

# The Branch and the Golden Branch



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### The Golden Branch

Preliminary explanation: "This work is not what is commonly referred to as a study of folklore; Creangă's fairy tales are merely a starting point, a pretext and raw material for strictly appropriate considerations woven into the science of symbols, a traditional discipline characterised as immutable, unanimous, perennial, with its own laws coextensive with those of a meaningful and hierarchical universe, mysterious but not absurd. To possess this science is to possess the Golden Bough and Ariadne's thread, complementary symbols." (p. 5)

The Golden Bough is capable of indicating a path where the road seems absent. Ariadne's thread leaves a mark on the path travelled, preventing its disappearance and implicitly safeguarding the possibility of return.

"But besides the doctrinal aspect, there is also the methodological aspect of the problem. The reader needs a teaching that is at the same time an electric shock. Our main enemy is mental apathy, the ashes formed by the corpses of notions that have been sedimented for centuries. Their layers have stifled in modern man Memory, Anamnesis, Longing, Nostalgia, the origins springing from intellectual intuition." (p. 5)

Fundamentally, myth is neither invention nor human convention. Myth is a Uranian descent, fixed by virtue of the law of inverse analogy in fabulous or real entities. When pure myth is swept from the sky by the simoom of abstractions, what remains is purely quantitative and devoid of explanatory power.

"We have only one alternative: either the sky is a fabric in which eternal hieroglyphs are encoded, the intangible framework of all gestures, arts and crafts; or the firmament crumbles into radioactive dust." (p. 6)

The demythologisation of the world, the disintegration of paradigms and transcendent schemes, leads to an unleashing of energy that culminates in chaos.

The sufficient reason for traditional societies was myth, a form of encryption that was both symbolic and ritualistic.

Ovidiu Bârlea's work, *Poveștile lui Creangă* (The Stories of Creangă), is invaluable for studying the roots of Creangă's fairy tales. This researcher has collected variants of the Humulești stories, whose meanings are hermeneutically complementary. By studying their geographical distribution, researchers have been unable to establish a definite centre for their centrifugal spread.

"Căliman is the name of a real or mythical being and of a mountain in our country, Koloman and Kelemen in Bulgarian, Calman in Hebrew; the Greeks had Kaeonimus, a simple metathesis, and the Etruscans had Lucumon. But on the other side of the world, the ancient island of Borneo regained its ancient name of Kaliman-Tan with its independence. The highest mountain in Africa is Kaliman-Gearo. Klmn are letters that appear in almost all alphabets. In Arabic angelology, it is the name of the Angel in the southern corner of the eight-cornered throne, the Heavenly Throne. How can we establish a filiation, or at least a kinship between these various toponyms and homonyms?

The reality is that, on a horizontal plane, the tribulation of myths wanders in a labyrinth with no exit, it is a ball of thread without Ariadne, a tangle of thread that breaks every time you pull on it. (p. 10)

We must admit for authentic fairy tales the possibility of a monogenesis from the Primordial Tradition, containing the root of the multiplicity of variants. From a traditional point of view, folklore is not a "popular creation", spontaneously produced by the masses. The only popular fact is the survival of symbolic forms. The people fulfil the function of a collective memory, a "lunar" function, denoting a passive character, incapable of initiative and spontaneity. What is thus preserved is a considerable amount of esoteric data

esoteric data.

The degree of consciousness and lucidity of the editors regarding the deep meaning of the myths they put on paper is of secondary importance. The value of myths is intrinsic, independent of the ignorance or knowledge of the editor.

Guénon considers fairy tales to be remnants of lost esoteric traditions. Vasile Lovinescu opts for the possibility of a concomitance between the fairy tale and the initiatory doctrine it maskedly represents: the doctrine is intended for the circle capable of receiving the light directly, while the fairy tale is for the others, capable of seeing only the shadows in Plato's cave.

Coşbuc captures the essence of the fairy tale in Death and Resurrection, in Metamorphosis. This is the defining feature, the central and essential element of all religions.

In the labyrinth of Creangă's work, both the Golden Bough and Ariadne's Thread are needed.

The Golden Bough serves as an emblem of the most important part of J. G. Frazer's work (The Golden Bough) in his limited interpretation of myths, reduced exclusively to the phenomenon of rebirth in nature.

In the Latin world, the primary authority on the Golden Bough is Virgil. He gives instructions on the use of this artefact in the sixth book of the Aeneid.

"But the question arises: why is any active conquest of the luminous heavens, of the heights and higher states of nature, conditioned by a prior descent into darkness, into the abyss, into the lower states of nature? Because death conditions resurrection, because Tod und Verklärung (death and transfiguration) constitute an inseparable pair with consecutive terms." (p. 16)

The descent into Hell resembles, to a certain extent, the "regressum in utero" referred to in psychoanalysis, regression aiming to eliminate harmful residues from the subconscious by bringing them into the light of consciousness. However, in psychoanalysis, the result is to bring to the surface monsters whose normal habitat is darkness. "The larvae blinded by the Golden Bough must be destroyed in hell, not unleashed in our world." (p. 18) The journey into Hell is only effective when guided by the Golden Bough, the pledge of Resurrection and Immortality.

The Golden Bough must be identified with the druidic mistletoe, with the acacia branch in some initiation rites, with the palm branches at Palm Sunday.

To offer Proserpina the Golden Bough, as Virgil says, means to legitimise yourself, to prove to her that you have plunged into Hell for catharsis, willingly, not damned. Then Proserpina becomes Eleusina, the Most Merciful, and the bearer of the golden branch becomes her adopted son.

The Golden Branch is "Uniqueness in multiplicity, the trail that the hound sniffs out in pursuit of sacred prey; more existential and more poignant, it is nostalgia for the beginnings [...]." (p. 19)

Exiled in the midst of a sordid humanity, the Golden Bough can be found in the sorcova worn as a flowering branch, offering to lead us from the end of one year to the first day of the new one.

The Golden Branch, growing on a tree like the mistletoe of the Druids, is also a tree, but without earthly roots, devoid of titanic, asuric, infernal elements. "As I have said before, the Golden Branch is a badge of legitimacy for those who possess it, a seal, a star on the forehead, the thread of continuity between hierarchical states of being. The temporal reflex of this continuity is the perpetuity of a traditional function throughout the centuries." (p. 21)

The shortest route to the centre is the spiral.

The version with the most details and descriptions of the Golden Branch can be found in P. Ispirescu's fairy tale, *The Emperor's Twelve Daughters and the Enchanted Palace*. The fairy tale belongs to the category of myths that recall the cyclical era when a degenerate female priesthood was rampant in the world. This era was brought to an end by Parasu-Rama, the sixth Hindu Avatar. At the same time, he also exterminated the rebellious Kshatriyas, whose deviations were probably related.

Every garden, especially those in fables, is an extension of the Garden of Eden, the natural prototype of all others, because it is the centre of the natural state in which we find ourselves.

The rite suppresses time.

The initiatory achievement, whatever symbolic form of external deeds it may take, is in reality first and foremost a spiritual achievement in the intellectual realm.

The Golden Branch can be found, in connection with the architectural *Magnum Opus*, in another fairy tale by Ispirescu, *The Hunter's Son*, with numerous references to other cyclical enigmas.

We recall that proper aiming is an exceptionally effective method in some traditional sciences for achieving concentration (Ekagra), without which spiritual attainment is inconceivable. The important role played by archery in Zen Buddhist schools is well known. In this discipline, the primary goal is to achieve a level of concentration in which the archer identifies perfectly with the target. At that moment, physical aiming becomes unnecessary, and a point is as easy to hit as a wall." (p. 30)

In Greek mythology, Zeus struck down the Titans and made humans from their ashes. That is why humans are made of Titanic substance, but with an Olympian spark, coming from Zeus. Humans must overcome their Titanic nature through their Olympian nature, according to Orphic teaching.

The elephant symbolically represents priestly power.

The Romanian term "zână", the feminine form of "zeu", designates something higher than "fée" or "fairie", entities that do not exceed the intermediate level of the subtle world.

Nedeia in Romanian fairy tales is an alliteration of India, which, according to Guénon, originally designated a region near the Supreme Centre of the world. In Oltenia, Banat and Țara Hațegului, nedeile are certain moments of pre-Christian celebration. "Nedeia Cetate is the spatialisation, the architecturalisation of an annual, and therefore temporal, celebration. That is why its inhabitants are Great Architects, because they have achieved the cubage of the sphere, or as it is also called, the squaring of the circle. As the Nedeia celebration is at the summer solstice, it means that Nedeia Cetate is a place where it is always Midsummer Night." (p. 35)

The proverb "to grease the axle so that the wheel does not squeak" makes a spiritual reference: the axle is the Pole, the Axle of the World, and to grease it means to put an end to an anomaly, a squeak, a disharmony between the derived tradition and the primordial Tradition.

In the myth of the Flood, Noah sends a dove (centrifugal force - solve) and a raven (centripetal force - coagula) from the ark.

About the fairy tale *The Hunter's Son*: "Leaving the West, the Hunter's Son takes the Golden Branch from the East and brings it back to where he came from. He thus promotes himself as the Great Architect of the East and West. The Golden Branch, broken from the tree of paradise, becomes a tree transplanted into a second paradise. In other words, we are dealing with a readaptation of the Primordial Tradition to

particular cyclical conditions, to the creation of a spiritual centre derived from the supreme one, or to the healing of an old centre that has withered because it has "cut its roots", according to the Kabbalistic expression, that is, it has broken contact with the Supreme Centre. Hence the need to oil the axle so that the wheel does not squeak." (p. 41)

According to traditional thinking, the world of principles is reflected in our phenomenal world, like in a mirror in reverse.

Everything that is transient is by definition symbolic, and everything that does not have sufficient reason within itself is symbolic. The universe is transient, and to realise its symbolism is to realise its roots in the immutable world of ideas.

The universe is an "inverted tree," planting its roots in the sky and spreading its branches across the earth.

"The study of Creangă's fairy tales is exemplary; in other words, his rules and inventions are valid for universal folklore; ethnic character interests us only insofar as it proves that the most immediate, most concrete reality is capable of serving as a starting point for considerations that surpass and transcend it completely." (p. 42)

The mother-in-law with three daughters-in-law (the mother's jealousy)

This fairy tale compels us to look for symbolism in a seemingly sordid story, which is more like a court case.

"The jealousy of the divine mother" is a fact that strikes in all myths of genesis. Creator of worlds and beings, she wants them to be closely dependent on her. The natural centrifugal tendency seems scandalous to her.

What is called Puruṣa-Prakṛiti in India appears as harmony from a transcendent perspective, but on a horizontal plane it appears as a fierce struggle and antagonism. Prakṛiti is unintelligible. She gives birth under the action of Puruṣa's presence, like a woman fertilised in her sleep. The resulting creatures participate equally in her monthly passivity and in the activity of the essential sun. It is natural for them to tend towards their essential pole, but this is only possible to the extent that they break away from their mother.

In Creangă's work, the negative aspect of femininity appears in The Mother-in-Law with Three Daughters-in-Law, in the old woman who is the neighbour of the old man in Punguța cu doi bani, in the old woman and her daughter in The Old Woman's Daughter and the Old Man's Daughter, in the old woman in Stan Pățitul, in the mother of the emperor's daughter and in the sow in The Story of the Pig, in Talpa Iadului (The Sole of Hell) from Ivan Turbincă.

The Mother-in-Law with Three Daughters-in-Law is the nadir of Creangă's mythology, while The Goat with Three Kids is its zenith.

The mother-in-law... was intuitively placed by editors among fairy tales, although no supernatural element transpires from the narrative. In fact, it seems more like a novella, narrating a rural drama, not one of the rarest.

"Mother-in-law" is a kind of rural nickname for the radical foundation, Mulaprakṛiti, as the Hindus call it, of Manifestation, of the Sole of Hell. She lives only for herself and keeps everything she produces compacted within her bosom. She is the original Attraction, Greed, radical Egoism, the driving passion of any elementary life, the inner spring of Nature.

The mother-in-law is Prakṛiti, and the three gunas that emerge from indistinctness are the three sons. They are energised by their wives, Shakti. The youngest daughter-in-law is unquestionably the sattwa guna,

the ascending, luminous tendency.

The sons are "tall as fir trees and strong in virtue but weak in mind," on the side of the root of the world.

Baba really does have a third eye, but it is the sinister inverse of the cyclopean, frontal eye of Eternity, located at the back of his head. In the language of the ancient Hermeticists, it is the "inverse attraction of Nature", the eye of Medusa, which petrifies and freezes the bottom of hell.

Our world does not allow for a closed circle of happiness or misery. Providence sanctions the attempt to establish a perfect circle in manifestation through a Luciferic attempt at separateness.

The third daughter-in-law symbolises the intervention of the Principle in the world. Under the guise of the terror of cataclysm, it is in reality a restoration of balance. "The cruelty shown by the youngest daughter-in-law is healthy, purifying through destruction like a hurricane. It may also be an allusion to the tantric methods of Shivaite rituals, it is the path of Rigour." (p. 51)

"There can be no doubt that the fairies in Romanian traditions personify the three gunas in Hindu tradition. Their sacred dance stirs up the manifestation from its basic numbness, determining the dosage of the descending, ascending and expansive tendencies in indefinitely variable measures, a dosage that is the effective cause of all that exists. Woe to the profane, woe to the unworthy whom they catch at the point of interference of their dance! They suffer like the mother-in-law in our fairy tale, they are disfigured, their mouths, hands and feet are taken away, their minds are taken away. The fairies are not evil; otherwise, why would they also be called the Merciful Ones? They are terrible, which is something else entirely. In reality, the three fairies cannot bear the abjectness of the human condition and, conversely, the human condition cannot bear their transcendent holiness." (pp. 51-52)

They are called Iele. "They" not because they do not have names, but because their names are too transcendent, too dangerous to be uttered by the uninitiated. Romanian tradition has preserved their names: Margalina, Rujalina, Savatina. Marga is found in pearls, and is therefore white (sattva). Ruja is red (rajas). Savatina, or Sabat, is the day of Saturday, of Saturn, whose colour is black (tamas).

The little girl is a personification of Kali's fierce aspect. Her judgement is of overwhelming intensity, a divine violence rushing to break every limit and every obstacle. When she jumps on the old woman's body and tramples it with her feet, she imitates Kali's eternal gesture, playing on Shiva's body.

The myth dates back to a very ancient era, when human sacrifices were still practised. It is reminiscent of a female priesthood, mentioned in many traditions, which apparently originated in Atlantis and was destroyed by Parasu-Rama, the sixth Avatar of Vishnu. In any case, Creangă's fairy tale is tantric, like almost all of his fairy tales. The Dacians sent Zalmoxis a sol, throwing him up and catching him, as he fell, on the tips of their spears. The sacrifice of the old woman takes place at the lower end of the spears. The old woman is crushed, not pierced. The Zalmoxian sacrifice is uranic and essential; that of the old woman is substantial, "ex parte materiae signata quantitate", rigorously symmetrical with the first. Therefore, we believe that the fairy tale reveals ancient prehistoric rituals." (p. 36)

The Goat with Three Kids

The Mother-in-Law with Three Daughters-in-Law and The Goat with Three Kids form a whole. Their continuity is intrinsic, and its visible seal is the number three, in the ternary of the daughters-in-law and that of the kids.

The mother-in-law, being the Devil's Foot, is coextensive with the foundation of worlds and integral manifestations,

of which she constitutes the dark root. The goat is "astral", she is Almatheea, Zeus' nurse on Mount Ida. The continuity between the Mother-in-law and the Goat is ensured by the three gunes.

"The first two fairy tales are the two poles, substantial and essential, between which the rest of Creangă's stories will unfold." (p. 57-58)

The three gunes determine Exaltation, Magnitude and immersion in the Abyss.

Cronos, married to his sister Rhea (Earth), swallows his children. In traditional exegesis, Cronos, ruler of the intellectual sky, swallows his children to renew and transform them, strengthening their Olympian character. Rhea is furious, because her point of view is exclusively maternal. She gives Cronos an emetic, which causes him to vomit his children in order to give them to the world (in relation to the supreme sky, the world is vomited from him).

"It is true that in Creangă's version, it is not shown that the wolf vomited the two older kids, but in other versions, this fact is stated; we quote the most famous of the versions, that of Grimm. However, as the myth is not quantitative, its different versions do not exclude each other, but complement each other as refractions of a single image. Therefore, their collation is permissible, and we can say, contrary to appearances, that the wolf ultimately killed the two older brothers." (p. 59)

The goat, setting out to bring the fruits of heaven, earth and air, sums them up within itself, producing the Cornucopia. It is the Universal Man in the guise of the divine Goat.

"In its essence, the Myth is prototypical, eternal, above space, time and Becoming, which it creates, or more precisely, brings from potential to actuality. It is simultaneously reflected, from top to bottom, in all parts of the world, like the sun in all the waters of the earth or in the myriad facets of a crystal. The correct diagram is that of a central point projecting an innumerable number of rays onto the circumference." (p. 60)

The wolf is the goat's godfather, because there is a kind of complementarity between Paradise and Hell when viewed from a median point, even a kind of interdependence, because Hell is located at the root of the World Tree, and Heaven in its crown. The goat chose the Hell Mole as its godfather because even the highest intellects, in order to survive in our world, must incarnate, must fix themselves. "And even a Seraphim must have a dose of Tamas in him, otherwise he would dissipate his being." (p. 62)

The symbol of the wolf is complex, bivalent. Called Lykos in Greek, which means both wolf and light. The Dacians, called daoi after Strabo, refer to the Phrygian name for wolf: daos. The Dacian banner was a dragon with a wolf's head.

