) destroys all the night's work their day. She revealed to one of the brothers, Vukašin, that the fortress could not be built unless they could find and build the twins, Stojan and Stojana. ¹⁴ For three years an emissary, Dimitir, searched for them and could not find them. Vukašin resumes the work, but still to no avail. The *villa* now reveals to them that instead of the mythical twins they can build the wife of one of them. The rest follows the familiar pattern: the three brothers swear an oath not to give their wives anything to suspect, but the youngest, Gojco, is the only one who keeps his word and his faithful wife is walled in. She begs to be given "a little window for her mother's breast" so that she can nurse her child and another in front of her eyes so that she can see her home. ¹⁵ The ballad of the city of Shkodër is also known among Albanians. ¹⁶

Finally, the Hungarian versions tell us of twelve the stonemasons working on the construction of Deva. Master Clemens decides to sacrifice the first wife who will come the next day to bring them lunch. There are no supernatural elements (genie, fairy, archangel, dream), nor the oath of the master-builders. When his wife arrives, Clemens announces his fate and begins to

¹² Translations and commentaries in A. Strauss, *Bulgarische Volleslieder*, Vienna, 1895, pp. 407-408; Caracostea, pp. 632 ff. ; after Amaudov ; Commentaries, pp. 31-32 ; Cocchiara, pp. 43-44. A similar song of the Gypsies of Bulgaria has been analyzed by N. M. Penzer, "Song of the Bridge," in *Journal of the Gypsy-Lore Society*, third series, vol. IV, pp. 110-114.

¹³ Amaudov, reproduced from Caracostea, pp. 632-633.

¹⁴ On the etymological symbolism of these names (stojati 'to stand'), see Comments, p. 33.

¹⁵ Cf. texts and bibliography in Comments, pp. 32-34; Cocchiara, pp. 46-48. Variants are recorded in the article by Sv. Stefanovil, "Die legende vom Bau der Burg Skutari" (*Revue internationale des Etudes Balkaniques*, I, 1934, pp. 188

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^{t6} Cf. Cocchiara, pp. 49-50.

build. The child begins to cry and the mother comforts him: "There will always be good women to nurse him and good boys to rock him." ¹¹

Exeg ezele : folc loriști, literary historians, stylists

Each national type of ballad has an original structuring of different dramatic, psychological and literary elements. A comparative study must analyze them carefully, both in terms of their genesis and in terms of style and literary quality. It is obviously a delicate matter to pronounce on the artistic value of each national type; such a judgment would presuppose, in addition to a perfect knowledge of Hungarian, Romanian and all the Balkan languages, a profound familiarity with their respective popular literatures and their own aesthetics. Some general conclusions emerge, however, from the treatment of the folkloric material. Șăineanu summarized the results of his comparative research as follows: "In terms of beauty and relative originality, the Serbian and Romanian versions occupy first place; the Bulgarian songs, by their disjointed form, give the impression of broken fragments; the Albanian traditions are pale imitations of Greek or Serbian ballads, and the Macedo-Romanian song is an almost literal reproduction of one of the neo-Greek versions; The Hungarian variants seem echoes of the Romanian ballad, while the neo-Greek versions, due to certain characteristic features, occupy a special place in this ensemble of poetic productions." ¹²

By classifying them in this way, Șăineanu was thinking both of the genesis and diffusion of the ballads and of their respective literary merits. The opinions of scholars differ, especially as regards the genesis. Politis, Arnaudov, Caraman, and now, more recently, Cocchiara, agree, for different reasons, to establish

¹¹ Cf. Șăineanu, pp. 392 et un. ; Arnaudov, pp. 413 ff. ; Caracostea, pp. 640 ff. ; Comments, p. 34. See now also Lajos Vargyas, *Researches into the Medieval History of Folk Ballad*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1967, pp. 173-233; .. The

origin of the word *ARCE* and its wife.

11 L. Şăineanu , op. cit. , pp. 360-361 .

The original Greek hearth. Arnaudov derives the Albanian, Bulgarian and Macedo-Romanian ballads from the Greek type; the Serbian type from the Albanian and Bulgarian forms; the Romanian type from the Bulgarian forms and the Hungarian type from the Romanian forms. 19 Caracostea also notes that Arnaudov also speaks of polygenetic, which gives flexibility to the scheme indicated. On the other hand, Arnaudov himself had noted the reduced circulation of the ballad in northern Bulgaria. However, we should expect the opposite phenomenon, if it were true that this region constitutes the bridge over which the ballad crossed into Romania.²⁰ In any case, the circulation was certainly two-way. D. Găzdaru discovered the name of *Curtea*, echo of *Curtea de Argeș*, in a Bulgarian variant, which implies the passage of the Romanian form south of the Danube.²¹

Skok came to quite different conclusions. For him, Macedo-Romanian craftsmen played a key role in the creation and dissemination of the ballad. The Croatian scholar argues that in all the Romanian variants the craftsmen are regarded as extraordinary **beings** ("Manole is a genius who communicates with the divinity"); moreover, the craftsmen are condemned by their profession to sacrifice their families, hence their tragic fate. The poetic elaboration of this motif, Skok supposes, can only be conceived in a mason's milieu. This trade was practiced all over the Balkan Peninsula by Macedonian-Romanians, whose masons were called *goge*; the Macedonian-Romanians identified themselves so closely with the mason's trade that the Macedonian-Romanian word *goga* became synonymous with mason for Serbs and Albanians.²²

Whatever we believe about Skok's general thesis, he has the merit to have first drawn attention to the crucial role of masons in the theme of the building ritual. Until the last century, masons kept "trade secrets" of undeniable archaism. As we shall see in a moment, building work involves a

¹⁹ Arnaudov, summarized by Caracostea, p. 630, note; Comments, p. 28.

²⁰ Caracostea, *ibid.* Comments, p. 29.

²¹ D. Găzdaru, "The Legend of Master Manole", in *A rhiva*, 1 932, pp. 8&-92 ;

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id., *The Romanian Contribution to the Cultural Progress of the Slavs*, spec. pp. 1 57-1 59.

²² Skok, *op . cit.* , p. 241; Caracostea, p. 624; Comentarii, p. 29; D. Găzdaru, *Contribution of Romanians*, p. 1 59.

ritual and symbolism that come to us from a very distant past Any trade, especially masonry and blacksmithing, was laden with ritual meaning and symbolism strictly reserved for "insiders" . This astonishing conservatism is partly explained by the deep resonance that the various ways of "doing", "making", "building", "constructing" have awakened in the depths of the human soul. There still survives a whole mythology of "doing" in its many and variously camouflaged forms in human behavior.²³

According to Skok, the very name of Manole would confirm the Romanian origin of the ballad.²⁴ Caraman, on the contrary, concludes that this anthroponym belongs specifically to the onomastic Greek and that it passed to Romania with a Greek phonetic.²⁵ The name of Manole would be in Greece the very symbol of the architect.²⁶ On the other hand, in the Serbo-Croatian versions the mason-mason Rado is called *Neimaru* or *Neimare*; the *higher* noun is also found in the Macedonian-Romanian and Bulgarian ballads. Now, this word, according to Caraman, represents the Turkish *mimar*, "arhi tect", assimilated by the Macedono-Romanians, thanks to a frequent process of popular etymology, to the Romanian word "mai mare", "*mai marlu*"²¹. This fact seems to confirm, at least in part, Skok's hypothesis on the role of the Macedono-Romanians in the diffusion of the ballad.

Caraman adheres to Politis' thesis, although for other reasons: for the Romanian scholar, the archaism and the thematic simplicity of the neo-Greek ballads show that the transition from the construction ritual to the *literary* folkloric creation took place on Greek soil. According to Caraman, the perfection of the Romanian and Serbian forms would be further proof that Romanians and Serbs "did not invent" the ballad, that they merely elaborated it, exploiting all its artistic virtues. Cocchiara rejects this last argument: for him there can be no question of literary evolutionism, for each song is

²³ On this problem see our book *Forgerons et Alchimistes*, Paris, Flammarion 1956. See also M. Eliade, "The Forge and the Crucible : A Postscript" (History of

Religions, *ARCE*, pp. 74-88).

²⁴ Skok, pp. 225 and 245; Caracostea, p. 625 note; Cocchiara, p. 52

²⁵ Caraman, pp. 95 ff. ; Cocchiara, p. 52.

²⁶ Caraman, p. 94.

ⁿ Caraman, p. 95; Cocchiara, p. 53, n. 46.

born with its author; and, moreover, he is not convinced of the literary superiority of Romanian forms.²⁸

It is regrettable that the eminent Italian folklorist was unaware of Caracostea's comparative and stylistic study. In penetrating pages, Caracostea has brought to light the artistic qualities of the verse in good time

Romanian. For him, in its Romanian form, the legend has realized its aesthetic destiny, whatever the "origin" and density of the South-Eastern European variants. Caracostea rightly underlines the ritual character of the beginning of the ballad *Curtea de Arges*: the search for a suitable place to build monasteries²⁹, whereas in all the other forms the action begins with the mysterious collapse of the walls during the night. The late critic also points out that in the Romanian form Manole always remains at the center of the action,

whereas in the Serbian ballad, for example, the focus is on the wife and her maternal love. In the Romanian ballad the woman resignedly and even serenely accepts her ritual walling up; in other versions of south-eastern Europe, the wife laments and

²⁸ Cocchiara, p. 51. Recently a new hypothesis has been put forward by Lajos Vargyas: according to this author, the origin of the ballad should be sought in the Caucasus, where it is attested by the Georgians (it is also found among the Mordvins); the Hungarians, who in the 6th-6th centuries nomadized between the Caucasus and the Don, would have brought the ballad to Europe and would have transmitted it to the Bulgarians. The other peoples would have borrowed the ballad from the Bulgarians; cf. L. Vargyas: "Die Herkunft der ungarischen Ballade von der eingemauerten Frau" (Acta Ethnographica, Budapest, 1960) and the English translation, The origin of the walled-up wife, cited above, p. 170, n. 17. The hypothesis is not convincing (see the criticism of G. A. Megas in I. Aografia, 18, 1959-1961, pp. 561-577, in G. Hadzis in Etnographia, p. 71, 1960, pp. 558-579, in Adrian Fochi in Limbă și Literatură, 12, 1966, pp. 373-418). As Ion Taloș notes, Vargyas does not explain the total absence of the ballad in Hungary (for of the 36 Hungarian variants, one was recorded in Czechoslovakia and 35 in Transylvania). Moreover, the transmission of the ballad to the Bulgarians has not been proved; cf. Taloș, "Balada Meșterului Manole și varile ei transilvănene", pp. 51-52.

²⁹ In a note published in the Review of the Royal Foundations, April 1944, pp. 213-215, Maria Golescu commented on the theme of "deserted and unfinished walls", recalling the custom of the Romanian voivodes and boyars to restore ruined churches and to complete those whose construction had been interrupted for many years due to historical vicissitudes. The author refers in particular to Ion Donat, Fundațiile religioase ale Olteniei, I, Craiova, 1937, pp. 22 et seq., 37 et

seq. See now Ion Tals, "Bauplätze in Rumänien", *op. cit.* pp. 204 et un. Cf. and D. Strombäck, "Die Wahl des Kirchenbauplatzes in der Sage und im Volks glauben mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Schweden" (Human iora, Locust Valey, New York, 1 960, pp. 37 et seq.)

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curses fate. The ballad *Mînăstiri Argeş* has a sequel, which, contrary to the belief of certain folklorists, is not outside the opera: Manole's flight and his tragic death. In a way, his death brings back to him the wife he had sacrificed.

But the stylistic analysis of the ballad does not exhaust its richness. A whole study could be made of the structures of the imaginary universes revealed by the different poetic creations. Let's remember that it is a bridge (Greece, Bulgaria, in the case of the Macedonian-Romanians), a fortress (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary) or a monastery (Romania). Of course, this choice is largely explained by the actual existence of such works: the popular imagination was impressed here by the presence of a bridge, there by the construction of a monastery^{3°}, and there by the settlement of a fortress. But once these "real objects" have been transformed into images, they no longer belong to the immediate, utilitarian universe. Released from the concrete text, the images enclose within themselves their own dimensions and their primordial symbolism. Now, in a ballad, as in any other imaginary creation, we are no longer dealing with 'real things', but with images, archetypes, symbols. It would therefore be of the greatest interest to study the different universals of our ballads from this perspective. It would reveal all the symbolic meanings of the Bridge (initiatory ordeal, dangerous passage from one mode of existence to another: from death to life, from non-consciousness to enlightenment, from immaturity to maturity, etc.). It would then show the cosmological structure of the "Citadel", at the same time *imago mundi* and "Center of the World", sacred territory where communication between Heaven, Earth and Hell becomes possible; it would then highlight the cosmological and paradisiac symbolism of the Monastery, at the same time image of the Cosmos and of the celestial Jerusalem, of the Universe in its visible totality and of Paradise.

Let us add immediately that such an exegesis of images and symbols is today validated both by the history of religions and by depth psychology. In other words, the analysis of an image and the explanation of its symbolism can disregard

30 The importance of the Argeş Court and the legends crystallized around
0Negru Vodă for what we could call the historical mythology of Romanians will
be noted.

the awareness that the individual or society that conveys such an image has or does not have of this symbolism. A symbol releases its message and fulfills its function even when its meaning escapes *consciousness*.³¹ And it is all the more remarkable, as far as the symbolism of the monastery-church is concerned, that it was received and culturally valorized by the Christianity of Eastern Europe, heir of Byzantium. ³² In other words, until very recently, people in the Balkan-Danubian area were aware that a church or a monastery represented Cosmos as well as the heavenly Jerusalem or Paradise: in this case, there was an awareness of the architectural and iconographic symbolism present in sacred buildings, and this awareness was realized both through religious experience (liturgy) and through traditional culture (theology). More precisely, it was a question of a historically recent (Christianity) religious revalorization of an archaic symbolism: for the sanctuary as *imago mundi* and "Center of the World" is already attested in the Paleo-Eastern cultures (Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, etc.)³³

Rites of construction: morphology and history

The archaism of the images and symbols present in the ballads is abundantly confirmed by the practices and beliefs related to building sacrifices. Such beliefs are known to be found almost everywhere in Europe, although they have not given rise to a

³¹ This methodological problem is too important to be settled in a few lines. See our book *Images et Symboles*, Paris, Galmard, 1952, and our studies: "Symbolisme du vol magique" (*Numen*, 3, 1956, pp. 1-13; reprinted in *Mythes, rites et mystères*, Paris, 1957, pp. 133-148) and "Centre du Monde, Temple, Maison" (in *Le Symbolisme cosmique des monuments religieux*, ed. G. Tucei, Rome, 1957, pp. 57-82).

³² For all this see Hans Sedlmayr, *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale*, Zürich, 1950, pp. 118 et un. and passim.

³³ See our books : *Traité d'Histoire des religions*, Paris, Payot, 1949, 2nd ed., 1952, pp. 315 ff. ; *Le Mythe de l'Eternel retour*, Paris, Galimard, 1949, pp. 21 et un. ; *Images et Symboles*, pp. 47 et seq. and the study cited above: *Center du*

popular literatures comparable to the Southeast. It is not the place to mention them here. After Jacob Grim, but especially after Felix Liebrecht,³⁴ a considerable number of legends, superstitions and customs more or less directly tributary to building rituals have been collected. A vast survey appeared in the *Revue des Traditions populaires* starting in 1890; Paul Sebillot, G. L. Gomme, R. Andree, E. Westermarck and others published contributions of various orientations; as for Paul Sartori, he established a very rich dossier in 1898.³⁵ These materials were used and supplemented by us in 1943 and by Cocchiara in his study of 1950.³⁶ On this occasion we only recall that the reason for a construction whose completion required human sacrifice is attested in Scandinavia and among the Finns, Latvians and Estonians³⁷, Russians and Ukrainians³⁸, Germans³⁹, and in France⁴⁰,

34 Cf. Felix Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde. Alte und neue Aufsätze*, Heilbronn, 1897, pp. 284-296 (Die vergrabenen Menschen).

35 Paul Sartori, Ueber das Bauopfer, in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, XXX, 1898, pp. 1-54. See also K. Kluseman, *Das Bauopfer* (Graz-Hamburg, 1919); L. D. Burdick, *Foundation Rites, with some kindred ceremonies* (n. d., New York, Abbey Press: scholarly but chaotic work; the author is not familiar with Sartori's research); Inger Margrette Bøberg, *Baumeistersagen* (FFC, n° 151, 24 pages, Helsinki, 1955); cf. the articles "Bauopfer" and "Eirunauem" in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*.

36 In the notes that follow we will confine ourselves to the bibliography containing in the studies of Sartori and Cocchiara and in our book. If necessary, we will note other works that are not recorded in the Italian folklorist's study.

37 Finezi: Sartori, p. 13; *Comentarii*, p. 38; Cocchiara, p. 55; n. 53; Letoni: Andrejs Johansons, "Das Bauopfer der Letten" (*AIV*. 1 & -199, 1962-1963, text reproduced in *Der Schirmherr des Hoes im Volksglauben der Letten*, Stockholm, 1964, pp. 55-75); Estonians: Oskar Loo, *Grundzüge des estnischen Volksglaubens*, II, 1, Lund, 1951, p. 136; on the diffusion of the motif see map at p. 137.

38 Valeriu S. Ciobanu, *Jertfa zidirii la ucrainieni și ruși*, Chișinău, 1930; D. Zelenin, *Russische (Ostslavische) Volkskunde*, Berlin, 1927, p. 287; *Comments*, p. 38; Cocchiara, p. 55, n. 51.

39 Sartori, op. cit.; Jan de Vries, "De sage van het ingemetselde kind", in

Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor volkskunde, XXXII, 1 927, pp. 1-13; Cocchiara, p. 55 and footnote 55.

40 Comments, p. 39, Cocchiara, p. 60.

in England⁴¹, in Spain.⁴² A famous episode is the one recounted by the Armorican monk Nennius (second half of the 10th century) in his *Historia Britonum* (ch. 18): as the fortress that King Gorthigem was building fell down every night, the druids did not dare to sprinkle it with the blood of a "father father" child, which the king did.⁴³ According to the *Vie de Saint Columba*, written by Saint Adamnan, a similar sacrifice would have been practiced by Columba (Columkile) when he built the church of Hy.⁴⁴

It should be noted that such beliefs and legends were part of a ritual scenario: whether it was a human effigy or the "shadow" of a victim, or whether one of the great forms of sacrifice by substitution (immolation of an animal on the foundations or when entering a house for the first time), a sacrifice of blood always ensured the solidity and durability of a building. This is not the place here to discuss the question of substitutionary slaughter, which still has certain obscure aspects. ⁴⁵ Suffice it to point out that the discovery of skeletons in the foundations of sanctuaries and palaces in the ancient Near East, prehistoric Italy and elsewhere leaves no doubt as to the reality of such sacrifices.⁴⁶ The presence of effigies or symbols in foundations also testifies to the various ways in which victims were substituted.

In the form of attenuated ritual, legend or vague beliefs, building sacrifices is found almost everywhere in the world. Quite a number of facts have been gathered in India

⁴¹ Cocchiara, pp. 58 and unn.

⁴² Al. Popescu-Telega, *Asemănări și analogii în folclorul român și iberic*, Craiova, 1927, pp. 12 ff.; Comments, p. 40; Cocchiara, p. 70, n. 77.

⁴³ Bibliography in Cocchiara, p. 56, notes 57-58; add A. H. Krappe, "Un épisode de l' *Historia Britonum*", in *Revue Celtique*, 1924, pp. 181-188; cf. also Commentaries, p. 40. The 'firi tal' child motif constitutes an independent folkloric theme.

⁴⁴ Cocchiara, p. 57 and note 60.

⁴⁵ See, for now, Comments, p. 58 and unn.

⁴⁶ Comments, p. 42 and note 20; Cocchiara, pp. 67-68, 70-71. See also B. Nyberg, *Kind und Erde*, Helsinki, 1931, pp. 185-187; Lorits, op. cit., p. 136.

The state of the problems and recent bibliography in Manole et les rites de

modern, in which the faith certainly had a ritual reality in ancient times.⁴⁷ Sacrifices are found in Mesoamerican cultures⁴⁸, and also in Oceania and Polynesia⁴⁹, Indo-Chinese, Chinese¹ and Japanese cultures.⁵² Special mention must be made of the sacrifice of the founding of villages among the Mandes tribes of the Sudan, a complex ritual extensively studied by Frobenius, whose symbolism reminds us of the implicit symbolism of the founding of Rome.⁵³ Obviously, particular studies must specify, in each case, to what extent the immolation of victims is ritual attested and to what extent we are dealing with legends and superstitions.

To adequately expose and discuss the multiple aspects that this type of sacrifice has taken on over time and in different cultural contexts would require a large volume. In short, let us say that all these aspects ultimately depend on a common ideology which can be summarized as follows: in order to last, a construction (house, technical work but also spiritual work) must be animated, that is to say it must be given life and soul at the same time. The "transfer" of the soul is only possible through sacrifice; in other words,

⁴⁷ M. Wintemitz, "Einige Bemerkungen Über das Bauopfer bei den Indem", in *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, XVI 1 877, pp. 37-40; cf. also M. Haberlandt, "Ueber das Bauopfer", *ibid.*, pp. 42-4; Buddhist text *capi tal*, *Jātaka*, n° 481 (vol. IV, p. 246); cf. Paul Mus, *Barabudur*, Paris-Hanoi, 1935, pp. 202 ff.; *Commentaries*, p. 43.

⁴⁸ *Comments*, p. 42.

⁴⁹ *Comments*, p. 42 and note 17; *Cochiara*, p. 66.

Cochiara, p. 62, footnote 86.

⁵¹ W. Eberhard, "Chinesischer Bauzauber, Untersuchungen an chinesischen Volksmüirchen", in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 11, 1939, pp. 87-99, spec. pp. 98-99. in *folklore*, W. Eberhard, *Typen chinesische Volksmärchen*, FFC, 1 20, Helsinki 1937, p. 146 and *Chinese Folktales*, Chicago, 1965, pp. 133-37, 231. On actual sacrifices, cf. Dr. J. J. Matignon, *IA Chine hermltique*, Paris, 1930, p. 24.

⁵² *Coci* p. 62; see also Masao Oka, summarized by Alois Closs, 'Das Versenkungsoffer', in *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, IX, 1952, pp. 66-107 and especially p. 89.

⁵³ L. Frobenius, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas*, Leipzig, 1933, pp. 177-180; *Cochiara*, pp. 64-5. Cf. also Trautl d'*Histoire des religions*, pp. 321 and unkn. and *Coc*

chi  pp. 71 and un.

by a violent death. It could even be said that the victim continues his existence after death, not in his physical body, but in the new body – **the** construction – which he has animated by his sacrifice; one could even speak of an "architectural body" substituted for the carnal body.^{s4} The ritual transfer of life through sacrifice is not limited to buildings (temples, citadels, bridges, houses) and objects **utilitaires**^{s5} : human victims are also immolated to ensure the success of an operation^{s6}, or even the historical duration of a spiritual enterprise.^{s1}

Bloody sacrifices and cosmogonic myths

The exemplary model for all these forms of sacrifice is almost certainly a cosmogonic myth, i.e. the one that explains creation by the killing of a primordial Giant (of the Ymir, Purusha, P' an-ku type):

^{s4} Morphologically, this 'transfer of life' is part of the well-known series of religious monuments 'animated' by relics or by drawings of vital organs: eyes, mouth, etc. See also Paul Mus, 'La Tombe Vivante', in *IA Terre et la vie*, VII 1937, pp. 11 7-127. Indian boats are animated by the drawing of two eyes; cf. J. Homell, "Indian boat design", in *Memorials of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1920.

^{s5} According to T'ao chouo, for several years the potters had tried "in vain to make out of clay an urchin adorned with dragons, commissioned by the emperor. One of them sacrificed himself and jumped into the hearth of the kiln: he died, but the urn was made"; cf. Max Kalten mark, *Le Ue-sien tchouan*, traduit et annoté, Pekin, 1953, p. 45. For metallurgical sacrifices see our study : "Symbolisme et rituels metallurgique babyloniens", in *Studien zur analytischen Psychologie* C. G. Jung, Zttrich, 1955, vol II, pp. 42-46, and especially our volume *Forgerons et Alchimistes*.

^{s6} Xerxes buries nine boys and nine girls alive when he embarks for Greece, in order to ensure his victory. It is also known that Themistocles, following an oracle, sacrifices three young prisoners on the eve of the battle of Salamis (Plu tarh, Vita Them., XI).

^{s7} S. f. Peter was accused of having sacrificed a one-year-old child, puer aMiculus, in order to ensure that Christianity would last 365 years. The fact that St. Augustine felt the need to respond to such a slander proves that even in the 4th

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century AD the pagan world believed in the efficacy of a magical technique; cf. J. Hubaux, "L'enfant d 'un an", IAtomus collection, vol II: Hommage a Joseph Bidez et a Franz Cumont, Brussels, 1949, pp. 143-1 58.

its organs give birth to different cosmic regions. This motif has known a miraculous spread : it is particularly intense in Eastern Asia. ss It is generally known that the cosmogonic myth is the model for all the myths and rites related to a

"work", "a work", a "creation". The mythical motif of a "births" caused by immolation are found in countless texts: not only the Cosmos is born as a result of the immolation of a primordial being and of its own substance, but also food plants, human races or different social classes.s9 Famous among all are the myths of Indonesia and Oceania which tell of the voluntary sacrifice of a Woman or a Young Girl in order to produce, from their own bodies, the various food species.60

the spiritual source of the rites must be sought in this mythical horizon

our construction. If we remember, moreover, that for traditional societies the home was an *imago mundi*, it is clear that all building work symbolically reproduced cosmogonia. The cosmic significance of the human dwelling was reinforced by the symbolism of the Center; for, as has come to be better understood today, every house – *indeed*, every palace, temple, fortress – was considered to be at the "Center of the World."61 I have shown in several recent works that the homologation of the house-Cosmos (in multiple variants: the tent assimilated to the celestial vault, the stake as *axis mundi*, etc.) is one of the specific features of the nomadic hunter-gatherer cultures of the Americas, North and Central Asia and Africa.62

sa Cf. Alfred Ktlnh, *Berichte iiber den Weltanfang bei den Indochinesen*, Leipzig, 1935; A. W. Macdonald, "A propos de Prajāpati": in *Journal Asiatique*, t. 240, 1952, pp. 323-388.

\$9 See the works cited in the preceding note and the indications given in our study, *IA Mandragore et les mythes de la "naissance miraculeuse"*, in *Zalmoxis*, m, Bucharest, 1942, pp. 3-48.

60 See Ad E. Jensen, *Hainuwele*, Frankfurt am M., 1939, p. 59; id., *Das religiöse Weltbild einer frühen Kultur*, Stuttgart 1948, pp. 33 et seq. and passim. Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Aspects du mythe*, Paris, 1963, pp. 129 et seq.

61 For the symbolism of the "Center of the World" see our works cited in note 33.

62 Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase*,

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Paris, Payot, 1968, pp. 230 et seq. (2nd ed., 1968, pp. 211 et seq.); id, Centre du Monde, Temple, Maison, passim.

But the notion of a "Center" through which that *axis mundi* passes and which consequently makes communication between Heaven and Earth possible is already to be found in an earlier stage of culture. The Achilpa Australians always carry a sacred stilp with them on their wanderings and determine the direction to follow by its inclination. The myth tells that the divine being *Numbakula*, after having "cosmized" the territory of the future Achilpa, created their ancestor and founded their institutions, disappeared in the following way: from the trunk of a rubber tree he fashioned the sacred stilt, anointed it with blood and climbed it to the sky. The sacred stilt represents the cosmic axis and its installation in a territory is equivalent to a "cosmization" from a center of irradiation. In other words, the Achilpa Australians, for all their continual movements, never move away from the "Center of the World": they are always "centered" and in communication with the Sky into which *Numbakula* has disappeared. 63

We are entitled to distinguish two conceptions of the religious function of the human dwelling: 1) the oldest, attested among the hunter-gatherer and shepherd-nomadic peoples, consecrates the dwelling and, in general, the inhabited territory, assimilating them to the Cosmos, by means of the symbolism of the "Center of the World" ; 2) the other conception, more recent (which arose in the societies of paleocultivists, in those *Urpjlanzer*), involves, as we have seen, the repetition of the cosmogonic myth : from the fact that the world (or nourishing plants, humans, etc.) came into being through the primordial sacrifice of a divine Being, any construction requires the immolation of a victim. In the spiritual horizon proper to this last conception, the very substance of *vic timei*⁶⁴ is transformed into the beings or objects born as a result of his violent death. In such a myth, mountains are the bones To the primordial giant, clouds are his brains, etc.: in another the coconut is the very flesh of the Young Hainuwele Girl. At the level of the building rites, as we have seen, the immolated being regains a new body: it is the very dwelling it has "animated",

63 This mythical-ritual complex has recently been studied by Ernesto de

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"Angoscia territoriale e riscatto culturale nel mito Achilpa delle origini", in Studi e materiali di Storia delle religioni, XXIII, 1951-1952, pp. 51-56.

64 It is irrelevant for our study whether it is a voluntary sacrifice – **of the** Hainuwelle type – or an immolation, of the Ymir, P'an-cu, etc., type.

He therefore made it lasting by his violent death. In all these myths, violent death is creative.

From the point of view of cultural history, the sacred building rites are to be placed among the conceptions of the paleocultivists, Ad. E. Jensen has come to a similar conclusion, based especially on the rites accompanying the erection of the "men's house" (*darimo*) at Kiwai.⁶⁵ According to Landtman, the ceremony goes as follows: when it is decided to build a *darimo*, the village chooses an old couple and approves their eldest son; it is rare that he refuses: he smears mud on his face and begins to mourn his old parents, for there is a common belief that they will not survive the completion of the building. The old man is called the "father of the *darimo*" and the old woman the "burning woman". They fulfill the main role in the construction of the cult house. This work involves the erection of a central pillar, its anointing with the blood of an enemy, and above all the taking of a prisoner, for a new cult house cannot be used before such a sacrifice.⁶⁶ The myth that founds and justifies this ritual tells how the divinity immolated *in illo tempore* becomes the first dead (the first to undertake the journey beyond the grave) and metamorphoses into a kingdom of the dead: the *darimo*, the cultic house, is the terrestrial reproduction of the life beyond. According to Jensen, the kiwai rite would represent the archetype of that *Bauopfer*, and all the other forms of sacrificial building that we find in the world would be linked to this exemplary model. We find it hard to follow it so far. We believe that the kiwai rite represents rather an already specialized variant of the original sce nari, which involved only the following moments: the immolation of a divine beast, followed by a "creation", that is to say, by its meta-morphing into a substance or form that did not exist before. The kiwai sequence, and especially the immolation of the divinity, its transformation into the realm of the dead and its reproduction in the cult house, already present an amplification of the original scheme.

⁶⁵ Ad. E. Jensen, *Dos religiöse Weltbild einer frühen Kultur*, p. 58; id., *Mithos*

und Kult bei Naturvo/kern, Wiesbaden, 1951 , pp. 21 O and unn.

66 Gunar Landtman, The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea, London, 1927, pp. 10 ff., 17 ff.

Archaism and survival

However we judge the Kiwai version, the bloody building sacrifices most probably belong, as historical-cultural phenomena, to the spiritual world of the paleocultivators. Can it be said that wherever such rites are practiced, we are dealing with vestiges that have been handed down without a solution of continuity from those distant times? No. Even more so the presence of that *Bauopfer* in a culture does not necessarily imply that this culture belongs entirely to the paleocultivation level. In many cases, ritual rites and myths have passed from one people to another and from one historical epoch to another, without entailing a transmission of the original culture implied by such rites and myths. More important, in our view, than what can be said about the age of these beliefs, is the fact that certain cultures or certain peoples have chosen or have accepted one worldview or another, while others have rejected or forgotten them quite quickly. What we mean to say is that establishing the origin, the age or the historical vicissitudes of a belief or of a cultural complex is not sufficient either to understand them as spiritual phenomena or to make their history intelligible. Two other questions immediately arise which seem to us to be equally important: a) what is the true significance of all these beliefs and all these cultural complexes? b) for what reason, for what reason, does a particular culture or a particular people have they co-created, elaborated and enriched them? difficult questions that to which a satisfactory answer can always be given, but which we must not forget when we want to write even the most modest page of spiritual history.

Let's return to our Balcanian-danubian ballads: the archaism of the motifs and their imagery is even clearer after all we have said. The wife who agrees to be immolated so that an edifice can be erected on her own body is undoubtedly the seal of a primordial myth; primordial in the sense that it restores to us a spiritual creation that long predates the protohistoric and historical epochs of the peoples of south-eastern Europe. It is

still too early to try to specify how and by what means this mythical-ritual scenario was able to survive in the Southeast. However, we do have

a few facts that may explain the archaism of these Balkan-Danubian popular poetic creations. They are the following:

1) the Balkan-Danubian countries are the only ones in which the building sacrifice has given rise to remarkable literary-popular creations ; 2) the rarity of similar legends among Russians, Poles and Ukrainians seems to exclude the hypothesis of a Slavic origin of this literary motif;

3) Romanians and all the Balkan peoples share a common substratum, inherited from the Thracians (and which constitutes, moreover, the main element of unity of the entire Balkan Peninsula); 4) other cultural elements common to all the Balkan peoples seem even older than the Geto-Trachiaic heritage, presenting a pre-Indo-European configuration⁶⁷ ; 5) it must be borne in mind, of course, that the Thracians and Cimmerians were part of a protohistoric culture whose successive irradiations crossed Central Asia and gave rise to the emergence of new cultural configurations on the shores of the China Sea and at Dongson⁶⁸-

We should not be fooled by the "contemporaneity" of folklore: beliefs and customs still alive in certain eminently conservative regions of Europe (among which the Balkans and Romania are always mentioned) often reveal layers of culture more archaic than those represented, for example, by "classical" Greek and Roman mythologies. This is particularly evident in everything that concerns the customs and the magico-religious behavior of hunters and shepherds. But even among the farmers of contemporary central Europe it has been possible to prove the extent to which important fragments of prehistoric myths and rites have been preserved.⁶⁹ Systematic research in the field of paleo-

⁶⁷ These are true especially of religious symbolism, dances and musical instruments. Cf. Dr. Jaap Kunst, *Cultural Relations between the Balkans and Indonesia*, in Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, Medeling, n° CVII, Ams terdam, 1955.

⁶⁸ Cf. Robert Heine-Geldem, 'Das Tocharerproblem und die Pontische Wanderung', in *Saeculum*, II, 1 95 1, pp. 225-255; id, 'Die asiatische Herkunft der sudamerikanischen Metalltechnik', in *Paideuma*, V, Heft 7-8, April 1954, pp. 347-423, spec. pp. 350 ff.

69 Cf., for example, Leopold Schmidt, *Gestaltheiligkeit im bäuerlichen Arbeitsmythos. Studien zu den Ernteschnittgeräten und ihrer Stellung im europäischen Volcsglauben und Volcsbrauch*, Vienna, 1952

However, it has been proved that a certain number of pre-Indo-European and Paleo-Indo-European cultural elements have been better preserved here than anywhere else in Europe (except perhaps the Pyrenees and Ireland).

It is not always possible to reconstruct all the phases of a religious conception before it crystallizes into popular artistic creations. But, as I have already said, this is not the point of the research. It is much more important to understand the original spiritual universe in which such primordial religious conceptions were constituted which, despite numerous religious revalorizations (of which Christianity was the most radical), have survived in the form of "superstitions", popular beliefs charged with images and symbols of extreme antiquity. The adherence of a people to one or another mythical scenario, to one or another exemplary image, says more about its deepest soul than a large number of historical events. It is not unimportant for the understanding of the peoples of south-eastern Europe that they were the only ones to have created masterpieces of oral literature on the basis of such an archaic ritual script. D. Caracostea believed that he could prove that, of all these folkloric productions, the Romanian ballad of the Master of Manole is the most artistically realized. Even if some Balkanologists and folklorists do not share this opinion, the fact remains — of great importance — that in other Balkan oral literature the ballad of the building sacrifice is not considered a masterpiece either. Now, we all agree that Meșterul Manole and Miorița (see chapter *below*) rightly constitute the crown of poetry Romanian folk. It is significant that these two of the Romanian poetic genius have as their dramatic motif a "slow violent death" with accepted serenity. Whether or not this conception derives directly or not from the famous joy in dying of the Getae can be endlessly debated. The fact is that Romanian poetic folklore has never succeeded in surpassing these two masterpieces elaborated around the idea of creative death and serenely accepted death.

Bandinus and Incantatores

The Hungarian folklorist Gyorffy Istvan was probably the first to draw attention to the "shamanic" character of magical practices among Moldovans. ¹ He relied mainly on information gathered by the missionary Bandini (Bandinus) in the mid-17th century. After his article, Bandinus's text remained the source par excellence of all discussions on "Moldavian shamanism." ²

Marcus Bandinus, of the confraternity of the Freres mineurs, was bishop of Marcianopolis, in lower Moesia, of Durostor and of Tomis on the Black Sea coast; he was also administrator of the Catholicos Church of Moldavia, a province in which he lived from 1644 to 1650. At the request of Pope Inochentius X, he wrote a rather long report: *La visite generale de toutes les eglises de rite catholique romain dans la province de Moldavie*. He began writing it in March 1648 in Bacău, but the manuscript of the General Visit was not published until 1895, thanks to the care of V. V. A. Urechia.³

in the chapter *De incantationibus*, Bandinus states that the incantatores et incantatrices in Moldavia are held in the same esteem as in Italy *Doctores subtilissimi et sanctissimi*. It is allowed to anyone

¹ Gyorffy István, "A bUbj,olās a moldovaiakn'l" (*Ethnographia* XXXVI 1925)" pp. 1 69 ff.

² See, for example" Geza Róheim, "Hungarian Schamanism" (*Psychoanalysis and Social Sciences*, m, New York, 1951 " pp. 13 1-169)" p. 147.

³ V. A. Urechia" *Codex Bandinus. Memoriu asupra scrierii lui Bandinus de la 1646, urmat de text, însoțit de acte și documente* (*Analele Academiei Române, Memorii*" Secția istoric' serie 2" tom. XVI , 1 893-1 894, pp. 1-335 ; București" 1895). See also A. Veress" *Letters of the missionary Bandini from*

Moldavia, 1641-1650 (Romanian Academy" Memories" Historical Section' tom.
VL Mem., 13"
1926, pp. 33-39).

practice and teach the art of magic incantations and spells; moreover, this profession is considered honorable. "Oh!" he exclaims, "I wailed and sobbed to God! How often has my patience been tried ... ' And Bandinus explains himself by recounting he had witnessed the abominable spectacles of the *incantatores*, comparable in every respect to what the ancients had related of the *vates*. He has seen the *incantatores* changing their faces, trembling in their hands and feet, and then with the whole body, staggering and throwing themselves to the ground, as if dead, for an hour, and sometimes three or four hours.

"Coming to their senses, they offer to those who behold them a horrible spectacle, slowly, slowly, slowly, trembling in every limb; then, as if possessed by infernal Furies, they twist themselves in such a way that you might think that a single bone does not

they still had a place left. At last, as if they woke up, they they tell dreams like oracles. When someone loses something or falls ill, they turn to these *incantatores*. When one encounters the opposition of a friend or acquaintance, usually a benevolent one, he endeavors to lessen his opposition by means of spells. In the same way, he believes that spells are the best means of revenge against an enemy. It would take a whole volume to describe the practices of these sorcerers and wizards, fortune-tellers and charlatans."