It is possible that the alliance between the goat and the wolf is ancient, dating back to when the beast had a luminous appearance. The wolf becomes gloomy during the degeneration of a cycle that is rushing towards its end. "That an era spanning many millennia has been condensed into a single anecdote should come as no surprise, because, as we have already said, ordinary chronology has no place in myth, which uses condensed time and unfolds in elliptical durations. Two events that follow each other in a fairy tale can sometimes be separated by eons." (p. 63)

The wolf tries to imitate the goat, but cannot. The devil can mimic anything, but not the Logos. Christian hagiography says that the devil can take on the appearance of Christ, but if he speaks, he gives himself away, emitting a rhythmic croak.

The big goat hides foolishly in broad daylight. The second hides under a bush. The third hides high up in the vertical darkness. The wolf is not a being, but a personified fundamental tendency, Greed-Radix, the insatiable monster that devours everything and ultimately devours itself.

The wolf eats those it must eat, either for cosmic sanitation, in the case of elements that do not deserve to survive, or in the case of beings that must be reborn regenerated, that is, the elite of the cycle. It is therefore a basic cosmic agent, voracious and insatiable, which devours and reduces to indistinctness everything that is transitory, the manifested world. The wolf's belly symbolises what Hindus call sandhya (the indistinct critical point that connects two consecutive cycles of existence).

Entering the wolf's belly is what is called "regressum in utero" in modern psychoanalysis, caricatured as psychological trauma. The little kid does not need the wolf's belly, because it takes refuge in another, superior womb, the cave of the dark chimney.

There are countless references to the end of the Dark Age by fire (Revelation XIX, 20 is one example).

The issue of Atlantis and its tradition, in relation to the Hyperborean, northern tradition, which is truly primordial in our cycle of humanity, is crucial to understanding cyclical development. The Vedas affirm the tradition of the primitive habitat of the Hindus, not in the country known as India, but in an extreme northern, polar region. Homer also speaks of Ogyia, "where the revolutions of the Sun are," an enigmatic expression that could have no other meaning than that, there, the sun has a rotational movement around the Zenith, without ever setting.

To reach its current location, the Northern Tradition had to descend from the polar region along a north-south axis, in several stages. It is said that this axis lies on a meridian that divides the habitable lands exactly in two, in terms of surface area, while also crossing the largest expanse of land, and this is the meridian of the Great Pyramid.

The tradition of Atlantis places the "island submerged beneath the waves" in the Atlantic Ocean. Its memory could only survive through the inhabitants who escaped the flood (Noah's Flood).

Hyperborea and Atlantis are not mutually exclusive, the latter being subordinate to the former. There was no competition between them, but rather a rebellion of the Atlantean civilisation, rigorously punished by the flood.

Guénon suggests that, in the traditions newly formed after the migration of a minority from Atlantis on the eve of the disaster, metaphysics would be Hyperborean, while cosmological doctrines would be Atlantean. The Egyptian, Chaldean, Syrian, Phoenician, and Minoan-Aegean civilisations, centred in Crete, are considered to be the result of such a fusion.

"The relationship between the Hyperborean and Atlantean traditions is that of masculine to feminine, of essence to substance." (p. 76)

The symbolic colour of the Hyperborean tradition is White or Green, and that of the Atlantean tradition is Red. In our fairy tales, we find the White Emperor, the Green Emperor and the Red Emperor.

"In conclusion, The Goat with Three Kids is an eschatological fairy tale, structured around the theme of Death and Transfiguration. We were given life on earth to experience them. The rest is vanity." (p. 77)

The bag with two coins

The realities of the higher plane are reflected on a lower plane in the form of symbols, due to the irreversible relationship between Principle and Manifestation. "Ens contingens is conditioned by ens necessarium and, as such, mirrors its possibilities, but like a mirror, in reverse, what is obvious above is encrypted and veiled below, requiring interpretation [...]." (p. 78)

Primordial pairs: Purusha-Prakriti, Plus-Minus, Positive-Negative, Male-Female, Vertical-Horizontal, Sun-Moon, Sky-Earth, etc.

Purusha and Prakriti are present in Romanian fairy tales through the pair "Moşul și Baba" ("once upon a time there was an old man and an old woman"). "If they happen to have children, they come from a pre-existing world; if they have them during the course of the myth, it is by divine command, in the manner of Abraham and Sarah, Deucalion and Pyrrha." (p. 79) The couple is manifested in its purest form in the fairy tale Povestea Porcului (The Story of the Pig), where the elderly couple has a positive value.

The Pig's parents are the adoptive parents of the Avatar, but also of the entire cycle. In The Two-Penny Purse, the couple is divided, hostile, a kind of Manichaeism that divides the universe into antagonistic camps – it is a cyclical disorder. The disorder is much more serious in The Old Woman's Daughter and The Old Man's Daughter. The old woman's tyranny is quasi-permanent until the providential element intervenes, striking out of the blue and where you least expect it, as in any soteriological myth. This group of fairy tales therefore has a common denominator.

"Feminism is not a recent phenomenon, it is the last reflex of an immemorial cancer." (p. 81)

The symbolism of the rooster is eminently solar. Its song in the darkness pierces the night. "Symbols of a luminous or fiery nature, such as the Sun, the Rooster, the Phoenix, and the Pyre, are of Atlantean origin, as are their natural complements, the Moon, the Hen, and the Waters." (p. 82) Hyperborean symbols are taciturn, nocturnal, polar: the wild boar, the swan, the coniferous forest, the bear.

In a transfer of symbols from Hyperborean to Atlantean civilisation, the septenary of the stars of the Great Bear was transferred to the constellation of the Pleiades during the predominance of the Atlantean tradition.

"The degeneration of a cycle is first shown by its intellectual ruin, by the inability to see the fiery signs of the things around us." (p. 83)

The apparent deficiencies of the primordial pair are inevitable and providential tribulations for cyclical becoming. Without them, the cycle would not unfold. Worldly deficiencies are functional, necessary masks, ad hoc imbalances, divisions that prove to be ordeals that move the wheel of the world.

"The myth expresses tantric methods because it emphasises the force aspect of the Principle (vira) and thus proves more suited to the end of the cycle. [...] the tantric awakens through special techniques the Kundalini serpent, which lies dormant coiled at the base of the spine. When it awakens, it climbs along the spine, burning everything in its path, so that it can finally pour into the necessary end in the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, in the crown of the Sahasrara skull, the halo of the saints." (p. 81)

The old man beats his cock just as the yogi awakens the Kundalini, with identical results.

The rooster sets off on an expedition, equal in means and results to the expeditions of the solar heroes in mythology. He is Agni, clearing a wet world, purifying the stagnant swamps, eradicating the snakes and dragons from them. When he returns home, the old man's yard will become the Rooster's Nest, essentially identical to the Phoenix's nest, which is an unquenchable pyre of herbs and incense; it will be a Solar Citadel, in Campanella's words. Let us not forget, however, that this expedition, like all myths, has a dual aspect, macrocosmic and microcosmic, and that its symbols are valid on both planes, external and internal." (p. 84)

The Road of the Rooster is akin to the nature of infernal journeys. The thieving boyar, the negative satanic element, is as necessary in the war for the liberation of transcendent virility as the wolf is in the final triumph of the Goat. The theft of the purse is reminiscent of the emasculation of Uranus, the Heavenly One, by his son Saturn-Kronos, and the fall of his virile attributes to the bottom of the Ocean.

The rooster's determination to recover the stolen purse can be explained by the fact that all the wealth of the world, all its abundance, is a mere illusion without the possession of its "root," the two poles through which the Horn of Plenty pours forth. "Ultimately, the stake in the present fairy tale is the 'wealth' of the goat in the previous fairy tale." (p. 87)

When the boyar takes the purse "without care," he cuts off its roots, amputating it from its natural place. The idea of "cutting off the roots" refers to the symbolism of the "inverted tree," which has its roots upwards, in the Principle itself. It is a typically Promethean operation, that is, what is called *Kufr* (negationism) in Islamic esotericism.

Thrown into the well, the fire rooster exhausts the Water, the radical Wet, cleansing the Borboros at the bottom of the well. The rooster, a positive element, is a mere point in relation to the mass of feminine waters. The point, spatially non-existent, swallows all space, because it is its principle, encompassing its possibilities in indistinctness.

"We must always remember this lack of common measure between the Principle and the world; for this reason, the former consumes the latter." (p. 89)

The rooster's descent into the well is symbolically identical to Harap-Alb's descent into Spân's well.

Thrown into the burning furnace, the rooster balances the element of fire with the element of water, putting into practice the "Art of Balance."

Water and Fire represent the same complementarity in the elemental realm as that of the Sun and Moon, Gold and Silver. In Hermetic symbolism, the upward-pointing triangle represents Fire, while the downward-pointing triangle represents Water. When joined together, they form the six-pointed star, called the Seal of Solomon, also known as the Shield of David, the most sacred symbol of the Jews, which is in fact widespread throughout the world. The Seal of Solomon is the counterpart of the cross, because it represents the complementarity of Active and Passive.

Thrown into the herd of cattle, the rooster represents solar power interacting with the earth element. "It is a descent into the primordial waste at the foundation of the world, at the root of the cosmic Tree; it descends into the promiscuity and original fertility, the enormous offspring of all that exists, the initial mud from which everything that lives and multiplies came forth. In elementary symbolism, the earth settles at the bottom of the waters as mud and as their residue, just as in a vessel of muddy water. It can be said that the rooster has reached the bottom of the universe, from where there can only be an ascent." (pp. 90-91)

Swallowing the yellow coins symbolically represents the liberation of the solar principle in the form of mineral light from the prison of Hades, which is exactly what all solar heroes do in their descent into Hell.

The rooster represents a principle of metamorphosis, for which quantity and volume no longer exist. He adapts to all the conditions of this world precisely because he does not belong. It is that indestructible element in the destructible world, called *Akṣara* in Hindu tradition and *Luz* in Jewish tradition. Sometimes enormous, sometimes reduced to a point, the Rooster is an alternation of plus and minus, of expansion and contraction, it is the heart of the world with its systole and diastole.

According to our folk traditions, the rooster crows at night when it hears the tolling of the sky, that is, in the moments when Non-Time descends into our world, with the help of the rooster.

After recovering the precious talisman, after summing up Water, Fire, Earth, the release of the birds brings to mind the symbol of the element Air. In a higher sense, birds symbolise angelic, supra-formal, divine entities, enslaved to the titanic, telluric nature of the boyar.

The Rooster's nature and mission are different: it is too great for the world, that is, for what is outside the old man's yard, to be able to comprehend it permanently. Its intervention in it is exceptional, occurring only in very serious cases of cyclical disorder. He is not a planet, but a comet, or in other words, he is the sun at the centre of the planetary system, sometimes descending into the world. In other words, the character of the solar rooster is avataric; he is a sole missus, an envoy of the sun. The greatest in heaven becomes the smallest on earth for a short time; it deliberately places itself under the authority of the one who, normally and in normal times, has the mission of guiding the destinies of a world, but who can no longer cope in times of serious disorder and can no longer fulfil his mandate validly and effectively. Then the unexpected and subtle intervention of the avatareous comet takes place." (p. 95)

The hen, sterile like her mistress, is the representative of a deviant female priesthood, rebelling against the supreme spiritual authority in this world: separated from the rooster, the hen lays eggs, but they are unfertilised.

"The hen dies because of the beating. When the Totem, the synthetic Prototype of a species, a tribe, a king, a civilisation dies, it implicitly means, according to the unanimous laws of symbolism, that the civilisation, race, etc., etc. in question have also died, or more precisely, have been erased from history and absorbed into the place where the principles and essence of vanished civilisations are preserved. Once Găinuşa disappeared, the Pleiades also disappeared as the "Pole" of the fallen Atlantean civilisation, deprived of its keystone. And the "place" where the essence of the vanished civilisation is reabsorbed is Moşului's yard, alias the Citadel of the Rooster, the Solar Citadel. (pp. 95-96)

### **The old woman's daughter and the old man's daughter**

The universe comes into being in the force field created by the pair Purusha-Prakriti. In its highest aspect, Prakriti, Nature itself, transfers its power to act to the possibilities of manifestation through the simple act of Purusha's presence. Only on the lower planes of nature do the two terms take on the appearance of sexes.

The primordial duality is embodied by the two first parents, Adam and Eve. In disgraced planes of existence, such as ours, the primordial couple suffers the vicissitudes resulting from the imbalance of the surrounding nature.

"The nature of the relationship between the two factors determines the harmony and good economy, not only of society, but of the entire plane of existence. When the pair appears in the form of opposition and extreme antagonism, it secretes chaos; when it is harmonious, it becomes complementary, with the purpose of spiritual and physical generation, we have a relative balance, as far as possible in the realm of life and death; in an eschatological perspective, that is, at the end of Time, the pair dissolves blissfully into Unity, returning to the Androgyne from which it originated." (p. 98)

The pair Puruṣa-Prakriti are the spiritual parents of humanity. They are the Old Man and the Old Woman from our fairy tales. In their pure state, without physical offspring, we find them in The Two-Penny Purse and The Story of the Pig. When they have children, as in The Old Woman's Daughter and the Old Man's Daughter, these are their Shaktis.

In *The Old Woman's Daughter and the Old Man's Daughter*, the antagonism between the sexes is virulent, and the cyclical moment is very dark. The Old Man is completely enslaved to the "Soles of Hell". The power of the Old Man, intoxicated by asuric influences, will be restored by his Shakti, his messenger to the Solar Citadel.

Both the Old Man and the Old Woman have children from previous marriages. The Old Man's previous companion was Sofia, because only the child of a resident of the Solar Citadel can get there.

Her place was taken by a master, because that is what the cyclical degradation, inevitable and indispensable for final regeneration, demanded. The old man is "widowed" by Sofia, by wisdom, but there is a substitute in front of her, a presence waiting to become effective.

"In her negative role, "Baba", "Hârca" represents the tendency towards subversion, towards dragging into the abyss, towards pulverisation. But if in the process of initiatory realisation, the old woman is "fixed", "mortified", she becomes, without wanting to and without knowing it, the root of the Axial Tree, the foundation of Dom in Mineral Symbolism. Until the moment when she is reabsorbed into the darkness that is positive for her, the old man and his daughter are hunted down, suffering the tribulations of the moon eaten by werewolves." (p. 101)

From a mythical perspective, a spinning peasant woman synthesises the three Fates, Clotho, Laheis and Atropos, the weavers of birth, life and death.

The wicked girl's fork spins Nothingness. It is not laziness, but helplessness. The girl and her mother spin the threads of their own shroud, the garment of Nothingness. "It is the mad hope of the Abyss to weave the Impossible, the work of Penelope and the Danaids, wanting to give substance to what exists only as a vague intention and conspiracy. But if mere intention is not enough to produce Nothingness, it is enough to ravage the world, to plunge it into relative Chaos and to give an appearance, an illusion of consistency to the absurd." (p. 102)

On her return from Holy Sunday, the old man's daughter reaps the fruits of her "cosmic" charity, because it is absolute and without expectation of reward.

"The propagation of an undulatory movement is only possible through an alternating succession of + and -. One might object that, in our fairy tale, + and - are divided into two homogeneous and distinct groups, like the fat cows and the thin cows in Pharaoh's dream." (p. 113)

The same path, retraced by the Old Woman's Daughter, is naturally sinister because of the basic selfishness that generates it. "The lazy girl goes through the same stages of her total inability to look at herself, her congenital sterility." (p. 114) On her return, she is rejected and tantalised by the beings and things she had rejected, which now appear to her in their fullness.

In Sanskrit, Surya is the name of the sun, identical to Syria. The historical land known by this name is only a substitute, an externalisation of the true Syria. Certain naturally privileged earthly "regions" can mirror certain heavenly, stellar "regions".

"So, the glade where Saint Sunday lives is a fixed point, the 'domicile' of the Sun, around which the 'revolutions' of the world, of the seven planets, take place. The Saint is located in the heart, in the centre of the world (more precisely, she is), from where Mercy and Rigour, herds of cattle or dragons pulsate outwards. Solve and Coagula. She is the Mistress of the Keys, of Life and Death, God's representative in our world." (p. 115)

Implored by the old man's daughter, the Saint, depositary of the Primordial tradition, from which all other traditions proceed, renews a covenant with the oppressed and almost extinct tradition. The chest she gives to the girl is the ark of the Covenant. By analogy in reverse, the oldest, ugliest of the chests is also the most precious, richest in content.

"In Ispirescu's version, instead of Holy Sunday, we find Holy Friday. We are in the sphere of

Venus, who is third in order. This reminds us of Dante's supreme heaven, il terzo Cielo, the third Heaven where the Apostle Paul is carried away on his way to Damascus. The symbolic colour of the planet Venus is green, and the importance of this colour in Romanian traditions is well known: "Verde-Împărat" is the eminently beneficial character in fairy tales; on the other hand, the patron saint of Moldova is Saint Paraschiva, St. Friday, the Greek name for the colour green. The planet Venus is the evening and morning star, the bipolarisation of the Midnight Sun, with Saint Sunday being the Midday Sun. So there are no contradictions, only different perspectives." (p. 116)

Saturday is dedicated to Saturn, ruler of the highest of the heavens, the intellectual heaven, whose colour is black, a metaphysical symbol par excellence, representing negativity.