(Quo in pretio sunt in Italia Doctores subtilissimi simul et sanctissimi, eodem /ere h is Incantatores et Incantatrices. Exercere et discere incantationis et maleficiorum artem omnibus liberum et honorificum. O quantos ego animi gemitus et suspiria ad Deum fudi? quantas habui patientiae exercendae occasiones, dum audirem et non semel viderem abominanda exerceri maleficia. Quod de antiquis Vatibus fabulam narrat antiquitas, his in partibus domestica cognoscit experientia. Dum enim futura praesagire Incantatores volunt, certo sibi sumpto loci spatio, mussitationibus, capitis intorsione, oculorum revolutione, oris obliquitate, frontis ac genarum corrugatione, vultus mutatione, manuum ac pedum agitatione, totiusque corporis trepidatione aliquantis per pedibus sistunt, deinde terrae se allidunt, expansis manibus pedibusque divaricatis, mortuis similiores, spatio unius horae non numquam trium aut quatuor, quasi exanimis manent.

~~Tandem as se rede sunt a nobis? horrendum videntibus faciunt~~
~~spectaculum, nam in primis~~

tremulis artubus paulatim se erigunt, deinde quasi furiis infernalibus exagitati, sic omnia membra et articulos membrorum exerunt, ut nullum ossiculum in suo articulo ac junctura manere credatur. Postremo velut e somno evigilantes, sua somnia, tanquam oracula pandunt.

Si quis in morbum incidat, aut rem aliquam aminat, recursus ad Incantatores. Si quis amici aut benevoli aversum animum experiatur, maleficiis aversum animum sibi conciliare nititur. Si quem vero offensum sibi habet, maleficiis se vindicare et ulcisci optimum medium putat. In his autem et similibus; omnibus diversissimi Incantatorum, Maleficorum, Divinatorum, Praestigiatorum actiones, vix uno comprehendi volumine possint.)⁴

We can only regret that Bandinus did not write this volume, so precious is his information, even if he uses certain literary clichés related to those ancient *vates* to describe the *incantatores* of Moldavia. The ethno-logical importance of his testimony lies especially in the description of the ecstasy of these *incantatores*, the prolonged interval (from one to four hours) during which the "vraci" remain inanimate, *mortuis similiores*. It is obvious that the "oracular" value of their dreams was guaranteed by the ecstatic character of the trance. Very probably, some of their dreams described the journey of the magician's soul while his body lay dead.

This form of ecstasy may be described as "shamanic": indeed, it characterizes shamanism in the strict sense, both in Siberia and Central Asia and elsewhere. In general, in all regions dominated by shamanism, the shaman would provoke ecstasy either to ascend to Heaven to meet the gods, or to seek the soul of the sick who had wandered astray, or who had been stolen by demons and held captive in the

Inferno, and to bring him back into the body; or, finally, to lead the deceased to the world of the dead. Besides this, shamanism is also characterized by a number of specific notes, including the most important are: a vocation which may manifest itself in an "initiatory illness"; an initiation involving the fragmentation of the body, the renewal of organs and viscera and ritual death accompanied by resurrection; a ritual costume and a specific shaman's instrument (generally the drum); the faculty of transforming into animals and of

4 V. A Urechia, *op. cit.* - p. 328; cf. also pp. 157-158.

to combat other magicians under this fonn1 ; links with a Mythical tree etc. s

However, none of these constitutive elements of shamanism is attested in the various varieties of "sorcerers" and "witch doctors" known in Romanian provinces. Moreover, the ecstatic trances that B andinus speaks of are not found elsewhere in Romania. This leads us to believe that those *incantatores* met by B andinus in Moldavia were not Romanians, but Csangai (Hungarian population of the Moldavian Carpathians). The specialist of Hungarian shamanism, V. Di6szegy, reached the same conclusion. Among other things, Di6szegy brought out in time in evidence the structural differences between that Hungarian taltos and the various types of "sorcerers" familiar to the peoples neighboring Hungary, primarily the *solomonar* of the Romanians, the planetink-ul of the Poles and the *graban cias-ul* of the Serbs and Croats. Only the ta/tos, notes Di6szegy, experiences the "initiatory sickness"⁷ or the "long sleep" (a kind of ritual death) or a shamanic "dismemberment"⁸ ; only the taltos undergoes an initiation, possesses a special costume, a tobl and practices ecstasy⁹. As we have shown in our book, and as the author points out, these specifically shamanic elements are present in all the Turkic, Finno-Ugrian and Siberian peoples, V. Di6szegy concludes that shamanism constitutes a magical-religious element fundamental to the original Hungarian culture. The Hungarians brought shamanism with them from Asia to the territory they occupy today. ¹⁰

s See our book *Chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris, 1951 ; new corrected and added edition, 1968).

6 V. Di6szegy, *A samanhit emlllcei a magyar nlpi muveltslgben*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1958, pp. 320 ff. ; id, 'Die Ueberreste des Schamanismus in der ungarischen Volkskultur' (Acta Ethnographica, VI, Budapest, 1958, pp. 97-135), p. 124.

7 Cf. V. Di6szegy, *Die Ueberreste des Schamanismus*, pp. 98 ff.

8 Ibid., pp. 103 et seq., 106 and un.

9 Ibid. pp. 112 ff., 115 ff., 122 ff.

10 Cf. Mircea Eliade, "Recent works on Shamanism. A Review Article"

~~(History of Religions, vol. 5, 1961, University of Chicago Press, pp. 152-186), pp. 171-172; id, Le Chamanisme (2nd ed.), p. 186, n. 3; p. 314 etc. On Hungarian shamanism see also Michel de Ferdinandy, "Die Mythologie der Ungarn (Wörterbuch der Mythologie, herausgegeben von H. W. Haussing, I: Die A/ten Kulturvölker, Stuttgart, 1964), pp. 188 ff., pp. 256 ff.~~

Defense against plague

Bandinus also informs us of certain rites of defense against the plague, which he says he witnessed personally in November 1646, in the villages around the county of Lukasesti. All along the frontier with Transylvania a *priapos*, made of an oak trunk which the craftsmen had shaped into a human figure with hands and feet, was everywhere spread; in his right hand he held a bow and two arrows, in his left a lance ready to strike. "The (Romanian) nation, ignorant and brought up in superstition", as Bandinus expressed himself, believed that thanks to this subterfuge he could terrify the plague and prevent it from entering Moldavia.¹¹

In this context the rite has not been noted among Romanians. Their most common defense against the plague consisted essentially in weaving and exposing a peasant shirt (iie) at the edge of the village.¹² The making of the shirt was an important element of the ritual: it had to be woven and sewn in less than 24 hours, especially at night, by nine or seven widows, or young girls. According to Teutsch, in parts of Făgăraș, seven women, all bearing the name of Maria, weave together a shirt with which they dress a "doll" of about one meter, filled with straw; then they hang or tie the "doll" to a tree at the edge of the village.¹³ Aurel Candrea brings us a piece of personal information from Spring (Sibiu County): in the morning, two women wear the "plague shirt" (iia plague) outside the village, put a hat on top of it and fasten it to a pole. Shortly afterwards it disappears; the informer does not doubt the plague has got it.¹⁴

¹¹ V. A. Urechia, Codex Bandinus, p. 56.

¹² The Italian traveler Del Chiaro reports that in Wallachia the linen shirt (which had to be made in 24 hours) was then burned; cf. *Istoria delle moderne rivoluzioni della Valachia*, ed N. Iorga, pp. 45 ff., passage quoted by L. Aurel Candrea, *Fol/clorul medical român comparat*, București, Casa Școalelor, 1944, p. 138.

¹³ Teutsch quoted by A. Candrea, pp. 137-138.

¹⁴ A. Candrea, *Fol/clorul medical român comparat*, p. 138. See also more recent studies by N. Al. Mironescu and R. Pastior, "Das pesthemd Ein magischer volkskundlicher Brauch" (*Forschungen zur Volks und Landeskunde*, Bd. XI, nr. 1, 1968), and Val Cordon, "Types et fonctions de la 'Chemise de la peste' en Roumanie" (Paper presented at the First International Congress of European Ethnology, Paris, 1971).

Rășinari commune, it is believed that the plague, spotting the shirt (iia) tied to a pole on the outskirts of the village, turns back.¹⁵

The apotropaic value of the 'plague shirt' also derives from its ritual confection and its function as an anthropo-morphic scarecrow. But *the priapos* made from a tree trunk mentioned by Bandinus is not attested among Romanians. On the contrary, such a ritual is found among the Yenisei. Anutchin informs us that during epidemics, the Yenisees place "shaman's sticks" on the graves of their victims, on top of which they place on the graves stilpi from half a meter to one and a half meters high, on which human figures are carved.¹⁶ As we shall see, this is not the only analogy between the information transmitted by Bandinus and the Finno-Ugrian and Siberian rituals.

Also in connection with the defense against the plague, Bandinus relates all that was told by "men worthy of all trust": once, during the night, ten young girls ran naked around the village, jumping, gesticulating, singing and throwing burning branches. Ten young men came in their wake, also naked, and chained with lances. The two groups greeted each other in silence and the young men crossed their lances with the lighted branches. Bandinus thus explains that the Romanians believe that in this way the plague will not touch the naked men at all; it will be ashamed of them, and will spare the young men.

Finally, Bandinus describes another rite: during the night, ten Young men joined by ten young girls plow a furrow around the village, singing and laughing. The villagers, clad in masks, stand along the furrow, facing Transylvania, ready to fight the plague.¹⁷

Bandinus states peremptorily that it is not Hungarians, but "of the Romanian nation". However, this rite is only vaguely attested among Romanians. Aurel Candrea cites only one example (Dolj county) of circumambulation around the village, but the ritual is not ritualistic: when the plague breaks out, two black oxen born on a Saturday and from the same cow are sought: they are yoked to a cart and the

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 139 (after Victor Păcală, *Monografia comunei Rășinari*, Sibiu, 1915, p. 225).

16 V. I. Anutchin, "Ocherk shamanstva u yeniseiskikh, ostyakov" (Sbornik Muzeya Antropologii i Etnografii, II, St. Petersburg, 19 14), pp. 66 ff.

17 V. A. Urechia, Codex Bandinus, pp. 56 and unn.

18 An incantation against the plague, collected in Bihor County, speaks of "a black man and a young black girl with unfurled hair", who with two black oxen and a black plow, and followed by the whole village, pulled a "black furrow", and stopped the plague from entering the village.¹⁹

As can be seen, there is no reference to the ritual nudity on which B andinus insisted. On the contrary, the furrow dragged around the village by naked young boys and girls is the typical plague defense ritual of Slavs and Finno-Ugrians. Aurel Candrea quoted

let me cite two examples. In Serbia, twelve young people and Twelve girls undress at midnight, harness themselves to a plow and silently pull a furrow around the village seven times²⁰ La Bulgarians, two twins pull several furrows with a plow forged by twin blacksmiths and pulled by twin oxen.²¹ In 1871, when cholera broke out near Moscow, "twelve maidens were harnessed

in the middle of the night to a plow and they had drawn a furrow around the village"²²- This custom was quite widespread in Russia, although the ritual nudity of women and young girls was sometimes attenuated

(they wore a long shirt with a waistcoat, unfurled hair, etc.).

In this case, the ritual was secret and exclusively feminine: the man encountered by the night procession risked being molested and even killed and put to death on the spot. It was believed that his presence nullified the power of the rite, or that he was a personification of the plague.²³

¹⁸ A Candrea, op. cit., p. 139, after Jon Creangă, m, p. 31 1.

¹⁹ A Candrea, op. cit., p. 140, after Sézătoarea, V, p. 1 45.

²⁰ F. S. K.rauss, Slavische Volksforschungen, Leipzig, 1908, p. 100. A. Can drea, op. cit., p. 140.

²¹ Sborniku za narodni umotvorenija (Sofia), vol. XXVI, pp. 557 ff. ; A Candrea, op. cit., p. 1 40. On the importance of twins in plague rites, see further on and note 25.

²² W. Manardt, Wald-und Feldkulte (2. Aufl. 1-11, Berlin, 1904-1905), voi. I p. 561 . Cf. also W. R. S. Ralston, Songs of the Russian People, 2nd ed. London, 1872, pp. 396 and unn. (the ritual furrow drawn around the village during cattle epi demi deming).

²³ Evei Gasparini, Ethnologica, t. XI,: li Matriarcato Slavo (University

Course, 1961 – 1962, roneographed, La Goliardica ; Venice, 1962), p. 137 and the bibliographical references in note 360. The rite was also feminine among the Mordvins; cf. U. Haiva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der Mordwinen* (FC 142, Helsinki, 1952), pp. 400-401.

in other regions inhabited by the Slavs, the rite is performed either by women or by women and young men together, but always naked.²⁴ In some places, it is two twins who pull the plow (for example, in

the region of Cracow, Pomania, in Byelorussia, etc.).²⁵ The Cerem0nia is also known among the Vendids of Saxony: when the plague breaks out, naked men go around the village three times, in silence, at night²⁶ Manhardt had already spoken of the ritual circumambulation around the village, among the Mordvins, of young men hitched to a plow and led by a maiden.²⁷ The rite is also attested among other Finno-Ugrians. ²⁸ In fact, as the abundant documentation collected by E. Gasparini proves, the custom of hitching women and young girls to a plow, even outside ritual ceremonies, was quite well known both among the Slavs and among other eastern Finno-Ugrian populations (e.g. the Permians).²⁹ It is possible that the ritual of defense against plague, as attested among Slavs and Eastern Finno-Ugrians, was also practiced in the 17th century in the Moldavian region of Moldavia visited by Bandinus. However, it is more likely that, as in the case of those *incantatores*, the information does not concern the Romanians but the ciangăi.

The Fall of Pentecost

The "Fall of Pentecost" has sometimes been compared to shamanism, a kind of para-extatic trance into which women in the Tim Tim Tim region fall during the three days of Pentecost. The ceremony was noticed around 1 890 by a Serbian scholar, Riznic, and described by him in Fr. Krauss, *Am Urquell*. In 1938 and 1939, G. A. Kilppers witnessed the "Fall of Pentecost" in the same village

²⁴ Cf. E. Gasparini, *Il Matriarcato Slavo*, pp. 1 37-1 38 and notes 363-368.

²⁵ Cf. D. Zelenin, *Russische (ostslavische) Volkskunde*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1 927, pp. 67 et seq. ; E. Gasparini, *op. cit.* , pp. 1 37-138.

²⁶ R. Wuttke, *Sächsische Volkskunde*, Dresden, 1900, p. 379; A. Candrea, *op. cit.*, p. 14 1.

²⁷ W. Mannhardt, *Wald-und Feldlculte*, voi. I, p. 56 1 ; cf. also U. Harva, *Die*

religiösen Vorstellungen der Mordwinen, pp. 400 ff.

²⁸ Cf. E. Gasparini, op. cit., p. 142

²⁹ Cf. Evel Gasparini, *Credenze religiose e obblighi nuziali degli antichi Slavi* (University Course, roneografi  La Goliardica, Venice, 1960), p. 92 with the bibliography recorded in note 1 ; id, *I Matriarcato slavo*, pp. 139 ff. with notes 369-391 .

Dubroka³⁰, and was amazed to find exactly the same ritual ensemble that Rimic had described half a century earlier. On the other hand, a Serbian author, Tihomir Georgevich, had visited the Timoc region in 1902, and his travel notes, *Kraz Nase Rumune* {"Among our Romanians"), were translated by C. Constante and published in 1943.³¹ Georgevici's monograph has been inaccessible to us, but the passages on the "Fall of Pentecost" were translated into French, after the Romanian version, by Octavian Buhociu.³² We will use these passages supplemented with Kiippers' information. Tihomir Georgevich who was not in the region during the week of Pentecost did not witness the rites, but he claims to have carefully noted down what he could hear from those who did witness them. "The Fall of Pentecost," he writes, is the name given to the falling into a hypnotic sleep of the women of the village of Dubroka for the three days of the Pentecost feast; they are awakened by the song of the "beetle." On Pentecost Sunday, the women start to pass out around three o'clock. In the afternoon, the next day around noon, the next day around nine o'clock in the morning, and so on until nightfall. They say it happens to children and old women.

Before fainting a woman begins to tremble, she lies on the ground and begins to shake and hit herself with her hands everywhere she can. Then the beetle arrives. Two men approach her, and three women who call themselves "queens" (it is the "beetle-woman"). The "beetle-kings" hold a naked sword in their hands and begin to dance: some dance, the "beetles" sing from their instruments. They dance around the unconscious woman, singing:

*Hop, hop, hop, hop, like this,
like this, like this, like this,
like this.*

During this time, i.e. for five minutes, the singer plays the bagpipe. Then the leader takes the woman by the armpits,

³⁰ G. A. Kuipers, "Rosalienfest und Trancetanze in Dubroka. Pfingstbräuche im ostserbischen Bergland" (*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. 79, 1954, pp. 212-21A).

³¹ Tihomir Georgevici, *Printre românii noștri*. Travel Notes, translated from the Serbian by C. Constante (The Romanians of Timoc, vol. III, Bucharest, 1943, The Society

Romanian Statistics, pp. 25-147).

³² O. Buhociu "Le Folklore roumain de Printemps (These principale de Doctorat)

crosses a river with it, stopping three times and singing the same verse as before. While the others dance, the leader of the dance takes a bit of water from the river, a bit of wormwood and a bit of garlic, mixes them in his mouth and spits in his mouth and **on the** face of the sick woman. During the dance, the leader makes the sign of the cross over the sick person. Then he gives **her** a little water on the tip of the knife, twice, then washes her and places her where she had fallen. She gets up by herself and begins to dance as if nothing **had** happened. 33

G. A. Kiippers gives a similar description, although he does not speak of "beetles" : " **Uberali, wo die Rosalien vom Geist befallen werden, reden sie in Zungen. Die Menge lauscht andächtig**

ihre Äusserungen, da der Glaube allgemein ist, dass die Rosalien ihre Äusserungen sind bald ein Schreien, bald Stammeln und Winseln, bald Hauchen. Nach einer Zeit konvulsivischen Ringens befällt sie eine Lähmung, die dann wieder durch Abwehr und Kraftausbrüche unterbrochen ist.

Nachdem die vom Rosalienschlaf Befallenen niedergebrochen sind, sammelt sich um sie eine Gruppe von Tänzern und Tänzerinnen. In dieser Gruppe ist offenbar der alte Erloserchor zu sehen. Unter Anführung eines stattlichen Mannes, der in der Hand ein Messer hält und dazu Kräuter mancherlei Art, Wermut, Knoblauch, Kamille, schliesst sich die Gruppe zur Kette. Die Kette beginnt um die Schlafende zu tanzen, nachdem der Anführer mit dem Kräutergeschmückten Messer ein Kreuz über die Schlafende zeichnete. Auch setzt der Anführer seinen Fuss auf den Leib der Schlafenden, bzw. er stösst mit seiner Fusspitze an ihre Fussohle. Dreimal bewegt sich der Erweckerchor im Uhrzeigersinn um die Befallene; dann wird die Richtung des Tanzes geändert. Ich konnte die feineren Einzelheiten gerade dieser streng zeremoniellen Tänze nicht genauer beobachten."34 (Everywhere the spirit-struck Rusalians speak in foreign tongues. The crowds listen attentively to what they say because he has a universal belief that Pentecost can predict the future. Their words are sometimes a shout, sometimes a babble or a groan, sometimes a whisper.

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33 Tihomir Georgev here, "Among Our Romanians" p. 97 , trans. by O. Buhociu"
op. cit. pp. 262-263.

34 G. A. KUppers, Rosalienfest und Trancetänze, p. 223.

After a period of convulsive writhing, they are seized by a kind of paralysis, interrupted again by attempts of defense and outbursts of violence.

After all those in the slumber of Pentecost have collapsed, a group of male and female dancers form around them. In this group, the ancient choir of those who bring deliverance is clearly distinguishable. Under the leadership of an imposing man holding a knife.

and various plants – wormwood, garlic, chamomile – form a chain. The chained group begins to dance around the sleeping woman, after the leader has made a cross over her with his knife. The leader puts a foot on the sleeping woman's thigh – i.e. hits her on the sole and the choir of awakened ones circles three times clockwise around the spirit, then changes to the clockwise direction. The finer details of these strictly ceremonial dances I have not been able to get into).

The author publishes some suggestive photographs (figs. 7- 13): the fall of a "Rosa/ie" (which Kilppers also calls "som nambulă" or "the sleeping one"; cf. figs. 8-9, 11); the transportation of these "Rosalien" to a river and their sprinkling with water; a singer who helps them to wake up by playing the flute, etc.

O. Buhociu quotes among others an excerpt from Georgevici reporting similar cases in other Romanian villages in Timoc and Craina. "I have heard Romanians in several localities saying among themselves that there were men and women who fainted and lost their minds on fixed days. I remember Anca Martinovici from Wallachia, who used to faint on the eve of great holidays and then – so the story goes – she would call in sick, answering the questions that were asked. Therefore, many people came to her, from her village and neighboring villages, and she answered their questions and gave them advice. Often if an object was stolen, or someone was ill, or someone had had a misfortune, they would go to this woman to

ask for advice. M. Subovici tells of a woman named Dokia, a woman of about forty from the village of Volnia, who from childhood became a Rusalie on the feast of Pentecost, and who began to fall into ecstasy on the days of great feasts, and then became a witch. On the great feasts, the faithful come to her and she then speaks

with God, with the Saints, with the dead and the living, predicts

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and prescribes medicines for all kinds of diseases. They say he does this without asking for payment. "35

None of these examples of trance has a shamanic character. All the constitutive elements of shamanism are absent: vocation, initiation, apprenticeship, ritual costume, auxiliary spirits, the faculty to provoke trance at will and to master it, healing by specific techniques, the function of psychopomp, etc. in the case of the "Pentecosts" and their "fall" (sleep, "somnambulism") it is a liturgically and culturally conditioned para-extatic experience, since it is accessible only on the three days of Pentecost, and only to the inhabitants of certain villages (mostly women) who have already been prepared for it by a well-established tradition "trance". "The 'awakening' brought about by dance and music is not shamanic either.

The "Fall of Pentecost" is rather reminiscent of the phenomenon of "Tarantism", brilliantly studied by Ernesto de Martino and his team in the Puglia regiWlea. 36

In both cases it is a temporary crisis of conscience prepared by a traditional mythical-religious context and overcome with the help of a choreo-musical cathartic. It should also be mentioned that, in certain regions of Romania, the Călușarii (horse-people) use the same cathartic when they are called upon to heal the sick with their songs and dances. These practices lead to an entirely different problem which we will not address here. However, the question of the "fall of Pentecost" deserves to be taken up in a broader comparative perspective.

Shamanism and spells

These pages were written when I became aware of Ltiko Gabor's article on the Romanian shamanic chanting formulas. "37 Bandinus' famous quotation was still

IS T. Georgevici, Among Our Romanians, p. 99, translated by O. Buhociu, op. cit, pp. 263-264.

36 Ernesto de Martino, LA Terra de/ rimorso. Contributo a una storia religiosa de/ Sud, Milan, 1961.

37 LUKo Gabor, "Samanisztilus eredetU raolva sok a románoknál" (Ethnographia, voi. LXXI, 1961, pp. 111-112-134; cf. pp. 133-134, summarized in genna nna ;Zaubersprache schamanistischen Ursprungs bei den Rumanen).

once quoted and commented (pp. 1115 ff.), to prove the existence of shamanic practices among Romanians in the 17th century. In the author's opinion, Romanians, towards the end of the Middle Ages, lived in a geographical and political, and even cultural, unity with populations of Asian origin among whom a number of shamanic beliefs and practices survived. With the exception of a few groups of Hungarians in the eastern Carpathians, the author unites, these populations of Asiatic origin were Romanized. Thus, Liko Gabor assumes that the information fumigated by Bandinus really concerns the Romanians, even if they were descended from recently Romanized allogeneic ethnicities. We will not discuss this interpretation here, because V. Di6szegy has already demonstrated that Bandinus's incantators belonged to the Moldavian ciangai group.

Most of L. Gabor's work is devoted to analyzing the beliefs and techniques involved in the Romanian incantation formulas.³⁸ According to the author, the characteristic notes are the following: 1) diseases are considered to be caused by theriomorphic and anthropomorphic demons; 2) in their turn, the witch-magicians make use of theriomorphic and anthropomorphic spirits; 3) besides that, they are helped by auxiliary spirits; 4) the witch-magicians sometimes sacrifice to the demons of disease. The author concludes that most of these motives are to be found in the shamanistic rites of the Siberian peoples.

It is possible that a certain number of "spells" and incantations used by Romanians have Central Asian and Siberian parallels. But others — a considerable number of them — have their origin in south-eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, and their origin must be sought in the ancient Near East. The archaism of the Romanian incantation formulas and, above all, their ultimate dependence on a source that is not "populated" but, on the contrary, "scholarly", make the influence of Central Asian shamanism unlikely.

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³¹ Natural" he relies especially on Arthur Gorovei's rich monograph *Descfntecele Românilor* (Bucharest, 1931, Romanian Academy. From the Life of the Romanian

THE CULT OF THE ROSE HIPS IN ROMANIA

Of all the plants that the sorceresses, girls and women of Romania, seek for their magical or medicinal virtues, there is none whose ritual of picking involves as many "dramatic" elements as the sorrel.¹ The technique of digging up is more complex and strange than that of any herb, even unthinkable in terms of sorcery or folk medicine. Only the mysterious operations carried out to pull the broom out of the ground alone accurately preserve very ancient rites. Moreover, for the harvesting of other magical or medicinal plants, a large number of elements have been borrowed from the rites of the sorrel. The magical virtues of the sorrel explain, in a certain sense, the plant's strange appearance. The root of the broom may indeed have a direct influence on the vital forces of man or of nature: it has the power to make girls marry, to bring good luck in love and fertility in marriage; it can increase the milk of cows; it acts happily on the course of business, brings wealth and, in general, in all circumstances, prosperity, harmony, etc. The magical properties of the sorghum can also be turned against a person. Against a girl, for example, so that she is no longer called to play by the village lads, or against an enemy, so that he falls ill or becomes mad. In addition to its magical properties.

¹ The variety *Atropa Belladonna* which grows in Romania in the dark forests of the mountains and blooms in the winter of July" is called by the Romanian peasant the following names:

cireaşa lupului" Doamna Doamna of the forest (Transylvania, Braşov), Marea Doamnă. floarea foresurii (Gorj County)" iarba pădurii (Transylvania)" Împărăteasa, Împărăteasa ier burilor etc. (cf. Zaharia Pantu" Plants known to the Romanian people, 2nd ed.

Bucharest, 1929" pp. 171-172).

has medicinal virtues. But also for this latter use it is pulled out of the ground following the same ritual.

In the commune of Vad (in the Maramureş region of "deaf forest", that is, far enough away from the village not to hear the rooster crowing. The women and witches who go in search of the sorrel ("old hags") leave at dawn before anyone has woken up in the village, carefully avoiding being spotted. If a dog senses their presence and a bark is heard, the charm is lost and the operation loses its effectiveness: the sorrel gathered under these conditions has no power.

The time between Easter and Ascension is the right time to harvest the sorghum. When the "old women" leave, they take some food with them: eggs blessed in church, pies, sausages, wine, etc. A week before, the sorghum is "meant"; they go in search of it, and tie a red bow on it, so that it will be easier to find it on the morning of the harvest. As soon as they arrive in the forest, the women go straight to it; "they are not allowed to search". They then dig the soil, uproot the broom and lay it on the ground. The food brought is placed around it. The "harvesting Babes" eat and drink, "embrace and cuddle". Finally, they begin to talk about the person to whom the sorghum is destined and the purpose for which they do it — good luck in business, consideration in the village (for the mayor, for his men), increasing the amount of milk for the cows, etc.

When two girls go to pick sorrel, they hug and caress each other, saying:

You wench, you wench,
Marry me in a month If
you don't marry me I'll
come and marry you.

Or :

Marry me in a month If not
this one, marry me after
another.

"Women in love" also resort to the use of the "mace" to make themselves loved by their husbands. Women of less rigid morals,

"women

"little women", to arouse men's love, take off all their clothes when they uproot the broom.

in the hole left by the root of the sorghum, put pieces of sugar and coins, pour wine. They also dip the sorrel in the wine. After they have eaten and performed the spell, they hide the sorrel in their breasts and return home. No one must know that the woman or the woman's wench is bringing the sorrel. They talk nice and polite to everyone ~~they~~ meet and greet everyone.

"If anyone learns that they bring briers, or if, in one of them on the road or path along which they have passed, anyone fights, quarrels, or swears, or if stones are thrown or anything is dropped, the effect of the briers is the reverse of that for which they were gathered." The same informant in V ad also relates the following facts:

"One day a village girl's mother was bringing sorrel. After the women had passed, our maid suddenly started beating me. She swore at me, pulled my hair, to hell, and then chased me away with lumps. I started crying, not knowing what she wanted from me. She rushed into the kitchen, knocked over the dishes, the pots and the pans. From there she ran to the closet and angrily threw stones, pieces of earth, murmuring that what she threw there were not stones but some girl, some woman, so that she would no longer be loved, so that she would be rejected by boys and men. A few weeks afterward, the girl whose mother had been seen by the maid when she returned with the sorghum was beaten and thrown out of the horde. Her mother complained everywhere, saying she could not understand why her daughter was hated by everyone and unpleasant to the lads. Little did she know that our maid had learned that she was bringing the sorrel and had thus destroyed the spell. "2

In Maramureş, the girls go to the fields accompanied by an "old lady craftswoman"; there, after they have eaten, they dance almost naked around the "mătrăguna", repeating:

My mother, my good
mother, Marry me in a
month's time, If you don't
marry me
Yes, I'll eat the sweet;

² Arltiva de Folklor a Academiei Române (= A.F.A.R.), ms. 963 , ff. 28-32, commune Vad (Maramureș}, collected by Grigore Vasile, teacher, informant Grigore Muntean (40 years old, 1937).

If I don't get it
Yes I'll eat sweet.³

In the county of Turda, the girls, who want to be called most often to the horde and thus to get married first, go at midnight embraced to the place where the mares are. There they **disrobe** and prostrate themselves three times. They each bring a silver penny, which they hold in their mouths so that it touches their teeth and tongue at the same time. Then they lean over the broom without **touching it with their hands**, and break off a few leaves with their teeth on the silver coin. They return, still hugging each other, always dancing, taking care not to be seen or surprised by the dawn. If they bring with them a fruit of a broom, wrapped in a piece of cloth, without touching it with their hand, the girls will be sought after at the horă and will not delay in getting married.⁴ Also in Turda county, girls or

young women go in twos, in the middle of the night, **naked and spread out**, hugging and kissing each other all the way to the place of the rosemary. Once they have anointed themselves, they lie on top of each other and pluck a leaf with their hand. Then they turn around, still dancing and kissing, and let the sorrel leaf dry until they can dust it. Then they go to the mill, steal the taint with their **upturned hands**, and **sift it** through a **sieve**. They make a paste with this flour, the sorrel leaf and honey and leave it to sour. It is then put either in brandy, tea, coffee or in a pie, which they offer to the bridegroom to awaken his love.⁵

In the commune of Tritenii-de-Sus (Turda county), the ritual of harvesting the sorghum is different: "Four girls, who want to be noticed at the village hora, harvest the sorghum, they bewitch it and bury it in the middle of the road, where they dance naked. While they dance, four lads stand by them to guard them; they watch them repeating:

Marry me, good madam,
Marry me this month,
If not in this, in that, then
in the other.

³ T. Papahagi, *Graiul și /o/clorul Maramureșului*, Bucharest, 1925, p. XLN.

⁴ A.F.A.R., ms. 407. f. 23, commune of Bistrița Turda county; informant Ion Mucea (60 years old, 1932), collected by Iuliu Coroiu, teacher.

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~~5 A.F.A.R., ms. 467, ff. 27-28, Bistrița commune, informant Elena Plie (30~~
years old, 1932), collected by Iuliu Cororiu.

They take the rosary to the church in the Easter fast, on Easter Thursday, hiding it under their apron or under their coat, and place it under the church stone to be blessed; on St. George's Day they carry it with them as a tojoice. "6 The presence of boys together with girls in the ritual of the mǎtrăguna is only sporadic in Romania.

The most frequent formula is that of two girls or two young women, going to the harvest accompanied by an old woman or a craftswoman. Elsewhere, the couple of young women is replaced by a couple of lads. This is common in the county of Bacău. A craftswoman goes into the forest accompanied by two girls and two boys, early in the morning, so that the sunrise will find them near the mares. They bring with them food and wine. "Once they find the plant, the old woman says magic spells while her companions eat, drink, speak words of love, embrace and kiss. When the craftswoman has finished, they dance around the sorghum, while the old woman carefully digs the earth so as not to break even the smallest piece of root." This is the process when the broom is picked "on love. If it is picked "on hate", to bring misfortune, to make someone ill, the lads, instead of sweet-talking, hugging, they spit in each other's faces and even fight. 7

In the Apuseni Mountains, the sorrel is harvested "for love", "for marriage", "for gambling", "for drinking", "for hate", etc. Two girls of a certain age go to look for sorrel, even early in the morning, so as not to meet anyone on the road. The plant must be picked far away from the village, so that no rooster crows or bribes are heard. Women don't talk to each other on the road. "They carry bread, salt and a penny. They search for the sorrel, saying prayers in their thoughts, and when they find it in well-hidden places, they set out to gather it. For this they undress and prostrate themselves three times, facing east. They circle the plant three times, reciting magic spells. They remove the broom with a hoe and lay it on the ground facing east. They put bread, salt and a penny where they plucked it, "the price of the blackberry". They have to pay it not only under

⁶ AF.A.R., ms. 383, ff. 9-1 O, commune Tritenii-de-Sus, jud. Turda, informant A. Petrovan (70, 193 2).

⁷ AF.A.R., ms. 852, ff. 49-50, commune Târgu-Ocna-Vâlcele, Băciu county,
inf. Elena Moisă, (72 years old, 1936) collected by C. Pîslaru, resurrection.

the threat to have no effect, but also to hear it at night calling to those who had gathered it and demanding that they take it back from whence they had brought it, threatening vengeance on anyone who does not obey. The two women put the earth back to the place from which they had taken the broom and prostrate themselves three times, facing the sunset. Then they sit back to back, one facing east, one facing west. The latter takes the broom and hands it to the former. The hunt is over. "8

C'md is picked "on love", the two women embrace, they kiss and say words of love. Circling around the plant (reminiscent, no doubt, of a ritual dance), the women say:

Buttercup. Good ma'am I
don't take you for sick
But I take thee to be
beloved; I take thee not
to mourn But I take thee
to be loved.9

If you pick the "married" sorrel, you sing a magic recitative, almost the same throughout Romania, with no significant variations:

Marry me, good madam,
marry me this month.
If not 'n that 'n that 'n
that 'n that 'n that 'n that
That the tail's been chewed off
Ring fingers
And the beaded necks . 10

If it is picked "on the ugly", to prevent the one for whom it is intended not only from being loved, but not even liked, women turn their faces away from the sorrel and say, scratching their backs:

I'll take you,
What do you take?
On urfl, not on pleasant

⁸ Valeriu Butu ♦ "Cultul mătrăguna în Munții Apuseni", (Excerpt from Grădina mea, anul al II-ilea, n° 10-11 , octombrie-noiembrie 1 936), p. 2: Information collected from the commune Sălciua-de-jos, Turda county.

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⁹ Valeriu Butura, *ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁰ Butura, *ibid.*, p. 3.

No way. Who'll
 take you or
 drink you
 Only with your back will I see
 your face. ^{1 1 1}

When it is harvested "on the game", in order to be sure that the person to whom it is destined will **be** called to the game, the two women turn their heads three times around the donkey, shouting:

Hop, hop, hop,
 hop With me' n
 playing
 Mrs. Ma'am. ¹²

In Moldova, in Vaslui county, the sorrel – which is also known as the **Great Lady**, the **Empress** – is mainly used for "on love". Women and girls who use it must change their clothes, at least their shirts, when they carry it with them; they must also speak to it respectfully, like a holy plant. It is harvested in April or May, before Pentecost, for it is believed that after this date the magical virtues disappear. The woman who picks the sorrel must be neatly dressed and have no sexual relations. She goes quietly, without being seen, into the forest, she **p l u c k s** the broom and puts in its place bread or cornmeal, honey and sugar, saying: "I give you honey, bread and salt, give me the power of your Holiness!" . If the woman has to cross a river on the way, she throws a little bread or cornmeal so that the water will carry these crumbs away, and not the magic power of the plant. The rite must be performed on a full moon. The hawthorn root hairs are then gathered together five, **seven** or nine at a time, while pronounce the name of the person to whom it is addressed. These bundles are called **g herbe** (herbs?). On a sweet day put the first three **gherbs** into a new pot, adding honey, sugar, bread and wine, and saying, "I give you these bounties, you give health and beauty to N." Pour over this mixture water "unstarted", taken from three springs, and recite: "As water gushes forth from the clear and pure spring, so when N.

¹¹ Jbid.

¹² Jbid., p. 2. There must usually be no wind when harvesting the apple.

lavla sl sl shine and all to shout" (i. e. called by the lads to the game, first of all). Then fill the pot with this paste and simmer the contents until evening. He or she at whose expense the drink was made crosses himself or herself as many times as the number of *gherbs* used and drinks from the liquid the same number of sips. He then goes to the river and rubs his wrists with this mixture (the one boiled in the pot) and pours the rest over his head, so that only his head is touched and the liquid runs down the stream. When he leaves, he must not look back, for the magical virtues of the plant are wasted. At other times this operation is performed near a flowering tree, and the herbs in the pot cling to the branches, leaving them there until they dry and are destroyed.

The root is also kept under a hat or sewn into clothes, which assures the wearer of people's consideration. When the sorrel is harvested 'on the ugly', the women, as we have seen happening all over Romania, do exactly the opposite: they walk towards the plant with dirty clothes, utter ugly words, and make grotesque movements with their heads, hands and eyes to make the sorrel's magical virtues negative. Whoever tastes of food or wine containing such cursed threads of sorrel risks madness. 13

In the parts of Hotin (Bessarabia), the broom is treated with salt and brandy before being harvested. When approaching it, it is called: "Hello, Motherwort. "At home they boil the plant (we are not told whether it is leaves or roots); with this stew they then wash the girl "so that she may be fru fru and be noticed." 14

In the Oaş region, all the girls accompanied by an old woman pick the sorrel. The auspicious day is Friday of Pentecost (commune of Cănzana). The girls bring with them some brandy, put a penny on the root of the mătrea gună, and then start hugging and dancing around it. After digging up the root, they lay it on the ground and dance again around her. At the end, they fill their glasses with brandy, they clink their glasses saying:

13 Defender of Health, II, p. 202, quoted by Arthur Gorovei and M. Lupescu, The Botany of the Romanian People, Folticeni, 1915, pp. 79-80 (cf. The Seistoarea, XV, n° 5, August, 1914).

¹⁴ A.F.A.R., ms. 1 87, f. 10, commune Hodărești (Hotin), inf. Ileana Bordeianu (87 years old, 1931).

Live to love me, If not,
sodomize yourself!

Then they eat the pies brought from home. And they come back with more sorrel roots for next year's use. When they go to the village to go to the horde, they carry a piece in their handkerchief: that way they will **be** constantly called to the game. ¹⁵

In another commune in the same region, Boinești commune, the girls go in pairs, carrying brandy, bread, bacon, honey, **anafură**, to pick the sorrel. They are not allowed to touch the plant before drink to her health a glass of brandy and say : "Glory be to Jesus Christ" and: "As I honor thee in drinking, honor me in drinking." She stro stro

fish then plant with brandy. They uproot it and put bread, bacon and anaf instead. Then on the same spot, the girls begin to **dance** naked.¹⁶ In Moişeni, the girls always leave with an old craftswoman until S f. Ion and Pentecost. They take with them, to pick sorrel, brandy and pie.

"They undress, drink and clink brandy, cuddle, embrace, dance."