The fact that the girl's path is schematised by the caduceus is also shown by the fact that the stages of this itinerary (the Old House, the Puppy, the Hair, the Fountain, the Oven, Holy Sunday), counting the starting point and the point of arrival, where it takes place, are six in number. Now, six times the serpents of Hermes' caduceus cross each other on the median axis, that is, between the six subtle centres, either of the axis of the great world, or in the microcosm, in the human being, in the six subtle centres symbolically located in the spine and in the frontal point between the eyes. The seventh, being exclusively extracosmic, is indicated by two wings.

The end of the fairy tale is the positive conclusion of one of the countless Amazonian adventures that mark the cycle.

### **Dănilă Prepeleac**

Motto: "Faust: Well, who are you then?"

Mephistopheles: "A part of that power which always wants evil and always does good" (Faust, Part One, Scene III)

The fairy tale consists of two consecutive themes: the disadvantageous exchange and the contest of power and cleverness with the Dragon (the devil). Both themes are strictly and organically linked. There is a cause-and-effect relationship between them. It is natural that deprivation should be followed by fulfilment.

In the peasant myths, Dănilă Prepeleac and Stan Pățitul, the issue of Evil and the pact with the devil is raised.

Satan is compelled to comply with a cosmic order, as he is one of its guardians.

"That is why Goethe's quote requires a 'key' that is not available to many. Mephistopheles is understood when he is surpassed. The definition 'a part of that force which wants evil and creates only good' requires word-by-word meditation. Mephistopheles is only a 'part' of that Force, which is why he speaks of evil and good. If he were 'the Whole', he would use complementary terms completely devoid of any moralistic connotations. Mephisto is 'un pauvre diable', he comes from Ahriman, not Lucifer. For Evil is only a very limited specification of that dark, compacting, then dissolving force, which is the root of the world, without which the Universe is inconceivable. It destroys the destructible, that is, everything that, being born, must die, so that it can be distributed into new forms of life. What would become of the world if corpses did not rot? (pp. 122-123)

"The problem of Evil, of the tendency towards nothingness, is solved in pure metaphysics and in the peasant tales spread across the face of the earth. Simplicity and humour destroy the Wicked One. In these tales, the element of psychological turmoil is almost completely absent. However, Satan's tyranny unfolds in the intermediate realm of the nafs (the psyche), says

Muslim esotericism. The middle world manifests itself through the middle class and its typical expression, psychological literature. However, literature, being "middle," necessarily expresses itself through feelings, which, given their median situation, can never reach a primary truth. It is one of the prejudices of the modern world that psychology leads to truth. In reality, it leads to nothing but literature for literature's sake. We dare to refer to huge examples. Faust would have lost his being if he had not been saved by the "Eternal Feminine," and Ivan Karamazov irretrievably loses his mind. The problem of Evil is posed, but not solved, in these colossal works." (p. 123)

Dănilă Prepelea tackles the terrible and grotesque aspect of the Devil through intellectual means, meditation and reflection.

"[...] by virtue of the law of inverse analogy, the more the fundamental problems of metaphysics are shrouded in the Bengal fire of mythology, in forms that are sometimes trivial and familiar, the greater the distance between the essential pole and the substantial pole of Manifestation, because of the gaping abyss between them. The space between the two brackets is vaster, therefore more comprehensive of truth, enveloping between extremes a broader synthesis of the Universe. The curved line propagated to the extreme meets its beginning and the circle is the all-encompassing image of the world." (pp. 124-125)

Since there is no common measure, there is no complementarity between Dănilă and Stan, on the one hand, and the devil, on the other.

The damaging barter in Dănilă Prepelea shows us that poverty is a necessary and prerequisite condition for spiritual enrichment. Impoverishment is another aspect of the process of regressum in utero.

Impoverishment and enrichment are two phases of a single process, essentially identical to death and resurrection when viewed from an initiatory perspective.

Children, in coded language, signify spiritual posterity and wealth in virtualities.

Dănilă's "recklessness" and "unbalancedness" simply mean that Dănilă was an exile in this world, like all great spiritual figures who sometimes wear the mask of confusion, sometimes of madness, in order to better hide their mission.

The older brother has both feet firmly planted on the ground, indisputably and irrevocably part of this world, while Dănilă, troubled, awkward, helpless, has his centre of gravity in the sky.

"Dănilă's nickname, Prepelea, is noteworthy because it is not a surname, but rather a nickname grafted onto his individual name. A nickname comes from a dimension higher than the family sphere. More precisely, it is a hieronym, an initiatory name, which aggregates Dănilă to a spiritual family, the family of prepeleci, without any connection to his family limitations. And what a name! Prepelea, nickname and axial symbol. Not only are the branches protruding from the stakes horizontal to its verticality, forming a crucial complementarity, but they also indicate the hierarchical multiplicity of states of nature, distributed to the right and left, in front of and behind the axis, thus forming a three-dimensional cross, an eminent and superlative symbol of the Universal Man, whose peasant name is Prepelea. (p. 127)

"For whoever has will be given more, and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away." The gospel's oracle is simple when taken literally. But it becomes miraculously ambiguous when transposed onto the spiritual plane. He who has (on earth) will be given more (also on earth), his poverty in Heaven remaining compensatory; on the contrary, he who has not will have even the little he has taken away, so that through poverty he may become an empty vessel to be filled with the "riches" from beyond, from on High. An initiate is called "faqir" in Arabic, meaning "poor." (p. 128)

In Dănilă's sister-in-law we find the mother-in-law, the wolf, the boyar, the evil old woman, that is, the fierce basic tendency towards greed and sterility, not as an end in itself, but satisfying itself in itself.

Dănilă is the madman, he does things backwards, valuing them from the perspective of the heights.

"Our peasants give admirable names to animals, names that have no Christian connotations or resonance. The usual explanation is that Christian names cannot be profaned by being given to animals. It is said that the gods of traditions that have died out become the demons of the tradition that has taken their place. Would it not be plausible that names such as Duman, Tălmășan, Bălan, Zuzan, and Hormuz (to quote only from Creangă) were the names of ancient Dacian deities, later borne by humans, then 'exiled' to animals after the triumph of Christianity? Proof of this would be the names Hormuz or Urmuz, the God of Good and Light, the eternal antagonist of Ahriman, now given to dogs and oxen. No longer human names, given to animals, peripheral beings in our state of existence, they can instead designate angelic beings or constellations." (p. 129)

Dănilă puts the oxen on a cart "that runs by itself", the cart on a goat, the goat on a goose, the goose on an empty bag, a void available for future abundance, a virtual whirlwind. It remains empty as a quail, empty as a worm, reduced to its primordial geometric scheme. This is the first stage of his realisation, Solve. It is a scattering, which requires to be followed by a gathering.

Dănilă Prepeleac has an admirable saying that is the very formula of cosmic illusion, of the illusory nature of the world (Maya): "Hey!... that's another one! If I am Dănilă Prepeleac, I have lost the oxen; and if I am not him, then I have found a cart... He is Prepeleac, he is not him." A purely Taoist formula, reminiscent of the reflection of Zhuang Zi, one of the fathers of the doctrine who, dreaming himself a butterfly, no longer knew whether he was Zhuang Zi dreaming a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming himself Zhuang Zi.

Dănilă Prepeleac, with his empty bag in his hand, is the hero facing a regressum in utero. We find this regressum in utero in all of Creangă's fairy tales: it is the old woman in The Mother-in-Law with Three Daughters-in-Law, it is the wolf's belly and the pit of fire in The Goat with Three Kids, it is the rooster's stomach in The Two-Penny Purse, it is Dănilă's bag, it is the sack in which Chirică Dracul puts the old woman and takes her away from our world, it is the chest of Saint Dumineci, which swallows and expels herds of cattle and knots of snakes and dragons in The Old Woman's Daughter and the Old Man's Daughter. "Whether it leads to the upper worlds or the lower worlds, up or down, it is the same single womb, in which death and life are successively combined and through which the creature is projected into heaven or expelled into hell. Passing through it is an unshakeable law, which Romanian fairy tales affirm tirelessly, categorically and strongly. Nothing and no one leaves one world to enter another except through the middle, non-spatial point of the letter X." (p. 131)

Nothing in the world sticks to Dănilă. His poverty is spiritual, in the evangelical sense of the word, as the recipient cannot work in the spiritual realm unless he has reduced himself to spiritual purity, identical to *Materia Prima*, the primordial paradisiacal mud from which Adam was made in his original form.

Dănilă Prepeleac begins construction with a cross that he sticks into the ground, thus establishing the central point, designing the edifice from top to bottom, consecrating the fact that it has its roots in heaven. This is only natural, for the foundations of any traditional building are in heaven, just as the roots of the cosmic Tree are also in heaven.

"The building of a church is the architectural expression of the transformation of Chaos into Cosmos, common to all cosmological doctrines; a building that is an imitation of the creation of the world. But Chaos is by definition the "home" of the demon who cannot accept its transformation, equating it with his own demise." (p. 134)

The devil symbolises a tendency towards adversity (Satan means "Adversary").

"The so-called Bogomil legends give countless examples in which the devil, from God's intentional adversary, becomes his collaborator in the creation of the world, and all his gestures of negation are transformed into positive acts: divine cogitation superimposes an intellectual "dimension" on his rebellion that "transmutes" it. A limited and "terre-à-terre" aspect of this truth is trivially expressed by the proverb "make friends with the devil until you cross the bridge", and this fraternity actually consists of a wager: the "bridge" is a narrow gate that connects two worlds, and you bet your fate that you will not fall into the abyss. The devil is a "resistance", to use the modern technical language of an engineer or electrician. He is Archimedes' lever, which helps to climb worlds, to cross seas, provided you do not lose sight of the "Polar Star", the heavenly lever. Even the residual aspect should not be despised. "Cineres ne vilipendas", "do not despise the ashes", the residues, said the old alchemists, because you can transform them into basic salt. Look for gems in "mould, boils and mud". The initiate looks at the sky, but that is precisely why he has a staff with a spike in his hand with which he picks diamonds from the mud without looking down. (p. 135)

Submissive to God, the Adversary is compelled to do Good when he wants to do Evil.

When offered money, does Dănilă abdicate by accepting it? No, because the monastery, enchantingly formulated in conceptual dimensions, is now a reality that the devil cannot perceive, because the intellectual realm is inaccessible to him. The ideal construction of the church forced hell to spill its enslaved gold into the sunlight. The ideal church acted as an emetic. "Dănilă, a hermit, has a priestly character; the simple unfolding of an intellect, the formulation of a sacred geometry, manages to loosen hell's grip on the mineral light." (pp. 136-137)

"[...] the more wittily the story is told, the more serious and mysterious the myth becomes." (p. 137)

There is a dispute over gold that can be defined by the fact that a brute force, the Intellect, adds ineffable elements to it, undetectable to the devil, but irresistible, purely qualitative, which do not destroy brute force through direct combat, but by opposing a void.

"We recall that the 'intellectual' realm is strictly forbidden to the demon. It is what is formed by the axiom of the unintelligibility and incomprehensibility of Prakriti, of Substance. With its nose in the primordial mud, the demon cannot see the stars because it does not even know of their existence.

It is not his purpose or function as the worm of Raw Matter." (p. 137)

The devil takes the mare on his back and circles the pond, a circus performance that has nothing to do with the specific, qualitative aspect of the horse, that of mobile support. That is why he does not see the difference when Dănilă takes the horse between his legs and performs the same feat. "Since qualitative determinations are forbidden and inaccessible to the devil, he cannot perceive those of space, so he is unable to differentiate between carrying the horse on his back and taking it between his legs." (p. 138) Riding backwards, with the mare on his back, the devil respects his nature, whose trait is inversion, the caricature of the natural order.

If Satan circles a pond, Dănilă circles the mirror of the sky reflected in it.

The devil works only through his own power, while Dănilă calls upon the power of beings apparently external to him. As king of creation, man externalised other beings from his own substance when God commanded him to give them "names" in Paradise. Traditional exegesis interprets the biblical quotation to mean that God first created beings as intellections, as Ideas, but only when "spoken" by the Primordial Man, God's lieutenant on earth, did they acquire "nama-rupa", "name and form", that is, the element of consistency and effectiveness. The man who has found his centre identifies with the Axis of the World, "internalises" once again the beings in his environment, who

become his intrinsic attributes.

For Dănilă, the horse's speed, the hare's agility, and the bear's strength are his own recovered powers, specific to his degree of spiritual achievement. In all his contests with the terrible but stupid force of the Abyss, Dănilă uses an initiatory technique well known in all esoteric doctrines, without exception: replacing quantitative force with imaginative force, through deliberate and synthetic concentration. This mental operation reduces physical effort to almost nothing. It involves substituting, through imagination, one thing or action for another in order to produce a magical or extraordinary result.

Jiu-jitsu is an initiatory fighting technique in which the opponent is destroyed by his own force. This force is multiplied by the void it encounters in front of it, so that it overpowers itself. By crossing the line, it destroys itself and its author.

The devil's hooting exhausts the noise, but not the sound, which is a fundamental difference. The true sound, the Word, is inaccessible to him.

Dănilă eradicates the devil's noise at its root with a simple gesture, "striking" the devil with an oak stick on his right temple, then on his left, then in the name of the Father, that is, in the subtle centres, in the vital nodes of noise. Creangă says: "for as much as Dănilă was a hermit, he relied more on the club than on the holy cross," but why then does he make the sign of the cross on his head with the club?

The club is the Venerable One's mallet, identical to Vajra and Thor's hammer, Mjølner, the diamond lightning bolt that makes the Master Architect the master of the power of the Keys.

The mace with which another devil comes is an expression of the force of gravity, of the principle of gravity, violently and madly projected towards the sky. However, it cannot reach the sky in any way, inevitably falling to the ground. Creangă wants to show us that this is an earthly, volcanic principle, exactly the opposite of Zeus' lightning, which descends from above.

About the moon: "In Hindu tradition, the moon is the dwelling place of the Pitris, the ancestors who gave rise to the current human race. They are celebrated in our country during the pre-Christian festival of "Moşii" (Ancestors). They can also be called germs with the same symbolism, given that the moon is considered the principle of the plant kingdom, germs of a subtle nature. If the world contains the seeds of the formal world, then ipso facto, the moon is at the boundary between the formal and informal worlds, a junction between them, an isthmus-gateway (Janua), an inevitable passage. Through this narrow gate and beyond it, only the being who has also reduced himself to a point, in other words, who has recovered his primordial unity, his simplicity, by renouncing all "accidents", who has "impoverished" himself like Dănilă Prepeleac, can pass. Then they can pass through the "eye of the needle". Those who cannot pass through this symbolic point on the moon, unable to renounce their "Name and Form", are "redistributed", projected back into the world of forms, into the world of genesis and death. It is not difficult to understand that the outlook is grim. That is why the moon is, at the same time, janua Coeli, because it is the point of passage to the higher worlds, and janua Inferni, for those who are sent back into Becoming by the "Guardian of the Threshold." (p. 143)

Lucretius: "God gave humans a face so that they could lift it up to Heaven."

According to Romanian traditions, the spots on the moon represent Adam's two sons. Cain carries the body of his murdered brother on his back as punishment. Abel bleeds continuously, drop by drop. When the blood fills the moon to the brim, it will spill onto the earth, burning it and turning it to ashes. "Cain represents Time, Abel represents Space. Time corrodes and grinds everything spatial to atomic dust: buildings, cities, geographical history, mountains and plains. In the end, with nothing left to consume, Time will eat itself, and space, reduced to a point, will instantly recover its three dimensions. It will be

Abel's total, lightning-fast victory. This is what is called in traditional science, "the spatialisation of time" or "squaring the circle." (p. 144)

If Dănilă's brothers from the moon are Cain and Abel, then Dănilă is necessarily the third brother and son of Adam, Seth, who managed to re-enter the earthly Paradise. He is the King of the Grail, a King in rags, as befits our age.

Dănilă's identity with Seth is functional. Our hero is a link in a chain, he holds a very high spiritual position in his generation.

Dănilă must pay a toll, a tithe to this world, in order to pass into the other, just like Făt-Frumos, who cuts off his thigh to feed the vulture that brings him out of hell into the light of day.

The ideal monastery built by Dănilă rises in reality on the surface of the pond, its foundations sunk deep into the mud at the bottom.

"The pact with the devil is in the nature of things only when the devil ceases to be the devil, that is, when he loses his limitations through the sacrament of Unity." (p. 149)

#### The story of Stan Pățitul

This second story is about Dănilă Prepeleac, and deals with the same theme of the Adversary. It is about the "adversity" that lies between the knife and the stone, between the plough and the field, the force that refreshes the worlds through destruction.

"[...] the devil is tricked by the dissolution of his own limitations, in the alchemical sense of the word, by someone smarter than him. But limitation is equivalent to stupidity, and if you strip the devil of his stupidity, what remains of him? Dănilă pulls out the devil's teeth like a virtuoso dentist and plays with him because he possesses the "infallible compass and impenetrable armour" of "Knowledge". He pushes virtuosity to the point where it cannot be surpassed, when it appears light, effortless, like the performance of a ballet dancer or a great acrobat. In reality, it is a dance over the abyss; the force it unleashes is terrifying; in order not to become dizzy, it must be situated at that intellectual point where there are no longer any antinomies, nor that up and down that constitute an abyss." (p. 150)

In Stan Pățitul, we are no longer dealing with the theme of "the devil being tricked", but with a showdown between God and the devil: the demon has violated God's cosmic order and is about to pay for what he has done conscientiously, without any plan to deceive.

The problem is no longer Faustian, nor is there any trace of a pact between Stan and Chiriță.