Without who bears sorrel is much sought after by lads for the village hora. ¹⁷

On Good Friday, in the commune of Cărmăzana, also in the Oaş region, the girls go with an old woman to the "garden of the Merciful" to pick herbs like they will pick the broom. They drink brandy and dance naked until dawn. Then they boil the herbs, first steeped in the holy water,

reciting magic "play" spells. They then wash their hair with this hair-growing water. ¹⁸

In another place (in the Raşca commune), the girl goes accompanied only by an old woman who carries the țuica and pies. When she arrives near the old woman, they both start dancing naked. Then the old woman recites the familiar invocation: "The Mother, Good Lady, I marry you in a month, etc."¹⁹

In Moldavia, the name of the broom is mentioned in another folk song:

¹⁵ Ion Muşlea, "Cercetări folklorice în Țara Oaşului" (Anuarul Arhivei de Folk/or, voi. I, Cluj, 1932, pp. 117-237), pp. 207.

¹⁶ Muşlea ¹⁶ ibid. pp. 207-208.

¹⁷ Musle❖ ibid. , p. 208.

¹⁸ Jbid., p. 207, the incantation for the game on page 208.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 208.

Green-leaved sorrel, you
foolish stroller,
Why do you keep singing to me on the moon .²⁰

Also in Moldova, dancing lads say satirical verses to girls who have not yet found a husband and who have resorted to the magical virtues of the sorrel:

Buttercup, good bream,
I'll marry in this house; If
not in this, I'll only' marry
once. The wart under the
bed,
I watered thee, and thou
didst not marry me, but
hast left me an old maid.
21

In the county of Baia, the old craftswoman goes to harvest the sorrel with the one for whom the plant is intended. She brings a teaspoonful of honey, a glass of wine, a piece of bread and a piece of flour. She looks for the sorrel and invokes it as follows: "Lady, I will anoint you with honey, I will sprinkle you with wine, I will sweeten you with sugar and I will feed you with bread (and saying this, she anoints the bottom of the stem with honey, sprinkles with wine and places the bread and sugar at the root) ...

"I left home, young and beautiful, blooming with health, on the road, on the path. I met the *potca* on the road: she struck me with her arrows in the head, in the heart, in the eyebrows, in the eyes. . and I fell worse than dead. The Blessed Virgin heard me weeping and wailing. And she said to me, 'Hush, O Helen, weep no more, for I will come and wash you with cold water, and wipe your eyelashes, your face, your heart with a towel, and all will pass quickly, and your heart will be at ease."

Once the incantation is over, the craftswoman takes three the witch's spell that he found earlier, wraps them up and puts them on the head of the person for whom the spell was cast. The person immediately has to take out a game whistle and begin to play. With the help of the craftswomen, she puts the wrapped trumpet into

the bag; they both return home, one holding the trumpet in

²⁰ A. Gorovei and M. Lupescu, *Botanica poporului român*, p. 81.

²¹ and Lupescu, *op. cu.*, p. 81 .

and make sure no one shouts for them. They are not allowed to spit, wipe their noses or urinate until they get home. Put the sorrel on the table, and the whole house must be kept very clean. A few sprigs of broom in wine or brandy will keep the innkeeper in business. The girls who carry it in their bosoms are often invited to the hor d'or and marry quickly. A few leaves of sorrel in your bosom, wherever you go you'll be held in high honor. Some trans plant the sorrel in the garden, in a very clean place, and tend it very carefully so that it doesn't get dirty. 22

In the commune of Săpînța in the Maramureș district, a boy and a girl, or even larger groups, can pick the sorrel, provided they are not seen. After they offer gifts to the sorghum, they dance naked around the sorghum, squeaking. They return home, just as careful not to be seen. They dig to pull the plant up from the root, without breaking it at all. It's the harvest of the "good" sorrel. When, dim

On the contrary, it is picked "for evil", you must beat it with a stick, throw it **on the** ground, tear it to pieces, and throw it to the one with whom you wish to quarrel or to whom you wish death, pronouncing his name and saying the evil you wish him.23

When it is harvested for medicinal purposes, in the county of Baia they invoke the sorrel in the following way: "Much exalted, the Empress sorrel. I honor you with bread and salt, and I worship you: give me your clothes. Wash me, cleanse me, cleanse me, cleanse me from all my filth, from all my deception. that I may be clean and bright, like silver, like the Mother of God who brought me forth. "24

22 A.F.A.R., ms. 799, ff. 8-10, commune of Moișă-Boroai❖ county of Bai❖ inform matoare Baba Ciocănoia (91, 1935).

23 A.F. A. R. , ms. 169, ff. 2-3 , collected by Vasile Tămășanu, teacher (1931). The information is rather suspect. The name of the informant is not specified. It is said here that a lad may go with a girl, or a group, without mentioning the artisan. It is stated that the broom is beaten with a stick, dragged on the ground, etc. — a detail not found elsewhere. The swearing, hitting and grotesque gestures essential to the 'evil' spell are exchanged among the members of the harvesting team: as for the sorrel, it remains respected and dangerous; no one, as we know, dares touch it except with awe.

²⁴ A.F.A.R., ms. 773, f. 20, commune of Boroaia, county of Baia; informant Maria Dănilă (1935).

in Gorj county, the sorrel is picked with magical intentions by two old women who "undress, unfold themselves and pronounce the incantation, making the most out of tune movements with their heads, arms, legs, and running like crazy"25-

In Neamt county (commune of Gârcina), for certain serious diseases

the patient is given to drink an infusion of dandelion. The patient falls into a kind of delirium and if he has not recovered in three days, this means that he will never be cured of the illness from which he is suffering. 26 One of the best expositions on the cultivation of the (healing) broom is given by Simeon Mangiucă, the native of Banat, in one of the oldest studies of Romanian popular botany. 27 If you go toward it, into the forest, go singing, eating and drinking, in other words rejoicing . When you get there, sit down next to her, continuing to be cheerful and without saying anything to her, until you think that she must now be in a good mood. Then, continuing to eat and drink with her, greet her (good day or good evening, as the case may be), and begin to talk to her. Praise her as a Lady and tell her the trouble for which you have come. The sick with the cold should bring with him a new shirt, freshly washed, and, among other things, honey in a glass in which no water has ever been poured28, a red cotton thread, a silver penny and a colac. The midwife takes all these things with her, and goes with the sick man into the forest as soon as evening approaches, in order to reach the sorrel at sunset, when day gives way to night. When he reaches the broom, he spreads the sick man's shirt under it and lays on it whatever he has brought. Apoi meșteroaia, făcîndu -și cruce și închinîndu-se pînă la pămînt în fața mătrăgunei, începe invocația următoare29 : „Bună seara mătrăgună, Bună Doamnă și bună maică (sau : înălțată mătrăgună și Puternică Doamnă) care atîngi

25 Tradition of Dobrița commune, Gorj county, cited by Gorovei and Lupescu, Botany of the Romanian people, p. 78.

26 Jbid, p. 78.

27 "De însemnătatea botanicei românești" in Familia magazine, year X,

Budapest 1874, pp. 51-1 ff. The passage we translate has often been quoted and reproduced; cf. I. A. Candrea, *Iarba Fiarelor*, Bucharest, 1928, pp. 53-54.

²⁸ It is an "unstarted pot". Manguica introduces many 'mo deme' details in describing the ritual.

²⁹ This incantation was remarkably translated into French by Miss Maria Holban, *Incantations*, Paris-Bucuresti, 1937, p. 98, note.

whose head is the sky, whose roots are planted under the earth, whose garment (foliage) flutters in the wind. You who are queen of the heavens and the storms, you who are queen of the flowers, for before you all the flowers bow down and worship you. Pe tine te chem și pe tine te rog, cu coatele goale , cu genunchii goi, fruntea plecată pînă la pămînt (meșteroaia se apleacă și sărută pămîntul) să-i dai putere și săn ătate, altfel zis să-i dai de leac bolnavului N-N, etc . . . "Jo Having done this, the old woman makes a cross and after prostrating herself to the ground in front of the old woman, wishing him good health and saying good night, she retires at ten o'clock, makes a fire, lies down and sleeps there with the sick man all night. In the morning, at dawn, the midwife and the sick man wake up and the midwife comes back to the nurse, saying to him: "Good morning, Mother, our mother, our good lady." She repeats the invocation of the previous evening, changing a few words instead of "go, go, seek and bring him the cure for his sickness", "you left, you went, you sought, and you brought the cure and put it in this cup to lick the sick man". The sick man tasted the honey in the cup, while the midwife poured all the water over his head; she anointed him with the honey, tied the red cotton thread and the penny around his neck, put the new shirt on him and returned with him by needle and thread. Before leaving, she thanks the sorceress, wishes her health and praises her strength.³¹

Mugwort³² is also harvested to cure certain known diseases crickets. In the commune of Doftana (Tg. Ocna), the sorrel is used against pain in the feet, hands, kidneys, chilblains, etc. But it is harvested as a cure following the same ritual as for witchcraft. The plant is boiled in a new pot. Before giving it to the sick person to drink, he is tied to the bed, for after tasting the drink he will begin to rave like mad. The whole body of the sick person is washed with this sorrel juice and he is given three teaspoonfuls of the drink. Three times a day, three days in a row. Bowl-

³⁰ The incantation is too literary not to be suspect. Mangiuca was writing at a time when amateur folklorists were helping the "genius of the people" in complete innocence. But it may well be that Mangiuca knew this invocation, in an

approximate form, from someone suffering from bookish influences.

³¹ Family, vol. X, pp. 540-541 .

³² Let us not forget that this name is given in Romania to plants belonging to different species.

But he shall not be allowed to eat raw onions for three days, nor to drink brandy for two weeks, and wine for six weeks. Fresh milk and other sweetened dishes shall not be touched for at least four weeks. During all this time the sick person must be kept very clean.³³

In Moldavia, the leaves of the common purslane and a few other plants are used as a cure for the cough; dried and burnt leaves of purslane are used to cure coughs.³⁴ In other places, purslane leaves are used as poultices against abscesses and against dropsy, in humans and animals. It is applied to the foreheads of people suffering from colds, and they are often cured. "The only fault with this medicine is that one becomes delirious after it, but this passes off soon enough. '³⁵ Mugwort is also recommended

împotriva toothache. 36

In In Bessarabia, the leaves of the purslane are also used against boils. 37 But it is very likely that in Bessarabia, the medicinal function of the purslane (*Atropa belladonna*) is also taken over by the empress (*Bryonia dioica*), a plant very often used in Bessarabian folk medicine. In the lower Nistru region, the purslane is used and is effective against intestinal worms in cattle. Dried and crushed leaves are applied to wounds. ^{Js}

They put the sorrel under the mill-wheels to attract the flies to the mill. 39 The farmers use it to fill their threshing floors. "They pay women who know how to harvest it. They take with them from the inn all kinds of drinks, bread, salt, a penny, and salt from the inn, after they have turned it three times around a barrel in the opposite direction

33 Apărătorul Sănătății, an. II, p. 20 1; quoted by Artur Gorovei and M. Lupescu, Botany of the Romanian people, pp. 7 8-79.

34 Ibid, p. 81 .

35 Dr. N. Leon, Istoria naturală medicală a poporului român, (Bucharest, 1 903, Les Annales de l' Académie Roumaine, Seria a doua t. XXV), p. 50.

36 Ibid.

37 Alexei A. Arvat, "Medicinal plants and folk medicine in Nishcani" (Bulletin Romanian Institute of Bessarabia, I, 1937, Chisinau, pp. 69-1 24), p. 87.

38 P. V. Ștefănuț "Cercetări folklorice pe valea Nistrului-de-jos" (Anuarul Arhivei de Folk/or, IV, Bucharest, 1937, pp. 31 -226), p. 21 3.

³⁹ I. Muşlea, *Cereale şi folklorice în ţara Oaşului*, p. 208.

movements of the sun. With all this, the women make a circle around the sorrel, drinking and hating those who enter the inn to come out with nothing but empty pockets. After picking it in this way, they put it under the barrel or even in wine. It is believed, about certain taverns, that the customers go there because the broom takes them there. "40

Same tradition in Moldova. The Christians put the bewitched sorghum on the barrel of wine or on the barrel of brandy: these are finished in two or three days, "for people drink from them until they lose their minds. "41

The belief that the one who has sorrel can ask for anything and get rich quickly — a belief widespread in Central Europe — is found in Moldova (jud. Vaslui): "Go on a Sunday to her, seek her in the field, give her to eat and drink — wine and bread — and take her with you, surrounded by people and minstrels; if you thus give her all the honor she deserves and do it with a cheerful face, if you do not quarrel and do not swear — be careful not to tread these prescriptions, for she will kill you — you will be able atwzci to take her with you anywhere, and whatever you ask of her she will give you (emphasis added). But take heed: let not Sunday pass by without your bringing her the players and the people from the village to play; and you shall be the joy yourself, especially on that day."42

Romanians also know other plants with magical v irtu they have to pick them like the broom. In Bessarabia, all medicinal or magical plants that are picked before Pentecost must be picked after the descântătoarea, approaching them, put a little bread on the stem and says:

I give you bread and salt
But you give me health.

In some places it is prescribed to put on a clean shirt when you go to pick magic herbs. In Bessarabia, the plant called "B arboi's grass" has a "devil's face", i.e. "the root is shaped like a devil's face". Apparently, this plant is also a variety of the broom: it is equally effective in the "lipit" and must be harvested according to an identical ritual. One goes in search of it on Tuesday evenings; he who goes must not look back, neither at the shower nor at the

40 V. Butură. Cultul mătrăguna în Munții Apuseni, p. 3 of excerpt.

41 Defender of Health. II, p. 202; quoted by A. Gorovei and M. Lupescu. op. cit. p. 80.

42 Revista Jon Creangă, p. 270, reproduced by Tudor Pamfile, Dușmani și prieteni ai omului, Bucharest, 1916, p. 91 .

turned back; he must have a clean shirt and not utter a word during the journey. Placing a loaf of bread and a piece of linen by the plant, he utters the following incantation:

I give you bread and salt
But you give me health.⁴³

Another grass, "slender, straight as the fir-tree, with leaves like silk", is also gathered on days of great feast, the one who gathers it by washing her underwear and washing her body. The bread is laid out and they say:

I give you bread and
salt, that you may make
yourselves useful.

Young girls are given this grass to put in the water in which they bathe, "water taken from the Dniester before sunrise." No one will hate them.⁴⁴ Like the girls who wear broom, they enjoy everyone's sympathy, are invited to games, and are lucky in love. It is also a general rule that the woman who gathers herbs should have a clean body and new clothes; otherwise the plant has no efficacy.⁴⁵ Bread and salt are put on it and it is said:

I make crosses and
beads And put bread and
salt
Give me a cure. ⁴⁶

Another herb, the five-fingered grass (*Potentilla recta* L.), a sort of panacea, good for all ills, you have to boil it in a new pot after placing it in front of the icon and prostrating yourself three times. At the same time it is invoked: "We give you bread and salt, be good to us."⁴⁷

All in Bessarabia (village Nishcani) is harvest *năvalnic* (*Nephrodium filix mas*)⁴⁸ after the bread and salt had been

⁴³ P. V. Ștefănuț ◆ Cercetări folk/orice pe valea Nistrului-de-jos, pp. 21 0-21 1 (n° 31 1).

⁴⁴ /bid - p. 21 O (No 309).

⁴⁵ A. Aivat, Medicinal plants in Nishcani, p. 75.

⁴⁶ Jbid.

⁴⁷ Jbid - p. 76.

⁴⁸ It is the identification of Arvat, op. cit. , p. 1 10. Z. Pantu, Plantele cunoscute

de poporul român, p. 192, recognizes *Scolopendrium vulgare* in năvalnic and adds that young girls carry the plant in their bosom, for "it has the power to make suitors năvalile". Cf. and A. Gorovei and M. Lupescu, *Botanica poporului român*, p. 92.

prostrated three times. The invocation is as follows: "As people quarrel over bread, so let the young girls quarrel over me. "49 Another informant (60 years old, illiterate) gives the following prescriptions: "Go to the nag, make a cross, put bread, salt and sugar and worship nine times : For love you have grown, for love I pluck you. O you, O mighty one, glorious emperor, as you have grown and multiplied more than any grass, as you have multiplied more than all the flowers, so let the world run to him who

has bought you (or better you call it by name). Then put it in wax, wear it, put it in the water in which you wash. "50 In the same way, in the Țara Oașului there are other plants besides the purslane, which are gathered by root eggs, anaf, wine, etc. 5 1

Let's try to draw out the characteristic features of this ritual ritual script:

1. The Romanians do not know the legend of the origin of the sorrel grown from the seed of a hanged man (Northern and Germanic Europe); nor do they know the ritual of harvesting it with the help of a black dog (Eastern Europe).

2. Mugwort is the erotic plant par excellence. It brings love, marriage and fertility. It also has magical virtues - if picked for the right purpose - to increase wealth. A source of love (fertility) and wealth, it is also a medicinal plant, bringing good health.

3. The gathering of the sorrel is a ritual. Sexual purity, cleanliness, silence, etc. The plant must be harvested without anyone's knowledge; remoteness (forests where the rooster cannot be heard⁵², nor the barking of dogs), relative solitude (not meeting anyone on the way), secrecy (no one must know the project) are also required. The women and girls dance naked around the mace, but are often content to unfurl themselves (unnas of magical nudity). Couples embrace and cuddle.

⁴⁹ A. Aivat. op. cit., p. 91.

so lbid., p. 91 .

⁵¹ I. Muslea op. cit., pp. 206-207.

^{s2} On the use of the formula "unde nu se aude cîntat de cocos" in Romanian folk tales, cf. V. Bogrea, "O străveche formulă de exorcism în descîntecele românești" (Dacoromania, IV, 1926, Quj), pp. 886-891.

In order to harvest the sorrel leaf, the girls lie on top of each other in a mimic of sexual intercourse.

4. The hunt is surrounded by a whole series of magical gestures and precautions. The marigold must be picked on a full moon. The leaves must not be touched with the hand, but with the teeth. The flour from which the magic paste is made, with the leaves of broom, must be taken from the mill with the lead turned upside down.

5. The plant must be paid, otherwise it has no effect. It is given gifts in exchange for its root: salt, bread, sugar, wine, etc. The sorrel is personified: "Great Lady", "Empress", "Hello Mother".

6. It is very dangerous. If it is not harvested according to the rules, if it is not shown enough care, its magical powers turn against the one who has gathered it. The sorrel has dual powers. Its uncommon forces can be directed either for good or evil, for love and health, for hate and madness.

7. However it is harvested, for "good" or for "evil", mugwort is feared and respected as a miraculous plant, far above all others. Within it are enclosed extraordinary forces that can multiply life or kill. To some extent, then, the sorrel is the "herb of life and death." 53

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S3 It has enjoyed such prestige since antiquity; cf. A. Delatte. *Herbarius. Recherches sur le ceremonial usite chez les Anciens pour la cueillette des simp/es et des plantes magiques* (2nd ed., Liège-Paris. 1938). pp. 68 ff. 75, 79 et un., 147 et un. 15 1 et seq. Oriental beliefs have been examined in our study .. *La Mandragore et les mythes de la "naissance miraculeuse"* ('Zalmoxis, m, 1

THE MISCHIEVOUS LITTLE MYNAH

A holy and emotional 1111...

When, in 1850, the poet Vasile Alecsandri published in the magazine *Bucovina* (III, n° 11, pp. 51-52) the popular ballad he called *Miorița*, "Oița" or, more precisely, "Mioara"¹, he was convinced of its poetic value and its importance for national affirmation because it brilliantly illustrated the creative genius of the Romanian people. However, neither Alecsandri nor any of his contemporaries could

¹ The text was communicated to him by Alecu Russo in 1846, during his exile. It was only after Russo's death in 1859 that Vasile Alecsandri claims to have heard and written down the ballad himself in the *Ceahlă* Mountains; cf. Adrian Fochi, *Miorița: Tipologie, circulație, geneză, texte*, with an introductory study by Pavel Apostol, Bucharest, 1964, pp. 124 ff. Alecsandri modified the text published in 1850 in the two editions of the *Poesiilor populare* (*Balade*, Iași, 1852, pp. 1-6; *Poesii populare ale Românilor*, București, 1866, pp. 1-3); see the analysis of these textual modifications and the history of the long controversy they aroused in Fochi, op. cit., pp. 207-211. Cf. and Gheorghe Vrabie, *Introducere la Vasile Alecsandri, Poezii populare ale Românilor*, București, 1965, voi. I, pp. 5-85; voi. II, pp. 13-15; and Lorenzo Renzi, *Canti narrativi tradizionali romeni*, Aorența, 1969,

pp. 97-127 ("un gioiello romantico popolare: La *Miorița* publicata de Alecsandri"); Al. I. Amzulescu, "Observații istorico-filologice despre "*Miorița*" lui Alecsandri" (*Revista de etnografie și folclor*, XX, 1975, pp. 127-158). As regards

As for the original oral version, it is certain that Vasile Alecsandri transcribed it with the freedom that the times allowed him. He himself admitted as much in answer to a question that Ioan Crăciunescu had put to him about the method of collecting and publishing popular texts: "I proceeded with some of these poems like a jewel with precious stones. I have respected the subject, the style, the phonation and even some of the incorrect rhymes that characterize them. So far from having arranged them according to modern taste, I have preserved them as if they were golden jewels that I would have found covered with rust and deformed. I made the stains disappear and restored them to their original

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brilliancy. Here is all my merit. The treasure belongs to the people who alone are capable of producing such original marvels' (Jean Cratiunesco, *Le peuple roumain d'apr's ses chants nationaux. Essais de li terature et de morale*, Pari s, 1 847, pp. 327-328; Cf. Fochi, op. cit., p. 208, n. 2).

prev adă the exceptional destiny that Miorița D will have in modern Romanian culture. The poem fascinated from the beginning, and not only Romanians. Michelet called it "a thing so sacred and moving that it makes your heart shudder". Yet the content is simple enough: the sheep warns its young shepherd that his envious companions on his tunnels and his dogs, they decided to kill him. But instead of defending himself, the shepherd turns to the myow and tells her his last wishes. He begs her to ~~tâmpo~~^{îngrăpa} to be in the lath to be close to the sheep and to hear his dogs. he also asks her to put three whistles on his head. The wind when will blow through them pierce through , and the gathered sheep will weep with tears of blood. But he begs him especially not to speak of murder; he shall say that he was married, and that at his wedding he saw a star; the sun and the moon held his crown, the great mountains and the beeches were his witnesses. But if he sees an old mother in chains, asking about a "proud shepherd", let him tell her only that he has married a "proud queen, the bride of the world, on a foot of the earth, on a mouth of heaven"; but let him not speak of the star that fell, nor that the sun and the moon held his crown; nor of the beeches, nor of the great mountains.

Miorița has been translated into French several times, first by Jules Michelet² in 1854. Like most masterpieces of popular poetry, it is in a certain sense untranslatable; so many archaic and paradisiacal images lose their mysterious freshness and poetic richness as soon as they are transposed into another language. With this preliminary remark, which is also valid for all translations of popular poetic texts, I am happy to reproduce here Ion Ureche's recent version³ , which is certainly one of the most successful:

*By the blooming co/s of
paradise,
Vois, descendre, prestes,
Des jardins celestes,
Three flocks of lambs And
three little flocks:*

*One from Moldova,
two from Va/achie.
Now these two
shepherds, These two
strangers, Here they
are talking,*

² Jules Michelet, *Ugendes democratiques du Nord*, Paris, 1854, pp. 351 – 354.

³ Published in the magazine *Semne, m*, Nr. 1-3, Paris, 1963, p. 1.

*To kill at one blow,
Between dog and
wolf, This Moldavian
shepherd, For he is
braver, **he** has more
lambs, Horned and
beautiful, Superb
horses and fierce
dogs. And now, three
days,
Ou' again, always! His
darling sheep
Stay there, marry
her, her voice is
silent, the grass is
falling.*

*– „O, sheep goat/ee,
Buckle up, annetee, for
a few days you've been
moaning
Is the grass dull or
are you ill; Tell me,
dear golden fleecy
treasure?*

*- "Master, my sweet master
Lead us out to pasture
Deep in the woods
Or /' one finds, at your
choice, Of /' grass without
number And for you
/'shade.*

*Master, O my master!
Keep a dog with you,
The strongest of the
strong, For if you
don't, the awres will
kill you with one blow
Between dog and wolf.*

*- "O, bind sheep, if thou
art a seer,
If tonight I die In this
valley in bloom,*

Tell me, dear sheep, to
put me down on the

ground, I am near with
all my goods, to hear
my dogs. Then, when
all is ready, Come to
my bedside:

A pipe of charm,
Moult ii has charm! A
holly pipe, Moult iI is
sad and sweet A holly
pipe, Moult iI is
unchained!

Lorsqu' ii soufflera
Le vent y jouera;
Alors rassemblees,
Mes brebis
troubtees,
Verseront de rang
Des /armes de
sang.

But, of murder,
friend Don't talk to
them!

Tell them, for real, I'm
married

Queen without a
second, Promised
Queen of the
world; That at this
wedding a star was
in the row;

That above the treme
Held my crown The
Moon, in her finery,
The Soiei/, their
courses,

Les grands monls, mes
pretres, Mes temoins, Ies

THE MISCHIEVOUS
 LITTLE MYNAH

hears,
To the hymns of the
voices of the birds of
the woods. That I had
for candles the virgin
stars,
Thousands of birds
And stars, torches!...

*But if you see, dear one,
 A running mother, all in
 tears
 Through these blossoming
 fields, Constantly asking
 Pale with distress:
 - Who of YOU has
 seen, Who would
 have known A
 proud shepherd,
 slim
 Like a young prince? His
 face was
 L' ecume de /ait ;
 Sa moustache espiegle,
 Deux epis de seigles ;
 Ses chevaux, et beatu:,
 Ailes de corbeaux;
 Her plums/pure plums
 The color of the
 mulberries! You, tell
 him, that in truth I had
 a wife*

*And one's from
 Vienna. And the
 Hungarian one
 And with the Vrincean,
 Mări, they talked,*

MORIZIA

(V. Alecsandri variant)

*By a foot of the
 plain, By a mouth of
 heaven, Here they
 come in the way,
 Three flocks of
 lambs with three
 shepherds.
 One's Moldavian
 One's Hungarian*

second, Promise
of the world, In a
beautiful land,
Corner of
paradise!
But, alas! to my
mother I'll
n e v e r tell
her
A star is in the row ;
That above the
throne held my
crown: The moon
in her finery,
Soiei/, their col lrs,
us grands monts, mes
pretres Mes temoins Ies
hetres,
To the hymns of
the voices of the
birds of the
woods; That I
have had for
candles The virgin
eroiles,
Thousands of birds
and flaming
stars...

more orthodox
And has more
sheep, Proud and
horned, And
learned horses
And more manly
songs. But the
little mioriță With
the smooth
plaviță,
For three days now

They took counsel
By the setting
sun To kill my
Moldavian,

*His mouth won't shut
anymore.*

*"Mioriță laie,
I.Aie, bucălaie,
For three days now
your mouth won't shut
up! "Either you don't
like winter, or you're
sickly, my pretty
lamb? "*

*"My pretty little
baby, Give your
sheep over here, To
the black hedge,
For there's grass
for us And shade
for you. Master,
master,
It's a dinner call,
The most manly
and the most
fraternal, That /
sunset*

*I want my Hungarian
Hungarian kiss
And with the one from
Vienna! "*

*,,, Borsan sheep
If you're naughty,
And if I were to die
In the moor,
You can tell the
Vrans and the
Hungarians
To bury me close
by
In sheep's clothing
I'll be with you*

*all; In the back of the
shrine,
Let me hear my songs.
Tell them that,
Jar to my head to put me on
Beech whistle, Much says
the dear ;*

*A bone
whistle, it
says much
sweetly;
An elder
whistle, it
says much
with fire!
The wind,
when it
blows, will
blow
through
them, and
the sails
will be
gathered,
They'll
weep for me
with the
tears of
blood! And
you of
murder
Don't tell
them. Tell
them
straight
that I got
married
A proud
queen of
the world's
bridal
queen
A star has
fallen, the
sun and the*

*moon
They held my
wreath. Trees and
hats
/ We had grooms.
Priests the high
mountains, Birds
the praying birds
Birds the
thousands
And stars! And if
you can see
them, If you can
see them, If you
can see them, If
you can see them
From the eyes of the
eyes / running
through the field,
Asking everyone
And to all saying:
„Cine-a cunoscut,
Cine mi-a văzut
Mîndru ciobănel,
Tras printr-un inel ?
His little girl*

*The froth of
milk; His
whiskers, his
whiskers of
gray; His brush,
his brush of
raven; His eyes,
his eyes of the
field! -You, my
lamb, go to her
and tell her I
married a king's
daughter,*

*On a mouth of
heaven. And the
nun
Don't tell her, sweetie,
that at my wedding
A star has fallen,
For we have had
grooms of fir trees
and straw hats,
Priests of the great
mountains, Birds of
the praying, Birds
of thousands
And stars!"*

Although it is "permeated in its depths" by a "charming brotherhood of man with the whole of creation", Michelet criticizes the Myrist for confessing "too light a resignation". "And let us beware, this is a national trait," he adds. "Man does not fight against death; he does not resist it: he serenely welcomes this queen, the bride of the world, and, without murmuring, he marries her. Having just come out of nature, it already seems sweet to him to return to his own self." ⁴

Many Romanian authors have also recognized this resignation seren serenity in the face of death and in this nostalgia for cosmic reintegration. a characteristic national trait. As we shall see, such an interpretation is unfounded. But it has succeeded in making the Miorița the most important piece in an almost centenary debate that goes beyond folkloric, literary or historical controversies. Indeed, the ballad is, for Romanian culture, both a question of folklore and the history of popular spirituality and a central chapter in the history of ideas.

⁴ Jules Michelet. *Ugendes democratiques du Nord*. p. 342.

As for **the** texts, we use the versions published by Fochi. Miorița, pp. 555-1 074. as well as other ci') eva more accessible folkloric collections, and first of all Al. I. Amzulescu, *Balade populare românești*, II, București. 1 964, pp. 463486; cf. voi. I pp. 178 ff. See also Introduction. vol. I, pp. 5-1 00, and also by Al. I. Amzulescu, "Cîntecul nostru bitrînesc", *Revista de*

Is torists, folklorists, fi lozofi

Se pot distinge în mod esențial în studiul Mioriței trei orientări : 1) Cea pe care am putea-o denumi istorică pentru că s- a străduit să reconstituie originea și istoria baladei ; 2) demersul folcloriștilor care au muncit pe teren, înmulțind numărul vari- antelor și urmărind anal iza baladei în contextul general al cul-

Romanian folk poetry; 3) finally, the exegesis of certain Romanian poets and

philosophers who identified in Miorița the major expression of the national genius and, consequently, considered it as an unequaled illustration of the Romanian people's unique way of being in the world.

It is useless to insist on some fanciful interpretations, such as that of Th. D. Speranția, who saw in the Miorița "a myth or a ritual legend" "of Egyptian origin", being part of "from the cult of goats"; or that of the literary critic H. Sanielevici, who deciphered in it the ritual murder of Zalmoxis. 6 N. Iorga believed that the ballad is the work of a certain author, who would have started from a real incident of transhumance, which took place in southern Moldavia.⁷ The illustrious historian dates the poem's appearance in the 8th century. Ovid Densusianu also believed that Ovid Densusianu found the "origin" of the Miori: he identified the historical background of the ballad in the economic rivalry between shepherds. According to the eminent philologist, the ballad was created three or four centuries ago in the Vrancei region. Densu sianu has had the merit of having analyzed the Miorița in the Romanian folk poetry as a whole; he shows, for example, that the episode of the young girl's lamb as well as the allegory of death are found in a large number of pastoral poems. As for the deeper meaning of

folklore (V, 1 960, pp. 25-28) Cf. Petru Iroaie, "Miorița o il canto della fusione con la Natura" (Extract from Folk/ore, XII, Naples, 1958), pp. 34-42, text and translation into Italian, pp. 43-47, Bibliography.

6 Th. D. Speranția, *Miorița și călușarii*, urme de la Daci, Bucharest, 1934, pp. 10 ff. ; H. Sanielevici, "Miorița sau patimile unui Zalmoxis?", *Adevărul lite rar*, 1931, No. 552, 553; cf. Fochi, op. cit., pp. 143-144, 149-150.

7 N. Iorga  The Romanian Popular Ballad. Originea și ciclurile ei, Vălenii de Munte, 1910. See the critical analysis of Iorga's theory in Al. Amzulescu, "Observații critice în problema studierii baladei" (*Revista de folclor*, IV, 1959, pp. 175-194).

of our ballad, Densusianu saw in it the love of nature, a sentiment that he considered pagan in structure and predating Christianity. s

But especially the historian and literary critic D. Caracostea has spent many years studying the *Miorița*.⁹ Caracostea denies the historical character of the Romanian ballad in general, pointing out, for example, that where the names of rulers, boyars or soldiers appear, the analysis shows that they are very old, ante historical personalities concerned. ¹⁰ At the root of the conflicts epic of the folk ballads is not a historical event, but a "primal human experience" that produced "a poetic world view."¹¹

The central motif of the *Myorist* does not depend on transhuman movements; it expresses a more general, and more profound, sense of pastoral life, specifically the shepherd's love of his occupation and 'a classical sense of optimistic affirmation.' ¹² As can be seen, Caracostea criticized both Densusianu's hypothesis and the 'pessimistic' interpretations of the allegory of death, fashionable since the time of Alecsandri.

As for the contributions of folklorists, they were decisive. Densusianu's appendix to his work on pastoral life contains 41 texts that had already appeared in publications

¹ O. Densusianu. *The Pastoral Life in Our Popular Poetry*. Bucharest. 1922. (quoting from the third edition, 1966). pp. 359-416. Cf. criticism in Fochi. pp. 156 and unnn.

⁹ D. Caracostea's publications on the Romanian folk ballad and especially on *Miorița* are indicated in Fochi's bibliography, p. 1077. Caracosteas contributions were collected in *Poezia tradițională română*, Bucharest. 1969. I, pp. 5-309. See especially. D. Caracostea, *Miorița în Moldova, Muntenia și Oltenia. Obiectiile d-lui Densusianu. Totalizări*, București. 1924 ; " *Miorița la Anîni*" (Omagiu lui Ion Bianu. București. 1927. pp. 91-108) ; "Miorița în Timoc" (*Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, 8, 1941, pp. 141-144) ; "Sentimentul creației și mistica morții" (*ibid.* pp. 608--620). Caracostea's contributions are conveniently summarized by Fochi. pp. 159-164. See also Ovidiu Birlea, *Metoda de cercetare a folclorului*, Bucharest. 1969, pp. 137-141 .

^{1st} Cf. D. Caracostea. *Balada populară română* (University course, 1932-1933),

pp. 543, quoted by Fochi. p. 160. ~~LITTLE MYA~~

¹¹ Ibid. , p. 338. quoted by Fochi. p. 160.

¹² Ibid. p. 777, quoted by Fochi, p. 162.

previous, while in 1930, Ion Diaconu published 91 unpublished texts, collected only from the Vrancei region. Constantin Brăiloiu and his team up to the outbreak of the Second World War, then the members of the Institute of Folklore after 1945, multiplied the number of variants considerably. Adrian Fochi's enormous work presents 930 documents, including 702 complete variants,

123 fragments and 105 "movement information". It is not our intention here to examine the problems posed by this mass of poetic documents popular. In fact, everything concerning folkloric technique and problems has been treated in detail by Fochi.

Among the folklorists who worked in the field, Ion Diaconu, C. Brăiloiu and A. Fochi did not hesitate to propose hypotheses on the origin of the ballad, and even theoretical considerations on the structure of the Romanian folk mentality. We will discuss Brăiloiu's and Fochi's contributions below. Diaconu's case is more nuanced. On the one hand, the ethnographic surveys and folkloric documents that he collected and published 14- ensured him a place of first rank among researchers. (A pupil of Ovid Densusianu, he situates the genesis of the Miorița in the Vrancei region, but admits that it is impossible to specify its primary aspect or the time of its formation.)¹⁵ On the other hand, Diaconu insisted on the disastrous consequences of the "economic prefectures" and the

"Modern instruction" on folkloric creativity. He spoke of the "technization of the modern age" which would eventually destroy the folk song, "a product totally independent of the influence of modern culture". He went even further, stating that the folk creator "the unique, superior individual (. . .) must remain an illiterate (. . .), must remain in a real primitivity", so that his work tends "towards the primitivization of his whole experience within his respective social framework".¹⁶

¹³ Fochi, p. 196. Fochi's analysis is based essentially on 800 documents, 64 % of which are unpublished material (22 % collected by the author; cf. p. 173). ¹⁴ See the list of publications in Fochi, p. 1079 ; *ibid.*, pp. 147-149, pp. 147-149, examine his theories.

¹⁵ Ion Diaconu, *Aspecte etnografice putnene, Focșani, 1939*, p. 28, quoted by

Fochi, p. 148.

¹⁶ See these and other citations in Fochi, p. 148.

Of course, similar reflections are to be found in many authors who have studied the consequences of the industrialization on popular creativity, and one Ananda Coomaraswamy has ceaselessly eulogized "illiteracy. " But such an attitude, criticized even before the Second World War, was interpreted by the representatives of the official Marxist ideology as evidence of reactionary obscurantism. Diaconu saw in the ballad "a remnant of pagan poetry with real naturalistic elements, depicting the union of the shepherd soul with cosmic immensity", a poetic layer prior to the adaptation of the Dacian-Roman soul to Christian values, for in the ballad the poet-pastor seeks "the liberation of earthly existence not in religion, but in nature".¹¹

Ion Diaconu is but one example, and not the most representative, of the almost religious admiration with which a large number of Romanian intellectuals approach the "mioritic" phenomenon. In fact, the ballad did not cease to inspire writers and visual artists as soon as it became known. Countless are the poems, dramas, novels and figurative works which have taken up the themes illustrated by the ballad, in part or in their entirety, from different angles and with different intentions. Such an affection for this masterpiece of popular poetry is not without a certain significance, to which we shall return.

"Traditionalists" and "modernists"

As was to be expected, this almost general tendency to isolate *the Miorița* from Romanian folk poetry as a whole and to project it alone in a mythical horizon, as a model par excellence of Romanian genius, irritated a certain number of intellectuals: they refused to recognize the dramas, destiny and ideal of a modern people in a multise cular folk loric creation. But in particular certain philosophical interpretations of the ballad triggered their anger:

a) a pessimistic interpretation of *Miorița*, almost general since

17 Aspecte etnografice putnene, pp. 23, 15 ?, 28, quoted by Fochi, p. 149.

Alecsandri onwards; b) the claim to consider the ballad as the only valid expression of Romanian popular genius; c) the decision to use the themes of the mioritic as a starting point for a "specifically Romanian" philosophical meditation.

The confrontation between these two positions (which, in the years we are evoking, 1930-1940, only partially represented the opposition "modernism-traditionalism") was clearly manifested following the publication of texts by the poet and essayist Dan Botta and the poet-philosopher Lucian Blaga. In a famous essay, *Unduction and Death*, Dan Botta speaks of death as a threshold of jubilation, of the shepherd's soul "throbbing liberated, in the white spheres of Joy. Somewhere in a space reduced to its essence, the wedding takes place between the shepherd and death".