God rewards Stan's mercy by giving him the devil as a servant, who creates his prosperity.

"Just as at the beginning of the series of fairy tales, The Mother-in-Law with Three Daughters-in-Law and The Goat with Three Kids illuminate the lower and upper extremities of the World Axis, so too, on a smaller scale, Dănilă Prepeleac and Stan Pățitul clarify the lower and upper, illusory and real aspects of Satan, which are resolved in the Demiurge, highlighting his mode of operation, his function in the Universe, without which he could not pass from potency to act." (pp. 151-152)

Dănilă Prepeleac and Stan Pățitul form a unique myth, with a bottom-up translation.

"Before beginning our interpretation of the fairy tale, let us recall Goethe's aphorism, 'Everything that passes is

a symbol." The evidence of the aphorism lies in the truth that nothing that has a beginning and an end can have sufficient reason in itself, because transitory is synonymous with conditioned, therefore having its cause in the unconditioned. Infinity "signifies" itself in the contingent world through limitations. Otherwise, it would be completely inaccessible. These limitations veil and reveal the primary Ideas, from which the finite necessarily proceeds. If we add the fact that ideas are reflected in the world of Necessity in reverse, the most petty and prosaic details can symbolise huge cosmic dramas." (p. 152)

We initially find Stan in the same state as Dănilă after the disadvantageous exchange. The orphan is symbolically complementary to the widow, and these two august prototypes are found, without exception, in all traditions. "When the prototypical orphan, the Primordial Rogue, deigns to settle in the world, most often with a specific mission, hiding his Unity in multiplicity, it is a veiling with the precise purpose of bringing at least his apparent periphery into contact with the environment. The infinite seeks a common measure with the finite." (p. 153)

The final enrichment has an alchemical character in both Dănilă Prepeleac and Stan Pățitul. "The Master of the Philosophical Fire, after reducing himself through 'impoverishment' to the state of raw material, of elementary particle, reaches the final phase of 'Multiplication', when with a 'drachma' of projection dust he transmutes ten thousand drachmas of lead into philosophical gold." (p. 153)

Being "pățit" (suffering), "pățitor" (passionate), Stan will be able to cross without dizziness the abyss of a three-year collaboration with the devil. Every initiatory wanderer "pate" (suffers). On the other hand, "Stan" has a sense of "solidity", of "staniște", antinomic to his nickname. Therefore, "Stan Pățitul" is a name that refers to both "Atma" and "Jivatma".

"Pățitul" can also be a derivation of the name Ipate.

Having had his name changed, Stan is a "dwija", the new name defining his new personality, as in all initiation rites.

Before attempting to clarify the meaning of this enigmatic page, let us establish what is meant by a pact with the devil. It is not as simple as some might imagine. In the immediate and accessible sense, it is a bilateral contract signed by both parties, the devil with an incomprehensible claw, the man with his name written with a pen dipped in his own blood. The devil undertakes to give the signatory a number of years or a lifetime of greater or lesser prosperity, accompanied by magical powers. The consideration is the soul of the person who makes the pact. Naturally, the terms of the pact vary indefinitely; sometimes prosperity is accompanied by regained youth, as seen in the legend of Faust.

This is the solemn, legal aspect of the pact. In reality and in its deeper, subtle and even metaphysical aspects, the pact with the devil is not a rarity; it is an everyday, moment-to-moment event. Good or bad literature on the subject has masked this aspect. Between heaven and earth there is a competition whose battlefield is the human soul, the median term. Therefore, neutrality cannot exist. So, the pact with the forces of Hell is made tacitly and automatically, to the extent that man sacrifices his essential, unitary nature to the Multiplicity whose protagonist is Satan, Principium Individuationis, of Otherness: first of all, Unity is sacrificed, the image and likeness of God, the One. It is primarily a matter of intention, of a more or less conscious impulse. Unity and Multiplicity, although without common measure between them, are implicit and necessary in the Universe.

Man must experience Multiplicity under the sign of Uniqueness, which is the aspect of Uniqueness in the world. Therefore, they must not cultivate multiplicity in the sense of proliferation, that is, in a direction of horizontal expansion, but perpendicular to it, in a vertical "station," to give themselves and the nature they govern a sense of aspiration towards reintegration into the Principle.

It does not take much insight to realise how many people make sacrifices on

the altar of Multiplicity and how many on that of Unity. All those who pay homage (in the feudal sense of the word) to plurality make a tacit pact with the Principium Individuationis and its representative in our world, Satan, the Adversary. The pact is effective, even if it is ignored by those who make it, without the need for the romantic setting of lightning, red light, bat wings and a pen dipped in blood. The pact is inevitable even for the man who claims to take a neutral position. Between the call of heaven and the vertigo of the abyss, the horizontal line is devoid of any consistency. There is no alternative but to fall into Hell or strive for the heights. Because of his central position in the Universe, man is the battlefield of the two extremes of Manifestation. Our lack of adequacy with Unity makes us, in equal measure, accomplices with Otherness, with multiplicity, that is, with that which has no existence in itself. In other words, with that force that religions designate by the name of Satan. The pact thus understood is what is called in Islam Sirk; "Associationism": the attribution of companions to God; by this, the creature denies him, for "the Supreme and Unlikeness Essence", as Muhiyiddin ibn Arabi calls it, suffers no point of reference. However, this "Associationism" is an event of every moment, of every breath, in human life; in Muslim esotericism it is called "Sirk khafi", hidden associationism, because it is unconscious, which does not prevent it from being a tacit pact of the second degree.

Sirk khafi can worsen, becoming conscious associationism, then rebellion and denial, which, in extreme cases, objectifies itself in a conscious pact with Hell, sometimes as a result of "convictions", but in the vast majority of cases, as a result of passionate propensities, with a longing for life for life's sake, seeking satisfactions of this nature or even without them. The best known is Faust's pact.

We mention in passing, the very rare case, at a very high level, when the power represented by Satan is deliberately used to understand it in a hierarchical work of which the devil is a part without realising it, because, being at the root of Manifestation, he is necessarily at the root of any complete work in the Universe. We have examples in the previous fairy tale, Dănilă Prepeleac, and in numerous legends of builders.

In all the cases I have cited, except of course the last one, the devil catches man in a moment of mental obfuscation, of lack of lucidity, when he sells Eternity for the ephemeral." (pp. 156-158)

In Stan Pățitul, it is not man, as usual, but the devil who is caught red-handed in an act of nonconformity. It is not the devil who has Stan in his power, but Stan who has the devil. He must serve man for three years because he did not say Bogdaprosti (God receive), as God commanded and as Stan complied.

When Satan punishes his subordinate, he reduces the appearance of the Adversary to a functional mask, adversity being necessary in the Universe as a lever and foundation. "Stan accepts Satan's subordinate into his service (a curious assonance between Stan and Satan) without a trace of sinfulness, because he gives him the opportunity through his service to redeem his original sin. A simple omission of bogdaprosti attracts a difficult three-year atonement. One can see how the law of concordant actions and reactions works in the universe. The devil's deficiency binds man hand and foot." (pp. 158-159)

This is not your typical bilateral pact. Stan does not hesitate, he has no remorse, because from beginning to end he is blameless.

A first affinity and common ground between the devil and our peasant: both are orphans, with all the significance that this symbolism entails. Stripped of accidents and superstructures, they present themselves to each other as they really are.

Stan and Chirică exchange riddles, with the essentially enchanting role of

break down the boundaries between two beings, so that a third may be born.

Stan is still called Stan, and Chirică is still called Chirică. It seems meaningless, but in fact it expresses the principle of identity: Chirică is still Chirică, Stan is still Stan. "To say that Stan is Stan means that the character has identified his substance with his essence, his individuality with his personality, that the being who can say these things about himself has restructured himself, restored himself to his primordial state. Moreover, in the formula Stan is Stan, the latter Stan cancels out the former through a tautology that is essentially a short circuit. What remains is a handful of ashes.

The person remains nameless, designated as such by a negative determination, which implies a high degree of initiation. The answer to the question implies its annihilation. Essentially, I am without form and name (Rupa and Nama) and this is my name. Being nameless, I have everything, I am still Stan, just as I am still Bran. What is Stan to me, what is Bran to me? Why are you so keen to find out the name of a phantom? (pp. 162-163)

Stan shows, in bird language, from the beginning, that he has figured out who the evening visitor is: "Hey, you little rascal, aren't you baptised by Saint Chirică the Lame, who keeps the devils by the hair?"

Chirică is "Kiriakos", "the Prince".

Ipatos is also a Greek name, Hupatos, "The Highest". It is the epithet of Zeus in Homer (Odyssey, I, 45): "Theon Hupatos" (Iliad, XIX, 258).

Both names insinuate themselves into each other: still Chirică, still Stan – "Chirică tot Ipatos", through the overlapping of the two terms. So "Kyrios Hupatos", "The High Lord", Elelion (in Hebrew), "The God of Melchizedek", "The Priest of the High One".

"Kyrios Hupatos is the real but hidden hero of the fairy tale, two-headed like Janus. Tribulated, patible, exiled on this earth, "suffering", he is "Stan the Suffering" in our world, in his buffoon's exile. Why should we be surprised? He was sometimes a horse dealer, a jester, a buffoon, a juggler, a clown, a court jester. These are some of his favourite disguises." (p. 165)

Riddle: "Over the beam, over the beam, over the red beam, over the red beam, over the crackling beam, over the crackling beam, over the clear beam, over the clear beam, over the yellow beam, over the yellow beam, over the dark beam!"

In this riddle, the household is reduced to its geometric pattern, which transforms it into a sanctuary with three square enclosures with a single centre.

"If the whole episode were not symbolic, why so many ceremonies for hiring a farmhand?" (p. 168)

Stan's prosperity grows astonishingly, because Chirică, the representative of the principle of multiplicity, has found in Stan an echo, a sounding board.

"Creangă, or more precisely the ancient myth to which he gave literary form, raises the issue much more deeply than relatively modern legends, i.e. those brought to Europe after the triumph of Christianity, in which Satan represents exclusively Evil, disputing with God for the soul of man. The alliance between Chirică and Satan is sincere, it is a mythological pact, 'going deeper than the root of Evil' and original sin. It belongs to traditions that are truly metaphysical, older and purer than those of a religious nature." (pp. 168-169)

The adversity between God and the Devil is not that between Good and Evil, except in elementary catechisms. At this level, the two are irreconcilable.

The Stan-Chirică partnership has nothing Faustian about it; neither tries to deceive the other. Neither man is damned, nor is the devil paid.

The fact remains that the Devil helps Stan to get his wife off his back.

"It must be reiterated that Chirică's gesture is in complete continuity with God's initial gesture. The same mythical blood pulses through the same artery. So, if Chirică removes a rib from the woman that is diabolical, i.e. negative, it means, by analogy, that God also removed a negative element from Adam. Eve symbolises this negative element. After the creation of woman, Adam forms a couple with her, which, however, cannot be compared to his original androgyny. The creation of Eve allows Adam to become positive to a certain extent, to recreate a substitute for principle, transmitted to his son Seth and his descendant, Enoch. "Enoch walked with God, then he was no longer seen, because God took him," which is traditionally interpreted to mean that Enoch did not die, like the prophet Elijah and the Evangelist John. (pp. 171-172)

Chirică, continuing what God began in Heaven, can no longer be the devil in the religious sense of the term. Chirică is the Demiurge, a concept eliminated from the Abrahamic scriptures, at least in their literal sense.

In Christianity, woman (the negative element) is rehabilitated by Mary.

The Lord, addressing the Serpent and Eve, says to them: "He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis III, 16). The antagonism between the two is evident, but so is their complementarity: Eve and the Serpent form a single entity.

According to the Talmud, the rib that God took from Adam is one of his ribs, and at the same time a Serpent.

"Eve, the first Pandora," said the ancient Hermeticists.

Stan's total lack of scruples and sense of guilt is remarkable. He had no reason to have them. From the beginning, he knew who he was dealing with and used his collaborator as a force of nature, like steam or electricity, for example.

"The myth has the intellectual purity of a Taoist apologue, under the guise of a fable." (p. 175)

#### The Story of the Pig

This fairy tale is so widespread across the globe that its centre of propagation is impossible to find. Practically speaking, it can be found from Europe to India, from Indonesia to Africa and America.

"More precisely, since myth is at the root of time and space, it is futile, a contradiction in terms, to seek its spatial and temporal origin. Myth is coextensive with the fundamental root of worlds, and therefore participates in their harmony, their 'order'. The word 'order' has the same root as 'rite'. This means that it did not burst into our world like a flood, but like a rhyming incantation.

And indeed, in its highest form, myth is an "incantation" that actualises the fundamental myth in our world of becoming, with necessary soteriological effects. And the adaptation of Silence (myth, muelo, to be silent, mute – have the same root) to the discursive form could only be elaborated in sanctuaries, by beings highly qualified for this adaptation; therefore, nothing less popular than myth can be imagined." (p. 207)

The theme of deviant femininity reappears, particularly virulent in the second half of the current human cycle. However, the malevolence of deviant femininity is mortified in fairy tales by a femininity

transcendent. The conclusion of Creangă's stories in which deviant femininity appears always involves its eradication, thus restoring the disturbed order.

Dănilă Prepeleac defeats hell, which is always located in the substantial half of the world. Stan Păițitul works with him because he is "Păițit" and knows its laws. Ivan Turbincă is swept away from ruling the world, being unworthy of it, with the back of God's hand.

The story of the Pig is the story of the sacrificial tribulations of the third Avatar of Vishnu, Sweta Varaha, the White Boar, who gave his name to his Shakti, Varahi, the spiritual centre of the world, the repository of Sanatana Dharma. The White Boar gave his name not only to the Supreme Centre, but also to the entire Kalpa, that is, the supercycle composed of fourteen Manvantaras, which is called Sri Sweta Varaha, "Kalpa of the Senior White Boar". The pig in our story is in fact the Boar, Lord of the Monastery of Incense (i.e. Alba).

The root Var, as the name for wild boar, is found in Nordic languages in the form of Bor (from which the English Boar and the German Eber derive). Its equivalent in Romanian is Boreu. The land of Hyperborean tradition is Borea, or the Land of the Wild Boar. In Romania, the north wind is called Borilă.

In ancient times, the wild boar represented the constellation that later became the "Great Bear" (also called Libra).

The couple in The Story of the Pig is the couple established at the beginning of time, the parents of the Evils. "They represent Saturnus Senex, Cronos, the dispenser of the ages, gloomy like him. It is a primordial sigzygy, which should not be confused with the Adam-Eve couple, the generators of humanity. As I said before, the senile pair watches over the cycle, keeping themselves outside it, not generating it. They manage its becoming through an action of perpetual but somewhat distant presence. If this pair is not represented by two young people, it is to remove any idea of proliferation, of generation. The action of simple presence must be suggested by the peripheral location of the pair. It is the Puruṣa-Prakṛiti couple, in human form, unmanifested in the cycle; they condition it by protecting it, leading it along paths unknown to other people." (p. 213)

The starting point of the fairy tale is the primordial sterile couple. Applying the law of inverse analogy, precisely because it is sterile on a physical level, the couple is fertile on a spiritual level. They create the invisible seeds of our visible world.

The avatars of early humanity did not have human form, but appeared as Fish (Natsya), Lion (Simha), Boar (Varaha), and it is the latter that is the subject of this fairy tale.

The old man sets out to find "either a man, a snake, or any other animal." The supreme search is one in which you do not know exactly what you are looking for and, above all, where to look.

The sow is an animal expression of the primordial mud, identified with the borboros. Together with her piglets, she forms an infernal projection of the Zodiac, because those above must have their mirror image below.

Through reverse mirroring, the one below is a mangy and muddy piglet, while above is the White Boar, with his home in Ursa Major.

"There is another perspective on the Myth, in which the Principle takes on the guise of abjection, in order to have a common measure with the world into which it has descended, so that, through momentary similarity, it can lure it and pull it up like a fishhook. This is one of the reasons why Jesus Christ, the Kings of the Grail, and Petru Rareș appear as fishermen." (p. 215)

In the Vishnu Purana, it is said that Vishnu, the conservative, restorative and healing principle of the worlds, transformed himself in illo tempore into a pig, stuck in mud up to his ears. At that time, the Universe was threatened with destruction. The god did not want to leave the mud, where he felt comfortable. The gods begged him in vain to leave the mud and return to heaven, which was also threatened with collapse. Then Shiva, the god of metamorphosis and positive destruction, pierced him with the spear of Knowledge. Vishnu burst out laughing as he died and turned into the White Boar, Sweta Varaha. He then manifests himself in the world as the third Avatar, saving it from danger. "These similarities leave no doubt that the Story of the Pig is the story of the third Avatar. This is what the sovereign traditions convey to the peasant of Humulești." (p. 216)

Făt-Frumos is trapped in a magic circle, from which he cannot escape without outside help. The old man's intervention is as providential as that of Shiva in the Vishnu Purana. The old man breaks the zodiacal circle, thwarting Hell's vain and illusory attempt to simulate a circle in the world of change and vicissitudes.

The old man, the breeder of the White Boar, is reminiscent of Joseph, who adopted the infant Jesus. Through this element, the Gospel is linked to the Primordial Tradition.

The situation of the wild boar cub in the mud is reminiscent of the Psalmist's verse: "The stone at the top of the Corner lies in the way, and the workers do not know what to do with it."