As in all his work, Dan Botta exalts the "nuptial death" which he relates to the "nostalgia of death" in the "thracic" sense of the term, for the poet does not doubt the ethnic thracism of Romanians, and Orpheus, Zalmoxis and the shepherd stand side by side in his universe of values. 18

On the other hand, Liviu Rusu, studying the "meaning of existence" in Romanian folk poetry, emphasizes the passivity and resignation that he thinks characterize the Romanian people. In *Miorița*, the hero does not attempt any gesture of resistance; he does not revolt against fate, and his only consolation is that death will allow him to rest in the bosom of Nature.¹⁹

But it was Lucian Blaga in particular who took the philosophical exegesis of the ballad the furthest. This great poet and philosopher wrote an entire work, entitled *Spațiul mioritic*, about what he called the "stylistic matrix" of Romanian culture. It is not possible to summarize it, because *Spațiul mioritic* is only part of the trilogy in which Blaga expounded his "Philosophy of Cultures". Suffice it to recall that for Lucian Blaga "the space

¹⁸ See the essays collected in the volume *Limite*, Bucharest, 1936; cf. the new ed. in *Scrieri*, vol. IV, București, 1968, in spec., pp. 75 ff.- After quoting all these passages, Fochi criticizes the author for his profoundly erroneous idea, which derives from the agonistic philosophy of desperation and nothingness. "existentialism" (op. cit. - p. 152). Nothing further from Dan Botta than existentialism

19 Liviu Rusu, *Le sens de l'existence dans la poesie populaire roumaine*, Paris, 1935, p. 84. Cf. other readings in Fochi, pp. 152-153.

mioritic" represents the specific horizon in which the Romanian people was founded, and still lives ("undulating space", i.e. made up of valleys and hills that follow one another). And because our author takes up and elaborates on Frobenius's conception of the relationship between landscape and cultural style, the 'mioritic space' both generates and limits the specific creations of the Romanian genius. Lucian Blaga also analyzes the anistorical and fatalistic attitude of the Romanians, and deciphers in Miorița a transfiguration of death that he also finds in other public creations, which allows him to identify in the 'love of death' a characteristic of the spirituality of the Romanian people.²⁰

Since 1945, Lucian Blaga has been much criticized for his "obscurantist mysticism", for his error (a serious one, being ideological) of seeing in Romanian folklore, and especially in Miorița, pessimism, resignation and passivity — exalting instead the vitality of the Romanian people and their love of life and work. But Lucian Blaga's speculations drew criticism even from

publication of his book *Spațiul mioritic*. In an article entitled "Filo zo fare a on the philosophy of the Romanian people". sociologist H. H. Stahl

He criticized the insufficient ethnographic information and rejected the assumption of the feeling of death in Romanians.²¹ Stahl emphasized that the Miorița, far from expressing "love of death", is part of a specific ceremony of young celibate dead.

The consequences of such a connection of the ballad with the universe of funerary beliefs and practices are considerable, and we will discuss this issue by examining the contribution of Constantin Brăiloiu. But it is important to state from the outset that neither Dan Botta nor Lucian Blaga attributed to themselves the competence, nor the scientific responsibility, the ethnographer and the folklorist. But they felt that their approach was legitimate as long as it deciphered

(It is, in a way, the position that opposed Nietzsche to Wilamowitz and, more recently, Walter Otto to Nilson, in their interpretation of the Greek religious genius.) The conclusions of Blaga or Dan Botta can be criticized or rejected en bloc, but their

method cannot be rejected on the pretext that it reveals

²⁰ Lucian Blag ◆ Spa liul mioritic, Bucharest, 1936, pp. 120 ff.

²¹ H. H. Stahl, "The Philosophy of the Philosophy of the Romanian People", (Sociologie românească, m, 1 938, no. 3-4, pp. 1 04-1 1 9); cf. ibid., m, 1 938, pp. 10-1 1 8).

new meanings and introduces personal values into an archaic spiritual universe. For, as we shall see, the ballad Miorița is itself the result of an analogous creative process which, at a certain epoch, transmuted a primary ritual behavior into a poetic masterpiece, charged with new meanings and carrying a richer and "elevated" message.

The exegesis of Constantin Brăiloiu

The opposition between the two tendencies is admirably highlighted by Constantin Brăiloiu's booklet, *Sur une ballade roumaine*.²² In less than 3 000 words, the eminent ethnomusicologist and folklorist has concentrated all the arguments that can be invoked against the unmeasured exaltation of the Miorița. Even the overly extensive study of the ballad seems suspect to him. Alluding to Caracostea's research, but without naming him, Brăiloiu writes: "There have been scholarly professors devoting themselves exclusively to the study of this piece and founding, what in German would be called, a veritable "Miorița forschung", a "miorițologie" in the full sense of the word. On the other hand, an outstanding thinker is not afraid to use a common suffix to create the strangest of vocabulary and to imagine a

"mioritic space" that would be a kind of place of elction of the soul of the race" (op. cit. , p. 3). He recalls the clichés that have been current since Alecsandri's time — resignation in the face of death, nostalgia for a return to the sinus of maternal nature — and adds: "Examined with less lyricism, the text reveals to us two themes here conjoined, here distinct, by themselves, and dissociable" (ibid., p. 4). There are two fairly well known folkloric themes: the first, death asimilar to a wedding, is archaic, rooted in prehistory²³ ; the second theme is constituted by what Brăiloiu calls "the substitution

²² Constantin Brăiloiu, *Sur une ballade roumaine* : IA Mioritza, Geneva. 1 946. On Brăiloiu's method, see O. Bîrte  Metode de - cercetare a folc lorului, pp. 31 ff.

²³ as early as 1925 Ion Muslea brought Miorița closer to the funerary rites of

boys and young girls; cf. Jean Muşlea, *Le mort-mariage — une particularitt du folk/ore ballcanique* (in *Melanges de l' tcole Roumaine en France*, Paris, 1925), p. 19.

any element or object that is incidental to the normal accessories of peasant ceremonies", but which we might more accurately call the replacement of the elements of peasant funeral ceremonies with cosmic minds or objects.

This second theme is also found in occasional popular poetry as well as in lyric poetry proper. Its vitality (i.e. "creativity") was still intact after World War I. Brăiloiu quotes a text probably collected around 1920.

- Tell me, you foot soldier,
where did you die?
- In the Oituz Valley
Under shell fire.
- What's your lumnation?
- The sun is up.
- Who bathed you?
- The rains cftnd it rained.
- And who cured you?
- The fog cft what's left.
- Who read your job?
- The moon when it rose.

Brăiloiu adds: "apart from the military details, here is revived, word for word, the ancient lament about the lonely sigh of the shepherd: one senses the closeness of *Miorița*" (pp. 5-6). But although this example alone would have been enough to enlighten him on the meaning of the national "adherence" to the mioritic universe, Brăiloiu reaches a completely different conclusion. For him, "the documents prove that the apotheosis so admired is not a unique miracle of art, but, on the contrary, a lyrical commonplace, obviously annexed, through a contamination in a certain fatal way, to the chorus of a narrative, whose tragic and pastoral substance implies, let us say, such a peroration" (p. 6).

In order to understand it, Brăiloiu believes it is good to analyze zeze the ballad in the light of peasant rites and symbols. Brăiloiu, the great specialist in the "de-ale of the dead", has grasped in a few concise formulas the link between *the Miorița*

and Romanian funerary beliefs and rituals. The posthumous
weddings of the young celibate dead,

as well as various other rites, offerings and tributes, which are performed during and after the burials, are intended to pacify the soul and help it to pass the difficult trials of its journey in the "land without mercy".²⁴ Numerous funeral ceremonies, continues Brăiloiu, must be performed to prevent the dead from "becoming wicked" and returning among the living, in the form of the undead. In conclusion, our author concludes, the nuptial symbolism of the Miori is fused with the rite of the posthumous wedding and this rite expresses the will of the living to protect themselves from the dead by pacifying them. The verses which later gave the inimitable "atmosphere" of the ballad were once the verbal element of a descant.

"The tinge of regret and sympathy, sensitive here and there in

These incantations with a changed purpose only crept in, of course, in the day when Christian mercy drove out the ancestral terror. They express neither the will of renunciation, nor the drunkenness of nothingness, nor the adoration of death, but the exact opposite, for in them the memory of the original gestures in defense of life is perpetuated" (p. 13). It is to Brăiloiu and H. H.

H. Stahl's merit in having uncovered certain constitutive elements of the Miorița, more precisely of the ballad's 'preistoriei'. It remains to be seen whether a poetic creation can be reduced to its "prehistory", i.e., in the case of the Miori, to the attitudes, rituals and beliefs that preceded it in time and which lent it part of its poetic content. However it may be, the opus *Sur une ballade roumaine* marks an important date in the history of the exegesis of popular poetic texts; it also constitutes a valuable document for the history of ideas in modern Romania. Many folklorists, sociologists and philosophers have rejected, since 1950, the "pessimistic" interpretation of the ballad, thus following Brăiloiu's anti-mystical and anti-metaphysical orientation.²⁵

²⁴ An entire opera would have to be written in a day on the rich and dramatic Romanian mythology of death, in which archaic motifs abound (e.g. : "cele două ci", the customs and the customs men, the animals that guard the dead, the sea that he has to cross, the huge fir tree that bends down at the end and allows the pilgrim to pass "with the dew on his feet, with the mist on his back"; cf. Brăiloiu, op. cit., p. 11

1).

2s Cf. inter alia, C. I. Gulian, *Sensul v ieții fn /olclorul românesc*, București, 1957, pp. 224 and passim ; Pavel Apostol, in his introductory study, *Miorița*, pp. 1 8 ff, 44 ff, 57 ff.

As far as Adrian Fochi is concerned, he has taken up and elaborated the eminent ethno-musicologist's thesis with a rich documentation. The foreign scholar who tried to elucidate the creation of *the Miorița* and to analyze its poetic value, unfortunately without knowing the contributions of H. H. Stahl and C. Brăiloiu, was Leo Spitzer²⁶. But as expected, the eminent author of *Stilstudien* focused on the process of literary creation, as he can reconstitute himself against comparative popular literatures.

The prestige of the ballad

To return to the variants published and analyzed by Fochi, it is important to emphasize a few facts. First of all, the current range of the ballad: no other folkloric piece enjoys such popularity (Fochi, op. cit., p. 409). In the form of ballad or colind²¹, *Miorița* is spread throughout the Romanian provinces²⁸, but it also circulates in Yugoslavia and Macedonia²⁹. However, the area of spread was wider in the past. Nowadays, the region with the highest density is the Danubian *Ōpia*. In the Vrancei region it was so widespread that Ion Diaconu assures us that "only in church is *Miorița* not sung". In Oltenia, too, the ballad was more widespread in the past (Fochi, pp. 424 ff.).

²⁶ Leo Spitzer, "L'archetype de la ballade Mioritza et sa valeur poetique" (Cahiers Sextil Pușcariu, vol. II, 1952, pp. 95-120). The study was reproduced in Spitzer's volume, *Romanische Literaturstudien*, 1936 ♦ 1956, Tübingen, 1959, pp. 835-867. See now Lorenzo Renzi, *Canti narrativi tradizionali romeni*, pp. 97-127.

²⁸ Cf. Christmas ritual, cf. O. Bîrlea, "Miorița colindă" (Revista de etnografie și folclor, xii, 1967, pp. 339-347) : critical remarks on Fochi's method. On colinde, in general, see awm Mircea Popescu, *Saggi di poesia popolare romena*, Roma, 1966, pp. 83-116 ("Les colinde romena").

²¹ See Fochi, pp. 175-188, for a list of the localities in which the various *ants* were recorded.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 191. Out of the 800 variants published by Fochi (in other words, without taking into account the documents reproduced in the appendix, pp. 991-1074), 413 were

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found in Transylvania, 178 in Moldavia, 77 in Wallachia, 77 in Muntenia, 60 in Oltenia, 15 in Banat, 13 in Dobrogea and 25 were not localized; cf. p. 192.

On the other hand, the Miorița is one of the rare ballads that has its own melody: informants state that they have known the melody for a very long time (from their elders). With all its pastoral character, the ballad also circulates in agricultural circles (e.g. in the Bărağan) and, on the contrary, it is poorly attested in some regions where the pastoral economy is dominant (e.g. in the "mărginenii" near Sibiu). In the Vrancei region, many shepherds do not know it, whereas it is known in the villages. Finally, it is important to point out that the language of the texts is not archaic, but represents the language spoken in the different regions where the variants were notated (*ibid.* , pp. 413 ff.).

All this, we believe, proves that :

1. Miorița enjoys an exceptional situation, which can be considered unique in the spiritual experience of the Romanian people (so that the irritation of some authors in the face of the "unique prestige of the ballad" was not justified);

2. it is an authentic popular creation, which does not owe its fame to the literary perfection of the Alecsandri version;

3. Its ability to reflect varied geographical environments and different social realities, the fact that it is recited or sung in the current language, confirms, on the one hand, its general Romanian character, and, on the other hand, underlines the continuity of what we could call the "creative process" that we will examine further on.

In short, if Miorița can be found in all the regions inhabited by Romanians, if no other folkloric piece has ever enjoyed such popularity, knowing that in a more or less distant past its circulation was even more intense, if various new versions have been continuously recorded – a first conclusion is in order: we are dealing with a folkloric creation that is still alive, that moves the soul of the people like no other; in other words, there is a total and spontaneous "adhesion" of the Romanian people to the poetic beauties and to the

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 428. But in other pyrhrithes of the same region the Miorița is said to be the favorite ballad of shepherds; cf. p. 429.

the symbolisms, with their ritual or speculative implications, of the ballad. It can therefore be concluded that the preference of some late authors, when they elevated the Miorița to the rank of archetype of Romanian popular spirituality, was not completely arbitrary. By insisting on the uniqueness of the Miori, they are merely following the choice of an entire people. Only the adjective "mioritic" is the invention of the literati: the Mioritic world was already perceived by the people as a special and incomparable universe.^{3 1}

Finally we can say that it was justified to see in ballad an exemplary expression of the Romanian soul. But the real problem begins with the exegesis of this privileged expression.

Analysis of themes

Beginning with the studies of Caracostea and Densusianu, scholars have endeavored to distinguish the different themes of the ballad in order to identify its central core and to reconstruct its development. Fochi's latest analysis of the text distinguishes the following themes: in a natural setting specific to the pastoral profession (theme 1, which Fochi designates as "The place of drama"), three flocks of sheep, led by three shepherds from different regions, are engaged in a series of actions characteristic of this occupation (theme 2: "Transhumanity"). Two of them are plotting against the third (theme 4: "The shepherds' decision"), on economic grounds (theme 5: "The causes of the killing"), but a ewe discovers the plot (theme 6: "The mischievous sheep"). Astonished by her strange behavior, the shepherd asks her what is wrong with her (theme 7: "The shepherd's question") and the sheep, having revealed the plot, advises him to be careful (theme 8: "The discovery of the murder"). The shepherd reacts in a completely unexpected and unnatural way (theme 9: "The shepherd's reaction"); he asks her to show him

31 Of course, the totality of folkloric creations must always be taken into account when a general exegesis of ethnic genius is made. But the fact remains, not only Fochi's monograph, but Miorița has already been singled out among these folkloric creations by its surprising popular adherence.

He asks the murderers where he wants to be buried (theme 10: "Burial place") and asks her to place certain objects on his grave (theme 11: "Burial objects") so that a she may mourn him (theme 12: "The cry of the sheep"). He also asks her to tell the sheep that he has married (theme 13: "Allegory of death"), in a spectacular setting (theme 14: "The shepherd's apotheosis"). But if the mischievous ewe meets his old mother (theme 15: "Old Mother") looking for him by looking for signs (theme 16: "Portrait of the Shepherd"), she tells him about her wedding (theme 17: "Myorist Wedding"), but without telling him about the unusual setting in which it took place (theme 18: "The Wedding Scene"). 32

Fochi then analyzes the 120 Moldovan variants to determine the frequency of each of these 18 themes. We will not reproduce the detailed results of these statistical analyses. It is enough to note that the themes with the highest frequency are: the shepherd's question (no. 7: 96%), the discovery of the murder (no. 8: 97%), the place of burial (no. 10: 92%), the objects of burial (no. 11: 82 %), and the crying of the sheep (no. 12: 70 %). Equally important, though less frequently, are the themes: the old mother (no. 15: 70 %), the shepherd's portrait (no. 16: 60 %), the mioritic wedding (no. 17: 50 %) and nuptial setting (no. 18: 42%).³³

As for the variants collected in Muntenia, the statistical analysis reveals a greater homogeneity in the frequency of the themes: only three of them (nos. 5, 6 and 16) appear in less than 50% of the variants. But as in Moldavia, the maximum frequency is reached by the central thematic group, i.e. the episode of the mischievous mya, the shepherd's testimony and the episode of the old mother. Almost the same thematic frequencies are found in Oltenia (op. cit., pp. 215-216). In Transylvania, however, the situation is different, and one of Fochi's great merits is to have published and used in his comparative analyses a considerable mass of Transylvanian variants (326 documents). In Transylvania, Miorița is also found under

32 Fochi, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

33 Ibid., 212 ff. Themes nos. 13, 14 are **găsesc** only in the Alecsandri version

and must be considered as added by the MYA. Consequently, and unnîdu-1 pe Cara costea, Fochi eliminates them from the discussion: *ibid.*, p. 214.

ballad form, but it is best known as a carol. Obviously, once integrated into the regional repertoire of carols, Miorița adapted to the specific conditions of this genre of oral literature. In its simplest form, the Miorița can be summarized as follows: two or three shepherds are with their flocks; they send one of them to turn the sheep, and while he is away his companions decide to kill him. On his return he is informed of the sentence and given the choice of death (by sword, spear, etc.) The shepherd shows them where he is to be buried and asks them to put certain objects on his head. In most cases, the carol ends with the crying of the sheep.³⁴ Some variants also include the episode of the old mother.³⁵

As can be seen, it is characteristic of the Miorița-colind that the shepherd communicates his will directly to his murderers. An analysis of the frequency of each theme shows that the pattern is reduced to two thematic nuclei: the initial epic setting (nos. 1, 3, 4) and the shepherd's testament (nos. 10, 11, 12).³⁶ We add that this carol is sung in groups, at Christmas, but also at gatherings and other occasions of communal work. If it had been sung only at Christmas, the carol would not have been known by the whole village, including women, who are not allowed in carol singing groups. This also explains why in some cases the Miorița carol has become a *le agăn* song. The fact that this carol is always sung in a group explains its textual stability. The possibilities for improvisation and poetic creation are quite limited. But, as we can see, it is precisely this textual stability that allows us to perceive in the *colin de*, one of the most archaic stages of Romanian spirituality.

³⁴ Fochi, op. cit., pp. 379- 380. The causes of the crime are not always very clear. In some cases it is a matter of judgment: the shepherd is condemned because he has not respected certain obligations related to his profession, or for sentimental reasons: he, and not one of the others, was chosen by a beautiful girl ; *ibid.* , p. 263.

³⁵ Fochi ♦ op . cit. , pp. 381 ff. Let us add that in a few other versions the shepherd is surprised at the stable by thieves, who announce that they will kill him after he has made his will ; *ibid.* p. 388.

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36 Fochi, *op. cit.* , pp. 21⁷-21⁸. See *ibid*, analogous to the less numerous variants from Banat and Dobrogea.

Summing up the results of the statistical analysis, Fochi arrives at the following picture:

a) only one thematic nucleus is common to the four Romanian provinces (Moldova, Muntenia, Transylvania, Oltenia), namely, the *shepherd's testament*, an episode composed of the themes: "the place of burial", "the objects of burial", "the crying of the sheep".³⁷ No other episode enjoys a similar situation. Consequently,

"Miorița is defined by the obligatory presence of this episode" (p. 220).

b) The episode of the *young* woman is characteristic only for the area of the ballad (i.e. Moldova, Muntenia, Dobrogea, Oltenia and a small part of Transylvania). The presence of this episode is typologically important because it radically separates the song-version from the ballad-version;

c) the initial epic framework (i.e. the themes: "the place of drama", "the shepherds", "decision of the shepherds", "causes of the murder") is specific to Transylvania;

d) The episode of the old mother characterizes the ballad area;

e) if we group the themes into four distinct episodes, namely :

I) the initial epic framework; II) the young mother; III) the shepherd's testament; IV) the old mother — we note that the ballad's phonula tends, in Wallachia, to include the four episodes; in Moldavia it includes mainly episodes II, III, IV, and in Oltenia episodes I, II, III, while the carol phonula, in Transylvania, contains episodes I and III;

Geographically, the shepherd's testament (IID) is present in Transylvania, Oltenia, Muntenia and Moldavia; the initial epic setting (I) appears in Transylvania, Oltenia and Muntenia; the episode of the shepherd's wife (II) is attested in Oltenia, Muntenia, Moldavia.³⁸

Of course, statistics are not decisive when it is a question of spiritual creations, be they works of popular or cultured genius, for in any statistical analysis, versions of great poetic beauty or of perfect symbolic transparency are taken into account together

³⁷ The frequency of this episode is 86 % in the Transylvanian variants, 78 %

in Oltenia, 74% in Muntenia and 81% in Moldova, an average of almost 80%.