"In myths, gods become men so that men can become gods." (p. 219)

The emperor wants to marry off his daughter, but between the girl and her potential suitor there is a gap, a narrow path, which can only be crossed by a bridge, an isthmus, and this last detail provides the key to the myth. This bridge is reminiscent of the ladder in Jacob's dream, along which angels ascend and descend. The bridge is the flat horizontal projection of Jacob's ladder. "Our fairy tale is not about the establishment of a secondary spiritual centre, an adaptation of the Primordial Tradition, [...]: it is about the Supreme Centre itself, which is called Varahi, and Varaha is the name of the third Avatar of Vishnu, who descended in the form of the White Boar. Readers unfamiliar with traditional disciplines may not realise the crucial importance of the fact that a Moldovan peasant storyteller mentions these fundamental things, when there can be no question of Hindu influence." (p. 221)

The hut of the Old Man and the Old Woman, transformed into a palace, becomes central to the emperor's palace: the girl comes to her groom on the bridge, and not the other way around.

The piglet is the "Bridge Builder," Pontifex Maximus between the two worlds. The Roman emperors and the Pope also bear the same title, Pontifex Maximus.

The Supreme Pontiff, in the highest sense, is Manu, the primordial and eternal legislator of the cycle, connecting Heaven and Earth. Făt-Frumos-Mistrețul embodies the function of Manu.

The Supreme Centre is known by various names: Agarthā (The Inviolable), Ciang-Sambala (Northern Sambala), Salem (Peace), Luz (Almond), Paradesa (the Supreme Land) from which Pardos and Paradis, Tula (the Balance), Varahi (the Land of the Boar), the Rifei Mountains, Monsalvat, Mount Qaf, Meru. In our country: The Other Realm, The Mouth of Heaven, The Land of the Rohmans, The Land of the Blajins, Youth without Old Age and Life without Death, The Green Kingdom, The White Island, today The Island of Serpents, Nedeia Fortress, The Incense Monastery.

The boar is the priest-king, or in Christian terminology, a King-Magus.

"The Supreme Point, precisely because it lies beyond any conceivable duality and is purely qualitative, has had different locations and a journey from its purely northern-polar habitat to the south and then

towards the east. It is interesting that there is almost general consensus among contemporary historians regarding the country of origin of the Aryans; it is no longer considered to be the centre of Asia, as it was in the 19th century, but rather a region north of the lower course of the Danube, called Histru in Antiquity, stretching to the Baltic, from where the Celts radiated westward, the Thracians and Proto-Elenians southward, and the Hittites toward Asia Minor, through the Hellespont and across the Caucasus, toward Turkestan, Iran, and present-day India. This formidable North-South, West-East migration naturally had stops along the way, and these stages were the locations of the Supreme Centre. However, this migration could only change its North-South direction to West-East in ancient Dacia and its surroundings, because it flowed north of the Black Sea and the Caucasus, in the area of the 45th parallel, which is equidistant between the Pole and the Equator. I said that one of the most important names of the Supreme Centre is "The Land of the Boar", Varahi; we recall Constantin Giurescu's observation that, according to the Peutinger Table, Vrancea was formerly called Varanha, The Land of the Boar, the place where the sacrifice of the shepherd from Miorița took place." (p. 223)

All versions of a myth come together as a whole. The story of the Pig is also known to Romanians in the versions by Tudor Pamfile and Petre Ispirescu. In Ispirescu's fairy tale, the "singularius" (sanglier) character of the wild boar, who lives in the heart of the forest, is better highlighted.

The advice that the emperor's daughter receives from her father is manly, implying self-control, respect and a sense of mystery: "My daughter! [...] Do not let sin push you to do him any harm, lest you suffer misfortune! For as I see it, this man, or whatever he may be, has great power. And it must be something beyond our understanding, since he has done things beyond human power!"

My mother's advice is purely worldly, dominated by social concerns, snobbery, and conventionalism: "My dear, what kind of life will you lead if you cannot go out in public with your husband? My advice to you is this: always keep the fire burning brightly in the stove, and when your husband falls asleep, take the pigskin and throw it into the fire to burn, and then you will be rid of him."

What happened to the emperor's daughter was what happened to Elsa with Lohengrin, the son of Parsifal, King of the Grail. A virulently evil female influence causes the empress to stray from the right path. The expulsion of an avatar from the earth is a cyclical misfortune.

"Why is the advice to destroy the filthy skin in which our prisoner is imprisoned nevertheless disastrous? First, because it is too early; second, because in our world, far removed from the Principle, he can only survive in this environment by wearing the garment of abjection, by virtue of the principle of inverse analogy. Agni must take on the skin of a pig in order to have a minimum of common ground with the surrounding world. He is a pig for exactly the same reason that, in The Face of the Old Woman and the Face of the Old Man, enormous riches lie hidden in the ugliest chest." (p. 228)

The reverse analogy requires that the incorruptible diamond at the top of the celestial vault cannot appear, cannot be effective in our world, except under a corruptible, filthy and tribulation-ridden appearance.

By day, the avatar obeys the sublunary law; by night, he is the Midnight Sun, which only the initiated can see in the shadows of the night.

The emperor's wife, trapped in iron along with the seed she carries within her, is Anima Mundi enslaved in the Iron Age, in the literal sense of the word, for cycle means sky in Greek.

"The golden age is long gone, existing only as a seed, as potentiality in the maternal womb of Time. The son of the third Avatar, the White Boar, for now

potentiality, will be born at the end of the cycle as the tenth Avatar, through the saving gesture of his father, who will break the iron circle that surrounds the womb of the redeemed woman. Until then, the golden seed is enslaved in the dark matrix of the Iron Age. Until then, the abandoned and wandering wife is the symbolic "Widow" of all initiations, whose memory has been preserved by the Freemasons, who call themselves "Sons of the Widow". She is Isis searching for Osiris, Mary searching for Jesus in our carols, Aphrodite searching for Adonis, mortally wounded by Ares, Ishtar searching for Tammuz." (p. 230)

The young empress burned the pigskin, Prince Charming's garment, and as a reaction she is seen dressed in an iron circle, iron shoes and the staff of exile, which she must wear out through use.

The pilgrimage to her true self leads the emperor's daughter to the Monastery of Incense.

"The disjunction between the two *hagialâcuri*, the external and the internal, caused incomparable qualities of intuition turned into instinct to wither away in humans. If we want to know what people were like in long-gone cycles, we must imagine them as beings in whom instincts became intellects and intellects became instincts." (p. 232)

In The Story of the Pig, the female "Ego" sets out in search of the male "Self". This is a direct sign of the Hyperborean derivation of this theme, an ancient message from the first Tradition in the cycle, after which the others are only adaptations.

The Empress must traverse the planetary circles, of which Creangă mentions three, the orbits of Mercury, Venus and the Sun, thus in popular form: St. Wednesday, St. Friday, St. Sunday.

St. Wednesday gives the emperor's daughter a golden fork that spins golden threads on its own, an axial symbol of the Caduceus.

From each of the three saints, the wanderer also receives a piece of bread and a glass of wine to help her survive. The Eucharistic food par excellence.

The golden spindle, received from St. Friday, is a gift that rigorously complements the golden fork, because it spins the threads spun by the latter. The Monastery of Incense is at the centre of that Dantean and Pauline "terzo cielo".

The Monastery of Incense is at the centre of that Dantean and Pauline "terzo cielo". Any initiatory centre is represented by three protective enclosures, either circular or rectangular. The transition from the circumference of the circle to the centre is usually symbolised in fairy tales either by flying or by jumping into the abyss.

The lame lark, the only one who knows the way to the Incense Monastery, says: "Only there did my longing carry me, that I broke my leg." The answer is admirable, because the White Incense Monastery can only be reached through an intense, vital, existential aspiration towards it.

Holy Sunday gives the emperor's daughter a hen with golden chicks. The tray is a horizontal section of the sphere of the world. The hen shows the cyclical moment, the sequence of human history whose destiny was spun by the wife of the Boar. "It is known that this name, Hen with Chicks, Hen, is the popular name of the Pleiades constellation, but it is less known that the Pleiades, the daughters of Atlas, became, at a cyclical moment, namely during the Atlantean period, the zodiacal substitute for the Big Dipper, the Polar constellation.

"The dependence of man and all nature on the Principle and the interdependence of phenomena in the cosmos are the two fundamental laws of traditional metaphysics. They have their origin and explanation in the divine Unity and in the homogeneity of Nature. Any spiritual change,

religious and social cycles in the human cycle must be synchronised with similar and analogous changes in the Universe, manifesting themselves in the predominance, at certain cyclical moments, of the symbolism of the directions of space, strictly linked to the symbolism of time, which also changes: the beginning of the year, the celestial location of the Solstices and Equinoxes, formerly polar, now zodiacal, the projection of these celestial locations on earth, which seems the most extraordinary thing, but in fact is not when we know the solidarity of the earth with the Sky, hence the displacement of the spiritual axis of the world, of the Polar Mountain, in different geographical regions. Man, having sufficient reason and ontological roots in the universal, finds his most important symbols in the celestial vault, sensibiliis Deus, the Holy Book par excellence, from which the other sacred books of humanity derive, through adaptation. (pp. 237-238)

When the Hyperborean Primordial Tradition and the Supreme Centre became occult, their accessible representatives were other traditions, derived directly from it. One was that of the Atlantean civilisation, whose symbolism was no longer polar and solstice-based, but solar and equinoctial.

Correspondences between spatial directions and races:

- North (Winter), childhood, white race, water;
- East (Spring), youth, yellow race, air;
- South (Summer), maturity, black race, fire;
- West (Autumn), old age, red race, earth.

The Atlantean civilisation belonged to the red race, and its last descendants are the American Indians. The period of Atlantean civilisation's dominance lasted one Platonic Great Year (12,960 years), until the catastrophe mentioned by Plato in *Critias* and *Timaeus*, and also in Genesis, Noah's flood being the same as the cataclysm that submerged Atlantis.

The collapse of Atlantean civilisation was primarily due to a deviant female priesthood, complicit in a revolt of warriors against the priestly caste.

"What do we see in our fairy tale? The young Empress makes a transfer, exactly the opposite of the one mentioned above, taking the Pleiades, the Hen with the Golden Chicks, from Holy Sunday, Regent of Atlantis (because of the solar nature of Sunday) to the Incense Monastery, the palace of the White Boar (and Boar was the name of the constellation now called Ursa Major)." (p. 239) This reintegration operation could only have taken place in the last moments before the collapse of Atlantis.

The entire story refers to the resorption of the secondary Atlantean tradition into the Primordial Tradition, ruled by the White Boar.

"If, subsidiarily, we corroborate the episode with the hierogamy of Harap-Alb with the daughter of the Red Emperor, the presumption becomes certainty, for the Atlantean civilisation was that of the red race. Moreover, essentially, the Story of the Pig and Harap-Alb represent two complementary sides of the same myth: in the first, the girl searches for the White Boar, in the second, the White Boar kidnaps the daughter of the Red Emperor, the quintessence of the Red Kingdom. One might say that Creangă wanted to consider centripetal and centrifugal forces, in a double reverse movement, at this crucial moment in human history, the most important in twelve thousand years. (p. 240)

A nocturnal Creangă, in the style of a fable chronicle: "And so they travelled for another year, with great difficulty and hardship, crossing countless countries and seas and through forests and deserts so terrifying that they were haunted by venomous vipers, the basilisk with its enchanting eyes, otters with twenty-four heads and countless other terrifying insects and vermin, which stood with their mouths open, waiting only to swallow them; whose greed, cunning and wickedness cannot be described in human language."

The mountain has a more "primordial" character than the cave, as it is visible from the outside, while the cave is, on the contrary, an essentially hidden and closed place. The representation of the spiritual centre by the mountain corresponds precisely to the original period of terrestrial humanity, in which truth (Sat) is fully accessible to all (hence the name "Satya Yuga" (Golden Age), in which the top of the mountain is then Satya-loka or "the place of Truth"; but when, as a result of the downward cycle, this Truth was only available to a more or less restricted elite (which corresponds to the beginning of initiation, understood in its strictest sense) and became hidden from the majority of people, the cave was a closer symbol for the spiritual centre and therefore for the initiatory sanctuaries that are its images. Through such a change, the centre did not leave the mountain, but only withdrew from the summit to the interior.

Creangă's description of the cave as "nothing less than paradise!" corroborates R. Guénon's assertion when he presents the cave as illuminated inside, while outside "darkness reigns," the profane world being assimilated with "the darkness outside."

In traditional teaching, any food is necessarily susceptible to becoming a Eucharist. The substance that serves as the basis for this Eucharist may indicate the origin of the rite.

Before entering the Incense Monastery, iron shoes and iron staffs are completely worn out and abandoned. "From a macrocosmic point of view, this indicates the total demise of the Dark Age, also known as the Iron Age." (p. 253)

One may ask: what is the Devil's Foot doing in the Incense Monastery? But what is the Serpent doing in Paradise? The Devil's Foot is precisely the Root of Heaven, it is Mula-Prakriti (the Root Goddess), the infernal aspect of Prakriti.

"The White Boar unites in his person the dual Priestly and Royal Power, in its unique Principle, as preserved in the Centre of the world, however this may be understood, symbolically and literally or both together. As the head of this centre and identified with it, Făt-Frumos is the master of Contemplation and Action. Significant in this regard is the mention in the fairy tale that, before drinking the cup of milk in the evening, a Eucharistic and therefore priestly gesture, he goes hunting during the day, a chivalrous gesture. He appears in his dual function, spiritual and warrior." (p. 260)

"There is a well-known linguistic phenomenon whereby a word loses or gains the letter r as a way of softening or strengthening its meaning. Trac, meaning 'dragon', becomes dac, the Phoenician god Dagon is a fish god; he was Dragon, Balaur, in another guise." (p. 260)

The sole of Hell puts sleep in milk: a time will come when even the Eucharistic substance, the sustainer of the world, will be intoxicated. The sleep of Făt-Frumos indicates the numbness of the Centre of the World.

Făt-Frumos, binding and unbinding his wife with an iron circle, shows himself to be the perfect master of the power of the Keys, of Potestas ligandi et deligandi, which is natural given his function as Ciakravarti (Spinner of the Worlds).

"It is worth noting a very important complementarity and exchange of attributes, similar to the Far Eastern Yin-Yang: the man is the master of the cup, a feminine symbol; the woman is the mistress of the Caduceus, a masculine symbol. This exchange of attributes makes the pair an Androgyne, Janus-lana." (p. 265)

The fairy tale illustrates very well the impossibility of neutrality in relation to the Transcendent. Those who lack this aspiration are necessarily swallowed up by Hell, by the Abyss. The Empress Mother represents the bourgeois, external line, convinced that she is working for the good of her daughter, when in reality she is walking on the gaping mouth of the Abyss.

The sole of Hell cannot be destroyed, because its disappearance would also bring about the disappearance of the Universe. Can a tree survive without roots? It is restored to its natural state of atomic dust, of discontinuous quantity. When it is in its place, the old woman represents a positive element, because she merges with the Principle of perceptibility; she makes possible the incarnation of spiritual principles in the manifested world. She is the alchemical base salt." (p. 267)

Unable to perceive the metaphysical level, she tries to capture Vishnu (the fairy tale explains that she wanted to marry one of her daughters to Prince Charming). Vishnu apparently allows himself to be tricked, because only in this way could he descend to the bottom of the Abyss, grafting himself onto one of the roots of the world. Vishnu takes on the guise of abjection in order to transfigure abjection.

The child of the two represents the Golden Age of the new Manvantara, which shows that our fairy tale has prophetic virtues.

"To conclude these considerations, a legitimate and natural question arises: is our fairy tale not the Hyperborean prototype of the Grail cycle, in its pure form, without diversions and additions that tarnish the Myth, distracting attention, especially without the very late, sometimes incongruous Christian infiltrations? (p. 269)

#### Harap-Alb

A fairy tale of daunting complexity, a veritable folkloric Capernaum, as some researchers say. However, there is no point in considering the insinuation that there was an artificial merging of two or three different fairy tales.

The myth of Harap-Alb, which took place in illo tempore, has the natural organicity of secondary causes.

Warning regarding the methodology of hermeneutic analysis: "Therefore, if the fairy tale of Harap-Alb collects esoteric vestiges from all over the world in its structure, it is not to serve as a cemetery and museum for them, but because it has synthetic virtues and sources of living water that revive them, in view of the great mystery at the end of the Age, when the wheel of the world will stop and time will be transposed into simultaneity. That is why digressions are imperative in a study of this fairy tale. Only then will the diamond sparkle through all its facets. Although multiple, the initiatory data in the fairy tale are only the endpoints of supposedly known doctrines, we will try to trace their genealogy to a small extent. (p. 271)

The setting of the fairy tale: a world fallen into chaos, virtually ruled by two principles, subordinate to each other: the Green Emperor and the King, the older and younger brothers. The connection between the two is weakened because of the disorder outside. The object of Harap-Alb's quest will be to restore the organicity of the world.

In geometric symbolism, the King is at the circumference of the circle, the Green Emperor in the centre. This is how the two brothers, sons of Shiva, are represented in Hindu tradition, Skanda the warrior protecting Ganesha's meditation. The symbolic colour of the latter is green.

The superior, the Green Emperor, has three daughters, while the inferior, the King, has three sons. As in the Yin-Yang symbol, each half of the circle has a dot inside it in the colour of the other half. "This is a crucial observation, I repeat, because the hero will soon acquire the Romanian name of Yin-Yang, Harap-Alb, realising his full potential. In other words, our hero will eventually become both Crai and Verde-Împărat, Skanda and Ganesha, meaning that their father, Shiva, the common principle of action and contemplation, will be Janus Bifrons, abolishing the initial duality that frames the fairy tale and radically vitiates its atmosphere." (p. 273)

The macrocosmic Harap-Alb, lethargic, reduced to a vegetative state, torpid from cyclical disorder, will be "cleansed" by the microcosmic Harap-Alb, through his major initiatory achievement. Man is the regent and centre of the plane of existence in which he finds himself, and his vicissitudes, his positive and negative achievements, are reflected in nature.

From a profane perspective, the three daughters of the Green Emperor have no purpose in the fairy tale. We only know that they exist without seeing their usefulness. They are the triple Shakti of the Green Emperor, they are the powers of their father, constituting a virginal priesthood.

The mention of "great wars" may be an indication that the state of environmental decay could have been the result of disorder caused by a revolt and a rift between the warrior caste (Kshatriya) and the priestly caste (Brahmins), which is mentioned in the Hindu Puranas and which has often been repeated throughout history, with its inevitable result, anarchy. With the normal hierarchical relationship destroyed and the two castes separated, each exacerbates its own shortcomings: the priestly power, deprived of the "outer covering" (to use the technical term) of the warriors, becomes ineffective, like a mollusc without its shell; and the power of the warriors, uncontrolled by a higher principle, becomes "titanic", compacts within itself, collapses, and crumbles into indefinite fragments. Thus, anarchy ensues. The place of intellect is usurped by affectivity, love and hate, the respective initiation taking on a strong sentimental "tinge". The active qualities of warriors. No longer gravitating around an immobile, intellectual engine, they project their gyroscopic force around a void, around an activity that lives only for itself, constituting not a circular movement like light, but a whirlpool. (pp. 274-275)

The King puts obstacles in the way of his sons when they want to reach the Green Emperor. This behaviour is equivalent to a refusal, an attitude that is not unrelated to the "geology of the mother", a basic behaviour identical to that of the mother-in-law with three daughters-in-law, who also does not want to release the boys. On the other hand, the King's egocentricity becomes a powerful means of selection, reinforcement and refinement.

The Prince, with his bearskin coat, belongs to the northern warrior class.

Harap-Alb is Mitrețul Alb, identical to the hero of the fairy tale Povestea Porcului (The Story of the Pig), master of the Incense Monastery.

"At the point of transition to another plane of existence, the atmosphere becomes sensitive under the guise of a symbolic entity called the 'Guardian of the Threshold'. In "Harap-Alb," it takes the form of a bear, summarising in itself all the limiting conditions that the hero wants to overcome. More than a being, the "Guardian of the Threshold" is a nightmare. In other fairy tales, he appears at three successive bridges, made of copper, silver, and gold, as a wolf, a lion, and a twelve-headed dragon. Similarly, Dante encounters the guardian at the beginning of his initiatory journey as a lion, a lynx, and a she-wolf." (p. 277)

A stooped old woman begs for alms from Harap-Alb: "Perhaps you would take pity on one like me?" said the old woman. Hey, enlightened prince! The One Above bestows His gifts even upon the helpless; it seems that this is how His Holiness pleases. Do not look at me as a hunchbacked and feeble woman, but by the power given to me, I know in advance what the powerful of the earth are planning, and I often laugh heartily at their ignorance and weakness. I know you find it hard to believe, but may God protect you from temptation! For I have seen much in the many bitter years I have carried on my shoulders. Oh! Little Prince! Believe me, if you had my power, you would rule over countries and seas, you would give the earth to those who deserve it, you would carry this world on your fingers, and everything would be according to your will. But look what this bent and helpless old woman is saying! Forgive me, Lord, for I do not know what came out of my mouth! Enlightened Prince, have mercy on this old woman and give her something!" It is one of the strangest texts in Creangă's work and in Romanian literature. The old beggar woman identifies herself with the immovable centre around which the skein of centuries and the whirlwind of cycles are wound. E

the feminine aspect of Manu.

Holy Sunday appears as a beggar, because the fallen human race can only connect with the solar Archangel through his humble aspects, the only possible points of contact. In Muslim esotericism, it is said that the spiritual Pole of the age appears among people as a beggar or a travelling merchant. "We repeat: the aspect of abjection of the great spiritual entities is deliberately taken up, without sinfulness, whereas in ordinary people it is a natural filth, a symptomatic eczema." (p. 280)

The way Creangă presents Saint Sunday goes far beyond folklore, and we are obliged to ask ourselves what Creangă knew.

The saint teaches him to ask his father for "the horse, the weapons and the clothes he wore as a groom," which shows that at the foundation of a traditional civilisation there is a hierogamy, and its renewal is achieved through another hierogamy.

Revealing herself as the Angel of Light (by ascending to heaven), Saint Sunday initiates our hero, who becomes her adopted son. A blessing, an initiation takes place.

The theme of the rejuvenation and regeneration of the mischievous horse is one of the most frequent and important in Romanian fairy tales. It precedes, conditions, and is in solidarity with the regeneration, with the palingenesis of the hero. The horse is an incarnation of Shakti, the aspect of power of the divinity.

"Both Saint Dumineca and the Horse are solar in nature, the latter emanating from the former, as a specification, as a dynamis. The horse is a gift from the Saint. Both undergo a metamorphosis, transforming from an ugly appearance to a radiant one. Again, the dual insinuation in the world. That is why both episodes are rigorously solidary and consecutive." (p. 283)

The way in which the horse is "awakened" from its numbness, by ingesting fire and receiving blows to the head with the bridle, is reminiscent of yogic practices aimed at awakening the power of the Kundalini serpent, an immanent aspect of Maha-Shakti, coiled and dormant at the base of the spine, in the root centre. "The yogi, through asceticism and special discipline, transforms his breath into rolls of fire, then with it, concentrated in whips and spearheads, aims at the dragon's head in its lair. The beast awakens, but the Yogi-hero puts the bridle in its mouth and forces it to climb along the subtle central channel of the spine, piercing from bottom to top the subtle centres within it, seven in number, in their ascending hierarchical order, synthesises it, then unites with Shiva in the thousand-petalled crown (Sahasrara) at the top of the head, where the transcendent hierogamy between Shakti and her Lord is consummated. And indeed, in the end, Harap-Alb puts on the "Crown" of the Green Emperor (Sahasrara) and consummates the hierogamy with the daughter of the Red Emperor, similibus. It almost goes without saying that this regenerated horse, restored to its nature, reintegrated into its native fire, is identical to Merkaba, the chariot of fire of the Kabbalists, which carries Elijah to heaven. The horse, in its capacity as a fire-bearer, is also a symbol, and in some of our fairy tales it is called Good-Yellow-of-Sun, meaning Solar Gold. Likewise, the icon in which Saint George thrusts his spear into the mouth of the fallen dragon, while the Virgin Mary watches from the tower, expresses the same reality." (p. 283)

The three leaps that the horse makes with its master on its back have, among other things, the virtue of shifting the centre of gravity of the newly regenerated man, an operation called in Kabbalah "the displacement of the Lights", Makifim.

The horse asks its master if he has ever thought of reaching "the Sun / with his feet / the Moon with his hand / and searching for his crown through the clouds?" Lovinescu's commentary: "What do they mean? How do they show us the prince's son? In a non-human form, in his transmuted image; he sits with his feet in the sun, touches the moon with his hand, and the top of his head and the crown on his head are in the clouds. In other words, our regenerated hero has slipped backwards in relation to other people, sitting with his head down and the sky as his floor; this is the typical position of the Universal Man in all traditions.

The man regenerated in the Spirit escapes the power of gravity, and his new centre of gravity is Heaven, which becomes for him a fixed point, as the earth is for ordinary people who "have both feet on the ground," as it were. (p. 285)

It is worth remembering the XII card of the Tarot, "The Hanged Man", in which the "condemned" is hanged by one foot, with the other making a cross, with his hands behind his back, that is, removed from action, and from his pocket flows, with inexhaustible generosity, a river of gold. "Any spiritual achievement can be summed up in one sentence: the initiate reverses his centre of gravity. For him, ponderability is fixed in the heavens. It is an application of the law of inverse analogy." (p. 286)

The King's son sets off "like the wind," not "like a thought," showing that he is at the beginning of his journey, in the "Little Mysteries" phase.

After meeting his father disguised in a bear skin, the King's Son sets off towards his destiny, invested through the bear skin with a northern warrior initiation transmission, whose symbol par excellence is this animal.

Belief in the evil nature of red-haired people is widespread, as is caution against them. "Roux poil est félonie," says a French proverb. In German: "Rote Haare, Gott bewahre." Judas was red-haired, as was Herod, and in the future so will be the Antichrist. In pseudo-Aristotle: "Blondes are generous, for they belong to the lion, redheads are very evil, for they belong to the fox." Green is the colour of vegetation, of spirituality, while red is the colour of desert sand. Baal paints himself red to descend into Hell. Esau, Jacob's brother, who sold his birthright (i.e. spiritual principality) for a bowl of lentils, was "as red as a hairy coat" (Genesis 25:25). Atlanta was the cradle of the red race in the far west; the cradle of the white race was in the far north, on the White Island, also known as the Green Island, Verdea Erin "Greenland".

Spânul is not a man without a beard, but a man deprived of the possibility of having a beard, afflicted with a congenital malformation of the hair follicles on his face. "In his own way, he is a kind of eunuch. Beard growth is the result of an expansive physiological possibility; completely lacking this, Spânul is exclusively constrictive, smooth, polished like sandstone, but razor blades sharpen themselves on such skin... When he is the master of a living being, he can only naturally play a vampiric-comprehensive role towards it; but when this being steps onto the path of an initiatory achievement, he subtly removes all the individual elements from it until they disappear. These elements are by definition limiting, and this is where we see the eminently positive role of Spân, without him realising it." (p. 289)

On the other hand, Spân represents the Principium Individuationis, Radical Egoism, egoism for egoism's sake, present in the prince as in all people, and which must be eroded in order for the hero's universal possibilities to be unleashed, producing his final apotheosis, his deification.

We can say that the average person is grey, an indistinct mixture of black and white, of White and Harap. Spiritual realisation consists in discriminating through separation, Harap from White. When the operation is successful, the two antinomic elements erode each other, becoming equal through this purification. "Separation, making a qualitative discrimination in the chaotic mass of our possibilities, implies moving forward without hesitation, therefore a total prohibition to look back, to turn back. In all traditions we find this prohibition pushed to its literal, almost superstitious aspect." (p. 292)

With every step we take, we leave behind a residue that is our own shadow, which we usually drag behind us. But when, through initiation, the separation I mentioned occurs, the umbilical cord that connects us to our own spectre is cut, and the shadow and residue objectify themselves for a final battle, becoming autonomous and relentless,

frustrated by their principle of life [...]." (p. 293)

Spân, who is an abscess of fixation, sticks to Harap-Alb like a suction cup, and the rest of the fairy tale is the prince's effort to carry him on his back without paying attention to him, until the spectre is destroyed. Spân's harshness towards Harap-Alb makes his role that of a guru. "And the sandstone is a guru to the scythe." (p. 294)

Descended into the "Fons terribilis", the prince's son dies dissolved in "Vitriol", then is sent back into the light of day, "reborn", "regenerated" into a new being, "Harap-Alb".

Spânul whispers his secret: "Chima Răului, / On the bank of the stream." Which must mean: "The Scheme of Evil / On the bank of the stream." Spânul designates himself: "I am the scheme, I am the figure of evil on the face of the waters, which poisons their being." But also "I am the crack, the grimace of evil, the abomination of desolation, reflected on the surface of the waters, that is, on the whole of creation. He is not Evil, but the scheme, the Archetype of Evil, therefore the Principium Individuationis, the principle of extreme distinctiveness, of Radical Egoism, which gives rigour to Manifestation. "In Western traditions, this Principium Individuationis, which pushes even the atom to want to be only and exclusively itself, is designated as Lucifer, the Fallen Star." (p. 296)

"The whole episode is written with refined subtlety. How could an ignorant peasant row with such skill and luck on a sea of ambiguities?" (p. 297)

The fierce enmity between the hero and the spân conceals a fundamental complementarity, the two antagonists being inseparable. Finally absorbed into the Great Unity, they remain inseparable there as well.

In an immediate sense, Spân is the Dragon, the Guardian of the Threshold, because we find him at both ends, at both gates of the hero's initiatory journey: first at the mouth of the well, when he receives the sacred name of Harap-Alb. The second time at the upper end, when he suffers a second death at the hands of Spân, which makes him pass from the Lesser Mysteries over the threshold of the Greater Mysteries.

The horse's expectation in the episode of the enslavement of the Prince's Son is interesting. If the episode had only an immediate, apparent meaning, it would have been logical for the animal to defend its master. In reality, the hero's ego will be crushed between Cal and Spân, like between two millstones.

The positive aspect of Spân is proven by the fact that he takes Harap-Alb out of the hopeless forest, whose thickets he knew like the back of his hand.

"The doctrine of cycles, unanimously present in all traditions, teaches, contrary to all theories accepted today, that the unfolding of a human cycle propagates not progressively, but descendantly, from quality to quantity. The cycle means circle, and the circle has a centre. Therefore, the spirals that depart from this centre are qualitatively superior the closer they are to it. That is why we are today in the midst of the reign of quantity.

So, symbolically speaking, the cycle spins its thread from light to darkness. The light that the planet Neptune receives cannot be compared to that received by Venus. This progressive decline was indicated in Antiquity by the sequence of the Golden, Silver, Bronze and Iron Ages. Romanian folklore has preserved this tradition well, showing Prince Charming, in his initiatory journey, necessarily travelling the opposite path to cyclical development, because it is a return to the origins, the forests of Copper, Silver and Gold, sometimes Diamond, the latter indicating integration into Eternity, the incorruptible diamond.

In Hinduism, the Ages are indicated by the names Satya-Yuga, Treta-Yuga, Dwapara-Yuga and Kali-Yuga. The name of the latter Yuga, Kali, means, among other things, Black,

while the first Yuga is naturally luminous. So the cycle is contained between the antinomic terms of White and Black. The one who bears its name, such as Harap-Alb, is the Eon; thus the cycle in its integrity: the white beginning, the black end and, at the same time, the return to the centre and the beginning of a new cycle.

The great traditions of the cycle necessarily manifest themselves in its providential moments. The last tradition of the cycle is the Arab tradition, in full swing during the Dark Age. That is why Arabs are "black".

Due to the polyvalence of symbols, "black" also has another, metaphysical meaning, representing the supreme, unmanifested face of the Principle. Indeed, black is not a colour, but is above and beyond them. It is what is called in Areopagite theology an apophatic term, a "negative determination" of the Principle, in its supreme hypostasis, like other negative determinations, such as Silence or the Void. As the last tradition in the cycle, Islam joins with the first tradition in it, the Hyperborean tradition, like the Uroboros snake biting its tail. Harap-Alb, as Eon and Androgyne, sums up in himself the Alpha and Omega of the Cycle, both on the microcosmic and cyclical levels. He unites the two traditions in their common principle. That is why he is "White," but also "Harap," Arabic. (pp. 300-301)

Of all the traditional sciences, "sacred geography" was the first to disappear, followed by "sacred history." In both cases, it is primarily a matter of knowing the qualitative determinations of Time and Space, as they appear not only in the Macrocosm, but also in the Microcosm, in man.

In its higher sense, black symbolises the main state of Non-Manifestation, and thus the name Krishna must be understood, as opposed to that of Arjuna, which means "white", each representing the non-manifest and the manifest, the immortal and the mortal, the "Self" and the "Ego".

As a Black Country, Romania also occupied a central spiritual place (also called Kara-Bogdan, Kara-Iflak, Bilarapsiku zemliu, its rulers being Negru-Vodă, Kara-Ştefan, Basarabi).

Ioan Corvin, Prince of Transylvania, father of King Matei Corvin, is "black", as his name suggests. In Western chronicles he is called "Le Chevalier blanc de Valachie". He was therefore a Harap-Alb.

Stephen the Great was a human representation of the White Bear, which is why the Turks called him Kara-Stephen, Stephen the Black.

"All these facts lead us to assume that 'Harap-Alb' could have been the necessary name of the Supreme Head of an initiatory hierarchy, which, in blessed historical moments, manifested itself externally, in history, as it is accessible to us; usually the name and entity are hidden throughout the centuries. It is possible that the mystery of their function was entrusted in symbolic form to fairy tales, such as the one we are now studying.

The veil of myth conceals what should not be known; apparent childishness exorcises indiscretions. A kind of encrypted testament is passed down through the centuries, misunderstood, until, at the hour decided by destiny, "the Stone from the Top of the Corner" will be taken out of the ditch and placed where it belongs. (p. 307)

According to Hasdeu, who in turn quotes the historian Jordanes, the pileati who constituted the ruling class in Dacia were called Sarabi. Thus, Dacia has been called the Land of the Arabs since ancient times. Hasdeu considers Bessarabia to be a historical survival of ancient Arabia.

During the Roman Empire, only two provinces were called Felix: Dacia and Arabia. Both

names should be linked to the "Islands of the Blessed", one of the names given to spiritual centres.

Several members of the Basarab family bore the nickname "negru" (black), and their "armes parlantes" feature black heads. It is therefore not impossible that "Harap-Alb" could also be a "Sarab-Alb".