³⁸ Fochi, *op. cit.*, 220-223.

alongside mediocre, mutilated or repetitive variants. But the results of the statistical analyses and comparisons are useful in that they indicate the general direction of the creative process and highlight the changes imposed by regional circumstances and differences in folk genres.

The fact that the original epic nucleus – the shepherd's testament – is also found in Macedonia proves that the basic motif was known to Romanians before their dialectal split.³⁹ As we shall see, the shepherd's testament characterizes the Transylvanian carol. However, carols are very ancient ritual songs. Bela Bartok had already emphasized the archaism and stability of Romanian folk melodies. As far as Transylvanian carols are concerned, Bartok points out that they are different from Western European Christmas carols, adding that "the most important part of the texts

- It is probable that some of the texts come from pre-Christian times. The presence of the original epic nucleus of the Miori among the ritual songs confines, on the one hand, its archaism, and on the other hand shows us that its origins are to be found in a religious universe.

Post-existence, posthumous marriage, "Myorian wedding"

The meaning of the Transylvanian carol is quite clear: finding out that his fate is sealed, the shepherd asks his murderers to bury him near the sheepfold, i.e. not in the village cemetery but in his familiar surroundings; and he also asks to have certain objects (whistle, trumpet, pipe, trumpet, axe, spear, etc.) placed on his monnînt. In other words, the shepherd

³⁹ Cf. the text published by Perlele Papahagi in Gr. Tocilescu, *Materiale folkloristice*, Bucureşti, 190, voi II, p. 938 and the version published by D. Caracostea,

"Miorița la armâni" (Homage to Jon Bianu, Bucharest, 1927, pp. 91-108); cf. Fochi, pp. 465-466. See also Tache Papahagi, *Paralele folklorice greco române*, Bucharest, 1944, pp. 7-8; id., *Poezia lirica populară*, Bucharest, 1967,

pp. 383-384. But Fochi considers the episode of the shepherd's testament prior to the

creation of the Miorița, at the basis of which was — **in** his opinion — a real act, subsequent to the dialectal separation of the Romanians; cf. *ibid.*, p. 554.

⁴⁰ Quoted by T. Alexandru, *Bela Bartok despre/o/cior românesc*, Bururești, 1958, p. 39; cf. Pavel Apostol, *Miorița*, p. 60.

hopes to enjoy a post-existence *sui-generis*, for all these objects, musical instruments, tools and weapons specific to the pastoral mode of existence, indicate a symbolic (i. e. ritual) extension of its activity. The underlying concept is archaic and is found in many cultures at the emographic stage: a violently interrupted life is continued by another mode of existence. In our example one glimpses even the obscure idea that the shepherd's post-existence in certain characteristic objects is ensured precisely by his violent death. Indeed, the amount of vital energy, which remains available through the interruption of an existence far from its source, is "creative" in the sense that it is capable of inspiring any object made by human hands.⁴¹ The shepherd's "existence" is continued through the symbolic prolongation of his "professional activity". The cheat. the whistle, the trumpet will continue to resound and, hearing these familiar melodies, the sheep will remember him and begin to weep or go in search of him in the mountains and valleys,⁴² or even ask him to rise from his grave and return to his work. ⁴³

We realize now the potential richness of the two themes — the grave and the objects placed on the grave — which are in fact common to both versions, carol and ballad. The desire not to be buried in the cemetery, but on the grave marker, allows for the subsequent amplification of the cosmic landscape and the final transmutation into a nuptial enchantment. On the other hand, the theme of the objects that the shepherd asks to be placed on the grave is open to multiple developments, as the most successful versions of the ballad prove. These objects, linked to pastoral activity as we have seen above, provide the shepherd, in the Transylvanian carol, with a ritual post-existence. Starting from this idea of a post-existence ensured by the presence of characteristic and familiar instruments, a neighboring idea (belonging to the same funerary universe) was reached: namely, the replacement of the ritual elements indispensable to burial, which B răiloiu considered, along with death-wedding, as essential to the understanding of the Miori.

⁴¹ See above chapter V (Meșterul Manole and the Monastery of Arges).

⁴² Cf. for example, variants XXil, XXX, XXXL XXXI etc.

⁴³ Cf. variant XXII.

We can distinguish two stages in the role of such objects in the epic core of the Miorița: the first, and the earliest, proves the shepherd's desire to prolong a symbolic post-existence far from the village, by means of the tools specific to his trade; the second stage indicates a more concrete ritual reinterpretation of these objects, an interpretation imposed by the general custom of substituting cosmic objects for the realities of popular funerary ceremonial.

Just as the instruments that the shepherd wishes to see on the grave come to represent the cultural realities of the funerary, the crying of the sheep comes to replace the ritual lamentations.⁴⁴ But it is always the roar of the wind, the whistle of the whistle, the crying of the sheep.⁴⁵ What is astonishing in the rich morphology of the Miori is the cosmic structure of all the expressions linked to a ritual substratum. Not only the cemetery is absent, but also the village and the church. The sheep's wail can be interpreted as a substitution for the ordinary wail only because comparative research has shed light on the "prehistory" of the ballad.

Fochi observes (p. 276) that the Transylvanian documents are closer to ethnographic facts, while the versions of the Moldavian-Vlăvic ballad are closer to art. But we must add that it was only the mythology of death and the funerary ritual that made possible the further development of the ballad. The primitive idea of post-existence, which we have just analyzed, is susceptible of being expressed in ever more complex forms. The desire and the hope to bring to an end, even in a symbolic way, the premature and violently interrupted existence explains the importance of the death-wedding theme in the ballad. No life is complete without a wedding, and it suffices to refer the reader to the numerous published works on the nuptial symbolism of the rites and customs connected with the funerals of young boys and girls in Europe and other regions of the world.

In Romania, the ritual of posthumous wedding ceremonies is very widespread. Two zones can be distinguished: the first, including Moldavia, Wallachia and a fairly large region in northern Transylvania,

⁴⁴ See examples in Fochi, pp. 277 ff.

⁴⁵ See the vocabulary analysis in Fochi, pp. 278 ff.

there is the custom of the symbolic marriage of the young unmarried dead to a living person; *in the* second area, including the rest of Tran Silvania, B an atul and a trans-Carpathian extension of Oltenia, the partner of the posthumous marriage is the fir tree or the lance. On the occasion of these posthumous wedding ceremonies, songs characterized by the nuptial symbolism of death are sung. Such songs are also found among other peoples⁴⁶, although their range is probably narrower than that of the custom of the post-wedding. In Romania, some of these songs, for example, Bradul and Zorile, have an archaic character and are certainly pre-Christian.⁴⁷ The popular poet was inspired by this repertory of images and symbols belonging to the posthumous wedding ritual.

But the transition from the world revealed by these songs to the world

The "mioritic wedding" is a new creation, more significant than the transition from the posthumous wedding to the ritual songs that accompany it. If in the song-song version of the Miorița the objects that the shepherd asks to be placed on his grave are ultimately a simulacrum of a funeral, in the Molda-Vlavic ballad death is totally transfigured.⁴⁸ It is not only a question of "a substitution" of objects and ceremonies, as Brăiloiu spoke of, but even the vocabulary and nuptial symbolism of funeral songs for young celibates are outdated. For the 'mioritic wedding' is celebrated in a cosmic setting of such grandeur that the event of death loses the immediate significance it still had in the funeral dirges and reveals a dimension hitherto unsuspected. Fochi notes that the theme of the nuptial setting, as a reflection of the nuptial ceremonies complementing the funeral ritual, belongs exclusively to Romanian folklore (p. 529): 'Miorița offers a typical example of the transfiguration formation existing in the people' (p. 528).

⁴⁶ For example in Corsica, in Hungary, among the Russians, the Galicians, the Bulgarians, the Turks, the ~~Turks~~ the modern Greeks; cf. some bibliographical indications in Fochi, p. 514, n. 1-8.

⁴⁷ There are also songs of clerical origin which betray the efforts of the church to remove these remnants of pagan ceremonial; cf. Fochi, p. 515.

48 It should be noted that the European area in which the ballads emphasizing the nuptial meaning of the moiety circulate is even narrower than the area of ritual songs; cf. Fochi, p. 520.

And yet, the same author, like Brăiloiu before him, concludes that the image of the "Myoritic wedding" can have no other meaning than that of the ceremony on which it depends, namely "the defense of the dead against the evil powers of the dead" (p. 529). And he adds: "The shepherd of Miorița does not desire death because it would be in his conception identical with the wedding ; he only wishes to have that funeral ceremony performed which suits his spectral situation of the unnamed."

It is understandable that Fochi, like Brăiloiu, and like so many others before him, was especially wary of the danger of interpreting the "mioritic wedding" in a pessimistic sense, that is, of seeing in the ballad the resignation and passivity of the shepherd, and, in the end, his desire to die in the sin of nature. But to replace the "pessimistic" cliché with a form considered "optimistic" because it reduces the "mioritic wedding" to a defense against the malefic power of the dead does not take the exegesis any further.

Prehistory of the ballad

H. H. Stahl and Constantin Brăiloiu were the first to decipher in the ballad, as in posthumous wedding ceremonies, the desire of the living to pacify the dead, especially to prevent them from becoming "nefarious". We do not discuss here to what extent the interpretation of death given by Brăiloiu and many other folklorists translates authentic popular conceptions. It is well known that, for traditional societies, death is an experience that is difficult for modern thinking to access. To give but one example, the solidarity of the ideas of fertility, birth and death, indicated by the closeness and sometimes even confusion between these ideas, is only rarely understood in the modern world. Only the great poets or visionaries like Nietzsche, or a few rare philosophers are capable of grasping the mysterious and paradoxical unity of life and death. One wonders, for example, whether the importance given by Brăiloiu to the somber and terrifying aspects of Romanian funeral rites

corresponds to reality. In the rural world, the fear of the undead does not seem to play the capital role that Brăiloiu attributes to it. It is more likely that, in Romania and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the fear of the undead and vampires is more the result of an occasional crisis,

of a panic that quickly becomes collective as a result of exceptional calamities, such as epidemics and scourges of a cosmic or historical nature.

But even if one accepts the interpretation of Romanian death and funeral rites presented by Brăiloiu and shared by many other cloritists, the continuity between the world of darkness and ancestral theories and the serene and transfigured universe of the Miorița remains to be proven. All we have to do is reread the Alecsandri version. Here "on a foot of the plai, on a mouth of heaven" you enter a totally different world, which not only has nothing to do with funeral rites and fear of the undead, but is not even remotely similar to the Romanian fields and villages as seen by a "profane eye" in the light of everyday experience. In Miorița, the whole universe is figurative. We are ushered into a liturgical cosmos in which Mysteries (in the religious sense of this term) are performed. The world is revealed as 'sacred', although this sacredness does not, at first sight, seem Christian in structure. As the preceding analyses have shown, specifically Christian concepts are not attested in Miorița. There is only the episode of the old mother searching for her son, which is reminiscent of other folkloric pieces about the wanderings of the Virgin Mary in search of Jesus. But even in Romanian folklore Christianity is not the Christianity of the church. One of the characteristics of the peasant Christianity of the Romanians and of Western Europe is the presence of numerous "pagan", archaic, sometimes barely Christianized religious elements. This is a new religious creation, peculiar to south-eastern Europe, which we have called

"cosmic Christianity", because, on the one hand, it projects the mystery of Christology on the whole of nature, and on the other hand, it neglects the historical elements of Christianity, insisting, instead, on the liturgical dimension of man's existence in the world. This "cosmic Christianity" is not as evident in Miorița as in other pieces of Romanian religious folklore. But here, as elsewhere, the cosmos is transfigured. Death is not considered a simple wedding, but a wedding of cosmic proportions and structure. The ballad reveals a mystical solidarity between man and nature that is no longer accessible to modern consciousness.

It is not 'pantheism', because the cosmos is not "sacred" in itself, in its own way of being, but is sanctified by participation in the mystery of the wedding. And like a wedding they were

interpreted by Christian mystics and theologians as the agony and death of Christ. It suffices to recall a text by St. Augustine in which Christ, "as a new bridegroom (. . .) comes to the bridal bed of the cross, and ascending into it, performs the wedding (*procedit Christus quasi sponsus de thalamo suo, praesagio nuptiarum exiit at campum saeculi, cucurrit sicut gigas exultando per viam usque venit ad crucis torum et ibi ascendendo coniugium . . .*)49.

As for the acceptance of death, only from a rational perspective can it be considered as proof of "passivity" or resignation. In the universe of folk values, the attitude of the shepherd expresses a deeper existential decision : "one cannot defend oneself against destiny as one defends oneself against the enemy"; one can only impose a new meaning on the ineluctable consequences of a destiny ready to implode. It is not

"fatalism", because a fatalist doesn't even think he is capable of changing the meaning of what was predestined for him.

The episode of the mischievous sheep admirably highlights all this. In Alecsandri's version, as in a large number of other versions, the sheep does not communicate information about the plot, but reveals in an oracular manner "what has been decided". We have further evidence of the creative genius of the popular poet in his choice of the oracular element instead of a "realistic" explanation (as, for example, in some variants in which the sheep makes sure to lag behind the flock, and reveals the plot. In fact, if we place ourselves in the universe of values characteristic of popular creations, this 'realistic' explanation seems recent; for it is the fabulous that dominates the whole episode, and a sheep that can talk does not need to play the spy to uncover the plot).

Pastoral societies have inherited from ancient hunter-gatherer cultures the belief that their annual gestures and revelations have an oracular function, as they know the future. Like everywhere else in the archaic world, destiny was revealed to the Mioritic shepherd by a sheep. Whether he defends himself or not, whether he wins or not, is of no importance. Whatever the outcome of the battle, the shepherd knows that in the end he

will have to die. ~~LITTLE MYNAH~~

⁴⁹ St. Augustine, *Sermo suppositus*, 1 20, 8 (/n Natali Domini, IV).

"The terror of history" and the shepherd's responsibility

Of course, this decision to accept destiny does not betray a pessimistic conception of existence, nor the passivity of which so much has been said since Alecsandri. The criticisms of Caracostea, H. H. Stahl and Brăiloiu were justified. But it is in vain to seek

The Miori's "optimism" in the love of the shepherd for his work, or in the defense of the living against the undead. One cannot speak of optimism because it is a tragic revelation. The deepest message of the ballad is the shepherd's will to change the meaning of his destiny, to transform his misfortune into a moment of cosmic liturgy, transfiguring his death into

"wedding mystical", calling on to him
the sun and moon and projecting himself
among the stars and the waters and the mountains. Of course,
we have seen that all this repertoire of gestures, images and
symbols already existed, at least virtually, in the rites and beliefs
of posthumous wedding ceremonies. But the popular poet was
able to transfigure these traditional clichés into a 'mioritic
wedding' of cosmic structure. In the ballad, the significance of
this wedding is no longer the substitution of ritual elements in
order to symbolically perform a posthumous wedding; the
fabulous grandeur of the mystical ceremonies is the shepherd's
response to his cruel fate. He manages to prefigure an
unfortunate event into a wedding mystery, as the death of an
unknown young shepherd is transformed into a nuptial celebration
of cosmic proportions. Especially the significance of this episode
has been little known.

In order to measure the consequences of such a rare will of transfiguration of a death sentence in a "Myoritic wedding", it is enough to compare it with some typical reactions of modern societies. When he learns that his death has been decided, the shepherd does not lament or abandon himself to despair, nor does he try to cancel out the meaning of the world and of existence, "demystifying" it with iconoclastic rage and

proclaiming absolute nihilism as the only possible response to the revelation of the absurd. In other words, the shepherd does not behave like so many illustrious representatives of modern nihilism. His response is quite different: he transforms the misfortune that condemns him to death into a majestic and magical mystery of the mystery of the marriage which, in the end, *allows him to triumph over his own destiny.*

Let's repeat: this revalorization of the traditional theme carried out by the ballad is a new creation, which projects the pastoral drama into a totally different spiritual horizon. The "Myoritic Wedding" is a vigorous and original solution to the incomprehensible brutality of a tragic destiny: the almost total "adhesion" of the Romanian people and intellectuals to the Myoritic drama is not without reason. Unconsciously, both the popular poets who sang and continually improved the ballad, and the intellectuals who learned it at school, felt a secret affinity between the destiny of the shepherd and that of the Romanian people. The hero of the Myoritic hero managed to find a meaning in his unhappiness by assuming it not as a personal 'historical' event but as a sacramental mystery. He thus imposed a meaning on the absurd itself, responding to unhappiness and death with a nuptial enchantment.

This is not how Romanians, like other peoples of Eastern Europe, reacted to historical invasions and catastrophes. What I have elsewhere called "the terror of history" is precisely the understanding of this fact: even if you are ready to do anything, with all the sacrifices and heroism, you are condemned by history, being at the mercy of invasions (countless barbarian invasions from the end of antiquity to the Middle Ages) or in the neighborhood of great military powers energized by imperialist fanaticism. There is no effective military or political defense against the "terror of history", by the simple fact of the crushing inequality between the invaders and the invaded peoples. This is not to say, of course, that the latter did not defend themselves militarily and politically, and often successfully. But in the end the situation could not be changed. Modest political groups of peasants could not resist the invading masses for long.

A similar situation can be found in other regions of the world and in other historical epochs: let us recall only the Jews and their neighbors at the confluence of military empires. Despair and nihilism could only be responded to by a joyful interpretation of the "terror of history". We have discussed elsewhere the responses of some ancient peoples and of the Jews. s♦ As for the rural populations of Eastern Europe, they

managed to withstand disasters and persecutions mainly thanks to cosmic Christianity

¹⁰ Cf. *Le Mythe de l'Eternel Retour*, Paris, 1949.

to which we have referred above. The conception of a cosmos redeemed by the death and resurrection of the Savior and sanctified by the footsteps of God, Jesus, the Virgin and the saints, allows us to rediscover, even if only sporadically and symbolically, a world filled with the virtues and beauties that the terror and invasions had stripped the historical world of. It is not the place here to show that such a religious conception implies neither pessimism nor passivity. It is a reinterpretation of Christianity, in which historical moments are taken as moments belonging to the Christological drama and, in the end, transfigured.

Such a revalorization of Christianity is a creation that has served as a model or guide for other folkloric creations. The essential element is the ability to cancel out the apparently irremediable consequences of a tragic event, filling them with hitherto unknown elements. We shall never tire of saying that such a process, far from betraying a passive resignation, illustrates on the contrary the unequaled creative power of popular genius. This cosmic Christianity is only allusive and ciphered in the ballad, which is why Dan Botta spoke of 'thraci' and 'Dionysus'. But the phonnula by which the shepherd pretends his happiness into a "Myoritic wedding" is of the same order as all the others that have served to turn an adversity into its opposite.

In conclusion, what our analysis has revealed in particular The importance and continuity of the creative moments in the elaboration of the Miorița, from the rudimentary para-rituals of the carols to the ballad in Alecsandri's version, is evident. Indeed, Alecsandri's verse spread to the villages through school textbooks and sometimes even definitively replaced the local versions (cf. Fochi, p. 547). This is of great significance, as it proves: 1) that the literary perfection of Alec Sandri's version does not contradict the popular aesthetic canon; 2) that the creative process, which began centuries ago, continues to this day; 3) that the more recent revalorizations of the ballad *in* modern Romanian culture are also part of the same creative process and, in a way, prolong it.

Ultimately, if Miorița has conquered a unique place at the two levels of Romanian culture — folklore and culture — it means that the people, as well as intellectuals, recognize in this masterpiece of popular genius their way of existing in the world and the most effective response they can give to destiny, when it shows itself, as so often, hostile and tragic. And this response is each time a new spiritual creation.

Of course, we do not mean to say that Miorița synthesizes all the characteristics of Romanian genius. But the "adhesion" of the whole nation to this folkloric masterpiece is still significant, and a history of Romanian culture cannot be conceived without an exegesis of this solidarity.

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The "weariness of God" after He created the Earth, expresses surprise at one of the aspects revealed by popular belief in a desperate effort to desolate God of the world's imperfections and to defend evil.

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