Hasdeu breaks down "Sarab" into Sar and Ab. The first part of the word, Sar, means Sun, Prince, Lord, Chief, in Indo-European and Semitic dialects. In Sanskrit, Sur, Surya is Sun, the Master par excellence of the world; in Hebrew and Chaldean, Semitic languages, we have Sar and Sara, Prince and Princess. Then, among the Aryan peoples, Sri, Sol Sun, Sir, Sire, Messer, Messire, Monsieur. In our language, apart from Sun, we find it in its pure but ambiguous form of "sur": the immediate meaning of grey indicates rather a kind of indistinctness of colours in excelsis: Sky Sur, horse sur, eagle sur. It is a kind of colour of the Ether and of Strength. It is therefore possible that the term "cal sur" actually means "cal soare" (sun horse), which must be linked to the mischievous horse in fairy tales, which we sometimes find referred to as "Bun-Galben-de-Soare" (Good-Yellow-of-Sun). Harap is the popular form of Arab; its possible connection with Sarah shows that "Harap" in our fairy tale means "master", "lord", "head". He is not black in the racial sense of the word, but in the Ethiopian sense, a transcendent being clothed and burned by the Ether. Saint Sunday, the Solar Archangel, is also "Dea Syra", the sister goddess, reigning in the mythical "Heliopolis" and in primitive "Syria", which, as I have already said, should not be confused with the historical city and country bearing this name. According to Muslim tradition, the "solar language", "loghah suriyannah", that is, the primordial language of present humanity, is preserved in primitive Syria. Adopted by "Dea Syra", it is natural for the son of kings to become "Harap-Alb", because the goddess is also "Black-White", for the reasons that Guénon cites at length in the excerpts we have reproduced.

As for the second part of the word, Ab or Ba (inversion is one of the most common phenomena in linguistics), we find it just as universally widespread. Ab, Ba, Pa means father, so also "Chief". Together with ma, it is the first monosyllable a child utters. There is another phonetic "coincidence" if we divide Sarab into Sar and Rab. The latter word means "Lord" or "Master" in Semitic languages. In Arabic, it is one of the divine names, exclusively reserved for God. Since Sur is Sanskrit and Rab is Arabic, Sarab could be a node, a point of coincidence, a sign of a junction between the Hindu tradition, directly descended from the Primordial Tradition (like the Celtic traditions), and the Arabic tradition, the last to appear in the cycle. The ruling caste in Dacia produced priests and kings. It therefore represented more than the Brahmins of India, who were exclusively priestly. The Sarabs may be closer to what in India is designated by the name Hamsa, beings who possess both priestly and royal powers, and are therefore in reality above all castes. This is how the holders of the Primordial Tradition are characterised. Even the Arabs emphasised the seniority of their name. The Prophet Muhammad, wishing to suggest his status as a "divine man," said: "Ana Arab bila Ain," "I am Arab without the letter ain." Only Rab remains, "Lord," which, as I said, is an exclusively divine name." (pp. 308-309)

Rab in Arabic could have been, at first, by virtue of the law of inverse analogies, bar, a monosyllable specific to the Boar, Varaha, Boar in English, bor, bro, vier. Such inversions that reveal the hidden side of things can be found elsewhere. Harap-Alb, which is Sarab Alb, may be Sar Bar Alb, Lord White Boar. The two main stories by Creangă, The Story of the Pig and Harap-Alb, may have the same being as their hero, mythologised in different ways.

"The Spân seems evil from a very external perspective; in reality, he represents the necessary aspect of the Principle, which descends into our world in ways we do not understand. He must be allowed to do his job." (p. 310)

The pair Harap-Alb and Spânul is preceded by the pair Heracles-Eurystheus. In the Bhagavad-Gita, we find Krishna and Arjuna riding in the same chariot in the battle of Kurukshetra.

The superior possibilities of Harap-Alb are realised along the sattwa guna, fixed in

the fire horse, while the lower ones are fixed in Spân. The mischievous horse and Spân are complementary and correlative along a vertical axis.

The function of the Green Emperor, Universal Monarch, is anaemic and withered, reduced to immanence, to mere virtuality.

Harap-Alb's role as a servant is eminently cathartic and redemptive.

"In the realisation of the spiritual alchemical Magnum Opus, for which Harap-Alb's *Questa* is a typical image, the completion of the Work has three main successive stages: the Black Work, inherent in "separation" and "putrefaction"; the Green or White Work and the Red Work, l'œuvre au noir, l'œuvre au blanc ou au vert, l'œuvre au rouge; Nigredo, Albedo, Rubedo, symbolised respectively by Lead, Mercury and Sulphur. All three are traversed by Harap-Alb, the work in black, in the separation that took place at the fountain, when he became the slave, the black Spân, a separation perfectly indicated by the dual name Harap-Alb, the white work, indicated in the same name, or the green work, as he is at the court of the Green Emperor, and the red work, perfected in the Magnum Opus, when he "finishes" the work given by the Red Emperor. (pp. 314-315)

It is interesting to note that at the Green Emperor's table, the salads (green) are in short supply, confirming the initial observation that the world he rules is deeply anaemic.

The tyranny of the spinner sends our hero on quests that reshape both him and the world. The bear symbolises the warrior caste, so if the garden belongs to the Bear, the cause lies in what is called the warriors' revolt, the Bear's revolt against those who hold supreme power, symbolised by the Boar. Harap-Alb must put an end to this usurpation.

Harap-Alb flies on the back of his horse to the green island of Holy Sunday. The Bear's Garden is also located on the same island. The Saint and the Bear cohabit the same space, the Green Island. "As the goddess necessarily dwells in the centre of the island, due to her solar nature, the bear can only occupy the periphery of that place, according to the commonly known diagram of spiritual centres, that is, at the point of contact between the centre and the rest of the world, ensuring the connection in normal times, but also being able to interrupt it catastrophically in the event of a revolt. Then the situation is restored through direct and harsh interventions." (p. 317)

The theurgical operation of gathering salads takes place at midnight, as is customary. The garden is located at the "crossroads", that is, at the quintessential point of the cross, further proof that the salads represent the Raw Material, the quintessence of a state of nature, fallen into a barren prison. Harap-Alb dresses in bear skin to deceive the hostile environment, apparently adhering to it externally. Outwardly a warrior, inwardly contemplative.

Throwing down the fur is what is called in secret organisations a "gesture of recognition". Through it, Harap-Alb lets the bear know that part of his being is also bear. Which is perfectly true.

Harap-Alb, like Mistreț, unleashed the green essence from the Bear's dominion. The ties between the Earth Pole and the Heavenly Pole being bound, Harap-Alb untied the bond, restoring on Holy Sunday the legitimate suzerainty in the garden usurped by the bear. Harap-Alb appears in the guise of an Avatar, a Saviour of the World.

The second recovery expedition targets the deer's head and its skin, adorned with precious stones. This time, the trophy is no longer vegetal, but animal combined with mineral. "In the first expedition, the Elixir of Long Life, the plant aspect of Magnum Opus, had to be won; in the second, the Philosopher's Stone, its mineral aspect." (p. 320)

The second journey on horseback, also consisting of qualitative leaps, leads to Holy Sunday.

The Stag, like the Bear, is on the same island as "the Queen of Fairies, / the Wonder of Wonders."

By putting on the mask of Statu-Palmă-Barbă-Cot, the hero exaggerates horror and grotesqueness in order to face the most terrifying entities of Hell in a contest with them.

The stag symbolises Mercury. Alchemy treatises use the assonance between *Cervus fugitivus* and *Servus fugitivus*, one of the designations of Mercury's instability. Statu-Palmă, polymorphic, is also an infernal aspect of Mercury with a thousand faces. "Mercurius vincit Mercurius". The poisoned and poisonous, degraded and virulent Mercury that is the Stag, Harap-Alb opposes the asymmetry and derhythmia, the grotesque and the absurd, the mask of undifferentiated Chaos.

The Stag is a Guardian of the Threshold. Many of those who exercise this function have a poisonous gaze. It is one of the descending and coagulating aspects of Kundalini.

The act of cutting the vital knot of the Stag takes place at midday, in contrast to the conquest of the Salats, which took place at midnight. Harap-Alb brings together the duality of the Day Sun and the Night Sun.

"Harap-Alb's expedition against the Stag belongs to the same mythical family as Perseus' killing of Medusa. Our hero is armed with Statu-Palmă's shield, just as Perseus is armed with Hades' helmet; he has Barbă-Cot's sword, just as the Greek hero has Hermes' sickle. The gaze of the Stag, like that of Medusa, kills." (p. 232)

The sanctity of the symbol of the Stag is shown to us by the fact that in the medieval bestiary, the stag sitting by a spring symbolises the soul thirsting for the water of Eternity.

Holy Sunday is the Heavenly Pole, and Green Emperor, the Earthly Pole. The spiritual gifts conquered with the help of Holy Sunday descend into our world through successive descending translations.

By bringing the deer skin and gems to the Green Kingdom, an alchemical reanimation of the seeds that had fallen into the lifeless parts of the Universe takes place.

"All the nuances, all the accents and tacit suggestions, the advances and retreats in the quoted page, reinforce the suspicion that Creangă was aware and lucid about the essential symbols he exposes in peasant form." (p. 327)

Baia was one of the capitals of early Moldavia. The seal of the old city of Baia (*Civitas Moldavensis*) has been preserved. It dates with certainty from the 13th century. The inscription reads: "Sigilium capitalis civitatis Moldavie".

"As heraldry belongs to Hermeticism, with a distinctly symbolic character and successive reflections on secondary planes, we will attempt a brief interpretation of this seal. Like all traditional sciences, heraldry has a dual character, macrocosmic and microcosmic. From this latter point of view, it suffices to recall that the heraldist who studies a coat of arms must consider it hanging from the neck of its owner. Therefore, the coat of arms expresses the virtualities in the heart and chest of its owner, his deepest possibilities, his latencies. Therefore, the coat of arms expresses the virtualities in the heart and chest of its owner, his deepest possibilities, his latencies. Therefore, the "furniture" of the Blazon expresses the hieroglyphic "Abyss" of the owner. It is an initiation that transmits certain "spiritual influences", a Barakah, as the Arabs say. These are valid not only for a human being, but also for a city or a state. Seen by a layman, the coat of arms of Moldova has the Sun on the left and the Moon on the right, which is an anomaly. When hung around a person's neck, the situation is reversed and becomes normal again. Even when it is on a seal, a throne, or a stone

votive, the coat of arms is also on the chest of the Universal Man." (p. 328)

In the coat of arms of Moldova, the Stag is located "en abîme", as in its lair, which becomes a point generating vibrations determining the future destinies of the new state. The Boar androgynously mates the Sun and Moon on his right and left, creating a positive-negative wave motion, the only one that can make an entity viable in this world of duality.

In the seal of the city of Băii, which dates, as I said, from before the founding of Moldavia, that is, before the "projection" into history of the myth of Dragoș and Bourul, we find a trilob, configured on the invisible pattern of an upward-pointing triangle. In the interstitial points of the trilob there are three stars, naturally forming a triangle with its tip pointing upwards. Both triangles intertwine, forming the seal of Solomon, a universal symbol, signifying first and foremost the union of heaven and earth, then other complementary elements. According to Simeon Florea Marian, the bull pursued by Dragoș had three stars on its forehead, which we find in the seal of Baia, as well as in other initiatory bodies. Baia was also a fortress... In the field of this union of opposites, that is, in the "heart" of the seal, there is a deer in profile in full flight, captured as if in a photographic snapshot. Therefore, we have an image of *Cervus fugitivus*, one of the symbols of the unstable Mercury [...]. (p. 329)

The final stage of Harap-Alb's initiatory achievement on a cosmological level, that is, the fulfilment of the Lesser Mysteries, is symbolised by the conquest of the Red Emperor's daughter.

Spân's defining trait, his unbridled tendency towards compactness, egocentricity, and retrogression, like the constellation he represents, is highlighted by Creangă when Spân orders Harap-Alb not to take his eyes off him, to stay close behind his chair. But this compactness is also a discipline of concentration.

The bird's words: "eat, drink and be merry, but do not think of the daughter of Emperor Roș" are from the family of "take, eat, for this is my body" Christic. Birds are unanimously symbols of angelic entities. The bird brings a transcendent message. "[...] the reader must not be deceived by the trickery and succulence of the episode; the discriminating bird is identical to the dove that descends every Friday above the Grail cup to perform the transmutation." (p. 332)

The Red Emperor is the ruler of blood, and confronting him is the most difficult trial an initiate must undergo, for it involves traversing the Niagara of passions and all the instincts that have their support and seat in blood.

How can we find, in the blood, the sinuous line that separates the Eucharistic substance from the inferior mortal aromas that serve to officiate the most sinister Typhonian mysteries of the Red Donkey? In India, the donkey is the mount of Mu-devi, the infernal aspect of Shakti. There is no contradiction in the fact that Christ enters Jerusalem riding a donkey, that is, dominating what the donkey represents.

"To venture alone through the sea of fire, without a guide, is a sign of major disqualification in the initiatory journey. That is why we see Harap-Alb, although an Avatar and solar hero, not daring to act in his search until he has summoned all the forces of the environment, from the humblest to the highest, from ants and bees, from the primordial polymorphic creatures, ruling the elements, the basic powers of the world, to the winged horse and Saint Sunday. And he obtains their help through an exchange of procedures, by fraternizing with them, while maintaining his distance and hegemony. (pp. 334-335)

From the superior perspective of the colour red, we can understand the importance of the "Red Work" of "Rubedo" when we see that a supreme initiate, the greatest spiritual Master of

Islam, Muhyiuddin ibn Arabi, bore the epithet "Red Sulphur" (elkebritul-ahmar), who was the one who completed the Hermetic Magisterium, first in the field of the "Lesser Mysteries", then in that of the "Greater Mysteries".

If in the case of the Bear and the Stag we are talking about deviations that prevented the organic connection between the Solar Goddess and the world ruled by Holy Sunday, in the case of the Red Emperor we are no longer talking about a deviation, but about a subversion, a deliberate break with the Supreme Centre. "The Red Kingdom had deliberately abolished everything that connected it to the Supreme Land, from which it had once drawn its legitimacy and justification. However, despite any break, the Supreme Authority remains unblemished in its magisterium, due to the irreversible relationship between Principle and manifestation, between the Supreme Centre and the centres derived from it. the restoration of balance occurs, but only after allowing the rebellious civilisation to perish through its own excesses, doing all the damage it can, and this observation applies at least as well to modern civilisation as it does to the distant red civilisation of Atlantis. (p. 337)

The message of the sacred Atlantean bird, the Red Phoenix, is that someone must be sent to save what can still be saved from the red civilisation, its essence, namely the daughter of the Red Emperor, the "terrible witch," while at the same time eliminating the useless remnants of the satanic civilisation.

"These are the considerations that led us to believe that the Red Kingdom is the red kingdom of Atlantis. Atlantis, which was living its last moments, in which sacred science had fallen into a red magic of blood (sometimes accompanied by sexual delirium) as it would be perpetuated in its distant descendants, the redskins of Central and South America. Shortly before Cortés conquered Mexico, 40,000 people had their hearts torn out alive in a single festive day.

Guénon provides interesting details about the collapse of Atlantis. It did not disappear all at once: the island Plato refers to was the last remnant. And even after the collapse described by Plato, it did not perish entirely: its remaining elements had time to save themselves on the symbolic "ark" (Noah's Flood is the flood of Atlantis), to emigrate and to join other traditions. This is the meaning of the conquest of the Red Emperor's daughter by Harap-Alb." (p. 338)

Guénon believes that in Celtic civilisation, the purely metaphysical element was Hyperborean, and the cosmological sciences, intermediate, designated by the generic name of Hermeticism, had an Atlantean origin.

The Vedas are categorical: India was not initially the country known today by this name. It had successive geographical locations, starting from a strictly polar point.

The determination with which the Atlantean monarch defends his daughter shows us that his kingdom is dead without her. Its imminent collapse into the waves is implied.

In Greek traditions, there is a myth whose survivors are Deucalion and Pyrrha. Pyrrha means bright red in Greek.

"As we can see, all Eastern European traditions preserve the memory of heroes, of a red race that came from elsewhere and mixed with the aborigines." (p. 340)

The entire history of the last 5-6 millennia has its key in the junction between the Hyperborean and Atlantean currents.

The episode of Harap-Alb's encounter with the Queen of Ants and that of his encounter with the Queen of Bees demonstrates that our hero has reached that level of spiritual achievement which is characterised in Muslim esotericism as "Cosmic Charity".

"Before making a beehive, Harap-Alb turns his hat upside down and steps aside. The bees gather in it. This detail shows that the quintessential faculties of man, his synthetic and intellectual elements, are located in the head. But the upturned cap indicates an inversion: the head, the apex of the human being, becomes a cup when it wants to fill itself with heavenly influences. A real plane of nature is active towards the lower planes, being passive towards the higher planes. This is the secret of spiritual achievements." (p. 345)

For a connoisseur, the contrast between the technical and doctrinal rigour of the symbols used by the author and their verbal expansion is disturbing, without the latter detracting from the former.

All the characters that Harap-Alb will bring to life are objectifications of their latent qualities. An inner solution coagulates outwardly, in the surrounding nature. The inner cry finds its echo in the form of entities that proceed through sciziparity from Harap-Alb.

"Laugh, laugh, Harap-Alb" – Harap-Alb's laughter is the laughter of the Demiurge who gives birth to worlds through his guffaws.

In literary history, Creangă, even as a writer of fairy tales, is considered a realist. The epithet is justified, more so than those who coined it believe. What kind of realist can be placed alongside a writer who manages to conjure up incredible beings such as the Chimera, the Griffin, the Sphinx and the Hesperides Nymphs, who speak and behave as naturally as the peasants of Vânătorii Neamțului and Baia?" (p. 347)

Gerilă's teratological appearance, however frightening it may be, shows us the master and at the same time the captive of his own power. Gerilă is the Regent of Fire, of the Philosopher's Fire, of the Fire of Athanor. His action is exclusively descending and compacting, which shows him to be the Regent of Tamas. His function is to give basic consistency to the volatile. "Well, it was frost fire, what more can I say?" – the peasant's definition of the Magnum Opus. His huge lips show him to be also the master of the Breath, of Prana, which carries the Fire. He elevates to the superlative the power we all have, we are all Gerilă, because by changing the tightness of our lips and the speed of our breathing, we can transform warm breath into a thread of frost.

Gerilă precedes the other elements in the fairy tale because he holds the key to the others. He gives consistency to fire, and therefore even more so to Earth (Flămânzilă) and Water (Setilă).

Flămânzilă, the next entity, represents the earth, the limit of the compaction that began with Gerilă.

"And in Gerilă, in Flămânzilă, in Setilă, besides their common zodiacal character, we find another unique trait. The absolute is reflected in them in an "absolute" passion, unquenchable by anything, which the relativity of our earthly gifts cannot satisfy. It is a striving towards the Absolute, death trampled by death. Seen in this way, a possibility is never exhausted additively; it must pass to the limit, either through overbidding or through integration, as will happen in the end; the second death of Harap-Alb attracts the 'extinction' of the quaternary element." (pp. 349-350)

Ochilă's synthetic eye, not being the usual dual organ, does not represent the sensitive quality that characterises the element of fire. It represents the Ether, identifying itself with the Eye of Eternity, the frontal eye of Shiva. This eye sees simultaneously the Zenith and the Nadir, the four cardinal and intermediate points, from the central point where the six directions of space depart, that is, from the centre of the three-dimensional cross.

Shiva's central eye turns Manifestation to ashes, revealing its illusory nature, a fact masterfully insinuated by our narrator when he has Ochilă say: "All things seem to me to be hollow like sieves and transparent like clear water." The entities that

are Regents of the Elements, but they are also proliferated by other dark forces of Nature, whose knot must be untied with great care so as not to break it. In addition, they also have an extracosmic character, tangential to Nature, hence their "exile" character, from which Harap-Alb must rescue them through his incantations. His invocations are salvific. Ochilă sees all the wonders of heaven and earth, but cannot move without help, because he does not possess an immediate and literal vision of the world. Neither he nor his companions can quench their thirst, hunger, cold, and need for guidance and knowledge with the immediate possibilities of the world. They are therefore exiled in this world, as I said above." (p. 351)

In Păsări-Lăți-Lungilă, Harap-Alb has strung together a veritable litany of Man, Universal, a gradual and incandescent evocation of him, in his aspect as "measurer" and devourer of the Cosmos. He is master and digester of the Birds, and therefore of what they symbolise, the Intellectuals. Like Heracles, he is a tireless actualiser of rectilinear and polar coordinates. He is the rector of the Element of Air.

Harap-Alb has actualised around him the army of the five elements.

An image of modern science and philosophy:

"As many as there are in  
the moon and stars, If you  
felt like running away from  
them, Or laughing like a  
madman, Believe me when  
I tell you!"

The observation of cyclical disorder, but also the fact that in the phenomenal world, everything must be the opposite of the prototypical world:

"This world is upside down,  
Everything goes headlong:  
Few climb, many descend,  
One grinds at the mill."

The mill in the last verse, located at the bottom of Hell, grinds everything that has a downward tendency in our cycle: between its stones, continuous matter, which still has qualitative determinations, is ground into discontinuous matter, into incurable darkness.

"To one without a soul (the Red Emperor) must be matched one without law (Harap-Alb)."

Harap-Alb's achievement is tantric in nature: the exaggeration of evil, its connection to divine names of wrath and corresponding rigour.

Harap-Alb and his followers are laid to rest overnight in the "fiery copper house". This is the Athanor, the Hermetic Vessel in which the transmutation of the elements placed in it for fermentation takes place. Normally, transmutation is done over a slow fire, but the Red Kingdom being subversive, the Athanor is also cursed. The Red Emperor's Athanor is in fact a Crematorium. Gerilă restores the fire to its true dignity as the Philosopher's Fire: "Then Gerilă blows three times with his skilful lips and the house remains neither hot nor cold, just right for sleeping in."

What follows are three pages unmatched in world literature, in the sense that nowhere else can we find a comic scene pushed to the point of indecency, stitched together with the needle of literary genius and woven into a deeper esotericism.

The old alchemists say that the "Raw Material" of the Work, susceptible to transmutation,

once placed in the Athanor and hermetically sealed at a moderate temperature conducive to life, buds and develops its possibilities in the sense of expansion and disconnection. In the copper house, budding and flowering take place, thus actualising in their own full form the auxiliary entities of Harap-Alb. This is the first part of the operation, Solve.

The mucalite quarrel in Athanor is an expansion of each for himself, at the expense of others, a polishing, a sharpening of blades in preparation for the battle that has broken out between the Green Kingdom and the Red Kingdom.

The elements swell in Athanor, thriving to their maximum distinctiveness, threatening to destroy the Vessel. Gerilă is the one who ultimately fixes the expansion, opposing the Solve tendency in Athanor with the Coagula tendency. He is the master and distributor of both.

Harap-Alb is the immovable engine of these "powers." It is significant that he does not utter a word throughout the entire scene. Their immediate director, their animator, is Gerilă, the leader of the elements, the Regent, the Minister of the Philosopher's Fire, whose true name we can now reveal: Elias Artista.

No one can say exactly who Elias Artista is, especially in divinis, except that he is the instigator, the Rector of the Philosopher's Fire. In his name we find those of Elijah and Helios reunited, with their respective attributes. Without him, the philosophical Magnum Opus cannot be accomplished. Present and operative in every palingenesis in Athanor, like Elijah in the ritual of circumcision of every Jewish child, Elijah will manifest himself macrocosmically at the end of the world, preparing and setting up the fire with which Christ will consume the world at the Parousia, at the second coming. Igne Natura Renovatur Integra. Through Fire, Nature will be completely renewed, says an illustrious hermetic adage. And if we read only the initials of the four words I.N.R.I., we see that they are the same as those written on the cross on Golgotha, Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum.

As I said, while the elements squabble among themselves and mock each other like Homer's heroes, Harap-Alb does not utter a word, like the immobile engine that he is. It is clear that his intention is to let them do their thing, more precisely, to allow them to expand their own nature to its maximum effectiveness; that is, until the moment when the quarrel turns into a fight, the expansion into slackness; then the grumpy, Saturnian Gerilă throws a thick three-palm snowball, and that is enough to harpoon them, to fix them in their moment of maximum efficiency and actualisation, of manifestation. Gerilă stirs them up, and he stops them, like the good leader he was. From now on, Harap-Alb has his instruments well tuned, energised to the precise degree for his initiatory war. (pp. 359-360)

One of the fundamental rules of the Royal Art is the complete closure of the Furnace in which the Magnum Opus is baked. Such closure is achieved "from within" by Gerilă, transforming the copper house of the Red Emperor into a block of ice.

Other trials follow, those of Earth and Water, symbolised by Flămânzilă and Setilă. "The zodiacal number twelve, which encircles the entire Universe like a belt, is an indication that this technique of actualising the elemental forces consists in raising them to a paroxysmal degree, to the superlative level of the entire cosmos, at which, after consuming the world, they consume themselves. All that remains are whirlwinds of energy, atomic particles with which ants and bees are adequately measured, the former on earth, the latter in the air, that is, in the sense of Amplitude and Exaltation, according to the terms of Muslim esotericism." (p. 362)

Ants separate poppy seed honey from sand honey.

Next comes the test in which Harap-Alb and his band must guard the Red Emperor's daughter throughout the night. "In the alchemical process, after processing, we could say, after the basic elements, in this case Earth and Water, have been loosened, the unleashed volatile elements rush upwards

upwards, ready to leave the Athanor, in our case, the sublunary world, as the story will show. The most imperative, most implacable law of the Royal Art requires hermeticism not to allow this, under penalty of compromising the entire work. The volatile must be forced to return to its "pantry," to its Athanor, because the perfection of the Work can only result from the harmonious collaboration of all the elements in the "compost." None can become "autonomous." (p. 363)

In the alchemical process, a dichotomy occurs: on the one hand, separation softens the wild cohesive force of matter, which kept the elements locked in their original "chaos"; on the other hand, the volatile elements, once separated, must not be allowed to leave the vessel, as is their tendency, but must be forced to come back down, otherwise the Work risks being scattered, and thus coagulated. If the volatile escapes from the Athanor, the alchemist risks death.

"If the girl goes beyond the moon, which is "Janua", the Gate, the whole Work is scattered. For the reasons I have shown above, the Bird-Girl must be imperiously brought back to her "chamber". Those who have a basic understanding of the 'prayer of the mind' that must be 'lowered' into the 'chamber' of the heart will grasp the importance of our myth, which is otherwise pre-Christian." (p. 365)

The last piece of evidence is that of the twin girls.

At each stage of the initiatory process, the results achieved are called into question once again. The cosmogonic process is renewed; everything the initiate has achieved so far, his entire new cosmos, becomes chaos again, because the continuous disruption of the balance of the three gunas transforms the results obtained into raw material, the aforementioned gunas only restructuring themselves on the immediately higher plane, and this continues indefinitely through the very ascending tendency of the sattwa guna, until final integration. (p. 366)

"When, therefore, in our upward journey, we reach the upper waters, where we see the image of our angel at the Zenith, they shatter their mirror, becoming Lower Waters as soon as we have passed them, and the Land is revealed above our heads. The Zenith becomes the Nadir, the Waters that were until now our Heaven become the Abyss, no longer reflecting an angel but a demon, an eidolon, maddened by the fear of death, because the sacrificial smoke of our aspirations no longer feeds it. Hence the unanimous exhortation in all mystery traditions that the Mist should never look back. The danger lies especially in the fact that the mutation, from essence to substance, is strictly internal, the appearances remaining the same. Discrimination can only be made through an inner sense, which is more of a feeling, atrophied in most people, actualised only through the labours of initiatory realisation. At every moment we have to make Heracles' choice, not once and for all, as gullible souls believe. At every moment, we see in Zenith the Archetype of our spiritual quest, and beneath our feet, like a twin sister, its residual image. It is what the ancient Greeks called the Eidolon of the God, deadly to those who confuse it with the Prototype. All our faculties of analysis are useless in this process of choice. The ant was able to distinguish hundreds of thousands of poppy seeds from hundreds of thousands of grains of fine sand because we are on the same plane, that of discontinuous quantity. There was no qualitative choice to be made; but to discriminate reality from its reflection, quality from quantity, is beyond its powers and competence." (p. 367)

The bee is the queen of transformations in our world, and she is engaged in a mission that requires sagacity.

The final test is between the horse and the turtle, both of whom set out to bring three branches of sweet apple and living water and dead water from where the mountains meet. This time we are faced with a direct competition between the rebellious female priesthood and the spiritual authority, which is virile by definition. We emphasise the fundamental identity of the episode with a famous ancient myth, the footrace between Atalanta and Hippomenes; the latter emerges victorious in the end, with the help of the Hesperides' apples

, a race that ends in both myths with a hierogamy." (p. 368)

"Everything is connected, everything is united in the cosmos, due to the homogeneity of nature. Let us return to what was said in *The Story of the Pig*: when, during a certain cyclical period, a derived spiritual centre must play a leading role, the shift in the centre of gravity was accompanied by transfers of symbols and names of constellations. Thus, in the era of Atlantean predominance, a civilisation with equinoctial symbolism, the name *Libra*, initially given to the solstice and polar constellation of the Big Dipper, moved into the zodiacal zone, not only to the constellation known today by this name, but also to the Pleiades, which are seven, like the stars of the Big Dipper. The Pleiades are the daughters of Atlas, seven in number and as such called Atlanteans. The Atlantean civilisation was located in the West, *Hesperos* in Greek, which identifies Atlantis with the Garden of the Hesperides. The Hesperid nymphs were also the daughters of Atlas; they guarded the apple of the Hesperides, which is undoubtedly identified with the apple in our fairy tale, in which the pharmacist rightly sees the quintessence of the Red Kingdom. Harap-Alb's mission was to transfer the apple to the Green Kingdom, a distant but necessary origin of the Red Kingdom and the apple in it. We recall the popular expression: "at the red apple", indicating extreme distance, in the Red Kingdom. Atlantean memory." (p. 369)

The race between Harap-Alb's Solar Horse and Atlantis's Lunar Turtle is the race between Solar Sulphur and Lunar Mercury.

"What is remarkable, demonstrating the fundamental identity of the Greek myth of Atalanta with that of the Romanian Atalanta, is the fact that in Greek, *Hippomenes* means "the Power of the Horse"; the Horse is also "the Power", Harap-Alb's *Shakti*, his agent in the similar race. Another convergence: sometimes, in variants of the myth, *Hippomenes* is also called *Melanos*, meaning 'black', representing the 'dark' element of Creangă's hero, with all the symbolism that this implies." (p. 370)

Creangă's fairy tale will be completed by *Eros Kosmogonos*.

The striking similarity between Harap-Alb's courtship and that of *Tristan* is striking.

*Melancholy* literally means "Black Bile," "Attract Bile," and it is natural for it to envelop the Dark Age, *Kali-Yuga*, with its black wings. *Melancholy* is characteristic of the Dark Age. From *Tristan the Sad*, through *Dante*, "who never smiled, not because he had seen Hell, but because he had left Paradise," as *Guénon* says, through Shakespeare's *Jack the Melancholic*, through the *Knight of the Sad Countenance*, to the "Weltschmerz" of the German Romantics and the twilights in which *Hyperion* appears, the wings of *Melancholy* are the only positive element in the night of the Dark Age, because they necessarily imply the assimilation of *Paradise Lost*. "*Wunsch von Paradies*" was, according to *Wolfram*, the essential trait of those who sought the *Grail*. (pp. 372-373)

Both Harap-Alb and *Tristan* set out to woo the girl with total loyalty, thinking only of being faithful to their master, to whom they have sworn allegiance until death. They fulfil their mission, but love overwhelms them. "In divinis, the pair Harap-Alb and the Red Emperor's Daughter, *Tristan* and *Isolde*, *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha* are unique, but when they descend into the formal patterns of our world, they take on the guise of the cyclical moment, with the shortcomings, additions, and transformations inherent in *Becoming*, fluidity, and universal instability." (p. 373) The relationship between *Tristan* and *Marc* is much the same as that between Harap-Alb and *Spân*. We are in the age of *Melancholy* with *Tristan*, who must marry *Isolde's* substitute.

"All these similarities and differences are but an illustration of the great law according to which a transcendent entity, when it descends into the sublunary world, through an *avatic* or functional mission, must take on the guise of the cyclical moment in which the descent takes place. The initiatory miracle consists in the fact that, setting out to pursue an idea, the hero

return with a bride." (pp. 374-375)

Spânul is a cosmic agent, a *dunamis*, with the mission of being evil, harsh in reality, because only on such sandstone does the noble blade of Toledo, which is Harap-Alb, acquire its rare sharpness. Spânul is tormented by the compacting force that works within him and increases his tension when, superimposed on it, love settles in.

Harap-Alb swore not to reveal his identity until his death and transfiguration ("until he died and rose again," his Spân, master and Guru had ordered him), and he kept his word until his death, according to the initiation pact. In order for the individual Self, *Jivatma*, to pass into the world of the gods and become the Self, *Atma*, it must rid itself of its accidents, for never has a "rich man" entered the Kingdom of Heaven. "But when the hero, renouncing all individual limitations, dying to them, reaches the causal planes, all the stones, trees, beings, the whole of nature, through the mouth of the Red Emperor's Daughter, proclaim him to be Perfect, the legitimate Son of Heaven and Earth, and they cannot do otherwise, because the reason for the existence of the entire Universe is to bear witness to the Supreme *Brahma* and those who have identified with him, in other words, Harap-Alb's quality as lieutenant of the divinity. Otherwise, they fall into nothingness." (p. 376)

About Harap-Alb's initiatory journey: "Harap-Alb is the son of the King, born in the usual way, like all humans. He begins to differentiate himself during his journey of initiation. He enters the well, which is his 'first death', and emerges regenerated, with a new identity called 'Harap-Alb', which is therefore his 'second birth' after his 'first death': after terrible trials, the 'second death' by the sword of Spân follows, followed by the 'third birth' in a necessary and consecutive manner. But this time he does not receive a new name, because he has reached the heavens, the Universal, above *Nama-Rupa*, above the 'Name and Form'. In fact, he was born three times, once when his earthly mother gave birth to him through the womb, a new entity named Harap-Alb, and the third time, through the hand of Spân, when he loses all trace of individuality. Only Personality remains, coextensive with Eternity. He acquires an unutterable name through identification with the Uncreated Light, with the Supreme in him and in the Universe. The *Atma* horse reabsorbs the *Jivatma* Spân into itself." (p. 377)

The horse lifts Spân up to the glory of heaven, then lets him fall to earth, integrating him positively through atomisation: "Spân is reduced to dust and powder."

Harap-Alb's achievement is so complete that it leaves nothing behind, an achievement similar only to that of Enoch and Elijah, who ascended to heaven with their bodies intact. "We see clearly in Harap-Alb, in his Theosis, a precipitation of inferior possibilities into a *caput mortuum* and the crystallisation of superior possibilities into *Excelsis*. In between, individuality has disappeared, leaving as a middle ground a hieroglyph with human appearance." (p. 180)

**BERSERKER**

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**BOOKS**

